

GLOBAL TERRORISM: THREATS TO THE HOMELAND, PART II

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS FIRST SESSION

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Wednesday, October 30, 2019

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 o'clock a.m., in room 310, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Bennie G. Thompson, [Chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Thompson, Jackson Lee, Langevin, Richmond, Rice, Correa, Small, Rose, Underwood, Cleaver, Green of Texas, Clarke, Titus, Coleman, Barragán, Demings; Rogers, King, McCaul, Katko, Higgins, Green of Tennessee, Taylor, Joyce, Crenshaw, Guest, and Bishop.

Chairman THOMPSON. We are going to convene the Committee on Homeland Security.

We are going to ask the members of the press to please part the center aisle so Members can have access to the witnesses.

The committee is meeting today to receive testimony on "Global Terrorism: Threats to the Homeland, Part II."

Good morning. The committee, as I indicated, is meeting to hear from 4 expert witnesses on where we are as of this date with threats to the homeland.

This committee was created in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Since the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security, the committee has focused on ensuring the Department is fulfilling its mission to secure the homeland.

I take this responsibility seriously, as has every Chairman of this committee.

That is why it has been the committee's practice to hold a hearing to assess global threats to the homeland and evaluate the Federal Government's efforts to confront them. Congress and the American people deserve to hear about the threats we face directly from the officials charged with our Nation's security.

Today, I am deeply concerned about the state of the Department of Homeland Security. It has been 203 days since the Department last had a confirmed Secretary, and Acting Secretary McAleenan recently announced he is leaving after just 6 months on the job. His replacement will be the fifth person to lead DHS in fewer than 3 years.

Even though Acting Secretary McAleenan is leaving tomorrow, from what I understand, the President has yet to announce who his replacement will be.

What is the delay?

Overnight, we learned the White House may be trying to find a legal loophole to install the President's pick, who is not in the Department's order of succession, as Acting Secretary.

This is completely unacceptable, and such a decision would raise serious Constitutional questions.

Also unacceptable is the fact that the Transportation Security Administration's administrator has been dual-hatted as acting deputy secretary of Homeland Security for the last 6 months. TSA administrator and deputy secretary of Homeland Security are not part-time jobs. They each require someone's full attention.

Beyond the Secretary and deputy secretary, 11 components and offices within DHS are operating with acting leaders, and in all but 2 cases the President has yet to nominate anyone to fill these vacancies.

This is an unprecedented situation with real consequences for the Department and the more than 240,000 men and women of DHS working to secure the homeland. Indeed, at no time during my tenure on this committee have I been more concerned about DHS's ability to carry out its mission.

The chaos is not limited to the Department, unfortunately. The President is also on his sixth National Security Advisor, fifth Secretary of Defense, third FBI Director, and third Director of National Intelligence, including acting officials.

He also no longer has a Homeland Security Advisor or a White House Cybersecurity Coordinator. The President needs to fill positions critical to U.S. National security.

At the same time, terrorism threats to the homeland, both international and domestic, are unrelenting. Just over 2 weeks ago, President Trump pulled American troops out of Syria. This abrupt exit put an end to U.S. counterterrorism missions with the Kurds and complicated the Pentagon's raid on ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

Fortunately, their mission was successful thanks to the bravery and skill of our military members and intelligence professionals, and we honor them for their heroic service to our country.

While al-Baghdadi is dead, the ISIS detainees who escaped Kurdish prisons pose a renewed threat to the United States, and conditions on the ground are ripe for ISIS to reconstitute.

Moreover, we abandoned our Kurdish allies, prompting them to make a deal with our adversary, the Russian-backed Syrian government.

I want to hear from our witnesses today about how these developments affect the global threat picture and what the implications are for the homeland.

Here at home, domestic terrorism is on the rise. One year ago, 11 members of the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh were gunned down by a perpetrator motivated by anti-Semitism and white supremacy.

This year, congregants at a synagogue in Poway, California and shoppers at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas were killed by white supremacists.

These attacks are increasingly linked to groups and individuals abroad, and many are exploiting social media to proliferate violent extremist content and incite others around the world.

Recent reports indicate the National Counterterrorism Center has begun to look at domestic terrorism, and last month DHS released its first Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence. I hope we can hear about their efforts today.

For too long this issue was not given the attention it deserved, and much more remains to be done.

Finally, I would note that the 2020 elections are just a year away. Despite the intelligence community's ringing the alarm about foreign interference in our elections, the President has refused to accept their conclusion that Russia interfered in the 2016 election. His refusal to ensure the integrity of our elections by leading on this issue from the White House sends the wrong message to our adversaries.

It also calls into question whether the many agencies working to defend our elections are getting the support and resources they need. I hope we can speak to that issue as well.

As I said at the outset, this committee must take its responsibility to oversee the Department of Homeland Security seriously. The security of the homeland is at stake, and our constituents expect no less.

I look forward to the witnesses' valuable testimony and Members' important questions today.

[The statement of Chairman Thompson follows:]

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OCTOBER 30, 2019

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Also unacceptable is the fact that the Transportation Security Administration Administrator has been dual-hatted as acting deputy secretary of Homeland Security for the last 6 months. TSA administrator and deputy secretary of Homeland Security are not part-time jobs—they each require someone's full attention.

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The chaos is not limited to the Department, unfortunately. The President is also on his sixth National Security Advisor, fifth Secretary of Defense, third FBI director, and third director of national intelligence, including acting officials. He also no longer has a Homeland Security advisor or a White House cybersecurity coordinator. The President needs to fill positions critical to U.S. National security.

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As I said at the outset, this committee must take its responsibility to oversee the Department of Homeland Security seriously. The security of the homeland is at stake, and our constituents expect no less.

Chairman THOMPSON. The Chair now recognizes the Ranking Member of the full committee, the gentleman from Alabama, Mr. Rogers, for an opening statement.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank all the witnesses for taking the time to be here today. I especially want to point out Acting Secretary McAleenan, and I am pleased that you came today. Our committee deserves to hear from you as the head of the Department of Homeland Security.

As tomorrow is your last day at the Department, I want to thank you for your years of service. The 9/11 attacks motivated you to serve our country. Your patriotism cannot be questioned.

I wish you Godspeed in your next adventures.

Director Wray, Acting Director Travers, and Under Secretary Glawe, thank you all for taking the time to come here. I know it takes time to prepare for these and it is inconvenient, but it helps us do our jobs better.

Mr. Chairman, today's hearing is important. The threats to our homeland are real. Every day terrorists plot to disrupt and destroy our way of life.

It is important that we as Members of this committee understand those threats. What we do at this committee on a bipartisan basis is vital to protect the homeland.

Just this weekend, we all were reminded of the evil that still seeks to attack our shores. The killing of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was an important victory in the fight against ISIS. ISIS is responsible for the public execution of 2 U.S. journalists. James Foley and Steven Sotloff were doing their jobs, and ISIS killed them both.

American aid worker Kayla Mueller was kidnapped, tortured, and killed by ISIS.

At least 7 terrorist attacks have been carried out in ISIS' name in the West. Who knows how many more attacks Baghdadi was planning?

Yet his death does not end the ISIS threat to our homeland, and ISIS is not the only threat that we face. I look forward to hearing more about how we are countering the threat from ISIS, al-Qaeda, and others who seek to harm us.

Mr. Chairman, I do need to address the subpoena issue before I yield back.

I am very frustrated at how the events of last week unfolded. I am frustrated that you were put in the position where you thought issuing subpoenas was necessary. If someone gives you their word, Mr. Chairman, they should keep it. I would like the same respect.

We have committee rules that need to be followed, and you gave me your word in a colloquy that we would work together on subpoenas. None of that happened this time around.

Just 2 months ago, we jointly issued a subpoena for Jim Watkins of 8chan. I have been willing to engage with you in the subpoena process. I have been with you every step of the way to defend this committee's mission and oversight responsibilities.

But the rules exist to protect the rights of the Minority in this body. You know that from your time in the Minority. Rule XII and our agreement that requires us to speak beforehand, we sat in these same chairs for a markup last week about 24 hours before you issued the subpoenas. You did not say a word about them.

I asked to discuss this issue on Monday this week, and I have not heard back from you since.

You have also accused me of providing the Acting Secretary with "faulty information" in a letter this weekend. I find that implication outrageous.

A quick conversation with me, an email, or a phone call would have prevented all of this. To be very clear, I probably would have voted for the subpoenas. You would have seen that if you had ever kept your promise to our Members and marked them up.

Our relationship to each other is the only way anything gets done around here. We have to set the tone. Going forward, I hope that we can conduct the committee's business openly and in accordance with the rules.

I yield back.

[The statement of Ranking Member Rogers follows:]

STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER MIKE ROGERS

OCTOBER 30, 2019

I want to thank our witnesses for being here today. Acting Secretary McAleenan, I am pleased you came to testify. Our committee deserves to hear from you as the head of the Department of Homeland Security.

As tomorrow is your last day at the Department, I want to thank you for your years of service.

The 9/11 attacks motivated you to serve our country. Your patriotism cannot be questioned. I wish you Godspeed in your next adventures.

Director Wray, Acting Director Travers, and Under Secretary Glawe, thank you all for coming before us. Your input today will help us as policy makers confront the global terror threats this Nation faces.

Mr. Chairman, today's hearing is important. The threats to our homeland are real. Every day, terrorists plot to disrupt and destroy our way of life. It's important that we as Members of this committee understand those threats.

What we do at this committee on a bipartisan basis is vital to protect the homeland. Just this weekend, we all were reminded of the evil that still seeks to attack our shores. The killing of Abu-Bakar al-Baghdadi was an important victory in the fight against ISIS.

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Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

Let me just say that I hear you, Mr. Ranking Member. We have information shared with you and your staff that we provided notification of what we were about to do, and——

Mr. ROGERS. That is absolutely false.

Chairman THOMPSON. Well, OK. I do not want to get into the——

Mr. ROGERS. I do.

Chairman THOMPSON. Mechanics of it.

Well, that is fine, but you are not Chairman. So you are going to have to bide your time.

So apart from that, we will go forward. I am comfortable with the fact that we followed the rules of the committee.

Mr. ROGERS. You did not follow the rules of the committee, and I have got them here. This is a black letter rule. This is not arbitrary. This is not as the Ranking Member.

Chairman THOMPSON. All right. I am going to try to be deferential to you, and if you want to speak, ask to be recognized, and I will recognize you. But I am not going to allow you just to blurt out.

So apart from that, I responded to it accordingly, and the rules were changed by Republicans in this committee. At one point the Chair and Ranking Member jointly had to agree on issuing subpoenas.

The rules have changed, and I do not have to get your approval to sign a subpoena, and that is the rules we operate on. We can provide information to you, but at the end of the day, it is the Chair's call.

Mr. ROGERS. May I be recognized, Mr. Chairman?

Chairman THOMPSON. You are recognized.

Mr. ROGERS. Would you put the rules up on the board for people to see?

I would like to offer this for the record.

Let me read to you what we say in the rules.

"A. Authorization. The power to authorize and issue subpoenas is delegated to the Chairman of the full committee as provided under Rule 2(m)(3)(A)(i) of Rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives."

"The Chairman shall notify the Ranking Member prior to issuing any subpoena under such authority. To the extent practicable, the Chairman shall consult the Ranking Member at least 24 hours in advance of a subpoena being issued under such authority, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays."

That is language that you demanded be put in the rules under the last Congress when Mr. McCaul was Chairman. That is your requirement.

I was sitting in the chair with you the day before. We were having a very wonderful relationship the day before you issued the subpoenas. All you had to do was tell me, "I think we need to send some subpoenas out."

I would have said, "Let's do it."

You never said a word to me, and this is your rule.

Now, 24 hours' notice was not followed. So I am not just making this stuff up. You and I have had a great relationship for many years. We have been on this committee together for 15 years. If you were the Ranking Member, you would be upset about this.

I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. Other Members of the committee are reminded that under committee rules opening statements may be submitted for the record.

[The statement of Hon. Jackson Lee follows:]

STATEMENT OF HONORABLE SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OCTOBER 30, 2019

Chairman Thompson thank you for this opportunity to receive testimony today during this second hearing on the topic of “Global Terrorism: Threats to the Homeland.”

I am pleased to know that the impasse that existed regarding the Acting Secretary of Homeland Security’s appearance before the Committee today was resolved prior to our meeting.

I thank today’s witnesses:

- Honorable Kevin K. McAleenan, Acting Secretary, Department of Homeland Security (DHS);
- Honorable Christopher A. Wray, director, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI);
- Mr. Russell E. Travers, acting director, National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC); and
- Honorable David J. Glawe, under secretary, Office of Intelligence and Analysis, DHS (Minority witness).

This hearing will allow committee Members to question Government witnesses about world-wide terrorism threats and examine how the Federal Government is addressing those threats to protect the homeland.

Members of this committee must focus on international terrorism threats, including the threats to the homeland resulting from the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Syria, and the rise in domestic terrorism incidents and recent mass shootings, including those inspired by or related to violent extremists with transnational links.

As a Member of Congress and a senior Member of the Committees on Homeland Security and the Judiciary, both of which deal with National security issues, I have long been committed and engaged in efforts to develop policies that anticipate and respond to new and emerging challenges to the security of our Nation and the peace and safety of the world.

I will never forget September 11, 2001, when 2,977 men, women, and children were murdered by 19 hijackers—15 of whom were Saudi nationals, who took control of commercial aircraft and used them as missiles.

I stood on the East Front steps of the Capitol on September 11, 2001, along with 150 members of the House of Representatives and sang “God Bless America.”

September 11, 2001, remains a tragedy that defines our Nation’s history, but the final chapter will be written by those who are charged with keeping our Nation and its people safe while preserving the way of life that terrorists sought to change.

I visited the site of the World Trade Center Towers in the aftermath of the attacks and grieved over the deaths of so many of our men, women, and children.

I was heartbroken over the lives lost at the Pentagon.

Since September 11, 2001, it has been a priority of this Nation to prevent terrorists, or those who would do Americans harm, from boarding flights whether they are domestic or international.

Over the last 17 years, since enactment of the Homeland Security Act, the mission of the Department of Homeland Security has expanded to include cyber defense of civilian agency and private-sector networks; protecting critical infrastructure in the form of the Nation’s electric grid, water delivery systems, transportation networks and Federal election systems; and, most recently, fighting the international reach of white nationalism, white supremacy, and violent acts targeting religious minorities living within the United States.

The struggle against violent extremism began on September 11, 2001, but it has extended to this day because of the continued attacks against religious freedom, diversity, equal rights for women, and other core principles that are foundational to our Nation’s expression of a democratic republic.

To succeed in the fight against violent extremism, our Nation’s leadership—in the Congress and the Executive branch must work together.

I am supportive of efforts to employ effective approaches to interdicting, disrupting, and dismantling terrorist networks.

The previous administration focused on how best to use our Nation’s soft power and military power for minimizing, eliminating, and containing terrorists’ threats in the region, with a full understanding that over-aggressive actions militarily can pull our country into a precipitous military struggle that would be open-ended.

We must strengthen and protect institutions—like our system of Federal elections that is under pressure from Russia and other foreign state actors.

We must also work to deter those in this Nation who may seek to gain political advantage in domestic elections by deploying the tactics used by Russia in the 2016 election.

We must support our strategic partners and find new allies who will join us in our fight to defeat extremism.

SEPARATED CHILDREN

We must not engage in immigration policy that is an affront to our Nation's values and in direct opposition to our National interest.

As the founder and chair of the Children's Caucus and as a parent and grandparent, I cannot think of a situation more devastating than having the Government forcibly separate a parent from her child to a place unknown, for a fate uncertain, absent from any form of communication.

But for months the official policy of the United States under this administration was to pursue a failed immigration policy that supported forcible removal of children ranging in age from infants and toddlers to adolescents from the care of adults who were fleeing violence, oppression, and economic desperation of Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.

Refugees are not criminals or terrorists, they are men, women, and children seeking asylum.

While they hope to receive asylum, none of us expected that they would be treated as criminals or that their children would be forcibly separated from them.

But shamefully that is exactly what is happening under this administration.

This failed policy has hurt the United States' standing around the world and harmed our strategic interest in our own hemisphere.

The separation policy was not to stop a terrorist from entering the United States, but it was effective in providing terrorist recruitment efforts with material that may be used for decades to recruit terrorists.

In an article in the *Washington Post* the ACLU reports that an additional 1,500 migrant children were taken from parents by the Trump administration than had been previously reported.

ISIS INFLUENCE ON TACTICS USED BY WHITE NATIONALISTS

Another misstep by this administration occurred when President Trump allowed Turkey to invade Syria to attack the Kurds our strongest regional ally working with the United States to stop ISIS.

The Congress and the Executive branch have worked for well over 5 years to defeat ISIS, with the aid of a staunch ally in the Kurds.

The defeat of ISIS is being threatened by an invasion by Turkey in the effort to attack Kurds who were essential in defeating ISIS.

It is reported that hundreds of ISIS fighters have escaped prisons where they were being held by Kurdish forces who are in retreat from the brutal onslaught of fighting caused by Turkish forces.

Over 100,000 Kurdish refugees have entered Iraq due to Turkish actions making the region unstable.

Today's witnesses testify that we are in a new era of geopolitical conflict.

It is no longer a matter of governments fielding armies or combatants—but the emergence of what is best described as a new form of geo-military transnational gang activity.

The affiliations of violent extremists' individuals and groups are loose, with membership remaining fluid—one individual or small group may identify with al-Qaeda today, and switch its identification to ISIL or al-Shabaab or Boko Haram, depending on which group is perceived to be the strongest.

Added to the challenge of violent extremism is its ability to very effectively use the tools of social media to reach far beyond the battlefield to influence young people to join their cause.

These groups require weak governments to enter new territory and must sow chaos in these areas to gain power by attacking institutions and people regardless of their religious or ethnic traditions to destabilize regions.

They act in the name of religion but institute intra- and inter-Muslim faith conflicts against individuals and mosques to kill thousands.

Violent extremism is not new—those who struggle to hold onto an idyllic past or rigid view of their faith that does not tolerate non-conformism has plagued societies throughout history.

Today, white nationalists are targeting domestic places of worship for to commit violence.

The only tools that have succeeded in overcoming violent extremism is the commitment of those most affected by their violence to stand against them.

PLIGHT OF KURDISH FORCES

Unfortunately, this administration has diminished the role and the capacity of the State Department to keep manageable threats in check, while doing the hard work of coalition building so that there would be effective burden-sharing for actions taken.

In the case of ISIS, the boots on the ground needed to defeat them had to be Egyptian, Jordanian, Saudi Arabian, Kurdish, Peshmerga with the full support of United States resources.

In the end it was the Kurdish people who ended the ISIS grip on the Middle East. The Kurds offered a real opportunity to have a strategic partner and reliable Muslim ally in the region that the United States could call upon, should another ISIS or al-Qaeda threat emerged.

How can the United States provide a credible bulwark against terrorism abroad if we cannot get this administration to get over its reticence to speaking before committees in this Congress?

Incredible as it is, the President was planning in September 2019 to meet with the Taliban at Camp David, an organization directly linked to the September 11, 2001 attacks on our Nation, while at the same time he discourages his political appointees and acting department heads to participate in this hearing to assess the threats posed by international terror groups, which include the Taliban.

I firmly believe that the most important lesson over the last decade is that the United States can want many things for the peoples of the impacted region, but it is the people in the impacted regions who must win these victories for themselves.

CONCLUSION

We must remember that after the battles are all fought and decided that the underlying causes for so many willing souls to commit themselves to kill and die for ISIS and Boko Haram may be expanding to other domestic groups aligned with white nationalist and white supremacist followers.

The battle against ISIS was won by creating a strong partnership with the indispensable Kurdish forces.

There is no other group in the region to whom the United States can turn who can field fighters to counter the threats posed by ISIS or ISIS-like threats that will not require that we place troops in harm's way.

The battle against extremism has entered a new phase in the United States.

The demons of racism, intolerance, and racial supremacy are active in engaging people in a hidden struggle in opposition to the diversity that is our Nation's best hope for a prosperous future.

I am a firm supporter of getting to the source of problems that come from the complexity of our interconnected world.

Our Nation needs our best efforts on the behalf of peace and security abroad to assure that we have peace and security at home.

Homeland security and National defense are not and should not be made into political issues.

The first thing that we must address is the leadership of the Department of Homeland Security and a need to allow for Senate advice and consent to secure the confirmation of the next Secretary of Homeland Security.

HISTORY OF MIDDLE EAST FAILURES

Members of this committee and the witnesses before us today understand that the fight against violent extremism is far from over and the actions by this administration that has led to betrayal of a valued ally can lead to erosion of the peace found at the apparent demise of ISIS.

Past misdeeds in the region have led us to the insecurity that exists in that region.

Part of the struggle for peace we face today is a direct consequence of invading Iraq without provocation or reason.

Paraphrasing Secretary of State Colin Powell's advice to President George W. Bush: "if we break it—we will own it."

He was warning President Bush about the folly of entering a war of choice with Iraq and the complexities of that region of the world that could spiral out of control.

I can offer a similar warning to the current President.

If you break the special relationship that the United States has with the Kurdish people in joining to fight and defeat ISIS, then future wars that cost American lives and treasure in that region are at your feet.

Our work as Members of this committee has for well over a decade, focused on potential links between international terror groups and persons residing within the United States.

Today, our focus remains the same, but the domestic targets of international terror have expanded to include members of white nationalist groups, neo-Nazi, and white supremacist adherents.

THREATS POSED BY BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

I would offer that we must keep an open mind and vigilant stance when considering threats posed by biologics.

Over the past 100 years, more than 500 million people died of infectious diseases. A percentage of these deaths were due to the deliberate release of pathogens or toxins, mostly by the Japanese during their attacks on China during the Second World War.

There are 2 international treaties that outlawed biological weapons, but they have failed to stop countries from conducting offensive bio-weapons research and large-scale production of biological weapons.

There are legitimate fears that modified pathogens could constitute devastating agents for biological warfare that may target people, agriculture, or animals with disastrous consequences.

The ability of the United States to remain actively engaged in policing this area of National defense is complicated by this administration anti-trade and NATO policies that place the United States at odds with long-time military and economic allies.

The Nation is at its greatest peril due to the lack of leadership within key components within the Department of Homeland Security.

We must do all that we can to support the work of men and women on the front lines of defending our Nation and our standing in the world.

I thank today's witnesses and look forward to their testimony.

Thank you.

Chairman THOMPSON. I welcome our panel of witnesses. Our first witness is Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Kevin McAleenan, who has served in that role since April 2019.

Next, we have Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Christopher Wray. Director Wray has served in his role since 2017.

Next, we are having Acting Director of National Counterterrorism Center Russell Travers, who has served in the role since August 2019.

Last, we have David Glawe, who has served as the under secretary for intelligence and analysis at the Department of Homeland Security since 2017.

Without objection, the witnesses' full statements will be inserted in the record.

I will now ask each witness to summarize his or her statement for 5 minutes, beginning with Acting Secretary McAleenan.

STATEMENT OF KEVIN K. McALEENAN, ACTING SECRETARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Secretary McALEENAN. Good morning, Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Rogers, Members of the committee.

I appear before you today to testify about the Department of Homeland Security's vital National security mission and our efforts to confront today's emerging world-wide threats.

The men and women of DHS are dedicated professionals who work to safeguard the American people, our homeland, and our values. They represent some of the best of the country, and I appre-

ciate the continued support this committee shows for them and the work they do each day.

The Department of Homeland Security, as you know, was created in the wake of the 9/11 attacks and was charged with coordinating and unifying the Nation's homeland security enterprise. Our mission is multi-dimensional built on the 5 pillars of prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery.

I would like to focus on 5 significant trends we see in the threat landscape and the efforts DHS is executing to combat them, specifically the threats we face from foreign terrorist organizations, domestic terrorism and targeted violence, transnational criminal organizations, and from malicious cyber activities and actors, and nation-state-level challenges to our interests.

DHS was formed, first and foremost, to counter the threat of international terrorism and has achieved significant successes in mitigating the ability of foreign terrorist organizations to present a threat to the homeland since 9/11.

We have achieved these successes by utilizing a range of tools, particularly our world-class vetting programs and capabilities to identify and detect foreign terrorist actors and prevent them from entering the country.

In cooperation with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the intelligence community, the Department of State, Department of Defense, and others, we prevent thousands of potential terrorists from entering or traveling to the United States each year through these efforts.

While we have enhanced our security greatly, the threat of foreign terrorist organizations remains a significant concern. Whether through direction or inspiration, these groups seek to spur disaffected individuals to violence, encouraging them to strike the heart of our Nation and attack the unity of our vibrant and diverse society.

ISIS, al-Qaeda, Lebanese Hezbollah, and their global networks represent significant and persistent security threats to the United States. We must work to ensure aggressively across Government and with our international partners that we are doing everything we can to pressure and disrupt these organizations and their efforts to target the United States homeland.

One of the most significant emerging threats over the past years has been domestic actors' adoption of terrorist techniques to inspire and direct individuals often via the internet to carry out acts of terrorism and targeted violence.

Of specific concern has been an increase in racially- and ethnically-motivated violence, particularly the threat posed by violent white supremacist extremists. Last month, DHS introduced a new strategic framework for countering terrorism and targeted violence, which explains how we will adapt the tools and expertise we have used to protect the country from foreign terrorist organizations to address the evolving challenges of today.

The prevalent trend of Americans driven by violent extremist ideologies or personal grievances to commit acts of terrorism or targeted violence with little apparent warning creates a unique challenge to law enforcement investigation tools. This framework explicitly recognizes the changing threat landscape and calls for the

whole-of-community efforts to enhance prevention and resilience, identify individuals who are on a pathway to violence, and to build off-ramps and intervention points.

Importantly, the framework calls out the need to focus on and protect our most vulnerable populations, particularly our youth. It is intentionally forward-looking, and its understanding of technology's role as a factor that can exacerbate threats.

The next major threat category in the DHS mission space is presented by powerful and violent transnational criminal organizations, or TCOs. These TCOs have diversified their multi-challenger businesses, profiting from drug and human smuggling and the movement of weapons and money.

These TCOs organize and incentivize illicit mass migration and engage in human trafficking. Their violent criminal activity, including competition for territory, creates security risks at our border and throughout the hemisphere.

DHS, on the cyber side, DHS works with the Government partners and the private sector to enhance our Nation's overall defensive posture against malicious cyber activity, protecting the dot-gov networks and our critical infrastructure against nation-state actors and cyber criminals.

In August 2019, DHS's Cyber and Infrastructure Security Agency, or CISA, published its strategic intent: Defend today, secure tomorrow. In this document CISA laid out its director's operational priorities, calling out the threat from China, and highlighting our need to focus on supply chain security, 5G technology, election security, Federal cybersecurity, and industrial control systems.

As acknowledged within the document, China presents the most pressing long-term strategic risk to the United States in these areas, and CISA is looking to reduce the risk of Chinese supply chain compromise, whether through 5G or other technologies.

The foreign intelligence threat faced by DHS in today's global environment has also quickly evolved into one of the most significant threats to our country. The leading state intelligence threat to the U.S. interest will likely continue to be China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea, based on their capabilities, intent, and broad operational scope.

In conclusion, every day the 240,000 men and women of the Department of Homeland Security work to ensure the safety and security of all Americans and are dedicated to building a brighter and more secure Nation. They deserve our support and our thanks.

I continue to appreciate their efforts on behalf of the American people. It has been an honor to serve as their acting secretary and as commissioner of CBP.

In closing, I want to note that the symmetry in this hearing, my 27th overall and ninth before this committee and its subcommittees, my first hearing was in front of then-Subcommittee Chairwoman Sheila Jackson Lee, and both Chairman Thompson and then-Ranking Member King attended.

So I think it is fitting that I close this stage of my Government career in front of this committee again.

I want to thank you, Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Rogers, distinguished Members of the committee for the support you and your staff have shown the Department of Homeland Secu-

rity and our men and women in providing the tools we need to adapt to the changing landscape.

I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Secretary McAleenan follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KEVIN K. MCALEENAN

OCTOBER 30, 2019

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished Members of the committee, it is my honor to appear before you today to testify about the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) vital National security mission and explain how we are implementing policies to confront today's emerging world-wide threats.

Let me first say that the men and women of DHS are exceptional and dedicated professionals who work tirelessly to protect the homeland from foreign and domestic threats. Their efforts play a vital role in ensuring that all Americans can be confident in their homes, schools, and houses of worship, as well as in public spaces. They represent the core of our Department and the best of our country. I appreciate your continued support for them and the various missions they undertake each day.

THE EVOLVING THREAT ENVIRONMENT SINCE 9/11 ATTACKS

As you know, our Department was created in the wake of the devastating 9/11 attacks and was charged with coordinating and unifying the Nation's homeland security enterprise. Our mission is multi-dimensional, built on the 5 pillars of prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery. It is a calling that has been heeded by thousands and a mission that has been achieved successfully for nearly 2 decades.

Although many years have passed since the pivotal moment that gave us a permanent mission, we have not forgotten that day or relaxed at our post. We cannot afford to, especially with the new threats that are arising throughout the world.

Today, I will share with you 7 major shifts I see in the threat landscape since 9/11, and the efforts DHS is executing upon to combat them. Specifically, I would like to speak about the threats we face from foreign terrorism, domestic terrorism, malicious cyber activities and the illicit use of emerging technologies, counterintelligence and foreign influence within the homeland, and the broad topic of the illicit movement of people and goods, particularly in the Western Hemisphere, which supports human smuggling and human trafficking, and global illicit drug sales and distribution.

Underpinning nearly all these threat vectors is an increasing rise in adversarial engagement from nation-states such as China, Russia, and Iran. I would like to be clear at the outset that we face today nation-state-level challenges to our interests and global democratic principles of a degree that we have not faced in many, many years. These nation-state adversaries seek to undermine, destabilize, discredit, and damage the United States through dynamic and multi-dimensional strategies that target not only our physical assets, but also our social cohesion and our confidence in our very way of life.

FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS

That said, the primary reason DHS was formed was to counter the threat of terrorism. Therefore, the first issue I want to address in the threat landscape is the threat posed by Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs), which remain a core priority of DHS's counterterrorism efforts.

We have had significant successes mitigating the foreign terrorist threat here at home since 9/11 and continue to make substantial progress in our ability to detect, prevent, protect against, and mitigate the threats that these groups pose. We have achieved these successes by utilizing a range of tools to identify and detect foreign terrorist actors and prevent them from entering the country. To ensure that foreign terrorist actors cannot enter through designated ports of entry or exploit the immigration system, the Department maintains numerous vetting programs and capabilities. We prevent thousands of terrorist-watchlisted individuals from entering or traveling to the United States each year through these efforts, in cooperation with the Department of State, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and other agencies. Additionally, DHS, particularly through Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), represents the largest Federal contributor of personnel, outside of the

FBI, to the Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs). At the JTTFs, DHS officers and agents are engaged in a majority of counterterrorism investigations every year and employ their unique authorities and capabilities every day to identify, disrupt, and dismantle threats associated with foreign terrorist organizations. Furthermore, our DHS component agencies patrol and rigorously enforce land, air, and sea borders, offering a critical final line of defense.

However, in spite of these successes, the threat of foreign terrorist organizations remains a significant concern. Whether through direction or inspiration, these groups seek to spur our youth and our disaffected to violence—encouraging them to strike the heart of our Nation and attack the unity of our vibrant, diverse society. ISIS, al-Qaeda, Lebanese Hezbollah, returning foreign terrorist fighters, and those still in prison in theater represent significant, persistent, and long-term National security threats to the United States.

Since 2011, the situation in Iraq and Syria has marked one of the most significant challenges to our ability to track and combat foreign terrorist actors. As many of you know, failed states and lawless areas represent opportunities for the restructuring, rearmament, consolidation, and emergence of FTOs. These organizations may target our interests and aspire to target us here at home. Given the opportunity to identify and control safe havens, they have proven capable at directing such attacks beyond the boundaries of a geographic region.

We must ensure that we continue to work aggressively across our Government, and with our international partners, to pressure and disrupt ISIS and other terrorist organizations targeting the United States homeland. DHS will continue to work closely with our international partners in the European Union and around the world to ensure that we are leveraging our expertise in screening, vetting, and border security—particularly in areas known to be vulnerable to large influxes of migration from this region, as these locations offer significant opportunities for exploitation by our FTO adversaries—to enhance our partners' capabilities.

We need not only focus on detained ISIS fighters, but also on gaining a better understanding of those individuals who have been forced into displaced persons camps within the region and subsequently potentially subjected to attempts from hardened ISIS fighters or sympathizers to radicalize them to violence. Furthermore, we must recognize that the threat from women and teenagers radicalized to violence is potentially as critical today as that from men. We must adapt to this reality.

DHS STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR COUNTERING TERRORISM AND TARGETED VIOLENCE

Perhaps one of the most significant evolutions over the past few years has been domestic actors' adoption of FTO techniques to inspire individuals via the internet to carry out acts of terrorism and targeted violence. Of specific concern has been an increase in racially and ethnically motivated violence. In September, DHS introduced a new *Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence*, which explains how we will use the tools and expertise that have protected the country from foreign terrorist organizations to address the evolving challenges of today. The Strategic Framework is intentionally forward-looking in its understanding of technology's role as a factor that can exacerbate problems, but also one that can provide new solutions to combat the threats we confront. We have begun the implementation of the Framework and will publish a public Action Plan that captures how DHS is working alongside our interagency partners to see this vision to fruition by the end of the calendar year.

The framework is designed to assess DHS's past and provide a guidepost to its future. Today, we face a growing threat from domestic actors inspired by violent extremist ideologies. The prevalent trend of Americans driven by violent extremist ideologies or personal grievances to commit acts of terrorism, mass violence, or targeted violence with little apparent warning creates a unique challenge to traditional law enforcement and investigation methods. We must address and prevent the mass attacks that have too frequently struck our houses of worship, our schools, our workplaces, our festivals, and our shopping spaces. The Framework lays out a comprehensive approach to enhancing our prevention capabilities here at home in an age of complex and multidimensional threats, regardless of ideology. Importantly, the framework explicitly recognizes the need to focus on and protect our most vulnerable populations, particularly our youth.

The Strategic Framework also introduces a new annual assessment that will examine the state of the threat to the Nation. This new assessment will help to inform all levels of government and the broader public about the various threats the homeland faces each year. Within this report we will analyze the threat of white supremacist violent extremism, one type of racially and ethnically motivated violent extremism.

ACTS OF “DOMESTIC TERRORISM” AND TARGETED VIOLENCE

There is no moral ambiguity on this issue. Racially- and ethnically-motivated violent extremism, including violent white supremacy extremism, is one of the most potent forces driving acts of domestic terrorism. Lone attackers, as opposed to cells or organizations, generally perpetrate these attacks motivated by this ideology, but they are also part of a broader movement. White supremacist violent extremists, for example, have adopted an increasingly transnational outlook in recent years, largely driven by technological forces. Similar to how ISIS inspired and connected with potential radical Islamist terrorists, white supremacist violent extremists connect with like-minded individuals on-line.

At the Federal level, the FBI and the Department of Justice (DOJ) are the U.S. Government (USG) leads for investigating violent extremism and acts of terrorism and prosecuting related individuals, while DHS informs, equips, and trains our homeland security partners to enhance their prevention and protection capabilities. DHS's primary responsibilities include: (1) Informing, equipping, and training State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments, civil society, and the private sector to take preventative and protective actions. (2) In conjunction with the FBI, DHS produces joint strategic products identifying trends as well as findings and lessons learned from acts of domestic terrorism.

To this end, in April, we announced the creation of the Office of Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP)—the primary entity responsible for driving the prevention mission. TVTP is a program office that uses awareness briefings, strategic engagements, technical assistance, information sharing and grants to catalyze the formation and expansion of locally-based prevention efforts. TVTP also looks across the Department to identify complementary efforts that amplify this work by addressing gaps through the creation and deployment of prevention programs that support these State and local efforts. To accomplish this, TVTP works alongside the United States Secret Service's (USSS), National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC), Cybersecurity Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to ensure all of DHS's office and components have the necessary tools to prevent domestic terrorism and targeted violence.

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION AND HEALTH SECURITY

The Department fully concurs with the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) that the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) threat continues to rise. Specific to the homeland, the period of sustained chemical weapons use on battlefields in the Middle East (Syria and Iraq), coupled with the ever-expanding on-line proliferation of related expertise, could inspire chemical attacks against U.S. interests at home and abroad. These attacks in Syria and Iraq, along with the very public Russian Novichok use in the U.K. and North Korean VX use in Malaysia, have flouted international norms against the use of chemical weapons, raising the risk of more brazen attacks in the future.

Furthermore, the increased diversity in biological and health-related threats is concerning. Advances in biotechnology are changing the threat agent landscape, and the decreasing cost and access of dual-use technologies and materials will inevitably expand the threat actor landscape as well.

These issues, coupled with the already-complex risks from emerging infectious diseases, and food, agricultural, and veterinary threats, require an elevated integrator and broader all-hazards approach, necessitating organizational change. To this end, in December 2018, the passage of Pub. L. 115–387, the Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Act of 2018 finalized the creation of DHS's Office of Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction (CWMD)—the primary entity responsible for driving the CWMD planning, detection, and protection missions and the Department's health security. We are actively working to overcome the routine challenges of organizational transition as we build out this new office.

The office is also the Department lead on CWMD issues and works with inter-agency partners including the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response at the Department of Health and Human Services, the National Nuclear Security Agency at the Department of Energy, and Special Operations Command at the Department of Defense to establish policy and operational plans to keep the United States secure from Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear and other emerging threats.

Cyber Threats

DHS, our government partners, and the private sector are all engaging in a strategic and unified approach toward improving our Nation's overall defensive posture against malicious cyber activity. In 2018, the Department published the *DHS Cybersecurity Strategy*, outlining a strategic framework to execute our cybersecurity responsibilities during the next 5 years. The National Cyber Strategy, released later that year, reiterates the need to acquire U.S. technology and capture U.S. data, communications, and intelligence property to support its goal of collaboration being the world leader in technology development and strengthens the Government's commitment to work in partnership with industry to combat cyber threats and secure our critical infrastructure. Together, the National Cyber Strategy and DHS Cybersecurity Strategy guide DHS's cybersecurity efforts.

DHS is working with the U.S. Coast Guard to build out its cybersecurity capacity in order to protect U.S. ports and shipping as well as implement standards at those foreign ports that have a U.S. National security interest. The U.S. Coast Guard is providing written guidance to conduct cyber risk assessments of these ports.

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), operates at the intersection of the Federal Government, State and local governments, the private sector, international partners, law enforcement, intelligence, and defense communities. Division N of Pub. L. 114–113, the Cybersecurity Act of 2015, established DHS as the Federal Government's central hub for the sharing of cyber threat indicators and defensive measures. Additionally, Pub. L. 113–283, the Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014, provides DHS with key responsibilities for protecting Federal networks. CISA works to enhance information sharing with partners and stakeholders, domestically and internationally, to help critical infrastructure entities and Government agencies strengthen their cyber posture.

By bringing together all levels of government, the private sector, international partners, and the public, CISA strengthens the resilience of our Nation's critical infrastructure and enables collective defense against cybersecurity risks. Specifically, CISA is working through the Critical Infrastructure Partnership Advisory Council (CIPAC) structure to engage with private-sector stakeholders, especially the Communications and Information Technology Sector Coordinating Councils and the Enduring Security Framework Operations Working Group to collaborate on the posed by supply chain vulnerabilities and the adoption of 5G technologies. DHS is also leading, in coordination with the IT and Communications Sector Coordination Councils, the ICT Supply Chain Risk Management Task Force with the critical mission of identifying and developing consensus strategies that enhance ICT Supply Chain security. The ICT SCRM Task Force's participants include 20 Federal partners, as well as 40 of the largest companies in the Information Technology and Communications sectors.

Cyber threats remain one of the most significant strategic risks for the United States, threatening our National security, economic prosperity, and public health and safety. Nation-states, cyber criminals, and criminal hackers, are increasing the frequency and sophistication of their malicious cyber activities. In a 2018 report, *Foreign Economic Espionage in Cyberspace*, the United States' National Counterintelligence and Security Center stated, "[w]e anticipate that China, Russia, and Iran will remain aggressive and capable collectors of sensitive U.S. economic information and technologies, particularly in cyber space." Strategic competitors such as China, Russia, and Iran are developing and using advanced cyber capabilities in attempts to undermine critical infrastructure, target our livelihoods and innovation, steal our National security secrets, and threaten our democratic institutions.

Vulnerabilities in supply chains—either developed intentionally for malicious intent or unintentionally through poor security practices—can enable data and intellectual property theft, loss of confidence in the integrity of the system, or exploitation to cause system and network failure. Increasingly, these vulnerabilities can be viewed as a principal route into our most critical systems and technologies, and we are increasingly concerned with aggressive actions by potential foreign adversaries.

5G Technology

Ultimately, 5G technology may enable significant advances in our society and the prosperity of the United States, but will also usher in an age of significantly greater cyber vulnerability. Advances in 5G technology, the internet of things (IoT), and other emerging technologies are driving significant transformation in how we communicate, operate our critical infrastructure, and conduct economic activity. This represents the next generation of networks that will enhance the bandwidth, capac-

ity, and reliability of mobile communications. The United States and South Korea launched 5G on a limited basis at the end of 2018, and more countries are rolling it out this year. According to the Global System for Mobile Alliance (GSMA), 5.1 billion people, or 67 percent of the global population, are subscribed to mobile services. It is expected that 5G networks will cover 2.7 billion people, or 40 percent of the global population, by 2025.

The first generation of wireless telecommunications networks in the United States was deployed in 1982, and its capabilities were limited to basic voice communications. Later generations added capabilities like: Text, picture, and multimedia messaging; Global Positioning System (GPS) location; video conferencing; and multimedia streaming. 5G networks will support greater capacity for tens of billions of sensor and IoT smart devices, and ultra-low latency necessary for highly reliable, critical communications. According to GSMA, between 2018 and 2025, the number of global IoT connections will triple to 25 billion. Autonomous vehicles, critical manufacturing, medical doctors practicing remote surgery, and a smart electric grid represent only a small fraction of the critical technologies and economic activity that 5G will support. These dramatic advancements in telecommunications and technologies associated with them come with increased risk to the Nation's critical infrastructure.

Risks to mobile communications generally include such activities as call interception and monitoring, user location tracking, cyber actors seeking financial gain through banking fraud, social engineering, ransomware, identity theft, or theft of the device, services, or any sensitive data. Integrating 5G into current wireless networks may convey existing vulnerabilities and impact 5G network security. Capabilities of 5G will allow for exponentially more data transmission across networks. Data on 5G networks will flow through interconnected cellular towers, small cells, and mobile devices and may provide malicious actors additional vectors to intercept, manipulate, or destroy critical data. Due to the nature of 5G network architecture, many more pieces of cellular equipment will be present in the physical world.

The *National Cyber Strategy*, released later that year, also reiterates the need to acquire U.S. technology and capture U.S. data, communications, and intelligence property to support its goal of collaboration being the world leader in technology development and strengthens the Government's commitment to work in partnership with industry to combat cyber threats and secure our critical infrastructure. Together, the National Cyber Strategy and DHS Cybersecurity Strategy guide DHS's cybersecurity efforts to prioritize the development of secure and reliable advanced information technology risks posed by supply chain vulnerabilities and the adoption of 5G technologies. To manage and address the risks posed by 5G, the U.S. Government is taking an interagency approach, led by the White House. National Security Council (NSC) Cybersecurity Directorate and the National Economic Council co-lead a regular 5G interagency Policy Coordination Committee (PCC) through the National Security Presidential Memoranda (NSPM)—4 process. DHS participates in these meetings and they provide an excellent opportunity to discuss and come to decisions on key 5G issues.

Unmanned Aircraft Systems

Criminal entities and terrorist organizations continue to promote and use unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) for illicit activity in order to support surveillance, smuggling, and harassment and, at times, use as weapons. The UAS threat to critical infrastructure and security activities will likely increase soon as the number of UAS introduced into the National airspace continues to increase, and the use of technical means to detect, track, and disrupt malicious UAS operations will likely remain limited. In order to combat the rising threat of UAS, DHS conducts counter aircraft system (CUAS) operations authorized by law, to disrupt malicious use of UAS at facilities or DHS supported activities within the United States, and as designated by the Secretary of DHS.

SUPPORTING ELECTION SECURITY

Leading up to the 2018 midterms, DHS worked together with Federal partners, State and local election officials, and private-sector vendors to provide information and capabilities to enable them to better defend their election infrastructure. This partnership led to a successful model that we aim to continue and improve upon in the 2020 election cycle.

To date, because of our holistic USG-wide response to this threat, there is no evidence that any identified activities of a foreign government or foreign agent had a material impact on the integrity or security of election infrastructure or political or campaign infrastructure used in the 2018 midterm elections for the U.S. Congress.

We must be uniform and clear in our communication of this fact to the American Public.

We must make the important distinction between malign foreign attempts to influence U.S. public opinion and actual incidents attacks on activities targeting/against our election infrastructure. While we see many examples of the first each every day—Russia and other foreign countries, including China and Iran, conduct malign influence activities and messaging campaigns targeting the United States to advance their strategic interests—there is no evidence of successful exploitation of our election or political campaign infrastructure. We must combat both election infrastructure threats and malign foreign influence campaigns holistically as a U.S. Government and U.S. society, building resistance and resilience to attempts by foreign nation-state adversaries to pull at the seams of our diverse social fabric and sow discord in our political process.

DHS is holistically dedicated to the security of our electoral process as it is a vital National interest. We regularly coordinate with the intelligence community and law enforcement partners, as well as relevant private-sector entities, to assess the scale and scope of malicious cyber activity potentially targeting the U.S. election infrastructure. It is our goal to ensure the American people enter the voting booth with the confidence that their vote counts and is counted correctly.

In advance of the 2020 Federal Election, DHS's Countering Foreign Influence Task Force (CFITF) is expanding on both operational support activities and public awareness and engagement. DHS established the CFITF to facilitate public awareness, partner engagement, and information sharing as it relates to malign foreign influence threats, including those targeting United States elections. These efforts are done in close coordination with and support to the FBI and its malign influence efforts. The CFITF is growing the number of participants, subsequently increasing lines of communication between the platforms being exploited and the victims of that exploitation.

CISA, in coordination with our interagency partners, is also helping Americans recognize and avoid foreign disinformation operations impacting our elections through innovative efforts like the #WarOnPineapple campaign. The #WarOnPineapple is aimed at educating Americans on the use of malign foreign influence campaign tactics by highlighting a topic that citizens can easily relate to: The divisiveness of pineapples on pizza. Through this work, CISA is helping Americans recognize and avoid foreign disinformation operations impacting homeland security, including our elections.

COUNTERINTELLIGENCE

The foreign intelligence threat faced by DHS in today's global environment has quickly evolved into one of the most significant threats to our country in decades. Although the leading state intelligence threats to U.S. interests will likely continue to be China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea—based on their capabilities, intent, and broad operational scope, other Foreign Intelligence Entities (FIE) in Latin America, South Asia, the Middle East, and East Asia pose local and regional intelligence threats to U.S. interests which cannot be ignored. Additionally, non-state actors, including international terrorist organizations, transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), drug trafficking organizations (DTOs), and foreign cyber actors will likely continue to employ and improve their intelligence collection capabilities using human, technical, and cyber means in efforts to obtain and exploit sensitive DHS information and National security programs.

As China's intelligence services continue to grow, they utilize and imbed into America's academic and scientific communities and pose a significant risk to economic and National security through technology transfer via foreign direct investment, venture capital investments, joint ventures, licensing agreements, cyber espionage, traditional espionage, and Talent Programs. The Chinese Government's Talent Programs are aimed at targeting and recruiting overseas Chinese and foreign experts, among them academics and business entrepreneurs, in strategic sectors to teach and work in China. Through its various Talent Programs, China has targeted foreign experts in the United States in order to acquire technology and know-how that is directly aligned with China's Five-Year Plans, science and technology, economic, and military modernization efforts. U.S. academic institutions are at particularly risk of exploitation due to their openness and collaborative research approaches.

Chinese citizens who come to the United States to study or teach at U.S. academic institutions also present a significant risk of technology transfer. While they competitively develop their science and technology workforce, we must continue to lead and out-produce China in this area. The most immediate threats have far-reaching

and enduring implications to U.S. National security: Influence operations, critical infrastructure, supply chain, as well as traditional and economic espionage. Developing technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) systems will influence the way we engage in National security in the future. It is essential that we lead the global AI race to ensure that we are ready for National security threats of the future.

ILLEGAL CROSS-BORDER MOVEMENTS OF PEOPLE AND GOODS: ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION,
HUMAN TRAFFICKING, HUMAN SMUGGLING, AND THE GLOBAL ILLICIT DRUG TRADE

Illegal Immigration

This year, our Nation has experienced an unprecedented and unsustainable humanitarian and National security crisis at the Southwest Border. This crisis has presented unique challenges that our Department has never seen. Nevertheless, this administration has taken extraordinary and successful steps to secure our borders and restore integrity to our immigration system.

As you all know, the scale of illegal immigration encountered by DHS this year, including the number of families and children crossing the border, has been unparalleled in recent history. The increased shift to more families and children and the overwhelming numbers profoundly affect our ability to patrol the border, ensure strong interior enforcement, and diminishes our ability to prevent deadly illicit drugs and dangerous people from entering our country. It also detracts from our ability to facilitate lawful trade and travel.

Every day, DHS employees from CBP and ICE work to reduce the illegal crossings into our country. CBP focuses primarily on enforcing U.S. immigration laws at and between the ports of entry while ICE is charged with enforcing immigration laws in the interior of the country. DHS is receiving international cooperation. Mexico and our Central American partners are also stepping up to help stop the flow of illegal migrants. Further, with the help of the U.S. military, CBP is on track to build 450–500 new miles of border wall by the end of 2020.

In the case of the foreign terrorist threat, border security is a zero-sum challenge. Similarly, with an on-going opioid epidemic in our country that has led to staggering numbers of casualties through overdose and violence, each drug shipment that illegally crosses our border is, in effect, responsible for the loss of American lives. Consequently, the challenge of illegal immigration—which diverts our resources along the border from our critical counterterrorism and counter narcotics missions—represents a critical National security concern.

We must continue to recognize the zero-sum nature of border security and address the significant increases in mass migration. This involves not just building the border wall that will conserve overstretched law enforcement resources, but also fixing our immigration laws that serve as “pull factors” for illegal immigration and working with our foreign partners to alleviate the “push factors” in Latin American countries, particularly within El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, that cause mass departures in the first place.

Global Illicit Drug Trade

The United States is in the midst of an opioid epidemic that is being fueled by the smuggling and trafficking of heroin, illicit fentanyl, fentanyl analogues, and other synthetic opioids. Based on investigative efforts, United States law enforcement has identified China and Mexico as primary sources of the U.S. illicit fentanyl threat.

Due to President Trump’s engagement with Chinese President Xi, China added fentanyl to the country’s list of controlled substances, effective May 1, 2019. Chinese fentanyl being shipped directly to the United States decreased significantly. Illicit fentanyl, fentanyl analogues, and their immediate precursors are most often produced in China. From China, these substances are shipped primarily through international mail or express consignment carriers (such as DHL, FedEx, or UPS) directly to the United States or, alternatively, shipped directly to transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) in Mexico.

Since May 1, 2019 it appears opioid traffickers have started altering their methods by either trafficking non-fentanyl opioids such as U-48800 to the United States as it is not scheduled in China, which is illegally shipped directly to the United States through the international mail or consignment carriers. Criminals and criminal organizations are also sending pre-precursor chemicals such as 4-AP to Mexico where Mexican cartels are synthesizing their own fentanyl from these chemicals. While the direct shipment of Chinese fentanyl to the United States has dramatically dropped, China is still ultimately responsible for most of the fentanyl reaching the United States due to its supply of pre-precursors to transnational criminal organizations in Mexico.

Once in the Western Hemisphere, fentanyl or fentanyl analogues are prepared and mixed with other narcotics and fillers and/or pressed into pill form, and then moved to the illicit U.S. market where demand for prescription opioids and heroin remain at epidemic levels. In some cases, regional distributors smuggle industrial pill presses and components into the United States to operate illicit fentanyl tableting operations domestically.

Mexican cartels have seized upon the profit potential of illicit synthetic opioids and intend to grow their share of this illicit market. Given its low cost coupled with high potency, one kilogram of fentanyl can generate almost \$10 million in revenue on the illicit market. We are now seeing instances in which precursors originating in China and smuggled into the United States have traveled through the United States, destined for the U.S. Southwest Border locations.

The Mexican cartels have then smuggled the precursors out of the country, synthesized them into illicit fentanyl, and imported the finished product back into the United States for distribution and consumption. The final product may be advertised as heroin, and the end-user may not be aware of the presence of fentanyl.

Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking

Alongside illegal immigration and human smuggling, human trafficking continues to pose a humanitarian and law enforcement challenge. Migrant smuggling and human trafficking are often used interchangeably in error when they are two distinct crimes. Migrant smuggling is a crime committed against the sovereignty of a state, while human trafficking is a crime of exploitation against an individual. Migrant smuggling involves the provision of a service—typically, transportation or fraudulent documents—to an individual who voluntarily seeks to enter a foreign country illegally. Human trafficking on the other hand, is a crime compelling an individual to perform forced labor or a commercial sex act through force, fraud, or coercion; or compelling a minor to perform a commercial sex act, regardless of force, fraud, or coercion. Immigration status or country of citizenship is not an element of human trafficking, nor is movement across an international border. Human trafficking is also an underreported crime because victims rarely come forward to seek help. This may be because they are unable to do so or because their vulnerabilities are being exploited, preventing them from seeking assistance. Proper identification, assistance, and protection of victims is essential to successfully combating this crime.

Transnational Crime Organizations

Based on the collection of intelligence and investigatory evidence from USCG, CBP, and ICE, we observe that human smuggling enterprises and the drug cartels maintain a symbiotic relationship. Certain members of these criminal enterprises control the major United States and foreign illicit drug markets, and others control the “smuggling flow,” otherwise known as the “illicit pathways.” It is critical to both our values as a Nation and the long-term stability of our Western Hemisphere—including the health and prosperity of our Latin American partners—that we work to disrupt these smuggling and trafficking organizations, protect the vulnerable populations they exploit, and help to build and strengthen our foreign partners’ domestic institutions and societies to protect their citizenries.

As we all know, cartels and other transnational organized crime (TOC) networks serve as organizing forces behind the illicit mass migration and migrant smuggling and human trafficking I discussed just a moment ago. These TOC networks threaten the homeland, support hostile foreign powers, and drive regional instability, crime, corruption, and violence. TOC networks maintain a diverse portfolio of crimes, including fraud, human trafficking, kidnapping, and extortion. They are also heavily involved in human, weapon, bulk cash, and drug smuggling through their sophisticated criminal networks.

TOC networks are motivated by money and power and have little regard for human life. These networks are commodity-agnostic—a human being is moved along with no more care than a gun or a bundle of drugs. When desperate aliens enter these networks, they may find themselves beaten, assaulted, raped, and even killed by network members.

TOC networks continually adjust their operations to avoid detection and interdiction by law enforcement, and—like legitimate businesses—are quick to take advantage of improved technology, cheaper transportation, and better distribution methods.

DHS uses a multi-layered threat-based strategy—conducts overseas operations and capacity building, at-sea interdictions, border interdictions, and interior enforcement activities—to leverage its unique criminal, civil, military, and administrative authorities to achieve mission objectives and counter TOC.

CONCLUSION

Every day, the 240,000 men and women of the Department of Homeland Security work to ensure the safety and security of all Americans and are dedicated to building a brighter future. They deserve our support and thanks.

I want to thank you, Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Rogers, distinguished Members, and staff for the support you have shown the Department and the work undertaken by this committee to ensure DHS has the tools it needs to adapt to the changing threat environment.

I look forward to your questions.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you for your testimony.

I now recognize Director Wray to summarize his statement for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER WRAY, DIRECTOR, FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Mr. WRAY. Good morning, Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Rogers, Members of the committee. I am honored to be here today representing the roughly 37,000 men and women of the FBI.

It has now been just over 2 years since I became FBI director in which time I have visited all 56 of our field offices, meeting with State and local partners from every State represented on this committee. I have met with every headquarters division, scores of our foreign law enforcement partners, business and community leaders, and crime victims and their families.

Those interactions have given me a much better sense of what we are up against. Quite frankly, the threats out there are not the same from a decade ago. They are evolving in scale, in impact, in complexity, in agility, and the FBI is moving forward to meet those threats head-on.

In fact, over just the past 6 or 7 months, the FBI has thwarted or disrupted terrorism-related plots, both domestic terrorism and international terrorism. Our Joint Terrorism Task Forces have made arrests in at least two-thirds of the States represented on this committee just since April, and that is not including all of our hate crime arrests and all the other kinds of important work that we do.

So preventing terrorist attacks continues to be the FBI's top priority. Even as we recognize our country's important recent achievements with the death of al-Baghdadi and our fight against ISIS in the Middle East, we know that we have to stay vigilant against the threat both overseas and here at home.

We are also laser-focused on preventing attacks on those already in the United States, people inspired by foreign terrorists, what we call the home-grown violent extremists. Often lone actors, these are folks inspired by foreign ideologies, but who are self-radicalized largely on-line through websites and encrypted messaging platforms rather than in some remote training camp or cave.

We are also keenly focused in today's world on threat of domestic terrorism, attacks carried out by people inspired by a variety of violent extremist ideologies. I am talking about everything from anarchist groups to racially-motivated violent extremist groups.

Again, these are threats that began mostly on-line. Terrorism today moves at the speed of social media. To confront these threats, we are working closely with our Federal, State, and local law enforcement partners and reaching out to the communities we serve.

Our efforts are paying off. But these cases present unique challenges in part because in this country, we do not investigate a person just because of his or her beliefs, and these people, like the home-grown violent extremists I was referring to a minute ago, can also move very quickly with little warning from espousing radical views to attack.

I can tell you after having personally walked through the crime scene at the Tree of Life Synagogue and having visited the teams from the mass shootings both in El Paso and in Dayton that this threat is never far from our minds and is a focus across the FBI.

The major threats we are focused on today are too numerous to mention in my opening, but I look forward to answering questions about a number of them as I respond to your questions.

In particular on the cyber front, we see a wider-than-ever range of actors, attack methods, and targets, including things like sophisticated ransomware attacks on municipalities and critical infrastructure. It is a threat that we are meeting by partnering with the victims, with State and local authorities and in particular, with our Federal partners, especially DHS and other agencies.

On the counterintelligence front, we are especially focused on China. They are using an expanding set of nontraditional methods, blending both lawful and unlawful techniques.

So on the one hand, to come after the United States, on the one hand, you have got things like corporate acquisitions, funding of research, but then woven into those you have cyber intrusions, stealing trade secrets, and a whole variety of supply chain threats.

Even as I sit here today testifying before this committee, the FBI has over 1,000 investigations involving attempted theft of U.S.-based technology that lead back to China, involving nearly all 56 of our field offices and almost every industry and sector.

So this is not just a big city problem. It hits the heartland. The men and women of the FBI dedicate themselves every day to keeping the American people safe. I want to thank this committee for your support for our FBI workforce. I can tell you it makes all the difference in the world to our hardworking agents, analysts, and professional staff both all over this country, but also around the world.

So thank you, again, for the opportunity to appear before you today.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wray follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER WRAY

OCTOBER 30, 2019

Good morning Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Rogers, and Members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the current threats to the United States homeland. Our Nation continues to face a multitude of serious and evolving threats ranging from home-grown violent extremists (“HVEs”) to cyber criminals to hostile foreign intelligence services and operatives. Keeping pace with these threats is a significant challenge for the FBI. Our adversaries—terrorists, foreign intelligence services, and criminals—take advantage of modern technology to hide their communications; recruit followers; and plan, conduct, and encourage espionage, cyber attacks, or terrorism to disperse information on different methods to attack the U.S. homeland, and to facilitate other illegal activities.

Just as our adversaries evolve, so, too, must the FBI. We live in a time of acute and persistent terrorist and criminal threats to our National security, our economy,

and indeed our communities. These diverse threats underscore the complexity and breadth of the FBI's mission: To protect the American people and uphold the Constitution of the United States.

COUNTERTERRORISM

Preventing terrorist attacks remains the FBI's top priority. However, the threat posed by terrorism—both international terrorism (“IT”) and domestic violent extremism—has evolved significantly since 9/11.

The most persistent threats to the Nation and to U.S. interests abroad are home-grown violent extremists (“HVEs”), domestic violent extremists, and foreign terrorist organizations (“FTOs”). The IT threat to the United States has expanded from sophisticated, externally-directed FTO plots to include individual attacks carried out by HVEs who are inspired by designated terrorist organizations. We remain concerned that groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (“ISIS”) and al-Qaeda have the intent to carry out large-scale attacks in the United States.

The FBI assesses HVEs are the greatest, most immediate terrorism threat to the homeland. These individuals are FTO-inspired individuals who are in the United States, have been radicalized primarily in the United States, and are not receiving individualized direction from FTOs. We, along with our law enforcement partners, face significant challenges in identifying and disrupting HVEs. This is due, in part, to their lack of a direct connection with an FTO, an ability to rapidly mobilize, and the use of encrypted communications.

In recent years, prolific use of social media by FTOs has greatly enhanced their ability to disseminate messages. We have also been confronting a surge in terrorist propaganda and training available via the internet and social media. Due to on-line recruitment, indoctrination, and instruction, FTOs are no longer dependent on finding ways to get terrorist operatives into the United States to recruit and carry out acts of terrorism. Terrorists in ungoverned spaces—both physical and virtual—readily disseminate propaganda and training materials to attract easily-influenced individuals around the world to their cause. They motivate these individuals to act at home or encourage them to travel. This is a significant transformation from the terrorist threat our Nation faced a decade ago.

Despite their territorial defeat in Iraq and Syria, ISIS remains relentless and ruthless in its campaign of violence against the West and has aggressively promoted its hateful message, attracting like-minded violent extremists. The message is not tailored solely to those who overtly express signs of radicalization. It is seen by many who enter messaging apps and participate in social networks. Ultimately, many of the individuals drawn to ISIS seek a sense of belonging. Echoing other terrorist groups, ISIS has advocated for lone-offender attacks in Western countries. Recent ISIS videos and propaganda have specifically advocated for attacks against soldiers, law enforcement, and intelligence community personnel.

Many foreign terrorist organizations use various digital communication platforms to reach individuals they believe may be susceptible and sympathetic to violent terrorist messages. However, no group has been as successful at drawing people into its perverse ideology as ISIS, which has proven dangerously competent at employing such tools. ISIS uses traditional media platforms as well as wide-spread social media campaigns to propagate its ideology. With the broad distribution of social media, terrorists can spot, assess, recruit, and radicalize vulnerable persons of all ages in the United States either to travel to foreign lands or to conduct an attack on the homeland. Through the internet, terrorists anywhere overseas now have direct access to our local communities to target and recruit our citizens and spread their message faster than was imagined just a few years ago.

The threats posed by foreign fighters, including those recruited from the United States, are very dynamic. We will continue working to identify individuals who seek to join the ranks of foreign fighters traveling in support of ISIS, those foreign fighters who may attempt to return to the United States, and HVEs who may aspire to attack the United States from within.

ISIS is not the only terrorist group of concern. Al-Qaeda maintains its desire for large-scale, spectacular attacks. While continued counterterrorism pressure has degraded the group's Afghanistan-Pakistan senior leadership in the near-term, al-Qaeda is more likely to focus on building its international affiliates and supporting small-scale, readily-achievable attacks in key regions such as east and west Africa. Simultaneously, over the last year, propaganda from al-Qaeda leaders seeks to inspire individuals to conduct their own attacks in the United States and the West.

In addition to FTOs, domestic violent extremists collectively pose a steady threat of violence and economic harm to the United States. Trends may shift, but the underlying drivers for domestic violent extremism—such as perceptions of Government

or law enforcement overreach, socio-political conditions, racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and reactions to legislative actions—remain constant. The FBI is most concerned about lone-offender attacks, primarily shootings, as they have served as the dominant lethal mode for domestic violent extremist attacks. More deaths were caused by domestic violent extremists than international terrorists in recent years.

The recent attacks in Texas and California underscore the continued threat posed by domestic violent extremists and perpetrators of hate crimes. Such crimes are not limited to the United States and, with the aid of internet like-minded hate groups, can reach across borders. To combat the threat at home, the FBI established the Domestic Terrorism-Hate Crimes Fusion Cell, in spring 2019. Composed of subject-matter experts from both the Criminal Investigative and Counterterrorism Divisions, the fusion cell offers program coordination from FBI Headquarters, helps ensure seamless information sharing across divisions, and augments investigative resources.

As the threat to harm the United States and U.S. interests evolves, we must adapt and confront these challenges, relying heavily on the strength of our Federal, State, local, and international partnerships. The FBI uses all lawful investigative techniques and methods to combat these terrorist threats to the United States. Along with our domestic and foreign partners, we are collecting and analyzing intelligence concerning the on-going threat posed by foreign terrorist organizations and home-grown violent extremists. We continue to encourage information sharing, which is evidenced through our partnerships with many Federal, State, local, and Tribal agencies assigned to Joint Terrorism Task Forces around the country. Be assured, the FBI continues to strive to work and share information more efficiently, and to pursue a variety of lawful methods to help stay ahead of these threats.

COUNTERINTELLIGENCE

The Nation faces a continuing threat, both traditional and asymmetric, from hostile foreign intelligence agencies. Traditional espionage, often characterized by career foreign intelligence officers acting as diplomats or ordinary citizens, and asymmetric espionage, typically carried out by students, researchers, or businesspeople operating front companies, is prevalent. Foreign intelligence services not only seek our Nation's state and military secrets, but they also target commercial trade secrets, research and development, and intellectual property, as well as insider information from the Federal Government, U.S. corporations, and American universities. Foreign intelligence services continue to employ more creative and more sophisticated methods to steal innovative technology, critical research and development data, and intellectual property, in an effort to erode America's economic leading edge. These illicit activities pose a significant threat to National security and continue to be a priority and focus of the FBI.

Foreign influence operations—which may include covert actions by foreign governments to influence U.S. policy decisions, political sentiment or public discourse—are not a new problem. But the interconnectedness of the modern world, combined with the anonymity of the internet, have changed the nature of the threat and how the FBI and its partners must address it. The goal of these foreign influence operations directed against the United States is to spread disinformation, sow discord, push foreign nations' policy agendas, and ultimately undermine confidence in our democratic institutions and values. Foreign influence operations have taken many forms and used many tactics over the years. Most widely reported these days are attempts by adversaries—hoping to reach a wide swath of Americans covertly from outside the United States—to use false personas and fabricated stories on social media platforms to discredit U.S. individuals and institutions. However, other influence operations may include targeting U.S. officials and other U.S. persons through traditional intelligence tradecraft; criminal efforts to suppress voting and provide illegal campaign financing; concealing efforts to influence U.S. Government activities, cyber attacks against voting infrastructure, along with computer intrusions targeting elected officials and others; and a whole slew of other kinds of influence, like both overtly and covertly manipulating news stories, spreading disinformation, leveraging economic resources, and escalating divisive issues.

Almost 2 years ago, I established the Foreign Influence Task Force (“FITF”) to identify and counteract malign foreign influence operations targeting the United States. The FITF is uniquely positioned to combat this threat. The task force now brings together the FBI's expertise across the waterfront—counterintelligence, cyber, criminal, and even counterterrorism—to root out and respond to foreign influence operations. Task force personnel work closely with other U.S. Government

agencies and international partners concerned about foreign influence efforts aimed at their countries, using 3 key pillars.

Currently there are open investigations with a foreign influence nexus spanning FBI field offices across the country. Second, we are focused on information and intelligence sharing. The FBI is working closely with partners in the intelligence community and in the Federal Government, as well as with State and local partners, to establish a common operating picture. The FITF is also working with international partners to exchange intelligence and strategies for combating what is a shared threat. The third pillar of our approach is based on strong relationships with the private sector. Technology companies have a front-line responsibility to secure their own networks, products, and platforms. But the FBI is doing its part by providing actionable intelligence to better enable the private sector to address abuse of their platforms by foreign actors. Over the last year, the FBI has met with top social media and technology companies several times, provided them with Classified briefings, and shared specific threat indicators and account information, so they can better monitor their own platforms.

But this is not just an election-cycle threat. Our adversaries are continuously trying to undermine our country, whether it is election season or not. As a result, the FBI must remain vigilant.

In addition to the threat posed by foreign influence, the FBI is also concerned about foreign investment by hostile nation-states. Over the course of the last 7 years, foreign investment in the United States has more than doubled. Concurrent with this growth, foreign direct investment (“FDI”) in the United States has increasingly become a National security concern, as hostile nations leverage FDI to buy U.S. assets that will advance their intelligence, military, technology, and economic goals at the expense of U.S. National security. The Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (“CFIUS”), an Executive branch committee chaired by the Department of Treasury, was statutorily created to address potential risks to U.S. National security resulting from foreign acquisitions or mergers with U.S. companies. As part of this process, the FBI provides input and analysis to the National Intelligence Council within 8 days of a CFIUS filing and a risk assessment to the Department of Justice within 30 days of a CFIUS filing. As a result of the Foreign Investment Risk Review Modernization Act (“FIRRMA”), which was enacted last year, the FBI anticipates its workload to increase dramatically.

CYBER THREATS

Virtually every National security threat and crime problem the FBI faces is cyber-based or facilitated. We face threats from state-sponsored hackers, hackers for hire, organized cyber syndicates, and terrorists. On a daily basis, these actors seek to steal our state secrets, our trade secrets, our technology, and the most intimate data about our citizens—things of incredible value to all of us and of great importance to the conduct of our Government business and our National security. They seek to hold our critical infrastructure at risk, to harm our economy and to constrain our free speech.

As the committee is well aware, the frequency and severity of malicious cyber activity on our Nation’s private-sector and Government networks have increased dramatically in the past decade when measured by the amount of corporate data stolen or deleted, the volume of personally identifiable information compromised, or the remediation costs incurred by U.S. victims. We expect this trend to continue. Within the FBI, we are focused on the most dangerous malicious cyber activity: High-level intrusions by state-sponsored hackers, global organized crime syndicates, and other technically sophisticated and dangerous actors. FBI agents, analysts, and computer scientists are using technical capabilities and traditional investigative techniques—such as sources, court-authorized electronic surveillance, physical surveillance, and forensics—to counter these threats. We continue to actively coordinate with our private and public partners to pierce the veil of anonymity surrounding cyber-based crimes.

Botnets used by cyber criminals have been responsible for billions of dollars in damages over the past several years. The wide-spread availability of malicious software (malware) that can create botnets allows individuals to leverage the combined bandwidth of thousands, if not millions, of compromised computers, servers, or network-ready devices to disrupt the day-to-day activities of governments, businesses, and individual Americans. Cyber threat actors have also increasingly conducted ransomware attacks against U.S. systems, encrypting data and rendering systems unusable—thereby victimizing individuals, businesses, and even emergency service and public health providers.

Cyber threats are not only increasing in size and scope, but are also becoming increasingly difficult and resource-intensive to investigate. Cyber criminals often operate through on-line forums, selling illicit goods and services, including tools that lower the barrier to entry for aspiring criminals and that can be used to facilitate malicious cyber activity. These criminals have also increased the sophistication of their schemes, which are more difficult to detect and more resilient to disruption than ever. In addition, whether located at home or abroad, many cyber actors are obfuscating their identities and obscuring their activity by using combinations of leased and compromised infrastructure in domestic and foreign jurisdictions. Such tactics make coordination with all of our partners, including international law enforcement partners, essential.

The FBI is engaged in a myriad of efforts to combat cyber threats, from improving threat identification and information sharing inside and outside of the Government to developing and retaining new talent, to examining the way we operate to disrupt and defeat these threats. We take all potential threats to public- and private-sector systems seriously and will continue to investigate and hold accountable those who pose a threat in cyber space.

CONCLUSION

In closing, the work being done by the FBI is immeasurable; however, we cannot afford to be complacent. We must seek out new technologies and solutions for the problems that exist today as well as those that are on the horizon. We must build toward the future so that we are prepared to deal with the threats we will face at home and abroad and understand how those threats may be connected.

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Rogers, and Members of the committee, thank you again for this opportunity to discuss the FBI's efforts to combat the myriad of threats it faces. I appreciate your continued support and look forward to answering any questions you might have.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you for your testimony.

I now recognize Acting Director Travers to summarize his statement for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF RUSSELL TRAVERS, ACTING DIRECTOR, NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER, DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Director TRAVERS. Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Rogers, Members of the committee, it is a privilege to be here to represent the men and women of the National Counterterrorism Center.

In the years since 9/11, the U.S. counterterrorism community and its many partners have achieved significant successes against terrorist groups around the globe. Perhaps most importantly, coalition operations against ISIS in Iraq and Syria deprived a group of its so-called caliphate.

But in addition, on-going CT efforts across Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia continue to diminish the ranks of al-Qaeda and ISIS, removing dozens of experienced leaders and operatives every year.

Interagency efforts at home to enhance our defenses here have resulted in continued progress in safeguarding the homeland from terrorist attacks. There is, indeed, a lot of good news.

But we need to be cautious because challenges remain. I am going to focus on just 3.

First, military operations have bought us time and space as we address the terrorist global threat, but the diverse, diffuse, expanding nature of that threat remains a significant concern.

After 9/11, we were primarily focused on the threat emanating from a single piece of real estate along the Apian-PAC border. Eighteen years later, as Director Wray, has indicated, we have a

very diffuse threat. We have a home-grown violent extremist threat.

We have 20 ISIS branches and networks ranging from hundreds to thousands of individuals. We have al-Qaeda and its affiliates and branches' affiliates. We have foreign fighters that flock to Iraq and Syria from over 100 countries. We have Iran and its proxies, and there is a growing terrorist threat from racially- and ethnically-motivated extremists around the globe.

By any calculation, there are far more radicalized individuals now than there were at the time of 9/11. This highlights the importance of terrorism prevention. While some aspects of the threat can be dealt with through kinetic operations, the residents of the ideology will not be dealt with by military or law enforcement operations alone.

The world has a lot of work to do in the non-kinetic realm to deal with radicalization and underlying causes.

The second challenge I would highlight stems from the terrorist's ability to exploit technology and the attributes of globalization. They are good at it, and they are very innovative.

We have seen the use of encrypted communications for operational planning and the use of social media to spread propaganda and transfer knowledge between and amongst individuals and networks. We see the use of drones and UASes for swarm attacks, explosive deliveries, and even assassination attempts.

High-quality, fraudulent travel documents will increasingly undermine a named space screening and vetting system and thereby threaten border security.

We will see greater use of cryptocurrencies to fund operations, and the potential terrorist use of chemical and biological weapons has moved from a low-probability eventuality to something we consider to be much more likely.

In many cases, terrorist exploitation of technology has outpaced the associated legal and policy framework needed to deal with the threat.

Looking out 5 years, we are particularly concerned with the growing adverse impact encryption will have on our counterterrorism effort.

The third challenge I would highlight relates to a concern about complacency. Our whole-Government approach to counterterrorism over the past 18 years has kept the country pretty safe. In our view, the near-term potential for larger-scale, externally-directed attacks against the homeland has at least temporarily declined as a result of U.S. and allied actions around the globe.

But as noted earlier, the threat itself continues to metastasize and will require very close attention in the years ahead. In a crowded National security environment, it is completely understandable that terrorism may no longer be viewed as the No. 1 threat to the country, but that begs a host of questions.

What does the National risk equation look like as the country confronts a very complex international security environment?

How do we optimize our CT resources in the best interest of the country?

If we're going to reduce efforts against terrorism, how do we do so in a manner that does not inadvertently reverse the gains of the past 18 years?

These are all complicated questions that will require serious discussion both within the Executive and Legislative branches.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Director Travers follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RUSSELL TRAVERS

OCTOBER 30, 2019

Thank you, Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Rogers, and Members of the committee, for the opportunity to be with you today. I will begin with a brief overview of the terrorism threat before discussing homeland and overseas threats in more detail. I will close my opening remarks with a discussion of global trends impacting counterterrorism efforts, along with comments on the way forward, from NCTC's perspective.

TERRORISM THREAT OVERVIEW

The United States and its allies continue to pursue an aggressive global campaign against a complex array of terrorist actors. Operating across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, U.S. and partner forces have killed or captured thousands of terrorist leaders and operatives since September 11, exemplified this past weekend in the heroic removal of the brutal ISIS in Iraq and Syria leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. These removals degrade the ability of terrorists to organize, communicate, and strike the United States. Working unilaterally or with partner nations, the United States has disrupted numerous attack plots, saving the lives of countless potential victims. At home, Federal, State, and local intelligence and law enforcement agencies—working in close cooperation—continue to counter terrorist activity. Enhanced border security efforts have constrained groups' ability to infiltrate the United States, and we now assess the most predominant terrorist threat to the homeland to emanate from U.S.-based lone actors. Additionally, the U.S. Government and private-sector allies have made significant strides curtailing terrorists' on-line presence.

While these efforts have diminished the terrorist threat to the United States, we have enjoyed less success staunching terrorist growth overseas. Over a year ago, NCTC warned that the terrorist threat was becoming more diverse, dispersed, and unpredictable; unfortunately, these trends have only continued, posing an increasingly complex challenge for the United States and its allies. In several regions, we continue to observe the expansion or revival of familiar threats, as well as the emergence of new ones.

- First, the overall threat from radical Islamic terrorists has not abated and, in some regions, is growing. Prominent groups including ISIS and al-Qaeda are expanding into new areas and reinforcing their networks' cohesion, bolstering the overall movement's reach, resiliency, and threat to U.S. interests.
- At the same time, the United States is confronting an aggressive Iran and its network of terrorist proxies, who are employing violence to undermine U.S. pressure and influence throughout the Middle East. Tehran, including the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force (IRGC-QF), and its formidable allies like Lebanese Hizballah are strengthening their relationships with a wide array of militants and exporting advanced tactics and weaponry—capabilities that can be turned against U.S. personnel with little warning.
- Finally, high-profile attacks in the United States and abroad—most notably the March attacks against mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand and the August attack in El Paso, TX—highlight that the United States is facing threats from a broader range of terrorist actors, to include violent extremists motivated by racial and ethnic hatred. While primarily a lone actor threat, these violent extremists in the United States and abroad are deftly using technology to recruit others to their extreme ideology.

Several broader global trends are adding to the complexity of the terrorist threat landscape including the availability of disruptive technologies, enduring conflicts and instability, the drift of focus and resources away from CT, and the rising global influence of U.S. competitors. These concurrent and interrelated dynamics are increasingly affecting—at times negatively—our ability to mobilize or sustain effective pressure against terrorists. In this environment, staying ahead of terrorist adapta-

tion requires an increasingly nimble U.S. response that better leverages foreign allies, private-sector partners, and whole-of-Government resources.

THE TERRORIST THREAT TO THE HOMELAND

Throughout 2019, persistent United States and allied CT pressure against key al-Qaeda and ISIS leaders and operatives have continued to degrade these groups' ability to launch terrorist attacks against the United States. Radical Islamist terrorists' external plotting capabilities may have been further hampered by the demands of sustaining large-scale insurgent campaigns, combatting capable local U.S. allies, or fighting other militant competitors.

Despite our successes, leaders of both al-Qaeda and ISIS retain the intent to strike the United States and have proven resourceful in finding ways to evade U.S. defenses. I would refer to the example of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) which, while fighting an insurgency in Yemen, nevertheless attempted 3 external operations against U.S. aviation between 2009 and 2012 using novel explosive designs. Currently, al-Qaeda, ISIS, and several of their local affiliates and branches retain key competencies and resources—including explosives expertise and foreign operatives—that could support attacks in the United States or the West. Further declines in CT pressure could enable them to quickly reinvigorate or expand external plotting. This could include additional attacks against aviation, which remains of great interest to terrorists because of the potential economic and psychological impacts.

As we sustain pressure against radical Islamic terrorists' external operations capabilities, we will likely continue to face a more persistent threat from U.S.-based home-grown violent extremists, which we assess represent the preeminent Sunni terrorist threat to the United States. While there has only been one such attack in the United States this year, it remains a serious threat and poses an enduring detection challenge because of these attackers' lack of direct connections to known violent extremists or terrorist groups, their use of easy-to-acquire weapons and tactics and tendency to operate alone or in small groups. In addition, radical Islamist terrorist groups overseas continue to promote lone actor attacks through their media outlets, viewing them as an efficient tactic to terrorize the United States and other opponents.

The threat from terrorists motivated by ideologies unconnected to the radical Islamist terrorism are also a concern. Since the beginning of 2018, these terrorists have conducted the vast majority of lethal homeland terrorist attacks. Most of these attacks were perpetrated by lone actors adhering to a racially- or ethnically-motivated violent extremist ideology who have been radicalized, in part on-line, and motivated by a range of grievances associated with political and/or social agendas. While most of these actors have used readily-available firearms and edged weapons against soft targets, 2019 has been the most lethal year for these attacks since 1995.

Finally, Iran and Hizballah's on-going efforts to expand their already robust global networks also threaten the homeland. The arrests last year of Iranian operatives and diplomats in the United States and Europe linked to attack plotting underscore Tehran's determination to use violence against its adversaries around the world, potentially including within the United States. Additionally, the arrest in July of a Hizballah-trained operative in New Jersey who conducted surveillance of U.S. landmarks on behalf of the group is emblematic of the reach of its sophisticated global network, which has been active in Europe, South America, and Africa.

THE TERRORIST THREAT OVERSEAS

While our CT campaign has diminished terrorists' external attack capabilities, our efforts to curtail radical Islamic terrorist growth and the threat to U.S. interests overseas have proven less successful. Radical Islamic terrorist groups are now operating in more countries around the world than ever before, threatening a widening circle of U.S. interests and allies.

I will begin with ISIS in Iraq and Syria, where United States and coalition efforts have eliminated the physical caliphate and removed the group's long-time leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, demoralizing ISIS fighters and demonstrating the persistence of U.S. and coalition forces to eliminate terrorist threats wherever they are. However, the terrorism threat persists as ISIS has successfully transitioned to a clandestine insurgency consisting of thousands of committed operatives across the 2 countries. ISIS cells continue to conduct a diminished but steady rate of IED attacks, raids, and ambushes against local security forces and other opponents. ISIS fighters are attempting to evade local counterterrorism pressure by using safe havens in rural, under-governed areas of northern and western Iraq and eastern Syria.

Senior leaders have publically encouraged adherents to be patient and persevere, pointing to the group's previous successes rebounding from setbacks.

In an effort to enable its revival and attract new recruits, the group continues to stoke and exploit Sunni fears of sectarian violence and economic and political marginalization while targeting populations vulnerable to ISIS's appeals, including refugees. ISIS leaders since at least mid-September have also prioritized the freeing of thousands of detained members in prison and IDP camps across Iraq and Syria. The release and reintegration of these veteran operatives would greatly augment the group's operations, mirroring the dynamic we saw play out in 2013. Finally, ISIS leaders will likely move to exploit the recent instability and the attrition and co-option of CT forces in northeastern Syria to reinvigorate their insurgent and external operations efforts.

Outside of Iraq and Syria, ISIS's global network remains robust and—in some areas—is expanding, thanks to its approximately 20 global branches and networks. This year, the group publically announced new branches in Mozambique, Pakistan, and Turkey, underscoring leaders' determination to sustain their global reach amidst setbacks in Iraq and Syria. The capabilities of these branches and networks vary, but ISIS groups in Afghanistan, the Philippines, the Sinai Peninsula, and West Africa have the capacity to conduct sophisticated attacks against local security forces and target U.S. interests and personnel. Even networks lacking direct connection to ISIS core can be deadly—the attacks in April in Sri Lanka that killed over 290 people—including 4 Americans—serves as a salient reminder of ISIS's reach and threat to U.S. citizens. Additionally, the far-flung ISIS enterprise retains a degree of cohesion: ISIS this year launched several synchronized attack and propaganda campaigns in which numerous branches and networks participated, which is an indicator of enhanced connectivity.

Meanwhile, al-Qaeda and its affiliates continue to target U.S. interests, expand their regional insurgencies, and strengthen their connectivity. Senior leaders, including several based in Iran, oversee these global efforts, sustaining the network's cohesion. In September, group leader Ayman al-Zawahiri praised the 9–11 attacks, reiterated his call for attacks against U.S. and Israeli targets, and urged extremists to travel to radical Islamist terrorist battlefields, highlighting al-Qaeda's multi-pronged strategy. In addition, the group leaders' announcement in January of a "Jerusalem Will Never Be Jewish" campaign in response to the move of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem underscores their efforts to tie the group's regional efforts to al-Qaeda's overall global agenda campaigns. Two attacks in Kenya and Mali, conducted by al-Shabaab and the al-Qaeda-aligned, West Africa-based Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), have since been included under this campaign.

Al-Qaeda's regional insurgencies continue to achieve varying levels of success. In Somalia, al-Shabaab has ramped up its campaign against African Union forces, the local government, and U.S. and Western personnel. In September, the group launched a large-scale assault on a base in Baledogle that houses U.S. military personnel. In Mali and other parts of West Africa, JNIM and allied fighters have ramped up their attacks against international peacekeepers and local security forces, exacerbating instability and humanitarian conditions. In North Africa, local CT operations in Libya and Tunisia have probably stunted the growth of al-Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), but the group continues to pose a threat to government and Western targets throughout the region.

In Yemen, AQAP has sustained its insurgent campaign and may expand their efforts as continuing political instability threatens to diminish CT pressure against the group. In Syria, Hurras al-Din—an al-Qaeda aligned group consisting of veteran extremists—is working to advance the group's global agenda, although the deaths of at least 1 senior operative and the tenuous status of its safehaven in northwest Syria could impede their efforts. In Afghanistan, the death in September of the leader of al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) may disrupt their regional operations. Finally, al-Qaeda retains its long-standing ties to the Haqqani Network and other militant networks active in Afghanistan and Pakistan that frequently target U.S. personnel.

In Iran, the regime continues to use terrorism to threaten the United States, our allies, and other opponents, as well as to cement its long-term political influence throughout the Middle East. As we have observed in recent months from Tehran's attacks on international shipping and Saudi oil facilities, the regime is intent on escalating its efforts to intimidate and impose costs on its opponents, posing a growing direct and indirect threat to U.S. interests and personnel. Iran, through the IRGC-QF and other malign elements like the Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) maintains links to terrorist operatives and networks in Europe, Asia, and Africa that could be called upon to target U.S. or allied personnel.

Iran can also call upon a wide range of proxy groups to support its terrorist and regional influence operations. Tehran is poised to use these entities to target U.S. personnel in the event that the regime is threatened. Iranian leaders also nurture these alliances in pursuit of long-term political advantage, similar to its decades-long partnership with Hizballah, which wields significant political influence within Lebanon and possesses a formidable military force including thousands of rockets. In Iraq, Iran has provided weapons and funding to a wide variety of powerful militia groups, whose influence and advanced terrorist capabilities threaten the U.S. presence there. Iran is also supporting Huthi forces in Yemen, whose increasingly bold attacks against Saudi Arabia could indirectly endanger U.S. personnel. Finally, Iran maintains ties to several Palestinian military groups including Palestine Islamic Jihad, which has killed numerous civilians in Israel.

GLOBAL TRENDS INCREASINGLY IMPACTING THE CT FIGHT

Our ability to combat the diverse range of terrorist threats continues to be influenced, at times negatively, by broader military and political trends. Navigating these challenges will likely require leveraging a broad range of Government resources and capabilities across the interagency, given their scope and scale.

- *Emerging Technologies.*—Terrorists continue to exploit rapid technological advances in fields like encrypted communications, social media, and unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). The speed at which industry responds to consumer demands for newer, more capable technologies also fuels terrorist innovation and, at times, limits our ability to disrupt their operations. Specifically, terrorists are continuing to explore the use of increasingly ubiquitous, more secure modes of communications in order to evade detection. While the amount of terrorist content on mainstream platforms like Facebook has been curtailed, terrorists have responded by using less-accessible platforms to communicate and disseminate propaganda. Finally, commercially-available unmanned systems—like aircraft (UAS) and surface vehicles (USV)—are enabling some groups to conduct tactical surveillance, smuggling operations, and attacks against key critical infrastructure targets like oil refineries or airports that can result in significant economic damage.
- *Conflict and Instability.*—Enduring conflicts in several countries including Egypt, Mali, Nigeria, Libya, Syria, and Yemen continue to serve as incubators for terrorist presence. The intractable nature of these conflicts, their spillover into neighboring countries, and the long-term impacts on humanitarian conditions continue to provide terrorist groups with new opportunities to carve out safe havens, bolster operations, derive resources, and recruit the next generation of fighters. As an example, several on-going conflicts and insurgencies across Africa have enabled terrorists aligned with al-Qaeda and ISIS to expand their influence and embed with local militant groups, fueling an unprecedented rate of jihadist growth across the continent.
- *Partner Complacency and Distraction.*—Some partners' perception that the terrorist threat has been sufficiently reduced or eclipsed by other political or security concerns may increasingly prompt them to allocate resources away from CT efforts, potentially diminishing pressure on some networks.
- *Influence by Strategic Competitors.*—The growing influence and footprint of U.S. competitors—particularly China and Russia—in key CT theaters could constrain our ability to mobilize and direct local CT operations. Both Beijing and Moscow have increased their security, military, and CT assistance programs as part of their campaign to undermine and supplant U.S. influence in parts of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East—regions that also host preeminent terrorist groups. In addition, our competitors often promote punitive and anti-democratic CT strategies that could fuel further radicalization to violence.

THE WAY FORWARD

These challenges require a nimble, aggressive U.S. response that makes greater use of foreign partners and resources resident in both the interagency and private industry. An over-reliance on “business as usual” practices or kinetic efforts will increase the risks of being outpaced by our terrorist adversaries and marginalized by our competitors, particularly as competing demands on U.S. National security resources mount.

- *Bolstering Foreign Allies.*—As the scale of the global terrorism challenge grows, foreign partners will play an increasingly central role in fighting it. Sustained U.S. leadership, advisory, and capacity-building efforts in both the military and non-military areas remain instrumental in ensuring that partners implement effective, comprehensive, and balanced CT measures, sufficiently resource them,

and cooperate with neighbors and other allies. As noted in the 2018 National Strategy for Counterterrorism, proactively identifying and focusing on those allies that are best positioned and able to advance U.S. CT efforts will prove key in countering the terrorist threat; this includes working with allies and partners on preventing and countering terrorist radicalization and recruitment in the first place—through not only strategic communications but community engagement and other “countering violent extremism” approaches.

- *Mobilizing Tech Sector Partners.*—As noted previously, terrorist actors continue to move aggressively to exploit new technologies to communicate, appeal to new audiences, and recruit adherents. Establishing and supporting relationships with those companies that are driving these technological changes remains critically important in countering such efforts. These partnerships have already borne fruit: For instance, private-sector action—enabled by Government assistance—has greatly curtailed the accessibility of violent extremist content from ISIS on the internet. However, subsequent terrorist adaptations, including the increased use of closed social media forums, only highlight the need to sustain and build on these partnerships. U.S. Government engagement with entities like the industry-led Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT) could help combat a broader spectrum of violent extremist content by using lessons learned in countering ISIS’s on-line presence, while also helping these companies navigate free speech issues. This should be complemented by support for local alternative narratives and counter-messaging in key countries around the world.
- *Exploiting Data.*—I have previously testified about the growing data challenge the CT community faces. We continue to see an ever-expanding corpus of pertinent data, an explosion in social media information, and competing equities and authorities, non-standardized data, and challenges with incorporating biometrically-based screening systems. To overcome these challenges, we must increase our focus on expanding information sharing and improving our use of data-driven techniques to counter terrorists’ attempts to evade CT pressure. Given the wide range of U.S. stakeholders with interests in data, broad reforms of our disclosure and information-sharing processes will require a whole-of-Government approach that works to broadly reorient mindsets and cultures. In addition, we will continue to move toward standardizing our existing systems and developing common guidelines for use in order to facilitate greater access for relevant authorities.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to present NCTC’s views and assessments this morning. I look forward to the committee’s questions.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you for your testimony.

I now recognize Under Secretary Glawe to summarize his statement for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF DAVID J. GLAWE, UNDER SECRETARY, OFFICE OF INTELLIGENCE AND ANALYSIS, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. GLAWE. Good morning, Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished Members of the committee.

It is my honor to testify on behalf of the Department of Homeland Security and to address today’s emerging world-wide threats.

First, let me briefly touch on my role. I currently serve as the chief intelligence officer and under secretary at the Department of Homeland Security. I am responsible for ensuring the Secretary, our 22 DHS components and offices and our homeland security partners have access to intelligence they need to keep the country safe.

My focus is to ensure the unique tactical intelligence from the DHA intelligence enterprise is shared with operators and decision makers across all levels of Government so they can more effectively identify and mitigate threats to the homeland.

My office, as well as the rest of the U.S. intelligence community and our law enforcement partners, generate intelligence that is un-

biased based on sound analytic judgments and tradecraft that meet the U.S. intelligence community standards. Regarding the threat landscape, I will speak today about the major shifts in the threat landscape.

Specifically, I would like to speak about the threats we face from foreign terrorist organizations, domestic terrorism, cyber threats, foreign influence, and transnational organized crime.

Underpinning these threats is increasing adversarial engagement from nation-states, such as China, Russia, and Iran.

Regarding domestic terrorism and targeted violence, I want to address one of the most pervasive threats we face in the homeland, which is the threat from targeted violent and mass attack. Regardless whether it is considered domestic terrorism or a hate crime, there is no moral ambiguity on this issue.

The extremists are often motivated by violent ideologies or perceived grievances, often targeting race, ethnicity, National origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, and gender identity.

We are focused on identifying the behaviors and indicators that are indicative of an individual at risk of carrying out targeted violence or mass attacks so that we can appropriately identify and mitigate any violent act before it occurs.

My past experience of 24 years as a policy officer and special agent and part of the first responder metropolitan police department to the Columbine attack has made me uniquely postured to be a witness for you today. My first-hand experience has shaped my approach to dealing with this type of violence.

Foreign terrorist organizations remain a core priority of DHS's counterterrorism efforts, and we continue to make substantial progress in our ability to detect and mitigate the threats that these groups pose. ISIS, al-Qaeda, and returning foreign fighters represent significant, persistent, and long-term National security threats.

Cyber threats and emerging technologies. Cyber threats remain a significant strategic risk for the United States, threatening our National security, economic prosperity, and safety.

Nation-states and cyber criminals are increasing the frequency and sophistication of their attacks and other malicious cyber activity.

Regarding foreign influence, the foreign influence has quickly evolved into one of our most significant threats to our country in decades. U.S. adversaries, including Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea, and other strategic competitors will use off-line influence operations to try to weaken democratic institutions, undermine U.S. alliances, threaten our economic security, and shape our policy outcome.

Regarding transnational organized crime, transnational criminal organizations have a destabilizing effect on the Western Hemisphere by corrupting Government officials, eroding institutions, and perpetuating violence. They profit from a range of illicit activity, including human smuggling and trafficking, narcotics, extortion, and kidnapping.

Transnational criminal organizations are motivated by power and money and have little regard for human life. They continually adjust their operations and supply chains to avoid detection and

interdiction by law enforcement and, like legitimate businesses, are quick to take advantage of improved technology, cheaper transportation, and better distribution methods. In many ways, they are operating like a sophisticated intelligence organization.

With that, I want to close, and I want to thank you for the opportunity, and also on behalf of the men and women of the Department of Homeland Security, and the honor to testify before you today.

Thank you.

Chairman THOMPSON. I thank all of the witnesses for their testimony.

I remind each Member that he or she will have 5 minutes to question the panel.

I now recognize myself for questions.

Mr. Secretary, during your tenure here with the committee, were you provided all the resources you needed to do your job?

Secretary MCALEENAN. I think the Department of Homeland Security has received strong support from Congress in a bipartisan fashion across multiple budget years and multiple administrations.

We have used that funding and those resources to increase our security effectively across programs from the IT side, the intelligence side, the operational side in both our border security and our international partnerships.

Are there more resources we could use? Certainly. There always are. I do not think you will ever meet a law enforcement leader who will say they have all the resources they need. But I do think we have been able to communicate our requirements and receive broad bipartisan support over my career.

Chairman THOMPSON. So if you had what resources you do not have, that could give us a greater grasp on the terrorist threat to the homeland?

Secretary MCALEENAN. On the counterterrorism side, one of the things that we have requested in this budget cycle and actually called you, Mr. Chairman, and other leaders on the appropriations side back in May to look at a resubmission of our grant capability so that we could focus on supporting efforts against domestic terrorism and targeted violence and readiness around the country so we could identify opportunities to move people off a pathway to violence and address, you know, their concerns and their disaffection early in that process.

That is \$17.5 million we requested. It is in the Senate mark-up for our appropriations, and we have also asked for investment in our Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention Office at the DHS headquarters. I created that my first week as Acting Secretary.

We are looking for that office to help coordinate and galvanize efforts across multiple DHS components to support prevention and that whole-community effort we are looking for.

So that is one specific investment, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

One of the issues in light of what you have talked about is this whole issue of domestic terrorism. Director Wray, can you share with the committee the challenges you have with your agency in addressing domestic terrorism?

For there are some definitional issues from what I understand that continue to be a challenge.

Mr. WRAY. Well, Mr. Chairman, I think what you are referring to, which we have talked about a little bit, I think, in the past, is that there is not currently a domestic terrorism offense, as such, in the same way there is, for example, on the international terrorism side a material support to foreign terrorist organization.

Having said that, we tackle the domestic terrorism threat through a wide variety of tools, explosive charges, gun charges, State and local charges, hate crimes charges. So we use a lot of different tools to go after it, and our folks have been pretty resourceful with our partners in making sure that we do not let anybody get away with it.

We had, I think, 107 domestic terrorism arrests in fiscal year 2019, which is about the same number, a little less, but about the same number as our IT or international terrorism arrests.

Chairman THOMPSON. So of your issues that you are addressing here, have you put a percentage on, of the cases you investigate, how many of them are strictly addressing domestic terrorism?

Do you see it on the rise?

Mr. WRAY. Well, we see a couple things. We see domestic terrorism as a persistent, evolving threat. We have typically had about 1,000, and it fluctuates from time to time, but it tends to be about 1,000, sometimes closer to 900, sometimes a little over on the domestic terrorism side.

The number has not dramatically changed, but it is made very troubling consistent. Certainly the most lethality in terms of terrorist attacks over recent years here in the homeland has been on the domestic terrorism side.

One of the things we have started doing recently is I created a Domestic Terrorism and Hate Crimes Fusion Cell, which brings together both our efforts targeting a lot of the same conduct through our counterterrorism resources, you know, our Joint Terrorism Task Forces, et cetera, but also on the hate crimes side, through our criminal programs we are able to pick that up there.

So we are starting to have less of a left hand/right hand issue internally, and I think that will make us even more effective as we go forward.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the Ranking Member for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROGERS. I would like to ask any of the panel that want to take a swing at this. When we look at the deaths of al-Baghdadi and Muhajir, what does that mean for the rest of the senior leadership?

Do you see anybody in particular emerging to fill that void?

Because that was the No. 1 and No. 2 ISIS leaders. How big of a leadership organization is below that tier of leadership?

Director TRAVERS. There is no question that the losses over the weekend were significant to ISIS. At the same time, it has a deep bench. Muhajir was one of the individuals that could have ascended to the top. Haji Abdullah is another one.

We need to remember that the United States and the Coalition overall have had tremendous success in eliminating leadership over

the years of both al-Qaeda and ISIS, and yet the bench tends to rise to the top.

My guess is that we will, if history is any judge over the next somewhere between a couple of days and a couple of weeks, we will see a new leader caliph announced. There will be eulogies. Those eulogies will come even from al-Qaeda. I suspect Zawahiri will play elder statesman and issue his own.

We will see calls for attacks against Western interests. Typically that does not amount to a great deal in the near term, and then we will see requests for the branches and the affiliates to swear allegiance to the new leader.

That is what we will be watching very carefully to see how this individual consolidates control going forward.

Mr. ROGERS. During this period of time before that happens, how effective do you think ISIS will be at carrying out attacks or do you think they will be kind-of in a pause period?

Director TRAVERS. I actually do not think it will have much impact. If there were significant attacks that were in the planning, that planning will continue. It will not have that much effect.

Mr. ROGERS. Can you give the committee an idea about how large a number of fighters comprise ISIS and how many of those are in prisons?

Director TRAVERS. As I mentioned, there are 20-odd ISIS branches and affiliates around the globe. They may be as few as hundreds. They may have as many as thousands in the case of Khorasan.

We believe that within Syria and Iraq, there are at least 14,000 ISIS fighters, and that is an important number because 5 or 6 years ago when ISIS was at its low point, they were down under 1,000.

So to us this tells us that the insurgency has a lot of options.

Within the prisons, the SDF had roughly 10,000 prisoners in, oh, 15, 20 prisons in Syria. Roughly 2,000 of those were foreign fighters.

Mr. ROGERS. OK. There was some faulty reporting recently about ISIS fighters being released from prisons and/or escaped. Can you tell us what is true and what is not true?

Director TRAVERS. Well, we know of no instance where ISIS fighters were released from prisons. There have been some prison breaks, not so much in the last few days. I think we were something over 100 individuals broke out of prisons.

There is a lot of fog of war as individuals are being relocated. We think the SDF has been incredibly professional about this, trying to relocate prisoners, and they are trying to keep control of the prisons.

It is going to be very interesting to watch over the coming weeks with the Turkish-Russian accord and the Syrian move into east of the river, how those prisons are being managed going forward.

Mr. ROGERS. Outside of al-Qaeda and ISIS, what affiliate organizations are you most concerned about?

Director TRAVERS. I am sorry, sir?

Mr. ROGERS. Outside of ISIS and al-Qaeda, what affiliate organization are you most concerned about?

Director TRAVERS. Well, the entire Shia side of the house, so certainly Iranian-backed Shia militia groups and Hezbollah and so forth.

As I mentioned and as my colleagues have mentioned, the homeland violent extremist individual threat is amongst the greatest that we worry about.

Mr. ROGERS. Good. I will use my closing seconds to welcome our newest Member to the committee. Representative Bishop, Dan Bishop, won an election last month to represent North Carolina's 9th District. He will serve on the Emergency Preparedness and Transportation Security Committees.

I know he is going to be a fine addition to the committee membership.

I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from Texas, Ms. Jackson Lee for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

To you and the Ranking Member, this is a very crucial hearing. I appreciate the time given, although the time is short.

Mr. Secretary, let me thank you very much for both your dedication and commitment to this Nation, as your fellow witnesses are likewise public servants, and we thank them for their service.

Let me start with you, and my time is short. So I note in your testimony on page 4 of your testimony you state, "Perhaps one of the most significant evolutions over the past 3 years has been domestic actors' adoption of FTO techniques to inspire individuals via the internet to carry out acts of terrorism."

Can you briefly explain that and what Homeland Security is doing about that briefly?

Secretary MCALEENAN. Very briefly, if you go back a few years to look at what al-Qaeda and its affiliates were doing with Zarqawi in Yemen, for instance, really using the internet to appeal to disaffected youth and to try to radicalize from afar, that was the home-grown violent extremist phenomenon.

We are seeing that unfortunately with other ideologies, and the ability to communicate with like-minded individuals and get validation.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Right. So what is Homeland Security doing about that?

Secretary MCALEENAN. We are doing several different things. First, the strategic framework outlines the whole-of-community efforts to build awareness, to identify opportunities to see risks being presented by individuals on a pathway to violence.

But in terms of monitoring that internet space, especially if on the Dark Web, that is one of the serious challenges we face going forward. We want to work with private-sector entities to ensure they have good policies, to monitor content, and to address it.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you.

Secretary MCALEENAN. If it is inciting violence, but the FBI—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary MCALEENAN [continuing]. Do not police ideology. We are trying to look at individuals who are on a pathway to violence.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you.

This chart represents, I think, a dangerous phenomenon. The red indicates that these are vacant. They are acting persons.

Do you find it difficult to secure the Nation when you have most of the positions held by temporary persons?

Is that something that should be corrected?

Secretary MCALEENAN. So it is very good to have confirmed leadership. That helps with interactions with Congress. It ensures the alignment with administration policy.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you.

Secretary MCALEENAN. What I can tell you though is that our career leaders, our senior executives throughout the organization are tremendous and are men and women on the front lines—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I appreciate that, Mr. Secretary. I need to go on to my other question.

It has been reported that there are close to 3,000 children that were separated from their parents, and by the way, I appreciate your extensive answer. I just have a very short period of time.

So my question is on the burden that it puts on your men and women at the border. Do you now view that as a failed policy and did not hold the deterrence that it should have held?

Children as young as 9 months, I held Roger in my arms. He was 9 months old separated from his family.

Can you give me a quick answer on that please? I have a question for Director Wray.

Secretary MCALEENAN. Respectfully, Congresswoman, I have testified several times on this. I have spoken publicly and to media and press on this issue. It was an effort to prosecute people violating the law.

We lost the public trust for that effort, and the President was right to end it.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Let me, Director Wray—I take that as it was a failed policy, but I thank you very much for your service.

Director Wray, let me quickly. I was at a meeting last evening dealing with biologic threats, threats of smallpox or Ebola being used by terrorists. Can you tell me what work the FBI is doing on this very difficult act of terrorism that might impact the American people, No. 1?

No. 2, a specific question dealing with 2 individuals that are unidentified being sought by police for the assault of an unarmed black man in Charlottesville. These individuals are still at large.

I am wondering if you are aware of them and whether the FBI is engaged with trying to find these individuals involved in Charlottesville.

Would you please answer those questions, please?

Mr. WRAY. Just taking your second question first, I am not at least sitting here right now familiar with the specifics of that matter, but I am happy to take the information from—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I would appreciate it. I will give it to you. Thank you.

Mr. WRAY. On the first question related to the biological weapons, as I think Mr. Travers mentioned, that is something that we are increasingly concerned about. We are trying to go about it through a number of different lenses working with our partners.

No. 1, we are, of course, working with the rest of the intelligence community to try to gain more information about the capabilities, plans, and intentions of different adversaries in terms of their designs on different kinds of biological weapons.

Second, we are working more and more closely with what you might consider non-traditional partners, whether it is labs, people in the medical industry, you know, research and development people to better understand what the capabilities are.

A lot of that work happens through our Weapons of Mass Destruction Division, which is really single-mindedly focused on this kind of stuff.

Then, of course, we have our Joint Terrorism Task Forces, which have investigated a number of attacks, and they are always on the lookout for information there, where we see any indication that a particular subject is looking into that kind of weapon.

We do think it is something that is going to become increasingly hard to chase just because the internet, again, makes the recipes for these things more and more widely available to less and less sophisticated actors.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentlelady's time has expired.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York—oh, I am sorry—from—

Mr. KING. How could you forget?

Chairman THOMPSON. Yes. Well, you appeared to be off—

Mr. KING. I appear to be forgotten. I know.

Chairman THOMPSON. Yes, well, I recognize the gentleman from New York for 5 minutes. Mr. King.

Mr. KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that.

First of all, Secretary McAleenan, thank you for your service. It has been truly outstanding in some very difficult times. I really admire and appreciate that.

Also, in my direct dealings with you, I have always found you to be totally straightforward. I want to again express my appreciation.

Director Wray, let me say especially from a parochial point of view of the very close relationship between the FBI and the NYPD and local police. It was not always that way in New York, but the JTTF is really functioning very well right now, and as far as I am concerned, the level of cooperation has never been better. So I want to thank you for that.

On some of these specific questions, Mr. Travers, you mentioned about the fog of war and we are not certain exactly how many ISIS prisoners may have escaped. Once that fog of war clears, and hopefully soon, what are our plans to get a reading on those 100, the chances of them going to Europe and coming to the United States or any attempt for them to become part of any coordinated effort against the United States?

Again, how soon do you think we will know how many escaped and where they are?

Are we working with our foreign partners, European partners especially, to track them going back into Europe?

Director TRAVERS. So we spent a great deal of time trying to work with the SDF over the past couple of years on biometrically enrolling individuals so that we can, as Acting Secretary

McAleenan indicated, ensure that our vetting processes are such that individuals cannot come to the United States.

I am actually feeling pretty confident certainly on the foreign fighter issue. That one has been worked very hard because over the last couple of years there was a concern about trying to get European countries to repatriate. We have not had a lot of success, and so we got somewhat fatalistic that we would eventually be seeing some of these individuals long before the Turkish incursion.

As a result, the ability to catalogue who they are and get them into the appropriate databases is, I think, a good thing.

The Europeans may have somewhat greater difficulty. They do not screen in the same way we do. The European Union processes, while they have improved dramatically since Paris and Brussels, they are still trying to deal with 28 countries, and so the Schengen system, I think it is fair to say, is somewhat more porous than ours.

So for us, I think we are in pretty good shape, at least on the foreign fighter problem. For the Europeans, I think they still have some challenges.

Mr. KING. Again, I would tie those 100 or whatever number it is escapees into that foreign fighter category.

How does that shape then? How does that change the picture?

Director TRAVERS. Well, our expectation is that the vast majority of the individuals that escaped more likely than not were Syrian and Iraqi and will be looking to stay in the region. They will be incorporated into the ISIS insurgency in all likelihood.

We could still see them serve as suicide bombers, and so forth. I think it is fair to say that where we had the SDF locking down these prisons for a couple of years, the expectation is that we will probably see more releases.

Just 3, 4 weeks ago, we had Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi indicate in a radio that he wanted to attack both prisons and IDP camps to get people out. I assume that we will see some of that. Those prisons are vulnerable.

Mr. KING. Director Wray, Secretary McAleenan, do you have any comment on that?

Mr. WRAY. I would just add in that, of course, the FBI has had our folks over there doing a lot of these biometric enrollments, and I do think that is an important part of the defense, and so I agree with Mr. Travers on that.

We are concerned that some of these folks may exploit the visa waiver program ultimately and may not be an immediate term threat to us, but over time could find their way in in ways that we have to be vigilant about.

I would also say that we know that ISIS has started to take advantage of using women in operational planning and trying to recruit youth more and more, some of them in these displacement camps that were in Syria. So it is a little bit hard to gauge.

I know our European partners are very worried about this, part of the plan by ISIS to try to launch kind-of a multigenerational conflict, and that is going to present all kinds of challenges for us and our partners.

Mr. KING. Secretary McAleenan.

Secretary MCALEENAN. I agree with both Director Wray and Acting Director Travers.

Just 2 notes. We are working this on the multilateral level with the European Union and Europol, both providing our capabilities and reach-back to identify threats.

I agree with Acting Director Travers on the work in the region. We have been there alongside the FBI and DOD helping identify people on the battlefield so that we can prevent them from accessing the homeland in the future.

But also, we have on a bilateral basis, we have extended our capabilities, an automated target system, global, some of the techniques to identify watch-listed individuals or even those that present risky travel patterns. We have given that capability to our European partners, to our Southeast Asian partners, and extensively in the Western Hemisphere.

So if individuals do try to travel toward us, we do have layers of international partner capability that will help identify and stop that movement.

Mr. KING. Thank you all. Again, Secretary, thank you for your service.

I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman's time has expired.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California for 5 minutes, Mr. Correa.

Mr. CORREA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank our guest speakers for being here today.

You know, an American life is an American life, whether it is in America or outside the U.S. Soldier, an American soldier is an American. An American front-liner, whether it is a firefighter or a police officer, is an American.

So we talk a lot about foreign terrorists and domestic terrorists, and my concern is: Are we separating these into silos and treating them independently?

I am hearing stories that we may have domestic terrorists going overseas to the Ukraine, getting trained on ISIS tactics, coming back to the United States prepared to do God knows what.

Are we having enough coordination between domestic terrorist operations and international terrorist operations in terms of your defensive capabilities to make sure that we are not missing anything?

Mr. Wray.

Mr. WRAY. I think you are onto a trend that we are watching very carefully. I know we have had conversations with NCTC quite a bit on this topic.

We are starting to see racially-motivated violent extremists connecting with like-minded individuals overseas on-line certainly. In some instances, we have seen some folks travel overseas to train and——

Mr. CORREA. Where?

Mr. WRAY. It varies. Different parts of Eastern Europe.

Mr. CORREA. OK.

Mr. WRAY. We have seen some connections between U.S.-based neo-Nazis and overseas analogues, and certainly a more prevalent

phenomenon that we see right now is racially-motivated violent extremists here who are inspired by what they see overseas.

So, for example, the Christchurch attack in New Zealand, we have had, you know, folks that we have arrested here who were motivated by what they saw happening over there. So they are not working together, but they are just fueled by each other.

Just to be clear on the silos point that you made, on the FBI end, our Joint Terrorism Task Forces, which bring together something like 50 different Federal agencies and like 500 State and local agencies, we tackle domestic terrorism and international terrorism both through the Joint Terrorism Task Forces.

So I think that ensures less risk of that silo issue that we are talking about.

Mr. CORREA. So if I call my local Orange County Sheriff and ask him if his Fusion Center is coordinating with your Fusion Centers, the answer from him would be yes?

The answer from him would also be yes if I asked him is there a two-way line of communication or is there only information on a need to know basis that he gets from your agency?

Mr. WRAY. Well, I do not want to speak for the Orange County Sheriff, but as I said in my opening, I have traveled out to California, to every field office, met with partners, including Orange County, LAPD, et cetera, and the feedback I get from our partners is that the chemistry and the information flow between the FBI and our State and local partners is better than it has ever been.

In fact, just a few days ago I brought together, which was not happening before, all of the major city chiefs with our SACs in charge of all of our field offices in one room for a whole afternoon, Classified briefings, working together.

So there is a lot going on on that front, and I would hope you would—

Mr. CORREA. It is very delicate when it comes to talking about Americans or privacy, and when you start to begin to talk about domestic versus international terrorism, you may run into some legal constraints in terms of what you do without a warrant when it comes to American citizens.

Do you have any thoughts of how to address that issue?

You are talking about somebody overseas. Then you are talking about an American citizen. How do you gather the proper intelligence to address those issues?

Do you have the legal framework there to protect privacy and at the same time let you do your job?

Is there anything we can do to help you do your job better?

Director TRAVERS. Well, we are very sensitive to the privacy concerns, especially when it comes to U.S. persons. We say all the time, every day, throughout the FBI our job is to protect the American people and uphold the U.S. Constitution.

I will say in terms of things that we are concerned about, and you have heard it referenced, I think, by every member of this panel, the encryption issue is a real problem. I think a lot of people do not fully understand the impact that is already having on our joint efforts and, more importantly, what it is going to be another year or 2 years from now.

More and more terrorists, domestic terrorists and international terrorists, are resorting to putting their communications on encrypted messaging platforms.

Mr. CORREA. If I may, Mr. Chair, just a couple more seconds here.

I just wanted to emphasize to all of you gentlemen here that in my district, I think, and other districts across this country, the El Paso shooting brought us to a new level of consciousness in terms of our safety locally.

So what I am trying to say is domestic terrorism on my list is No. 1 now.

Thank you very much.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana for 5 minutes, Mr. Higgins.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary McAleenan, thank you for your service and your tenure. You shall be missed. You have testified many, many times. You will be missed by this committee. None of us shall miss attempting to pronounce your last name.

[Laughter.]

Mr. HIGGINS. So thank you for your service. I think you reflect the very highest standards of commitment to service to we, the people, and the law enforcement community, myself included, certainly recognize your professionalism in very difficult times.

Now, regarding border security and the humanitarian crisis at the border, just to follow up on what my esteemed colleague stated earlier, in my opinion and the opinion of many Americans, the responsibility for failure primarily lies with Congress, not with the boots on the ground and not with the Executive.

On June 27, after many months of delay, the Emergency Border supplemental to address the humanitarian crisis at the border was finally passed by this Congress. Important missions like providing Health and Human Services funds to carry out programs for unaccompanied alien children, many other very worthwhile investments, those funds specifically were meant to ensure for unaccompanied alien children, that minors received adequate care and services to address the humanitarian crisis at the border.

I witnessed this, and my colleagues, first-hand. So I ask you, sir: Since funding was passed, have you seen improved conditions at the border with regard to the humanitarian aid?

Secretary MCALEENAN. We have seen dramatic improvements, Congressman. We were able to apply that funding immediately to increase available bed space for unaccompanied children with Health and Human Services. That resulted in a dramatic drop from a peak of 2,700 unaccompanied children in border stations down to now on an average day, it is between 85 and 150.

Those children are moving very quickly to a better setting for their care, usually in less than 24 hours.

Mr. HIGGINS. Would you concur that this, of course, is a priority not just for the Department of Homeland Security, but for us as a Nation, as a compassionate and loving nation?

Secretary MCALEENAN. There is no question, and the opportunity to provide a better situation for families arriving with the new fa-

cilities, the 6,000 additional temporary beds that we have provided that are not in border patrol, not in police stations, if you will, also——

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you for clarifying that.

I bring that up because this committee has a responsibility to move forward the people's business in a bipartisan manner, and I ask you, Mr. Secretary, do you believe regardless of what party controls Congress, who is in the Majority or Minority, or who sits in the White House, that focus and funding from Congress on the continuing issues at our Southern Border, security and humanitarian; would you concur that regardless of politics in this bizarre realm of Washington, DC, that we should as a Nation focus on improving the conditions at our Southern Border?

Secretary MCALEENAN. I would agree.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, sir.

May I ask in my remaining time regarding cartel activity, there have been reports of increased cartel-to-cartel violence. How has that impacted Customs and Border Patrol at the border?

What level of cooperation is DHS receiving from Mexican law enforcement?

Has that cross-border cooperation been impacted greatly by the increased conflict among Mexican criminal cartels?

In my remaining minute, if you will address those questions regarding the cartel activity in Mexico.

Secretary MCALEENAN. So the extreme violence that the cartels or TCOs are mounting are really over control of territory, control of access to the border, the very valuable routes to conduct drug smuggling activities or human smuggling activities remains very intense, especially in Tamaulipas, which is the easternmost northern border state in Mexico.

That creates challenges in our security environment at the border, but also for our Mexican counterparts. They have stepped up. They have identified 25,000 troops, if you will, that are——

Mr. HIGGINS. You say "they." Just to clarify, you mean Mexican law enforcement?

Secretary MCALEENAN. The Mexican government. They have taken elements of their military, elements of their navy, and elements of their federal police and combined them into a national guard that is now helping patrol both their southern border between Chiapas and Guatemala, for all types of smuggling, especially human smuggling, and states in transit routes toward their northern border.

Where we still want to collaborate further and try to gain control is working with them on joint patrols on our shared border so we can prevent access to those routes for any type of smuggling to these violent organizations, and that is an area we need to continue to partner and develop.

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Secretary, again, thank you for your answer, your service.

Mr. Chairman, my time has expired, and I yield.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair recognizes the young lady from New Mexico, Ms. Torres Small for 5 minutes.

Ms. TORRES SMALL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Ranking Member.

Thank you all for being here today, and particularly, Secretary McAleenan, thank you for your presence here on the eve of your departure. Thank you for your years of service to the Department of Homeland Security and to our country.

On the eve of your departure, we are looking now at our fifth Secretary of Homeland Security, and I would like to hear how you think that lack of continuity in leadership might impact the ability for the Department to fulfill its mission of protecting National security.

Secretary MCALEENAN. One of the things that has been very gratifying for me the last 6½ months serving as Acting Secretary. It was really getting exposed to parts of the Department that I knew about but had not had a chance to work directly with.

You know, areas where we had partnered on counter-narcotics or, say, a response to a natural disaster like with the Coast Guard, but now it is kind of imbedding with them. I spent the night on a Coast Guard cutter 2 weeks ago off the coast of El Salvador, really understanding their mission, their capabilities.

I mean, talking with our CISA professionals on how they are looking at the cyber landscape and working with the private sector, working with State and local, these 8,800 jurisdictions, counties, and townships that are managing elections, thinking about the similarities between how at Customs we worked with the supply chain side, how they are working with State and locals.

I am just very confident with the quality and caliber of leadership and front-line people across this entire Department. I have seen how effective they are. I have seen how clear they are on their mission, and I see how dedicated they are.

Ms. TORRES SMALL. Thank you, Secretary.

Secretary MCALEENAN. Senior leadership is key. I am not going to disagree with you there, but I am not worried about continuity in our efforts to protect the American people across a whole range of threats.

Ms. TORRES SMALL. I think we both can agree that there are good folks working and that senior leadership is key.

One of the concerns that I think you hit on that I share is when it comes to our cyber assets, when it comes to protecting our election infrastructure and when it comes to combatting transnational criminal organizations, all of those require careful relationships with private partners, with foreign partners, with our public sector. It requires careful coordination and leadership is key in that.

Do you see how lack of leadership, especially when you have identified the need to bring Government, private sector, and international parties as well as the public together to combat, for example, or to protect our cyber assets?

Do you see how having to go through another Secretary could impact our ability to do that?

Secretary MCALEENAN. So I focused on 3 things during my tenure: The border security and immigration crisis, election and cybersecurity, and counterterrorism and domestic terrorism.

One of the things I am very pleased with is we have very clear strategic intent and strategic framework on——

Ms. TORRES SMALL. I understand that. In terms of cyber assets, do you see the change in leadership, again, could impact our ability to maintain those essential partnerships?

Secretary MCALEENAN. The main connection point on cyber with the communities, both interagency and the private sector, is the director of CISA. Chris Krebs is in place. He is well-respected and regarded and has a tremendous relationship that I have seen in action across those areas.

I do not think a different Secretary or Acting Secretary is going to affect that progress.

Ms. TORRES SMALL. OK. So when it comes to election security, again, one of the main focuses is making sure that you are working with foreign partners as well as with local election officials, State officials.

Given that on the eve of Secretary Nielsen's departure she sought to warn the President about continuing Russian involvement, do you see a change in leadership impacting the potential for protecting our election security?

Secretary MCALEENAN. I do not. In fact, with Director Wray, with the DNI, with Chris Krebs from CISA, with Paul Nakasone, General Nakasone from NSA, we briefed the House in July and the Senate on our joint efforts as a team to address election security from the foreign to the counties and townships, and I think we have a team effort, and very clear lanes that we are all working in concert against.

Ms. TORRES SMALL. Secretary McAleenan, I do not want to downplay the work that you have done. I just have a fear that some of it will be lost with continuing efforts to protect our election infrastructure, and that is my concern.

You have expressed a need for this to continue into the work of 2020 for that election cycle. So do you see that impacting with now having to change leadership, given the steep learning curve that the next person will have?

Secretary MCALEENAN. I do not think so because of the strength of Director Krebs and our partners across the cyber and election security efforts.

Ms. TORRES SMALL. Last, with transnational criminal organizations and the need to coordinate with Federal partners as well as foreign partners to alleviate some of the push factors that we are seeing in the Northern Triangle, do you see that the change in leadership, the lack of continuity will impact those relationships to help stem those push factors?

Secretary MCALEENAN. That has been the entire focus of my tenure. Really, I mean, we have over a dozen agreements with Mexico and Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, respectively. We are now executing against those agreements, and I have high confidence with our international affairs team and our operators that we will be able to maintain that momentum.

Ms. TORRES SMALL. So it has been the main focus with you as Secretary to do that work, and how you are having to leave and someone else will have to face that learning curve.

Secretary MCALEENAN. Well, the agreements are in place, and we are actually executing and operating against those agreements. So we do not have to do that front-line diplomatic effort again.

So I do think we have momentum in place and the layers that we need to continue to make progress.

Ms. TORRES SMALL. Thank you, Secretary.

I yield my time.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentlelady's time has expired.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Taylor, for 5 minutes.

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that.

I appreciate this hearing. I think this is important.

I just wanted to start toward the Department of Homeland Security. I appreciate your leadership there, and in some ways in my short time here in Washington, it seems like an agency that is embattled. We are watching different groups advocating for different things.

One of the things I have been most surprised by is the advocacy for disbanding Department of Homeland Security. It certainly almost goes without saying that that is bad for morale when Members of Congress are advocating to get rid of the entire Department of Homeland Security.

Mr. Secretary, how would you respond to someone who says that we do not need a Department of Homeland Security?

Secretary MCALEENAN. I guess fundamentally I would say they do not understand how the Department has matured and evolved to work in a cohesive manner to address the threats we face.

I think it is an essential part of our homeland security fabric and enterprise. The synergy that we have developed across operating components with our Intelligence Analysis Directorate, with State and local partners, with international partners, that is because of the multi-mission capabilities that we bring, the authorities that are unique, the opportunity to have both civilian and military service with the Coast Guard under our umbrella.

All of that is integral to protecting the homeland across the variety of threats that I outlined in my opening statement.

Mr. TAYLOR. In addition to threats, you also have FEMA, which is the ability to respond. You have Coast Guard, which now deals with threats but also response to National disasters.

I will say that I have not heard a Member of this committee who seem to have more expertise and understanding of what it is that goes into what you do and appreciation that we may disagree on how you are doing it or the complexity of how you do it; we can all agree that certain things need to be done, whether it is a disaster response or securing the border or having an immigration system that is orderly.

So I just want to let you know that I do not think that we should be getting rid of the Department of Homeland Security, and I am somewhat taken aback with the suggestions from some of my colleagues that that is an idea.

But, again, I have not heard that on this committee.

Just I know that during your questioning, you were cut off a couple of times. Is there anything you wanted to add or you felt like you had not had a chance to express at this point, Mr. Secretary?

Secretary MCALEENAN. Nothing to add right now. Thank you.

Mr. TAYLOR. All right. Director Wray, just shifting over to your job, it seems like you are able to police into people that are inspired

by international terrorist organizations; that that is easier to do because there is some web of ideology that you are able to integrate into, whereas home-grown violence seems to be a little bit more difficult to police.

Can you talk about is that a correct perception?

That is my perception from sitting on this committee, but I just wanted to hear from someone who is doing it on the ground.

Mr. WRAY. I think you are correct, Congressman. In particular, on the international terrorism side, because of the nexus to foreign persons and foreign threats and foreign terrorist organizations, we have the ability to use intelligence tools, counterintelligence tools, counterterrorism tools, FISA, in particular, which is absolutely indispensable to our effectiveness in protecting this country.

We, of course, do not have that in a domestic, a purely domestic terrorist context. So that is one particular way in which we have less transparency sometimes.

But I will say in general the domestic terrorism threat is increasingly, as I think Mr. Travers used the term "diffuse," and I think that is why this issue of complacency becomes so important.

You know, the post-9/11 era of sleeper cells, well-structured, very disciplined, massive, large-scale attacks, that is still out there, but we have moved into this world where you have terrorists including domestic terrorists, who are not really that organized who are and some people use these terms "lone actors." I do sometimes, but a lot of times they are communicating with each other in a more informal way, on-line or in some other way, inspiring each other.

The lack of a structure makes it more challenging for us, for example, to get human sources or undercovers inserted. If there is no organization to insert somebody into, that is a challenge. So that is part of the different nature of the threat.

Mr. TAYLOR. Sure. I guess in my closing seconds, I would just like to thank the men and women of the FBI for what they do for our country. I am incredibly grateful, particularly for your counter-corruption efforts and what you have done to keep this country on the level in terms of Government.

It has been depressing to me to watch how states are so unable to police themselves in terms of corruption, and I am very grateful for the people at the FBI that really provide that level of policing. They are really just a mission-critical thing for this for our democracy.

So I am grateful for your service and the service of the men and women that you serve.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. I thank the gentleman. The time has expired.

For everybody concerned, we are trying to get the temperature adjusted a little bit. I just kind-of look at everybody, and they are kind-of drawn up.

We understand.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York for 5 minutes, Mr. Rose.

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Chairman, thank you. Ranking Member and to the gentlemen of the day, thank you all for your extraordinary service.

I want to first just put out a few questions regarding our current efforts against the Jihadist threat and make sure we are on the same page.

My understanding is today we have the correct levels of authority and resources at hand to tack foreign Jihadist fighters moving to ISIS or al-Qaeda and its affiliates and their efforts to come to the United States.

That is correct?

[No response.]

Mr. ROSE. OK. Currently we have the correct resources and authority at hand to track and use the tools of law enforcement to prevent or punish those American citizens who send resources to ISIS, al-Qaeda or its affiliates; is that correct?

[No response.]

Mr. ROSE. Last, currently we have the correct resources—

Chairman THOMPSON. Hold on just a minute.

Say yes or no. That helps everybody for the record.

Mr. WRAY. I am answering the last question. My answer to the last question is yes.

Mr. ROSE. Thank you.

Currently we have the authorities and the resources at hand should someone use the tools of social media to translate ISIS texts, al-Qaeda texts, disseminate that information, recruit people whether at home or abroad. The tools of law enforcement are available to us to punish those individuals; is that correct?

What I am specifically referring to is providing material support to a foreign terrorist organization.

Mr. WRAY. Right. Certainly legally material support is a very valuable tool for the kinds of things you are talking about.

You get into the technological dimension of it which is becoming increasingly challenged, which is that encryption issue I was talking about before, and that is a real phenomenon that is going to become a bigger and bigger legal issue.

Mr. ROSE. Of course. I just mean, sir, if we can identify what we are doing, there are charges associated with that.

Now, you all described each in your own separate way this domestic terrorism threat that we are facing today, white nationalism, white supremacist threat that we are facing as transnational in nature and mirroring many of the tools of ideological persuasion that the Jihadist threat has used for the last 25, 30 years or more.

So I just want to ask you the same exact questions as it pertains to some of these global white nationalist, white supremacist, neo-Nazi organizations that we currently see today, the Azov Battalion in Ukraine, which over 17,000 foreign fighters have streamed to; National Action in the United Kingdom; Nordic Resistance in Sweden, all entities that the Federal Government has already identified as hostile in nature.

Do we currently have the authority and resources in place to track who has gone to these entities to train and work with them, and to make sure that they are tracked when they came to the United States?

For you, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary MCALEENAN. So that is one of the things we emphasize in our strategic framework, that for DHS our operational effective-

ness and our authorities really apply to that border and cross-border movement of people, goods, money.

Mr. ROSE. It is a simple question, Secretary, and again, with respect to your service, someone goes and trains with the Azov Battalion.

Secretary McALEENAN. Right.

Mr. ROSE. Do we have them on the list in the same way that we would have someone on the list if they went to go train and fight with ISIS?

Secretary McALEENAN. So between our National Targeting Center under CDP, our Homeland Security Investigations, we have had multiple efforts, Hammerskins, Rise Above Movement, just in the last year where we have used that international cross-border collaboration and movement to address and make arrests, take away visas, prevent that collaboration.

So, yes, we have been focused on that.

Mr. ROSE. Good. Sir. Mr. Director.

Mr. WRAY. I think we use different tools than we do on the international terrorism side, but I think we have been effective much as Secretary McAleenan said. We just use different offenses and work with our foreign partners on it.

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Travers.

Director TRAVERS. I have probably talked to 15 of my counterparts around particularly Europe and Southeast Asia on this particular problem. Everyone is grappling with the same thing.

There are experiments in terms of naming these organizations. In many cases our European colleagues find that these organizations are very close to political parties, and that confronts the free speech issue, and so this is something we are all grappling with as this question of designations comes up.

Mr. ROSE. Well, so is Hamas and Hezbollah, and that has not stopped us.

My larger question here is that do we need to consider designating some of these entities as foreign terrorist organizations or is the current policy of the United States of America that we only designate Muslim organizations as FTOs?

If white nationalist organization fits the criteria of an FTO, as I believe these do, should we consider designating them as such?

You have the broad-based authorities. You currently do to fight ISIS and al-Qaeda and its affiliates.

Director TRAVERS. Designations is not an intelligence community function. It belongs to the State Department.

Mr. ROSE. Is that all of your answers here, that this is the State Department's purview?

Mr. WRAY. Designations is the purview of the State Department, yes.

Mr. ROSE. I understand. My time is running out. My question is that would this assist you because I am sure that if we took away the FTO designation for other terrorist organizations, you would protest. You would object to that.

Mr. WRAY. We would find that very operationally problematic, yes.

I will say that as Secretary McAleenan said in response to a different question, we can always use more tools, right? You are never

going to find a law enforcement or intelligence professional that would not like more tools, and I can imagine situations where what you are describing would be very helpful for us to have as a tool.

I will also say though that more and more—and I referenced this in my opening statement—more and more the biggest threat we face here in the United States is these, whether it is domestic terrorists, like white supremacists, or international terrorism, people who are inspired by Jihadist movements, we have these self-radicalized actors here, and so the whole concept of going after organizations, which was a construct which was created about things like al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, et cetera, is still valid, but the threat that we face right now is not so much about organizations.

That is why the approach that you are describing might be useful, but I do not think that it is going to necessarily hit what we consider the biggest threat that we are facing here, and that is why what Mr. Travers said is so important.

Mr. ROSE. Thank you.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman's time has expired.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York, Mr. Katko.

Mr. KATKO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

At the outset I want to thank Mr. McAleenan for his career in public service and all he has done to help keep our country safe. We very much appreciate what you have done, and you have done an extraordinarily good job, and thank you for that.

I wish I had an hour or 2 hours with all of you because there are so many questions I want to ask, but you know, Director Wray, something you said really struck me, and that was that on the cyber front we have a wider range of threats now than ever before.

I could not agree with you more, and as the Ranking Member on Cybersecurity Subcommittee, I am constantly amazed at the complexity of the threats and the permutations of the threats. So I want to talk about that a little bit if I can.

You mentioned a few of them, ransomware, supply chain, trade secrets, China. What else can we be doing as a committee to give you the tools to address this issue?

I am going to ask some of the others the same thing.

Mr. WRAY. Well, certainly, we need to work more and more closely with the private sector, and so things that help facilitate that are always useful. You know, in this country, something like 90 percent of the critical infrastructure is in the hands of the private sector, and so the cyber threats, in particular, for the United States, unlike, say, a very centralized country like China where over half of the companies are state-owned enterprises, requires this partnership with the private sector.

So this is a place that for me we need to see more and more resources, quite frankly, devoted because we are going to have to engage more and more with the private sector on that issue.

I will also say that data analytics are an increasingly big problem. It is not a sexy topic, but it is incredibly significant in the cyber arena, particularly. In any one case, if you just stop and think about it for a minute, the volumes and volumes of them coming up with new kinds of bytes. You know, but your own prefix in front of it to capture the sheer volume of what we are getting in every case.

The ability to exploit that fast enough is a real challenge, and so helping DHS and FBI and others with kind-of the tools to exploit that information is going to be a real step forward.

Mr. KATKO. Yes, and I do want to talk about that a little bit. You are right, and it is a different dynamic.

I was a Federal prosecutor for 20 years, organized crime, and so we had different agencies. You worked together with them, and you go after the bad guys, and you are protecting the public.

But here we have to work so closely with the private sector. I do not think we do a good enough job, and from a resource standpoint.

So could you expound just a little bit on the resource standpoint, what specifically you think you would need in order to get this done?

Mr. WRAY. Well, we need more agents, computer scientists, data analysts, and tools, technological tools to be able to engage on more and more cases.

We find that one of the biggest frustrations that we have from the private sector is how quickly we can engage on a lot of these things, and part of that is because of the point that you made, right, just the sheer volume. The attack surface is so broad now.

We are trying to use our cyber task forces that we have all over the country that have a whole bunch of different agencies on them as well, and we are trying to look for ways to partner with the private sector.

But, again, a lot of it comes down to people and tools and very specific kinds of people.

Mr. KATKO. Yes, I would like to follow up with you off-line about this and just try and get a better handle on what it is we need and so then we can maybe try and fulfill your requests.

Mr. McAleenan, I know you want to add to this, but the centerpiece of the cybersecurity mission for Homeland is in CISA, and that has been stood up over the last year. How is it going? What else can we do better with them?

Secretary MCALEENAN. I think it is going very well, and I just want to echo the director's point about people and tools. We do need more. The attack surface is very broad, and private-sector engagement is obviously one of CISA's core responsibilities.

But I would like to add at the State level, State and local government levels. We really do need to think about the right resourcing to support our States.

We are going to have an election in 2020 with well over 90 percent of voters casting ballots with good, auditable paper backups, but not every State is there where we need them. That is a resourcing issue.

When we engage these counties, we are talking about updating their Windows software to eliminate vulnerabilities that have existed for years, and that is usually a funding problem, not necessarily a will problem, although we do have awareness challenges.

So that kind of engagement is critical. The public utility side of this equation, I mentioned industrial control systems in my opener, you know, everything from pipelines to power. This is a critical area where we need those quasi-governmental and private-sector entities to take the cybersecurity measures they need to be successful, and that is what CISA is doing across the board.

Mr. KATKO. I am out of time, but, Mr. Glawe, is there anything else you want to add to that?

Mr. GLAWE. Just to follow what Director Wray said and Secretary McAleenan. Our engagement with the private sector is critical, and we have conducted since I took over in 2017 a real heavy emphasis on engagements through the corporate security symposiums, which I host with Director Wray's folks in the Bureau.

But getting the collection requirements, show the private sector how to protect the brand, how to protect their customers, how to protect their clients is critical. We are not going to be able to win this fight on the foreign adversary to try to influence business on the homeland without a hand-in-glove relationship, and it is a new dynamic.

How we are using the State Fusion Centers and partner with the FBI is critical to have that hand-in-glove information sharing on what is their biggest risk.

It is not about a competitive advantage. It is about an equal advantage with those foreign adversaries that are attacking our country through economics.

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Chairman, I yield back, but I just want to note and respectfully suggest this is an area that I think we should have a subject of a hearing and really try and figure out what the manpower requirements might be. Then maybe we could formulate something to try and assist them because it is a critically important area.

Chairman THOMPSON. The Chair agrees with you. We have already had some discussions along that line.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Missouri, Mr. Cleaver, for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLEAVER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to thank all of you. A thank you to Mr. McAleenan for your appearance before the committee and the fact that as far as I know, you have been a very straight shooter with us. So thank you very much.

Are any of you concerned about what could happen and may be already happening as a result of the cryptocurrency issue?

The thing that is frightening to me in looking at this is that the software is available to just about anybody, including people who would like to do some harm to us, and you know, you could do a transaction, you know, just like that.

Unless we have some really low-IQ bad guys, in the future we are going to have to deal with people moving arguably millions of dollars, millions of invisible dollars going here and there.

Is there a division? I know FinCEN is working under Treasury, but is there a division anywhere else that is focusing on this problem that is only going to grow?

Director Wray.

Mr. WRAY. Congressman, I think you have put your finger on a very, very vexing issue for everyone in law enforcement and National security more broadly. At the FBI, we have an Office of Technology Division that is keenly focused on cryptocurrency, and we have a number of tools that we use with different forms of cryptocurrency to try to break past or get around the anonymization that occurs there.

But every time we come up with a new tool, you know, there is a new type of cryptocurrency coming right behind it, and it is not just as you mentioned the low-IQ bad guys. Unfortunately, one of the phenomena that we are seeing increasingly is in effect crime is a service.

So in other words, there are sophisticated forms of cryptocurrency out there, and on the Dark Web there are basically organizations that are now marketing it to the low-IQ bad guys. So it is now available to those people, too.

So this is absolutely going to be a phenomenon going forward that we need to be concerned about.

Secretary MCALEENAN. Can I just add quickly, Congressman, I agree with you 100 percent that traceability of financial transactions is a huge vulnerability as we emerge into different cryptocurrencies?

For DHS, U.S. Secret Service has unique capability on both financial investigations and cyber, and this is kind-of the nexus of all Homeland Security investigations have this capability and is working these problems as well.

I do not know if Under Secretary Glawe wants to add anything from the intel side.

Mr. GLAWE. Just to echo what the Secretary just said, the vulnerabilities we have for how we identify illicit activity with finance is critical, and how we have the infrastructure to track and identify the individuals in the United States and global is critical.

We also have the policies and authorities in place to do that.

Mr. CLEAVER. Thank you.

I wish we could probably have a whole hearing on this issue. I have spent a little time dealing with it.

FinCEN, we probably need somebody from Treasury to talk to us about FinCEN, but there is also this proposal being kind-of floated around now by Treasury that the Secret Service should be transferred out of DHS into Treasury.

I guess I am not sure if they want to connect it with FinCEN or what, but do any of you have a position on that, especially you, Secretary McAleenan?

Secretary MCALEENAN. So I have talked about why and I certainly understand why Treasury would want to be associated with one of the finest law enforcement organizations in the world, the U.S. Secret Service, and they do have a nexus with the financial responsibilities, financial investigations of Treasury.

They are also well-ensconced in DHS on National security special events and threats. Obviously, we will look at that with the administration and with Congress in the months ahead.

Mr. CLEAVER. OK. Since you are leaving, do you think that that should remain with Homeland Security?

Secretary MCALEENAN. I think there are strong arguments on the placement for Secret Service in both departments, and I support the dialog that the administration is having with Congress at this time.

Thank you, Congressman.

Mr. CLEAVER. You are a good man, Mr. Director.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee, Mr. Green, for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Being a fellow Mississippian, I agree it is kind-of chilly in here.

Mr. Secretary McAleenan, thank you for your service.

As I understand your story, you were watching the towers fall at 9/11 and ran to the sound of the guns. So I appreciate that, and for those of us who were in service at the time those towers fell, we look at that degree of patriotism with great admiration. Thank you.

To all of the witnesses here today, thank for your service to our great country. I really appreciate your being here today and for your candor.

My question is really to all of you or whomever you think is best to answer it. I would still like to kind-of dig into this cooperation between ISIS and AQ and what you think their capacities are if they combine and how that impacts the homeland.

Director TRAVERS. I will start. There are places around the globe where ISIS and AQ definitely cooperate, West Africa, I think, being a classic case where JNIM, an AQ affiliate, and ISIS West Africa certainly cooperate on the ground.

I think the general view is that we are very unlikely to see a strategic alliance between the two. There are issues associated. Al-Qaeda thought the caliphate itself was a mistake. The very issue of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi being a caliph grated at AQ, to be sure.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Oh, sure.

Director TRAVERS. So my guess is that we are going to continue to see much like we do today, ISIS and AQ battle in places, Yemen, in East Africa, whereas in the homeland, and Director Wray can talk to this, we do see a bit of an idiosyncratic adoption of sometimes individuals will cite ISIS. Sometimes they will cite AQ ideology. We have certainly seen that in Europe, but in general, I do not think we are going to see a strategic alliance.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Switching gears a little bit to cyber, what are your thoughts on Blockchain and its impact on cybersecurity, and is there an increased vulnerability with Blockchain or is it decreased?

Is that protective in any way, I guess?

Secretary MCALEENAN. I think it has potential to decrease vulnerability by creating a distributed ledger where you can verify transactions across multiple entities. I think there are some really interesting applications being explored, supply chain being one of the critical ones, and I am speaking of the traditional cargo supply chain from a Customs and Border Protection background, being able to verify that shipment from stuffing in a manufacturer's facility all the way to unloading it at a Walmart in the United States.

That is a very promising type of capability. So I think ultimately Blockchain will be a help as it is applied in various sectors.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. How well do you think Government as a whole is accepting that?

I mean, I agree with you. Are we moving toward Blockchain across the infrastructure?

Secretary MCALEENAN. So I think the private sector is going to drive it as it usually does in adoption of new technology. What we

are trying to do at CHS is play a productive role where we can partner in the financial sector, for instance, in movement of cargo in supply chains and in cybersecurity applications as well, to basically provide a platform and support standard-setting for Blockchain applications in different areas.

I think there is a lot of work to be done, and frankly that is a dialog that needs to happen with Congress as well.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Agreed. Again, changing the subject, and this is for Under Secretary Glawe. I am pronouncing your name correctly, Glawe?

Can you elaborate a little bit on the National Vetting Center, where we are, the memorandum that was recently issued, and kind-of give us an update on that?

Mr. GLAWE. Sure. Myself and the Secretary for many years in our prior capacity have been working on this, and I am happy to say the National Vetting Center is right on track with where we want to be, and that is really taking U.S. intelligence community data, law enforcement data, U.S. Customs and Border Protection data, and other data sources to find nefarious actors, criminal entities, work expanding it to looking at transnational crime, foreign intelligence operatives, and it is really a model that the Secretary led in his prior capacities in developing the business model to find bad things that are trying to come into the United States.

This will be expanded to cargo, and it really is a model that is really important for the Department of Homeland Security. We are the last line of defense before bad things come in the country, and I would defer to the Secretary because he was really the architect behind this for many years, and he saw it to fruition before he left.

Secretary MCALEENAN. I think you summarized it very well.

This is a collaboration with the intelligence community and interagency parties that has expanded, that has been done from the beginning with inclusion of privacy from across the interagency to make sure we are doing this right with every additional data set with every comparison that we have the right safeguards in place.

It is already identifying individuals that could pose a threat to the United States that we would not have seen before this capability was brought on-line.

So I think it is absolutely headed in the right direction, building off the National Targeting Center framework.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. I just want to thank you for that work. Thank you both.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman from Mississippi and Tennessee yields back.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Green, for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I thank the witnesses for appearing.

I would like to juxtapose, if I may, 2 children. We have seen the photographs of the babies coming from south of the border, but I have also seen as of late a photograph of a child 3 years of age born in Ukraine, came to this country with his father after his mother died, grew up in Brooklyn, Master's degree from Harvard, serves in the military, Purple Heart recipient.

There was no way to prognosticate at the time this child sought to enter the United States that he would become the person he is today. No way. One can but only imagine the number of children we have turned away who may have been of great benefit to our country.

Immigrants have made America great, not by themselves, but they have been a part of the greatness of this country.

When I see the photograph of this baby being separated from a parent crying, there is just no way to know what we have done when a person is seeking lawful asylum.

In my research, I do not find any place where the colonel, whom I have great respect for, by the way, do not believe he is being treated fairly, but I have not found in my research any indication that he was required to wait in a third country for some period of time before he could enter this country.

My research does not indicate that at that time persons who were coming from Europe or Ukraine in this case, any of them had to wait in cages. I just have to ask myself why are we treating persons coming from south of the border so differently, wait in a third country, working out agreements such that if they do not do certain things in other countries, they are going to be denied the opportunity to traverse to this country.

Why are we treating them so differently, if you would, Honorable Mr. McAleenan?

Secretary MCALEENAN. Congressman, under the U.S. refugee programs, people do apply and wait in third countries while they go through the process with, first of all, the United Nations, the International Organization of Migration, with the State Department Population Refugees and Migration, and then DHS, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

So it is a multi-agency process that happens abroad for refugees that come to the country today, to the most welcoming country in the world.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Is it your indication to me for the record that this is what occurred with the colonel?

Secretary MCALEENAN. I do not know the colonel's individual case, Congressman. I am sorry.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. All right. Well, I do not know it in totality, but I know enough about it to suggest that it appears to me that we are not being even-handed in terms of our approach.

At the turn of the century, we had many people to come to this country, not into the 21st Century but the 20th Century, from Europe. They came here on boats. They went through Ellis Island, and they did not have the requirements that we have for the people coming from south of the border.

A lot of these changes are changes that were made on your watch. This happened on your watch. You have some responsibility for what is happening.

This is not to disrespect you, dear friend, but it is to say that some of this could have been abated. You did comment and indicate that it was terminated because of the way it was impacting people. I hope I said that correctly. I am not trying to demean you or the President.

But it should not have started. It should not have started. Why? What made us decide that these people should be treated the way they were treated?

Secretary MCALEENAN. I do not think we have the time today to have a fulsome conversation on this, but let me try to answer your question.

The laws have changed dramatically since the turn of the century and the prior arrival of mass migrations. We are trying to apply those laws.

We are also trying to ensure that individuals who need protections, protections for asylum, and these categories are political, racial, religious, membership in a social group, they are able to receive those protections as close to home as possible without entering in a dangerous smuggling cycle.

We cannot have an immigration system that is based on a Darwinian principle, of anyone who arrives at the U.S. border should be allowed to enter. We have to have more integrity in the international system. We have got 70 million in vulnerable populations of—

Mr. GREEN of Texas. My time has expired.

I must state and say this, dear sir. Nowhere in the law do we have language such as what you just used. That was done to inflame.

If you were in court and being questioned, you would be taken to task for trying to use that type of inflammatory language.

Darwinian? There is nothing in the law that says Darwinian, and you know this. That was done intentionally to inflame.

Secretary MCALEENAN. I am not inflaming anything, Congressman.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. But that is what that language does.

Secretary MCALEENAN. I am explaining that under—

Mr. GREEN of Texas. But you are using inflammatory language. I was very careful to try as best as I could to be fair to you and the President, but the truth is this.

They are people of color, and with people of color, we have a different standard. If these were babies coming from the north, we would not have treated them the way we treated these children.

Secretary MCALEENAN. I disagree. We apply the law equally to people, refugees of all colors.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Well, it does not evidence itself in what we see.

Secretary MCALEENAN. Migrants from all colors—

Mr. GREEN of Texas. It does not evidence itself in what we see. I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman yields back. The time has expired.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCCAUL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want thank Secretary McAleenan for your service to our Nation and to the American people and protecting the American people in I think very difficult times.

When I was Chairman of this committee, I saw the rise and fall of ISIS and the so-called caliphate. We just had recently the killing, the death of Abu Bark al-Baghdadi.

I would like to know just from the Secretary and the two Directors, FBI and NCTC, what impact that has on the morale of ISIS. How much of a threat are they today?

Secretary MCALEENAN. So I believe just starting quickly, and passing to my colleagues, I believe they do continue to present a threat, and as Russ Travers noted, the inspiration of their ideology persists.

One of the things we have done recently with DHS, with the FBI, we put out a joint intelligence bulletin just ensuring there is awareness of the potential even though it has not happened in the past after the death of a senior leader, the potential for someone to be inspired and to commit an attack in the immediate aftermath.

We do think it is going to affect their ability to reorganize and to direct, but we maintain our concern about the diffuse and dispersed ISIS affiliates and their ability to continue to mount threats to U.S. interests world-wide.

Mr. MCCAUL. Director Wray.

Mr. WRAY. I would agree with Secretary McAleenan. Certainly it is an important blow, a successful blow for which we are all grateful, but it is also clearly the case that they anticipated at some point that they would need to have successors, and to a large extent what we are most worried about here on the homeland is what I would call the virtual caliphate, which is people who are inspired on-line, which is a lot easier to do and not just all tracing back to one leader.

Mr. MCCAUL. Director Travers.

Director TRAVERS. I would just add that they have been thinking about the demise of the caliphate for a couple of years. Adnani talked about it and the need to prepare for an insurgency.

They have lost a lot of leaders. This is a bureaucracy that is pretty good at doing succession planning. I think it is absolutely fair to say that it will be a morale hit. I think you can largely attribute many of the decline in attacks in Europe over the last couple of years to the demise of the caliphate.

But nevertheless, the ideology continues. The resonance continues, and that is a strategic concern for us.

Mr. MCCAUL. I think that is all accurate, and I do think the threat level has gone down a little bit. I mean, 2015, 2016 was like one external operational plot per month it seemed like.

Domestic terrorism seems to be on the rise, but, Director Wray, I just want to ask you about in terms of just numbers and arrests.

How many domestic terrorism arrests were effectuated in 2019?

Mr. WRAY. Sir, in 2019, we had 107 domestic terrorism arrests, and we had, I think, 121, give or take, international terrorism arrests.

Mr. MCCAUL. So in terms of international terrorism, there were more international terrorism arrests than domestic terrorism?

Mr. WRAY. Yes. Pretty close in number, but yes.

Mr. MCCAUL. Pretty close. How does that compare to the previous year?

Mr. WRAY. The previous year was both hovering around 100 arrests, both of the prior years as well.

I will say on the international terrorism side in terms of number of investigations that we have on-going, we have both the home-grown violent extremists, which are these people here inspired by various parts of the jihadist movement. We have about 1,000 give or take investigations of that sort.

But then that is not counting the foreign terrorist organizations or directed, structured international terrorist organizations which, you know, probably have about another 1,000 or so of those.

So while domestic terrorism is absolutely something that is very much top of mind and we at the FBI recently elevated to be a National threat priority along with HVEs and ISIS, international terrorism is very much alive and well and something we need to stay focused on, too.

Mr. MCCAUL. I think that is correct. You know, we talk a lot about domestic terrorism being on the rise, but I do not think we can let our eyes off the ball with foreign terrorist organizations and international terrorism.

I introduced a bill with some colleagues. You know, you have a domestic terrorism definition that was created after 9/11. Congress passed, you know, laws pertaining terrorism and both the international terrorism and domestic terrorism.

International terrorism had charges associated with it. Domestic terrorism did not. The FBI opens cases of domestic terrorism and international terrorism. However, the U.S. Attorneys, and I was one of them, cannot charge a domestic terrorism case. There is no specific charge related to that.

I introduced that bill working with the FBI, and it was endorsed by the FBI association. Do you have any comments on that bill and what value that would give to the FBI and U.S. Attorneys?

Mr. WRAY. Well, I think as I had mentioned in response to a different question, certainly we can always use more tools. As you say and as you experienced first-hand in the U.S. Attorney's Office, we do not have a domestic terrorism crime as such.

What you probably also saw and probably practiced while you were in the U.S. Attorney's office is our folks at the FBI, just like the AUSAs they work with, do not give up, and so they find work-arounds.

We have been very good at using everything else in Title 18, including creative things like most recently we used the Federal rioting statute to go after some of the terrorism that occurred in connection with Charlottesville, for example, and the Rise Above Movement there.

We also work with our State and local authorities, and especially in places like Texas. We have had some very successful work with State and local law enforcement, and you can get some pretty good hits at some State and local charges.

Mr. MCCAUL. Yes, the State charge has the death penalty.

But I think, Mr. Chairman, in closing, you know, whether it was the Austin bomber, which is clearly terrorism, to El Paso, to Odesa, I think this is something we should take a look at.

I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from New Jersey, Mrs. Watson Coleman.

Ms. WATSON COLEMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to the witnesses for coming today, and good luck to you, Mr. McAleenan. Good luck to you with whatever it is you are going to do next.

I have got a number of questions. I would be here, like Mr. Katko said, forever. I want to start with either Mr. Glawe or Mr. Travers said that there are 15,000 ISIS members in Syria and other places and Iraq, versus 1,000.

Who said that?

Director TRAVERS. I did, ma'am.

Ms. WATSON COLEMAN. OK. So what is the time frame that you are talking about? From when to when?

Director TRAVERS. This is 5 years ago, before the build-up of ISIS and the caliphate was formed. ISIS was down to about 1,000 people. Even after the demise of the caliphate, the low end of the estimate is 14,000 ISIS members in Syria and Iraq, mostly in Iraq, which for us suggests that there is a great fertile ground for a long-term insurgency.

Ms. WATSON COLEMAN. OK. Do you think that given the recent betrayal of our Kurdish allies and uproar and chaos that is taking place over there now become fertile ground for ISIS to grow there as well?

Mr. WRAY. Ma'am, I did not get the question.

Ms. WATSON COLEMAN. The President of the United States pulled away the troops that were supporting the Kurds and fighting with the Kurds against ISIS. Now, we have Turkey has infiltrated. There have been alliances now with Russia, our other really trusted friend. ISIS, some of their prisoners are escaping. There seems to be really chaos and fear and elimination happening over there.

I am wondering does that make it more fertile territory for ISIS to grow as well? That is just yes or no.

Mr. WRAY. It is a very fluid situation. Sure. We do not know exactly what the Syrian military is going to do east of the river. I believe both the President and the Secretary of Defense have indicated that we remain committed with our forces there to a counter-ISIS campaign.

Ms. WATSON COLEMAN. Really? I thought we were just going to protect the oil.

Do we have any idea how many members of al-Qaeda exist?

Director TRAVERS. Numbers are difficult to come by. Again, we are looking at a command-and-control structure that exists, and then there are a half-dozen or so affiliates, and they have thousands of individuals each.

Ms. WATSON COLEMAN. So are we talking about another 15,000, 20,000? I am trying to figure out how safe I feel.

Director TRAVERS. I would say that numbers themselves are not a particularly good indicator of capability.

Ms. WATSON COLEMAN. So this is what I heard, and you can tell me if I am wrong. I am hearing that we are doing pretty good at keeping bad people, really bad people, out of the United States of America. Even in cybersecurity, we are doing a decent job with trying to protect our infrastructure and those things that are impor-

tant to us, whether it is China for monetary reasons or Russia for disruption of our infrastructure.

I am hearing that, right? That is basically what I am hearing. Just anybody just tell me.

Director TRAVERS. I can only speak to terrorism, but I think this country has done a great job pushing borders out and establishing a comprehensive vetting system.

Ms. WATSON COLEMAN. So I kind-of want to go into for a minute, real fast, this whole issue of domestic terrorism, and I want to direct my questions to Mr. Wray.

Mr. Wray, first of all, I am sorry. Honorable Mr. Wray.

You had collapsed. You have taken away this horrible category of black extremity, extremists, whatever it was called, and the report that went with it.

You have now collapsed what is white supremacism, replacement supremacism, and black separatism into a racially-motivated category of terrorism.

Do you then make a distinction as to who commits what infractions, and do you have any indication are we having a greater percentage of those incidents happening with white supremacists, white replacementists, or black extremist; and if so, can you tell me your breakdown?

Mr. WRAY. Well, I cannot give you exact numbers sitting here right now, but what I can tell you is that the reorganization of our categories, our nomenclature was based on a lot of I think very helpful dialog that I had with Congressional Black Caucus, with Noble, with lots of other people, and was part of a much broader reorganization of the way we counted.

Within the racially-motivated violent extremist category, I think it is fair to say from what we see internally that a huge chunk, the majority of the racially-motivated violent extremists, domestic terrorism, the majority of that is at the hands of what I would call white supremacists.

Ms. WATSON COLEMAN. Are we aware of the linkages that may take place internationally, the inspiration that comes from things we saw in Christchurch and things of that nature?

Mr. WRAY. We are very actively looking at that. We spend a lot of time trying to discern trends and leads on that front.

Ms. WATSON COLEMAN. If we identify those connections, would we then be able to identify the groups as terrorist groups?

Mr. WRAY. Where there are groups, as such, I think we have been pretty effective at identifying them, but I will say, as I think I may have mentioned to one of your colleagues, more and more on the domestic terrorism side, including this white supremacist violence category, it is not really about groups in the same way we used to think of groups with al-Qaeda and Hezbollah. It is more diffuse, more unstructured and undisciplined.

Ms. WATSON COLEMAN. So I think you have a really huge task. All of you have a huge task to keep us safe, and I thank you for the work that you do.

I am concerned about the FBI having its resources taken away from doing some of this really important stuff and put into a position to have to investigate itself as to whether or not there was a treasonous investigation done as it related to the 2016 involvement

of Russia in our election, and I pray that your resources are not taken away so that you can continue to focus on that which is really a threat to us and the safety and security, and Congress can concentrate on the other.

Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentlelady's time has expired.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Crenshaw, for 5 minutes.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you all for being here.

What a great discussion today, and I will try to hit some different topics. This question regarding Hezbollah and the recent decision of the Lebanese president to step down, I will direct this to you, Mr. Travers.

How do you think that affects the Iranian threat, the Hezbollah threat, globally?

Then maybe you can expand upon what the nexus is between Hezbollah and some of the groups south of the border in South America and Mexican drug cartels, if any.

Director TRAVERS. Well, the unrest in Lebanon and Hariri's decision largely is a local issue having to do with a WhatsApp tax, I think, and so it has been fascinating to watch. I am not sure that it has a great deal to do with the Hezbollah threat itself.

My guess is that Hezbollah was a fan of Hariri and would like him to stay put. So we will have to see how that plays out.

Hezbollah itself, you are quite right, is an extraordinary organization, and it does have global connections. It is a very mature organization. It is very careful in its decision-making process.

We are watching very carefully its activities in the Middle East right now, how if it would respond to Iran. In our view it has no interest in going to war with Israel, for instance. It has a high bar for any attacks against the United States. Nasrallah is a pro. He has been doing this for a very long time.

Mr. CRENSHAW. There is a high bar for attacks, but what is its capability?

Have you seen any nexus between them and groups south of the border?

I mean, there was long thought to be a relationship between them and the tri-border areas in South America. What about closer to our border? Is there any potential for that kind of relationship?

Director TRAVERS. In this session, sir, I just do not think we can get into that. I need to go into closed session.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Fair enough. But let's talk directly about the Mexican drug cartels that we do see south of our border. I will direct this to you, Mr. Secretary.

One thing that stands out to me especially from a tactical perspective is how capable the Mexican drug cartels are, with their weaponry, with their training, with their brutality, and with their endless amount of funding.

I mean, if you look around the world as far as threats at a very tactical level, they are probably one of the most capable groups, and right now they have no interest in conducting attacks against the United States, right? Their interests are more business-related.

But how can we do better working with the Mexican government to quell this threat, and what should we be worried about in the future?

Secretary MCALEENAN. It is a really challenging one. I outlined it in my opening as one of the major threat vectors we see affecting the homeland, and not necessarily a direct act of violence, as you alluded to. They focus that on each other primarily and, unfortunately, on the government of Mexico and other allies' police forces in the region.

But really their ability to smuggle hard narcotics into the United States, we have seen the impact of the fentanyl and synthetic opioid epidemic. Methamphetamine is really the main concern in scale if you talk to our State and local law enforcement partners right now.

But there are 4 or 5 very violent, very capable organizations that impact the safety of Mexican citizens in a number of states.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Is there more we can be doing with the Mexican government?

Is there a better relationship that could be had or is that at a good place right now?

Secretary MCALEENAN. So I think both the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice and other IC partners are really supporting the government of Mexico law enforcement. I do think we need to continue to work on the weapons flowing south, on the money flowing south that is helping support cartel activities in Mexico and in the region more broadly.

That has got to be a concerted effort across the USG.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Thank you.

Director Wray, I will point this last one to you.

You mentioned before thwarting various attacks, domestic and foreign terrorist attacks, over the last few years. You did not give any numbers. Maybe those are Classified. That is fine. I do not need the numbers right now.

I want to know if we have been more successful than we were 20, 30 years ago and why. Is it because stovepiping has ceased to be such a problem?

The interagency relationships, are those working better?

Do we have better tools?

Is our presence overseas helpful? Is it hurting?

The eyes and ears on the ground, is the intelligence collection, is our view of the networks helping us out there?

Are we keeping them busy so that they are not planning attacks here?

What is it?

I am out of time after that question. So I will let you take it.

Thank you.

Mr. WRAY. Well, in the interest of time, what I would say most of the reasons for the success boils down to one word, which is partnerships, partnerships between Federal agencies, partnerships, in particular, between Federal agencies and State and local law enforcement, partnerships within the intelligence community, partnerships with our foreign partners.

All of those things have led to a greater flow of information, greater connecting of the dots, greater ability to get ahead of the

threat, and a greater recognition that there is no one disruption strategy. There are a lot of different ways in which you can disrupt a terrorist attack.

It could be a kinetic strike. It could be criminal law enforcement action. It could be some, you know, visa action. It could be some foreign government taking action. There are a lot of different ways, a lot of different tools in the toolbox if everybody is talking to each other.

I will say, having been in the FBI building on 9/11 and been intimately involved in the War on Terror during those years and then coming back into this role now, the difference between how closely everybody is working together, I know this sounds a little Pollyannaish. It is like night and day, and it could not come a moment too soon.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman's time has expired.

The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from California, Ms. Barragán, for 5 minutes.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Thank you.

So, Mr. Secretary, under your tenure we have seen an expansion of human rights abuses under this administration specifically named "migrant protection protocols," or the "remain in Mexico policy."

The name almost assumes that this program will actually protect migrants when it does the complete opposite. Instead of allowing asylum seekers to remain safely in the United States as they wait for their cases to be heard, as has been done by law under the U.S. Refugee Act, you have forced nearly 50,000 asylum seekers, including vulnerable individuals like those with serious medical conditions, pregnant women, LGBTQ people to wait in areas plagued by violence, like the state of Tamaulipas, Mexico, which is a Level 4 threat.

This is the same warning that countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and North Korea have.

I am going to say this again. We are sending people, pregnant women, back to dangerous places in Mexico that have a Level 4 threat that is the equivalent of Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and North Korea.

Before you decided to return families with children and other asylum seekers to wait in these very dangerous places in Mexico, did you conduct any type of an analysis, any type, to assess the potential harms that these asylum seekers might suffer?

Secretary MCALEENAN. So the migrant protection protocols is a program in partnership with the government of Mexico.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. I am asking if you have any kind of an assessment on the potential harm of where they are being sent. Did we do that?

Secretary MCALEENAN. There was a month-long dialog with the government of Mexico on the—

Ms. BARRAGÁN. I am asking the United States. It is a yes or no. Did you assess the threat level before you sent them there?

Secretary MCALEENAN. Between the Department of Homeland Security, Department of State which jointly negotiated this program with the government of Mexico, assessments were done on

Mexican's ability to manage this program jointly with the United States, yes.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. OK. So you did assess this, and you thought it was perfectly fine.

Do you know that there are public reports of kidnappings, assaults, and other attacks on families and other asylum seekers that are returned to Mexico?

Are you reading these reports? Are you hearing about them?

Secretary MCALEENAN. Certainly we carefully monitor reports of violence in the northern border states of Mexico for lots of reasons.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. So have you heard about people being kidnapped? Yes or no?

Secretary MCALEENAN. Yes, we have heard—

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Have you heard about people being assaulted? Yes or no?

Secretary MCALEENAN. Please let me finish the answer.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. I do not have that much time, and I want to know what you are aware of.

Secretary MCALEENAN. But sometimes it is not a yes or no question.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Because my colleagues over here are talking about how we are a compassionate and loving Nation, but sending a deaf child back to Mexico and to a Level 4 area is not compassionate to me.

Sending pregnant women back to these areas to be raped, killed, and abused is not a compassionate Nation.

So I am trying to assess whether you—

Secretary MCALEENAN [continuing]. Families to pay smugglers and put themselves at risk on a dangerous journey is not compassionate either.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Correct, and let's talk about those.

Chairman THOMPSON. Just a minute, Mr. Secretary. She is still talking. Let her finish, and you will get your chance to respond.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. So, Mr. Secretary, let's talk about those cartels. In the press conference yesterday, Acting CBP Commissioner Mark Morgan remarked that the Mexican cartels could really teach a business class at Harvard. These are the same cartels that dominate the several areas of the border where your agency is currently sending tens of thousands of vulnerable asylum seekers to wait for weeks and maybe months under this so-called protection program.

In August, cartel members came to a shelter in Nuevo Laredo, a city where your agency has returned 10,000 asylum seekers. They demanded that the minister in charge of the shelter hand over Cubans who were sheltered there for ransom.

When he refused, do you know what happened? The cartels kidnapped him. That pastor has not been seen or heard of since then.

Have you heard of this incident with the pastor?

Secretary MCALEENAN. I have not heard of that incident.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. OK. Well, in September, *Vice News* reported how many numerous people who are subjected to MPP have been delivered to the hands of these very dangerous cartels—we at least can all agree are just very dangerous—just miles away from their being forcibly returned by CBP officers.

One migrant described how the Mexican immigration officers who were transporting them turned them directly over to the cartels.

Are you aware that Mexican officials are turning these people directly over to these very dangerous cartels? Are you aware of this?

Secretary MCALEENAN. I am not aware of any verified incident where that occurred.

Ms. BARRAGAN. Well, it is clear to me that the MPP program is creating a business opportunity for cartels who now have tens of thousands of vulnerable people and desperate people who are being exploited. It is unbelievable to me that we believe that this is OK, that because it is not happening on U.S. soil, that it is just OK.

But as my colleague said, it is on us, and one day we will have to go to heaven and go face those who judge us, and we will have to live with the decision on what we did and whether we stood up for human rights or whether we let them happen under our watch.

I have to tell you it is heartbreaking that this country is closing the door on people who are fleeing violence and sending them back to dangerous places that have a Level 4 threat where even U.S. citizens are told not to go.

With that I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentlelady yields back.

The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from New York, Miss Rice, for 5 minutes.

Miss RICE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. McAleenan, I, too, want to join my colleagues in thanking you for your service and wish you luck on your future endeavors.

There have been several reports that President Trump is considering appointing Acting U.S. CIS Director Ken Cuccinelli or Acting CBP Commissioner Mark Morgan, even though the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel has determined that they are ineligible under the Federal Vacancies Reform Act. Are you aware of that?

Secretary MCALEENAN. So I am not going to discuss any pre-decisional personnel efforts, but I will note that the administration will follow the law in naming a successor for the Department of Homeland Security.

Miss RICE. OK. I am glad to hear that.

In your final hours as Acting Secretary, do you have any plans to change the current line of succession at DHS?

Secretary MCALEENAN. Again, I am not going to discuss any pre-decisional personnel actions.

Miss RICE. Well, I am just asking if you are planning on doing that. I mean, there is only 24 hours left.

Secretary MCALEENAN. I have no present plans to do that.

Miss RICE. Have you discussed nominating someone to be the assistant secretary of the Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office with the President?

Secretary MCALEENAN. I have not.

Miss RICE. Have you spoken to anyone in the administration about that?

Secretary MCALEENAN. Again, I am not going to discuss pre-decisional personnel matters.

Miss RICE. I was just asking you. You said you did not discuss it with the President. Have you discussed that specific thing with anyone in the administration?

Secretary MCALEENAN. I am not going to discuss pre-decisional personnel matters.

Miss RICE. OK. Last week Facebook announced that it had removed a network of Russian-backed accounts that posed as local citizens to support President Trump and attack former Vice President Joe Biden.

Multiple reports, including the 2017 intelligence community assessment, Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation, and a bipartisan report released earlier this month from the Senate Intelligence Committee, have all confirmed that Russia attempted to interfere in the 2016 election and will do so again in 2020.

Do you accept that conclusion, Mr. McAleenan?

Secretary MCALEENAN. Yes, our entities, CISA is leading that effort along with our Intelligence and Analysis Directorate and others, are focused on threats posed to our elections, including from Russia.

Miss RICE. Mr. Wray, do you agree with those conclusions?

Mr. WRAY. We believe that Russia—we assess that Russia continues to have designs on interfering and influencing our electoral system.

Miss RICE. Have either of you spoken with President Trump or anyone in the administration about Russia and what they are planning on doing in the 2020 election?

Mr. WRAY. Well, I have had, along with others, numerous meetings with folks in the White House, including the President, on election security and on the threats they face.

Miss RICE. Do you conclude that they appreciate Russia's interference in 2016 and the likelihood that they are doing it now to affect the 2020 election?

Yes or no. You do not have to tell me who you spoke to. Just do you have confidence that someone, that there is someone in the administration that appreciates that?

Mr. WRAY. Let me say it is crystal clear, I think, to all of us involved in protecting our elections, FBI—and I do not want to speak for the other agencies, but from all my interactions with our partners, it has been the same—crystal clear that this is a top priority that we intend to take very seriously and throw every tool in the toolbox against.

Miss RICE. OK. Thank you.

So I just want to make reference to an article that literally just posted on the *New York Times*, and I understand some people's feelings about the *New York Times*, but let's just accept for a fact that what I am going to talk about is actually fact.

Russia has been testing new disinformation tactics in an enormous Facebook campaign in parts of Africa as part of an evolution of its manipulation techniques ahead of the 2020 American Presidential election. The campaign underlined how Russia is continuing to aggressively try different disinformation techniques, even as it has come under scrutiny for its on-line interference methods, by spreading the use of its tactics to a region that is less closely monitored than the United States and Europe.

It is said that it was highly likely that Russian groups were already using the same model of working. What they did in Africa was actually work with local people so that it was not immediately detectible that these were Russian-backed accounts.

So the Russian groups have already started using that model of working with locals right here in the United States to post inflammatory messages on Facebook, and by employing those local, the Russians did not need to set up the fake accounts as they had done in the past or create accounts that originated in Russia, which is making it easier to sidestep being noticed.

This is just an enormous, enormous problem. Director Wray, were you aware of this, using local people, not just in Africa, and its disinformation about being critical of various American and French policies?

But they are doing that now in anticipation of the 2020 election. Can you tell me are you able to address this?

Are you finding Facebook and other social media platforms helpful?

If you could just expound on that.

Mr. WRAY. Sure. So obviously, I have not read the article that you mentioned, and I have to be a little bit careful about what I can say that I know through other sources.

But I am generally aware of the phenomenon or the tactic, if you will, that you are describing. I would say that we expect that the Russians will and already have continued to up their game from, you know, what they did in 2016.

Of course, we have upped our game, too, and in particular, you mentioned Facebook. We've worked very closely with a lot of the social media companies. That is one of the big steps forward that happened in the midterms and that has continued right on up to this day, is a lot of engagement with those companies to underscore to them that they bear, that they bear a significant responsibility in this area.

There are a lot of things that they can do under their terms of use, terms of service that would be harder for anybody in the government to do in a country like ours.

So we have made a lot of progress. There is a lot more sharing of information back and forth and getting synergies from working together.

There is still progress to be made, and we are going to need to keep the pressure on because, as I think I said, the bar is just going to keep going up, and you pointed to a good example of that.

Miss RICE. I would like to continue this conversation with you off-line, if that would be possible.

I want to thank you all for being here, and I hope that we can all agree that this issue of election security is not a political issue. We are talking about saving democracy as we know it, and I know all of you gentlemen, I think I can speak for you in saying that I know and I am grateful that you appreciate that fact, too.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you.

The gentlelady yields back.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mississippi, Mr. Guest, for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUEST. I want to thank you and your staff for visiting Mississippi in August. I had a chance to visit with you as you all were conducting some field hearings there, meeting with members of the community about working together, the private sector/public sector, to see that we are making and creating a great place to live and worship and raise a family, and I want to thank you for that visit, and more importantly, thank you for your service to our country.

Earlier this month, President Trump signed into law House Resolution 1590, a bill that was authored by my office, the Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel Act. This law would require your successor to develop and exercise and evaluate the effectiveness of our Nation's ability to identify and deter terrorists before they travel through our State, into our States and into our Nation.

My question is: Do you believe that bills such as 1590, bills that create exercises are helpful for the Department of Homeland Security so that we are able to identify, close gaps, and so that Congress is better able to determine the necessary weaknesses within our system?

Secretary MCALEENAN. Certainly, I think it is the kind of activity we undertake really every day to make sure that there are no vulnerabilities or gaps in our information sharing between agencies, between foreign partners, and that we are applying that at every opportunity to identify a potential threat trying to enter the United States or even head toward us through our foreign partner nation's borders.

So I do think being very focused on it and highlighting the effort to exercise it and test those capabilities is a valuable approach.

Mr. GUEST. You have testified several times before this committee and before other committees in Congress. We have talked a great deal about Southwest Border apprehensions. I believe that in fiscal year 2019, it has reached nearly 1 million apprehensions.

Do you believe that illegal immigrants are encouraged by loopholes in our immigration laws to make the dangerous journey and to try to cross the border illegally?

Secretary MCALEENAN. I do not think there is any question about that. We had 977,000 crossings. We are in our fifth month now here in October of a 15 to 20 percent reduction month-over-month, and that is because we have been able through our National partnerships to address some of the vulnerabilities presented by those loopholes, the No. 1 being that if you bring a child with you, you could have been released into the United States.

That is why we had that crisis in the spring. We have asked Congress to address that in November 2017, in January 2018, and throughout my tenure as CBP commissioner and Acting Secretary, Congress has not acted on those vulnerabilities.

We have been in partnership with international partners and using existing legal frameworks, including 235(b)(2)(C) of the Immigration Nationality Act, which is the migrant protection protocol program, to try to create the ability to get immigration results elsewhere in the system since we cannot do it here in the United States.

Mr. GUEST. Mr. Secretary, what do we need to do as Congress to close these loopholes?

Secretary MCALEENAN. We have asked for 3 very specific legislative changes that would have addressed the drivers of this crisis before it occurred.

One is the ability to keep families together in an appropriate setting through an immigration proceeding. That is what the prior administration was able to do at the end of 2014 crisis. A district court in the Ninth Circuit took that away from us in 2015, and we have not had that authority.

We have asked for Congress to reestablish it, and we are now trying to pursue it by regulation, also held up in the courts.

Second, we have asked for the ability to treat unaccompanied children coming from non-contiguous countries the same way we do with Canada and Mexico and provide them access to protections from their home countries so they do not make these dangerous journey, but if they do, have the ability to repatriate them so they are not incentivized to try.

Then third, we have asked for Congress to address the vulnerabilities in our asylum system and the huge gap between the ultimate rulings by immigration judges where only 10 to 20 percent are giving an affirmative asylum recognition, but at the credible fear stage, which happens at the border, 80 percent-plus have been allowed to proceed with their cases that could take 5 to 7 years while they are released in the United States.

Those are the 3 changes in law that we have asked for consistently for over 2 years.

Mr. GUEST. If Congress were to act and implement the requests that you have made, what impact do you believe that it would have upon what we are seeing as far as the humanitarian crisis along our Southwest Border?

Secretary MCALEENAN. I think it would provide us the ability to have integrity in the system here in the United States and not rely solely on foreign partnerships to address the loopholes in our law that caused the crisis over the last year.

Mr. GUEST. Mr. McAleenan, this may be your last time as Acting Secretary to address this committee in this setting. Is there anything that you would like to leave with us as a Committee of Homeland Security? Anything that you see moving forward that we need to address and prioritize as Members of Congress that would be able to keep the American public safe?

Secretary MCALEENAN. So I think we have seen a lot of evidence of nonpartisan, bipartisan discussion on critical threats facing our country. You heard all 4 panelists outline really the same 3 to 5 top concerns that we are facing.

But we have had really important dialog, I think, on some of the emerging aspects that are going to be challenging in the future, things like foreign influence, things like cryptocurrency. Those are conversations that we need to have with Congress in a bipartisan basis and come up with solutions, and this committee is properly placed to support those dialogs.

Mr. GUEST. Mr. Secretary, thank you for your service.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from Illinois, Ms. Underwood, for 5 minutes.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to begin by thanking the departments and agencies represented here today and our entire intelligence community. In addition to protecting us from underseen threats, your continued work contributed to the successful operation this weekend that killed ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. I am really grateful for your diligence, your commitment to the mission, and service to our country.

Thank you.

Director Wray, you said that when it comes to foreign interference in American elections, 2018 midterm elections were a, "dress rehearsal for the big show in 2020." In the 2019 Worldwide Threats Assessment report, we expect our adversaries and strategic competitors to refine their capabilities and add new tactics as they learn from each other's experiences, suggesting the threat landscape looks very different in 2020 and in future elections.

So, sir, as much as you can share in this public setting, can you detail what those new tactics might be and increasingly sophisticated capabilities that our adversaries are developing?

Mr. WRAY. Well, I think you anticipated part of what I am going to say, which is most of what I would say in response to that question really cannot be done in an open setting.

I will say that as I have mentioned in response to Congresswoman Rice, some of the things that the Russians have tried in other countries we expect them to try to do here as well. You know, it is pretty common to test it out in other jurisdictions.

Thankfully, we do not have elections every year. So that gives us a little bit of time to plan ahead.

Certainly technological tools keep evolving. So their ability to come up with different kinds of false personas, the trolls, the bots, all those things become more vexing and more challenging, which puts the premium on the point that I was making before about our working, on the foreign influence side, working with the social media companies, in particular, to really get them to keep upping their game as part of the defense.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. OK. The 2019 Worldwide Threats Assessment also reports that Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran currently have the ability to carry out a sophisticated cyber attack on our elections. We know that they have the capability. In addition to that, would you say that these countries have the motivation or the intent to attack our election?

Mr. WRAY. Again, I want to be a little bit careful what I can say in this setting, but I do not think we have seen an intention by those other three countries to attack election infrastructure. That does not mean they are not looking carefully at what the Russians attempted to do and trying to learn lessons from that.

But all of those countries in different ways are clearly interested in engaging in malignant foreign influence.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Right.

Mr. WRAY. The difference from interference in election infrastructure, and they all have different ways of going about it, but they are all kind of taking pages out of each other's playbooks. As we project forward, it is something that we have to be vigilant about.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Now, are you worried about copycats from smaller actors, non-state actors, on our elections?

Mr. WRAY. Absolutely. Cyber actors, and where that becomes particularly challenging is one of the phenomena that we see in the cyber crime arena these days is what we call the blended threat, which I where nation-state actors essentially hire cyber mercenaries.

So you used to be able to separate the world into the cyber criminals and the nation-states. Well, now if you see what might be a cyber criminal actor, he could be acting on his own for a financial benefit or for his own—

Ms. UNDERWOOD. For hire.

Mr. WRAY. Or he could be hired by some nation-state.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Thank you.

Mr. McAleenan, earlier this morning this committee had a field hearing on election security in my district in Northern Illinois, and during the hearings, State and local election officials spoke so highly of their work with CISA senior cybersecurity advisor Matthew Masterson. These officials coordinate with Mr. Masterson and his team to prepare and respond to emerging threats to our election infrastructure, and they testified that this coordination was incredibly helpful and valuable.

So what can Congress do to support and expand CISA's resources in this area as we prepare for growing threats in 2020 and beyond?

Secretary MCALEENAN. Thank you, Congresswoman, for that feedback. Mr. Masterson is a tremendous professional and well-regarded in the field.

I had the opportunity to speak with State and local election officials in Illinois when I was in Chicago a few months ago, and I had that same sense of partnership with CISA.

What can we do to expand it? We do want to increase our presence, our protected security advisor presence, conveying the capabilities of CISA to support counties, townships that are running elections Nation-wide. We would like to be out and present in more places because it is that direct interaction when you have a partner that you know that has that expertise that can really change your capabilities and your readiness.

So that is a key area that CISA is looking for additional reach and resources.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Awesome. So I am about out of time. I wanted to talk about domestic terrorism a little bit. So we are going to send over some questions. I know it is your last day, sir, but I would hope that the Department would respond.

Our committee is continuing to explore how we can protect our country from these emerging threats of the violent extremists and appreciate your on-going work in that area.

Thank you so much.

I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

Would the gentlelady want to mention a report that you were trying to find?

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Thank you so much, sir.

So we had the opportunity to get a briefing from an FBI briefer over the last couple of weeks. He came in last week on Wednesday,

in the Classified setting came in this week, and in response, they mentioned that on CapNet that there would be weekly reports about social media findings taken from the IC and distributed to State and local partners, and that it would be available to us each week.

We attempted to log in and access that report to track what the Russians are doing in real time. It is my understanding that that report is being developed somewhere between your agencies, but we do not have access to that currently.

I am a little bit concerned, sir, to be honest, Mr. Wray, because if that report is developed, we would like to see it, and if it is not, you know, worried that perhaps the briefer was not completely truthful in his update to us.

Chairman THOMPSON. Well, I think we were promised access to what we thought was a report that had been generally produced on a regular basis, and we will get to you in writing what that is because the Vice Chairwoman went down to look for it, and it was not there.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Yes, sir. Thank you.

Mr. WRAY. If I can get the information from your staff, I will be happy to have my staff drill into it and figure out what is going on there.

Chairman THOMPSON. Sure. Thank you.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana for 5 minutes.

Mr. RICHMOND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I will start with you, Mr. McAleenan.

Let me ask you about the parole directive. Is it still in effect and in force?

Secretary MCALEENAN. I am sorry. Which one, the significant public benefit parole directive?

Mr. RICHMOND. Well, no, the one with ICE detainees about parole or holding them, and my specific concern is the New Orleans ICE office, the field office that has released I think last year not 1 person. This year they still keep about 98 percent of the people.

So I am asking you is that parole directive still in force.

Secretary MCALEENAN. So I am not aware of any policy changes at the National level for ICE making determinations on parole, variety of different categories, whether people arrive at a port of entry, between ports of entry, whether it is an interior enforcement action, whether it is a mandatory detention context under Congressional statute.

Mr. RICHMOND. Well, let's just go to a specific part where they determine whether the person is a flight risk, whether they have substantial connection to the community, whether they have family that are U.S. citizens.

It is just amazing to me that no one in a particular field office in a whole year had any substantial ties to the community that they were not determined to be not a risk factor and released pending their hearing.

So does that stand out to you, 100 or 98 percent of people being held?

Secretary MCALEENAN. I would have to follow up with ICE and the acting director on that question. I am not aware of a different

approach by field office because it is a National policy, and you have listed some of the factors that are considered in a case-by-case manner.

Mr. RICHMOND. Well, then let me just make this as a formal request, and you can pass it off to whoever you deem necessary that I would like an analysis of the New Orleans field office, how many people were granted parole over the last 3 years and the different categories of why they were not granted.

Also, do you remember the case of Yoel Leal? He was in New Orleans. He was very sick. He was housed in Louisiana and in Mississippi, and we were discussing, No. 1, his medical treatment, and we realized that there is a language barrier many times for the people that we are holding in our custody and care, and that he refused treatment, but he did not understand what he was doing. So that was a big question for us.

Then we also asked to have a specific conversation with you, the Chairman and I, and in the mean time you all deported him. My question would be: No. 1, did you know about it?

No. 2, if you did, why would you all deport him when the Chairman and I were requesting a specific meeting about his status and whereabouts?

Secretary MCALEENAN. So I am personally not aware of the details of this case or a decision to remove him while the Chairman was asking about the case. I will be happy to go back over the time line and get you any information we can about that decision making process.

Mr. RICHMOND. Would you please do that?

Then let me just on a different note, and I would really appreciate just a candid answer if you could, our TSA officers play an incredible part in securing our country and our airports, and especially in New Orleans where they stopped a guy trying to board a plane. One officer was shot. One was stabbed, I believe.

Do you think we are paying them what they are worth?

Secretary MCALEENAN. So I do think the pay structure for our TSOs has to be looked at. They are incredible professionals. We want to maintain that cadre, that expertise as much as we can. They do a tremendous job.

I had a chance to meet some of the team in New Orleans who was involved in that incident, and we are extraordinarily proud of the work they do.

Mr. RICHMOND. Do you have a suggestion on what it should look like?

Secretary MCALEENAN. I do have a referral because our acting deputy secretary to TSA Administrator Dave Pekoske is working intimately on this issue, and we can get you the exact details on our recommended path forward for TSO pay.

Mr. RICHMOND. If you could get that to the Chairman and I, I know the Chairman has a bill, but if you can get us that, that would be very helpful.

Then with the last remaining seconds, Director Wray, you and I talked several times about the term "black identity extremists." Over the last couple of weeks, we were alerted about something called "Iron Fist." Is that on-going?

Does it exist, No. 1?

No. 2, is it still on-going?

Our information tells us it was to target individuals it classified as black identity extremists.

Mr. WRAY. Well, I am not familiar with the name that you just used. So I cannot engage specifically on that question.

I will say, as I think we have discussed before, we have moved away from that categorization, and I will add, as I think I mentioned to you in one of our earlier conversation—and this is very important to me personally—we do not open investigations into anyone on the domestic terrorism side unless we have, No. 1, credible evidence of a Federal crime; No. 2, credible evidence of a threat of violence; and, No. 3, in furtherance of an ideology.

If we do not have those 3 things, there is no investigation. So we do not investigate ideology, rhetoric, peaceful protests, anything like that.

Mr. RICHMOND. Well, let me just ask unanimous consent to enter into the record an October 6, 2017, article from *Foreign Policy* entitled “FBI’s New U.S. Terrorist Threat, Black Identity Extremists”; an October 13, 2017, letter from the CBC to Director Wray asking for a briefing; an August 8, 2019, article by the Young Turks entitled “Leaked FBI Documents Reveal Bureau’s Priorities under President Trump.”

But I will just conclude by asking your commitment to meet with us again to give us an update of where we are, what it looks like, if, in fact, there have been arrests, surveillance, investigations on anybody under the old black identity extremists and now what it is consumed in.

So I would just ask that you commit to briefing us again on that particular issue.

Mr. WRAY. We would be happy to keep the dialog going.

Mr. RICHMOND. Thank you.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you.

Without objection we will enter those into the record.

[The information referred to follows:]

ARTICLE SUBMITTED BY HONORABLE CEDRIC L. RICHMOND

THE FBI’S NEW U.S. TERRORIST THREAT: ‘BLACK IDENTITY EXTREMISTS’

Law enforcement calls it a violent movement. Critics call it racist.

By Jana Winter, Sharon Weinberger / October 6, 2017, 11:42 AM

As white supremacists prepared to descend on Charlottesville, Virginia, in August, the FBI warned about a new movement that was violent, growing, and racially motivated. Only it wasn’t white supremacists; it was “black identity extremists.”

Amid a rancorous debate over whether the Trump administration has downplayed the threat posed by white supremacist groups, the FBI’s counterterrorism division has declared that black identity extremists pose a growing threat of premeditated violence against law enforcement.

“The FBI assesses it is very likely Black Identity Extremist (BIE) perceptions of police brutality against African Americans spurred an increase in premeditated, retaliatory lethal violence against law enforcement and will very likely serve as justification for such violence,” reads the report, marked for official use only and obtained by Foreign Policy.

The August 2014 shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, was the catalyst for widespread anger and violence, the FBI report says, concluding that continued “alleged” police abuses have fueled more violence.

“The FBI assesses it is very likely incidents of alleged police abuse against African Americans since then have continued to feed the resurgence in ideologically motivated, violent criminal activity within the BIE movement,” the report states.

Some 748 people have been shot and killed by police so far in 2017, including at least 168 African-Americans.

The report, dated Aug. 3—just 9 days before the white supremacist rally in Charlottesville turned deadly—appears to be the first known reference to “black identity extremists” as a movement. But former government officials and legal experts said no such movement exists, and some expressed concern that the term is part of a politically motivated effort to find an equivalent threat to white supremacists.

A former senior counterterrorism and intelligence official from the Department of Homeland Security who reviewed the document at FP’s request expressed shock at the language.

“This is a new umbrella designation that has no basis,” the former official said. “There are civil rights and privacy issues all over this.”

The concept of “black identity extremists” appears to be entirely new. FP found only five references to the term in a Google search; all were to law enforcement documents about domestic terrorism from the last 2 months. One of those on-line references is to law enforcement training on identifying “domestic terror groups and criminally subversive subcultures which are encountered by law enforcement professionals on a daily basis.”

Among the six acts of premeditated violence linked to black identity extremists—it excludes violence toward police carried out in the normal course of their duties—the reports cites the July 2016 shooting of 11 police officers in Dallas. The shooter, Micah Johnson, was reportedly angry at police violence.

“Based on Johnson’s journal writings and statements to police, he appeared to have been influenced by BIE ideology,” the FBI report states. The attack took place during a Black Lives Matter protest of police shootings, though the BLM movement is not mentioned by name in the report.

Yet those involved in the Black Lives Matter movement have voiced concerns about FBI surveillance.

DeRay McKesson, an activist involved in the Black Lives Matter movement, told FP that the FBI visited his house in the run-up to the Republican National Convention. “I spoke about the FBI visit to my house and the houses of other activists in our final meeting with [President Barack] Obama,” he said.

“There is a long tradition of the FBI targeting black activists and this is not surprising,” McKesson said.

The FBI declined to comment on the report itself and did not respond to specific questions, but in an emailed statement to FP, the bureau defended its tracking of “black identity extremists,” saying that “the FBI cannot initiate an investigation based solely on an individual’s race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, or the exercise of First Amendment rights.”

In its August report, the FBI said it expects further attacks by black identity extremists, driven by both the perception and the reality of unfair treatment at the hands of police officers.

“The FBI further assesses it is very likely additional controversial police shootings of African Americans and the associated legal proceedings will continue to serve as drivers for violence against law enforcement,” the report says.

Some experts and former government officials said the FBI seemed to be trying to paint disparate groups and individuals as sharing a radical, defined ideology. And in the phrase “black identity extremist” they hear echoes of the FBI’s decades-long targeting of black activists as potential radicals, a legacy that only recently began to change.

“They are grouping together Black Panthers, black nationalists, and Washitaw Nation,” said the former homeland security official. “Imagine lumping together white nationals, white supremacists, militias, neo-Nazis, and calling it ‘white identity extremists.’”

The FBI is linking the people discussed in the report based only on them being black, rather than on any sort of larger ideological connection, the official said. “The race card is being played here deliberately.”

Michael German, a former FBI agent and now a fellow with the Brennan Center for Justice’s liberty and national security program, said manufacturing this type of threat was not new. He has criticized earlier FBI reports on “black separatists,” arguing that they conflated radical groups operating in the 1970’s with attacks in 2010 and later, even though there was no obvious connection.

The use of terms like “black identity extremists” is part of a long-standing FBI attempt to define a movement where none exists. “Basically, it’s black people who scare them,” German said.

Even former officials who view the government's concerns about black separatists as legitimate balked at the term "black identity extremist," and point out that the threat from individuals or groups who want to establish their own homeland is much less than from the far right.

In 2009, Daryl Johnson, then a Department of Homeland Security intelligence analyst, warned of the rise of right-wing extremism, setting off a firestorm among Congressional critics. Johnson, who left the department in 2010, said he could think of no reason why the FBI would create a new category for so-called black identity extremists. "I'm at a loss," he replied, when asked about the term.

"I have no idea of why they would come up with a new term."

There have been concerns about rising violence among black separatist groups in recent years, he said, but it does not approach the threat of right-wing extremism. "When talking about white supremacists versus black supremacists, there are way more white supremacists," Johnson said.

For historians and academics who have looked at the history of FBI surveillance of black Americans, the report also smacks of the sort of blatant racism the bureau has worked hard to leave behind. From the time J. Edgar Hoover took over the anti-radical division in the FBI at the height of the first "red scare" in 1919, the bureau began systematically surveilling black activists.

"Black protests get conflated for the bureau [with communism], and it begins there," said William Maxwell, a professor at Washington University in St. Louis, who has researched the FBI's monitoring of black writers in the 20th century.

What followed, according to Maxwell, was decades of FBI pursuit of black radicals in the belief, often mistaken, that they were part of a larger subversive movement. "It's deep in the bureau's DNA," he said.

Lately, that seemed to be changing. As FBI director, James Comey famously kept a copy of the Martin Luther King Jr. wiretap order on his desk as a reminder of the bureau's past abuses and made new agents learn the history of the FBI's pursuit of the civil rights leader.

The FBI also appeared to be focusing more attention on the threat of white supremacists. In May, the FBI warned that white supremacist violence was growing, according to a report obtained and published by FP. That same report noted that white supremacists were responsible for more attacks in the United States than any other extremist group, including Islamic extremists.

Critics, however, accuse President Donald Trump of shifting attention away from right-wing violence. This year, the Trump administration decided to focus the Department of Homeland Security's "countering violent extremism" program on Islamic terrorism and deprioritized funding to counter white supremacist groups.

"To hear there is a new initiative targeting black identity extremists is surprising given that shift," said Alvaro Bedoya, the executive director of the Center on Privacy & Technology at Georgetown Law.

Maxwell, the Washington University professor, had an even darker view. "It's classic Hoover-style labeling with little bit of maliciousness and euphemism wrapped up together," he said. "The language—black identity extremist—strikes me as weird and really a continuation of the worst of Hoover's past."

In a sense, the FBI's desire to identify a unifying ideological underpinning to what are often individual violent acts is not surprising, said David Garrow, a historian who wrote a Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of MLK. "Security agencies want to perceive a threat that is political, a threat that ideological," Garrow said, "but what we're actually witnessing is men, almost entirely men, acting out in violent criminal ways and grasping at some chimera of political justification."

But the document itself smacks of incompetence more than conspiracy, according to Garrow, who reviewed a copy of the report provided by FP. "The immediate instinct is to think [the FBI] are a threat," he said. "My immediate instinct is to wonder whether they are minimally competent."

Garrow, who has reviewed decades' worth of FBI documents for his work, warned against seeing this report as proof that the FBI is illegally targeting black Americans.

"They are often so clueless," he said of the FBI. "I don't find them a threat."

But the former homeland security official said the report's tendency to lump together different groups that have no obvious connection will make it harder for law enforcement to identify real threats. "It's so convoluted—it's compromising officer safety," the former official said.

And even though the report mentions in a footnote that "political activism" and "strong rhetoric" by themselves don't amount to extremism and "may be constitutionally protected," it identifies anger with police or "anti-white rhetoric" as indicators of a potential "violent threat."

“Just the term ‘black identity extremist’ is protected,” the former official said. “You can identify all you want.”

The FBI, however, defended the classification in its statement to FP.

“Domestic terrorism groups differ from traditional criminal groups in that they take action for a different purpose, to bring attention to a social or political cause,” the FBI wrote.

“Therefore, their existence as a group has a legitimate purpose, at least in part. Their legitimate activity may include acts of protest, advocacy, and civil disobedience.”

The FBI says there are “nine persistent extremist movements” in the United States at present. Those include “white supremacy, black identities, militia, sovereign citizens, anarchists, abortion, animal rights, environmental rights, and Puerto Rican nationalism.”

Jana Winter is an investigative reporter based in Washington, DC. Twitter: @janawinter Twitter: @weinbergersa

LETTER FROM THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS SUBMITTED BY HONORABLE
CEDRIC L. RICHMOND

October 13, 2017.

Director CHRISTOPHER WRAY,
*Federal Bureau of Investigation, 935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC
20535-0001.*

DEAR DIRECTOR WRAY: We write to express our concern over the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) recent “Intelligence Assessment” dated August 3, 2017, entitled “Black Identity Extremists Likely Motivated to Target Law Enforcement Officers.” We also request a briefing on the origins of this research and the FBI's intended next steps now that this assessment has been performed and disseminated.

As you are no doubt aware, the FBI has a troubling history of utilizing its broad investigatory powers to target black citizens. During the 1960's, Director J. Edgar Hoover used the Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) to surveil and discredit civil rights activists and members of the Black Panther Party. For example, the FBI falsified letters in an effort to blackmail Martin Luther King, Jr. into silence. Given this history, and given several concerning actions this Administration has taken on racial issues, Members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) are justifiably concerned about this FBI Assessment.

Unfortunately, this Administration has developed a pattern of statements and actions that are hostile to African Americans. The President and his advisors have at times failed to condemn Neo-Nazis and white supremacists. The President encouraged law enforcement personnel to use less restraint in dealing with individuals suspected of crimes. Last, the Attorney General has rolled back criminal justice reforms—a move that will disproportionately harm African Americans.

Against this backdrop, the Members of the CBC cannot help but be concerned about the aforementioned intelligence assessment. The FBI is responsible for investigating criminal activity and referring its findings to Department of Justice attorneys for prosecution. The intelligence assessment, citing only a handful of incidents since 2013, has concluded with “high confidence” that “Black Identity Extremists” are likely to target law enforcement based on “perceptions of police brutality against African Americans.”

The assessment and the analyses upon which it is based are flawed because it conflates black political activists with dangerous domestic terrorist organizations that pose actual threats to law enforcement. It relies on a handful of obviously terrible incidents to paint black Americans who exercise free speech against witnessed police brutality as possible violent extremists. These broad characterizations can only serve to further erode trust between law enforcement officials and many of the black communities they serve, further inflaming an already tense and complicated dynamic. Local law enforcement may erroneously target non-violent but politically-engaged persons or groups because of this assessment. Our constituents continue to express their frustration about being ignored and being attacked for exercising their constitutionally-protected right to free speech to protest inequities across American institutions.

We are concerned that this assessment could lead the FBI to target black communities, and it is imperative that you come to meet with the 49 Members of the CBC to address our concerns. Please respond to this letter in writing by October 23, 2017, as many of our Members and constituents will interpret a lack of response as confirmation that the FBI intends to unfairly target African Americans. Thank you for

your personal attention to this critical matter, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

CEDRIC L. RICHMOND,
Chair, Congressional Black Caucus.

JOHN CONYERS, JR.,
Ranking Member, House Committee on the Judiciary.

BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
Ranking Member, House Committee on Homeland Security.

ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS,
Ranking Member, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

ARTICLE SUBMITTED BY HONORABLE CEDRIC L. RICHMOND

LEAKED FBI DOCUMENTS REVEAL BUREAU'S PRIORITIES UNDER TRUMP

By: Ken Klippenstein, Aug 8, 2019.

Under President Trump, the FBI's official counterterrorism priorities have included "Black Identity Extremists," "anti-authority" extremists, and "animal rights/environmental extremists," according to leaked Bureau documents obtained exclusively by The Young Turks. The documents, many of which are marked "Law Enforcement Sensitive" and "For Official Use Only," also reference a mysterious plan to mitigate the threat of "Black Identity Extremists" with a program code named "IRON FIST" involving the use of undercover agents.

Each fiscal year, the FBI headquarters updates its Consolidated Strategy Guide, which lists the Bureau's priorities in numerous domains such as counterterrorism, counterintelligence, and cyber crime. When an August 2017 internal FBI report referencing the counterterrorism threat posed by "Black Identity Extremists" was published by Foreign Policy, the FBI became the subject of intense criticism for adopting what critics alleged was a racially loaded term.

What was not publicly known, however, was that not only had the FBI adopted the term; it specifically listed it as a top counterterrorism priority in its 2018 strategy guide, referring to the group as a "priority domestic terrorism target," and even established a program to counteract the supposed threat.

While the documents depict concerns about violent black extremist attacks, they do not cite a single specific attack—unlike white supremacist attacks, of which several prominent examples are provided.

Furthermore, although the FBI last month reportedly assured Senate Democrats that it had dropped the term "Black Identity Extremist" in favor of one that isn't race-specific, the documents suggest that this was misleading. Despite changing the name, the Bureau retained much of the original definition and still targeted black people.

So grave did the Bureau consider the threat of black extremists that from 2019 to 2020, using new designations, it listed the threat at the very top of its counterterrorism priorities—above even terror groups like al-Qaeda.

"Black Identity Extremists": What's in a Name?

By 2019, the FBI had indeed replaced its 2018 counterterrorism priority "Black Identity Extremists" with the vaguer designation "Racially Motivated Extremism," according to the Bureau's fiscal year 2018–20 counterterrorism strategy guides obtained by TYT.

In addition to the strategy guides, TYT also obtained FBI threat guidances associated with many of the counterterrorism priorities. These guidances detail the nature of the threats as well as how the Bureau plans to counteract them.

Despite the new term, "Racially Motivated Extremism," a 2019 threat guidance defines the new priority as including "Black Racially Motivated Extremism," a term that appears repeatedly in the document and includes much of the same definition of the 2018 "Black Identity Extremist."

"Racially Motivated Extremism . . . generally includes White Racially Motivated Extremism, previously referred to as White Supremacy Extremism, and Black Racially Motivated Extremism, previously referred to as Black Identity Extremism," the FBI document states.

The FBI's new 2020 counterterrorism priorities changed the designation yet again, this time to "Racially Motivated Violent Extremism."

However, the new term also includes much of the same definition of the 2018 "Black Identity Extremist."

The 2020 threat guidance states, “RMVEs [Racially Motivated Violent Extremists] use force or violence in violation of criminal law in response to perceived racism and injustice in American society, or in an effort to establish a separate black homeland or autonomous black social institutions, communities, or governing organizations within the United States.”

The 2018 threat guidance defines Black Identity Extremists in nearly identical fashion, saying members “use force or violence in violation of criminal law in response to perceived racism and injustice in American society; some do so in furtherance of establishing a separate black homeland or autonomous black social institutions, communities, or governing organizations.”

“The FBI judges some RMVE perceptions of police brutality against African Americans served as justification for premeditated, retaliatory violence against law enforcement in 2016,” the document states.

Origins of the ‘Threat’

The 2018 threat guidance strongly suggests that the “Black Identity Extremist” term emerged from the Black Lives Matter movement—specifically, the 2014 shooting of black teen Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and its aftermath.

“The FBI judges BIE perceptions of police brutality against African Americans have likely motivated acts of pre-meditated, retaliatory lethal violence against law enforcement,” the document states. “The FBI first observed this activity following the August 2014 shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and the subsequent acquittal of police officers involved in that incident.”

The threat guidance goes on to attribute the threat in part to violent rhetoric on social media as well as media attention generally.

“The threat to law enforcement from BIE . . . is likely to remain elevated, and may continue to expand, driven in part by continued calls for violent action on social media,” the document says. “The FBI assesses racially charged events, coupled with the wide-spread media attention of the events . . . remain contributing factors to the emergence of violent lone offenders within the BIE movement.”

Countering the ‘Threat’

The documents also shed light on the FBI’s plans to counter the perceived threat of black extremists. Methods alluded to include undercover employees, confidential informants and, cryptically, IRON FIST.

The 2018 threat guidance states, “It is challenging to get sources into BIE groups, due to security measures these groups employ. The vetting process and time investment to gain access to leadership in BIE groups is very lengthy. The use of undercover employees and on-line covert employees in BIE investigations would provide valuable intelligence to assist in mitigating the threat.

“Field offices will evaluate their need for an open Type 3 assessment file in regards to BIE. An open assessment file allows for greater proactive collection techniques should the BIE threat emerge in the wake of a police-involved incident that sparks potential BIE activity.”

The Bureau appears particularly interested in ascertaining BIE groups’ organizational structure as well as their alleged ties to criminal organizations.

“The FBI needs a better understanding of the hierarchy and structure of BIE groups, and how these groups train/work with one another, and criminal organizations,” the guidance states.

Although the document says that “many recent lethal BIE incidents have been conducted by BIE lone offenders,” it does not cite any specific cases.

The guidance also references legal and seemingly innocuous activities as “key threat indicators,” including attempts to identify the names or vehicles of law enforcement officers.

Threat Mitigation Strategy IRON FIST

IRON FIST, an FBI program not known to the public prior to the publication of these documents, was a strategy implemented by FBI headquarters to “mitigate” what it considered to be a “threat” posed by the “BIE movement.”

“IRON FIST is designed to evolve and adapt to the ever-changing threat posed by BIEs, to proactively address this priority domestic terrorism target by focusing FBI operations via enhanced intelligence collection efforts,” a 2018 FBI threat guidance document states. (At the same time, the Bureau also considered white supremacist extremists a priority domestic terrorism target.)

“IRON FIST will accomplish this by identifying actionable intelligence to directly support the initiation of FBI investigations and augment current efforts directed against BIEs . . . In addition, FBIHQ works to develop potential CHS [Confidential Human Sources] and conduct assessments on the current BIE CHS base.”

IRON FIST also includes a tactic by which the FBI would use the felony status of many Black Identity Extremists against them.

"Many BIEs are convicted felons who are prohibited possessors, therefore the FBI will continue to use their prohibited possessor status as a tactic to assist in mitigating the threat for potential violence," the document states.

Little else is revealed about IRON FIST in the documents.

'White Supremacy Extremists'

The same documents show that the FBI also defines racially motivated extremists as inclusive of white supremacist groups, which it describes as a "medium threat."

Until 2019, "White Supremacy Extremists" was a term listed on the FBI's counterterrorism priorities before it was categorized under racially motivated extremists, the documents also reveal.

"Some RMVEs are driven by a belief in the superiority of the white race and a perception that the U.S. Government is conspiring with Jews and minority populations to bring about the race's demise," the 2020 threat guidance states.

While the 2020 threat guidance alludes to violent black extremist attacks, each of the specific attacks referenced were carried out by white supremacists: The October 2018 attack on a synagogue in Pittsburgh, which killed 11, the March 2019 attack on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, which killed 51, and the April 2019 attack on a synagogue in Poway, California, which killed one.

In July, FBI Director Chris Wray told Congress that the majority of terrorism cases the Bureau has investigated in 2019 "are motivated by some version of what you might call white supremacist violence."

The head of the FBI's counterterrorism division testified that 40 percent of domestic terrorism cases were racially motivated extremists and that most of them were white supremacists.

Despite the apparent rise in attacks, the documents show that, in 2018, the FBI anticipated a decline in national white supremacist groups.

"The FBI further judges ongoing attrition of national organized white supremacy extremist groups will continue over the next year, yielding a white supremacy extremist movement primarily characterized by locally organized groups, small cells, and lone offenders," the 2018 threat guidance states.

"Infighting and lack of leadership have made it difficult for groups to organize nationally and to sustain their memberships and influence. The internet and the emergence of social media have also enabled individuals to engage the WSE movement without joining organized groups," the 2019 threat guidance says.

A PDF of the FBI documents obtained by TYT can be viewed [here](#).

Ken Klippenstein is a senior investigative reporter for TYT. He can be reached securely via Signal at 202-510-1268, on Twitter @kenklippenstein or via email: kenk@tyt.com.

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Chairman THOMPSON. Mr. McAleenan, let me join the chorus of people who have thanked you for your service to this Department for quite a long time. You have been a consummate professional. I personally thank you for that.

Going forward, the question is if nobody is appointed by tomorrow, are you prepared to stay on until somebody is appointed?

Secretary MCALEENAN. It is an important question, and in my letter of resignation, I did offer to the President to ensure a smooth transition in that arranged my position and want to make sure that happens to the Department.

Chairman THOMPSON. So you are, if asked to stay on, prepared to do it until someone is nominated for your position?

Secretary MCALEENAN. I hope the plan for a successor is imminent, but if necessary, I will absolutely ensure a smooth transition.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

I thank the witnesses for their valuable testimony and the Members for their questions.

The Members of the committee may have additional questions for the witnesses, and we ask that you respond expeditiously in writ-

ing to those questions. Hearing no further business, the committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:47 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

QUESTIONS FROM HONORABLE DINA TITUS FOR KEVIN MCALEENAN

CLIMATE CHANGE

Question 1. How can the United States strengthen our counterterrorism approach to better link the impacts of climate change with countering violent extremism and terrorist recruitment?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

WOMEN & ISIS

Question 2a. How should the United States address the emerging threat of attempted radicalization of women by ISIS and other terrorist organizations?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 2b. Are there U.S. programs or strategies targeting this specific concern?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

SYRIA & ISIS

Question 3a. Recently, hundreds of ISIS affiliates escaped from a Kurdish-run prison in northeast Syria after bombing by Turkish military forced the Kurds to divert resources to counter the Turkish threat.

Where are they now?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 3b. Could conditions on the ground allow ISIS to reconstitute and undermine 8 years of counterterrorism operations by U.S. and allied forces?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 3c. Which ISIS affiliates, if any, are capable of conducting attacks beyond their borders? Which pose the greatest threats to U.S. National security, and why?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 3d. What is the state of ISIS' cyber capabilities? How sophisticated are they?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

TPS

Question 4a. In September 23, 2019, a *Federal Register* announcement to extend Syria's TPS designation for 18 months to March 31, 2021, the Department stated that, "following the defeat of the self-described Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in March 2019, ISIS sleeper cells have stepped up insurgency operations in cities controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces." However, the President has bragged multiple times that his administration is responsible for defeating ISIS "100 percent."

Please explain the discrepancy between the Department's findings and the President's declarations?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 4b. Do you believe that conditions will have improved sufficiently in 18 months to safely return Syrian TPS recipients to Syria? What effect will the President's recent decision to turn his back on the Syrian Kurds have on the conditions supporting Syria's TPS designation?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

QUESTION FROM RANKING MEMBER MIKE ROGERS FOR KEVIN MCALEENAN

Question. Acting Secretary McAleenan testified before the House Appropriations Committee in April that the Department would like to quickly establish a permanent central processing center in El Paso. Can you please give the committee insight into the status of that project? What concrete steps have you taken to establish this facility and when do you expect it to be completed?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

QUESTIONS FROM HONORABLE DINA TITUS FOR CHRISTOPHER WRAY

WOMEN & ISIS

Question 1a. How should the United States address the emerging threat of attempted radicalization of women by ISIS and other terrorist organizations?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 1b. Are there U.S. programs or strategies targeting this specific concern?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

SYRIA & ISIS

Question 2a. Recently, hundreds of ISIS affiliates escaped from a Kurdish-run prison in northeast Syria after bombing by Turkish military forced the Kurds to divert resources to counter the Turkish threat.

Where are they now?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 2b. Could conditions on the ground allow ISIS to reconstitute and undermine 8 years of counterterrorism operations by U.S. and allied forces?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 2c. Which ISIS affiliates, if any, are capable of conducting attacks beyond their borders? Which pose the greatest threats to U.S. National security, and why?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 2d. What is the state of ISIS' cyber capabilities? How sophisticated are they?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

QUESTIONS FROM HONORABLE DINA TITUS FOR RUSSELL TRAVERS

CLIMATE CHANGE

Question 1. How can the United States strengthen our counterterrorism approach to better link the impacts of climate change with countering violent extremism and terrorist recruitment?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

RELATING TO WOMEN & ISIS

Question 2a. How should the United States address the emerging threat of attempted radicalization of women by ISIS and other terrorist organizations?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 2b. Are there U.S. programs or strategies targeting this specific concern?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

SYRIA & ISIS

Question 3a. Recently, hundreds of ISIS affiliates escaped from a Kurdish-run prison in northeast Syria after bombing by Turkish military forced the Kurds to divert resources to counter the Turkish threat.

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Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 3d. What is the state of ISIS' cyber capabilities? How sophisticated are they?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

QUESTIONS FROM HONORABLE DINA TITUS FOR DAVID J. GLAWE

CLIMATE CHANGE

Question 1. How can the United States strengthen our counterterrorism approach to better link the impacts of climate change with countering violent extremism and terrorist recruitment?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

WOMEN & ISIS

Question 2a. How should the United States address the emerging threat of attempted radicalization of women by ISIS and other terrorist organizations?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 2b. Are there U.S. programs or strategies targeting this specific concern?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

SYRIA & ISIS

Question 3a. Recently, hundreds of ISIS affiliates escaped from a Kurdish-run prison in northeast Syria after bombing by Turkish military forced the Kurds to divert resources to counter the Turkish threat. Where are they now?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 3b. Could conditions on the ground allow ISIS to reconstitute and undermine 8 years of counterterrorism operations by U.S. and allied forces?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 3c. Which ISIS affiliates, if any, are capable of conducting attacks beyond their borders? Which pose the greatest threats to U.S. National security, and why?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

Question 3d. What is the state of ISIS's cyber capabilities? How sophisticated are they?

Answer. Response was not received at the time of publication.

