

The Honorable John Carter
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
Transportation Security Administration: FY 2015 Budget Request

Witness:

Administrator Pistole

10:00 AM | Tuesday | March 25, 2014 | 2359 RHOB

Opening Statement As Prepared

Hearing is called to order –

This morning we welcome Administrator John Pistole. Administrator -- we thank you for being here today and we look forward to your testimony on the President's budget request for the Transportation Security Administration for fiscal year 2015.

While the outcome of the investigation into Malaysian Airline flight MH370 is still inconclusive, we must accept it as a sobering reminder that our aviation sector remains a primary target for terrorists and that the threats to aviation security continue to evolve. They are more sophisticated and complex than ever before and it is imperative that TSA address these threats and develop the right methods for combating them.

However, budgetary reality means we cannot simply throw money at the problem – even as we agree on this real threat to our security. We must make wise use of limited resources, and apply these resources to activities that have real, measurable security impacts.

A risk-based approach to screening and other TSA activities has been long overdue, as we must make every effort to improve our security, reduce screening times, improve the passenger experience, and cut costs.

This Committee has consistently supported risk-based approaches to transportation security. And, although the primary driver for these risk-based measures must *always* be to improve security, I was pleased to see that your FY 15 budget request includes a reduction of \$100 million, as a result of savings related to these measures, including noteworthy reductions to screening personnel and other cost efficiencies at the checkpoint.

This is the type of progress Congress envisioned when it directed TSA to apply a risk-based approach to aviation security and I commend TSA for undertaking efforts to better focus its resources and improve the passenger experience by applying such screening procedures. But we can all agree that TSA can -- and must -- do better.

I have one additional point to make and I've made this point before. Once again, this budget request uses phony, unauthorized offsets to pay for critical aviation security measures. We've rejected such false offsets before, but, unfortunately these gimmicks keep coming back, and we just keep rejecting them. Needless to say, this Committee will most assuredly reject the

Administration's proposed increase in aviation security fees yet again, because the necessary authorization legislation has not been enacted – legislation that is not under the jurisdiction of this Committee.

Rather than these fees, we should be spending this time talking about a legitimate budget that ties funding to results and mission requirements.

Administrator, Transportation security has -- and will -- remain a priority for this Subcommittee. I look forward to hearing from you today about how TSA is strengthening the security of the Nation's transportation system.

I remind you that your written statement will be placed in the record, so I ask you to take five minutes to summarize it. But first, I would like to recognize Mr. Price, our distinguished Ranking Member, for his opening remarks.

#####