



WRITTEN TESTIMONY

OF

**KIRSTJEN M. NIELSEN
SECRETARY**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

FOR A HEARING ON

***“THE FISCAL YEAR 2019 DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
BUDGET”***

BEFORE THE

**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY**

Wednesday, April 11, 2018

Washington, DC

Chairman Carter, Ranking Member Roybal-Allard, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee:

It is a privilege to appear before you today to discuss the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) crucial missions and to present the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Budget request for the Department.

The men and women of DHS are exceptional and dedicated professionals who are on watch 24 hours a day, 365 days a year protecting Americans from threats by land, sea, air, and in cyberspace, while also promoting our Nation's economic prosperity. They work tirelessly to strengthen the safety and security of our Nation from persistent and emerging dangers, including terrorists, transnational criminal organizations, rogue nation states, and natural disasters.

The FY 2019 Budget request provides funding to advance core DHS missions. It sustains and strengthens our most critical programs and capabilities and places emphasis on protecting our nation from terrorism and countering threats; securing and managing our borders and enforcing our immigration laws; preserving and upholding the nation's prosperity and economic security; securing cyberspace and critical infrastructure; and strengthening homeland security preparedness resilience. DHS will also build a culture of efficiency on the foundation of agency reform efforts to ensure accountable, effective, and efficient operations.

The FY 2019 President's Budget for DHS requests \$47.5 billion in net discretionary funding and an additional \$6.7 billion for the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) for response and recovery to major disasters.

This Budget would make crucial investments needed to secure our borders against threats and illegal entry. The request includes recruitment, hiring, and training of 750 additional U.S. Border Patrol Agents, 2,000 additional U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) law enforcement officers, and more than 1,500 support staff needed to more robustly execute the Department's border security and immigration enforcement missions. It also funds construction and renovations at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers to meet increased training requirements for DHS.

Investments in our layered defense at the border would include 65 miles of new border wall construction in the highest-traffic zones along the southwest border, as well as priority tactical infrastructure, border security technology improvements, and aircraft acquisition. The Administration also reiterates the unfunded wall requests from the FY 2018 Budget in addition to the investments outlined in the FY 2019 Budget. These investments ensure DHS law enforcement personnel are supported with effective surveillance technology and equipment to improve their ability to detect and interdict illegal activity.

The FY 2019 President's Budget includes funding for 52,000 detention beds, including 2,500 beds reserved for family units, to ensure that apprehended aliens who are subject to removal from the United States—such as illegal border crossers, criminal aliens, and national security threats—are detained in safe and secure detention facilities pending their removal. For

apprehended aliens who are not considered a threat to our communities, but who may pose a diminished flight risk, the President's Budget would fund ICE's Alternatives to Detention Program to provide intensive supervision for up to 82,000 average daily participants through a combination of home visits, office visits, alert response, court tracking, and electronic monitoring. Proposed funding for removal operations will facilitate the complex coordination required to return aliens safely and expeditiously to their home countries and pay for transportation costs.

Unfortunately, some of these critical missions are impeded by jurisdictions that refuse to cooperate with DHS in the enforcement of federal law. This makes it more dangerous for federal agents and officers to do their jobs. And it creates a greater threat to public safety, and results in greater expense to American taxpayers. I hope the Committee will work with DHS to help make sure jurisdictions around the country do not harbor criminal aliens or put the men and women of DHS at risk while they are doing their jobs to protect the public.

The Budget gives our frontline operators the tools and resources they need to more aggressively disrupt and dismantle transnational threats. It would advance the Administration's efforts to block terrorists, criminals, and other nefarious actors from reaching the United States and exploiting our immigration system. It would further integrate intelligence into DHS operations to make sure rapid changes in the threat environment are met with a near-real-time change in our response. And it propose funding across the Department for initiatives that will help us keep pace with adaptive enemies and new threats.

For example, the Budget focuses on bolstering DHS activities to counter transnational criminal organizations (TCOs). TCOs are facilitating the illicit flow of opioids and other deadly substances into America. The drugs and violence they import are a threat to the homeland, which is why we are focused on ramping up counter-TCOs activities. The Budget bolsters the capacity of ICE/HSI special agents to conduct transnational criminal investigations, and it provides funding to support law enforcement hiring and workload growth consistent with this mission, including \$105 million for critical training, IT, facility support infrastructure, and wiretaps associated with ICE's proposed increased staffing and workload.

The Budget proposes essential funding to implement the President's executive orders to intensify vetting of U.S.-bound travelers and individuals in our immigration system. Since the beginning of last year, DHS has undertaken historic efforts to improve every phase of the vetting process so that we can be more confident in knowing who is coming into our country—and more capable of identifying nefarious actors. This includes making applications more rigorous, deepening background checks, tightening travel and arrival screening, and enforcing foreign government information-sharing requirements. The Budget will facilitate the stand-up of the newly announced National Vetting Center (NVC), which will become a central U.S. Government hub for fusing intelligence, law enforcement, and homeland security data to enhance the vetting process. A detailed implementation plan is currently under development to identify NVC capacity and operational needs that will inform future budget requests.

Additionally, DHS is seeking to provide critical resources to the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) to better defend the nation against transnational threats and natural disasters. The USCG secures

our maritime borders by operating up to more than 1,500 miles offshore to extend the Nation's security and to enforce laws. During the 2017 hurricane season, the USCG, working alongside the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), was prepared and immediately responded to the needs of our citizens and partner nations. Their unique blend of statutory authorities combines civil law enforcement, response, and prevention with military service capabilities, resulting in an extremely agile force capable of responding to any significant event or emergency.

The FY 2019 President's Budget requests \$1.9 billion for the recapitalization of USCG assets. This funding provides for a new Offshore Patrol Cutter, four Fast Response Cutters, and the Nation's first new heavy Polar Icebreaker in more than 40 years, providing an advanced command, control and communications platform capable of operating in the harshest environments. It also provides for timely and necessary sensor and service-life extensions to aircraft and improvements to shore infrastructure. These are the investments we need to be making to defend our territory, and I hope the Committee will support our requests.

We are also seeking important cybersecurity enhancements. This Committee knows that the dangers we face online are serious, and they emanate from hackers, TCOs, nation-states, and other nefarious actors. DHS is on the digital frontlines of this fight and is undertaking historic efforts to safeguard the Federal Government's civilian information technology systems and to work with all levels of government, international partners, and business sectors to share cybersecurity information and build resilient systems.

The President's Budget would continue investments in cybersecurity initiatives that protect federal networks and address identified vulnerabilities. More than \$644 million is requested for DHS's Continuous Diagnostics and Mitigation program and the National Cybersecurity Protection System program, commonly referred to as EINSTEIN, which provide network monitoring tools, intrusion prevention, intrusion detection, and analytical capabilities that strengthen the cybersecurity of federal civilian departments and agencies.

The threat is real, and we know that a sophisticated adversary can put the foundations of our democracy at risk through cyberattacks, which is why our request for FY 2019 would also make sure DHS is positioned to counter foreign meddling by supporting state and local election officials in defending the integrity of election systems. The Budget also would provide \$158 million to secure the Nation's interoperable emergency communications capabilities that enable first responders and government officials to continue to communicate in the event of natural and man-made disasters.

Moreover, DHS is seeking to ramp up "soft target" security efforts. From terrorist attacks to school shootings, we have seen public areas continue to be struck by violence. Our National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD) is helping to lead the charge on soft target security. The President's Budget would provide almost \$12 million for the establishment of the Soft Target Security Program which would expand NPPD's capabilities to reduce the risks to these locations through a mix of technology integration, targeted threat information sharing, training, and improved standards for security. This program will provide a more comprehensive, innovative, and coordinated approach to address threats to soft targets—including schools,

entertainment venues, major events, and public spaces.

Our wider transportation system also faces persistent and emerging threats, as terrorists adapt their tactics to target airlines, airports, and other transportation hubs. The President's Budget was built to confront these challenges. It would add 687 TSA screeners and 145 additional computed tomography systems in order to stay ahead of our enemies, especially by helping to better detect concealed explosives, threat devices, and suspicious passengers. This budget would also provide an increase of nearly \$27 million for CBP's National Targeting Center to improve our capabilities to identify high-risk individuals and cargo both entering and leaving the United States in the air, land, and sea environments.

Similarly, we are seeing an evolution in the danger posed by chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear agents. That is why in December I announced the establishment of a DHS Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office (CWMD). I call on Congress to permanently authorize this Office and to ensure we have the authorities needed to protect Americans against such deadly agents. Already, CWMD has been at the forefront of driving the Department's response to recent threat streams and incidents. The President's Budget supports CWMD's efforts to mitigate security vulnerabilities, and includes \$75 million for the acquisition and deployment of nuclear, chemical, radiological, and biological systems to support operational customers, including enhanced Radiation Portal Monitors and other programs to support scanning of cargo entering the Nation. In addition, it includes \$65 million for capability building, including outreach efforts necessary to ensure federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, and international partners are enabled to support the WMD detection mission.

The President's Budget recognizes that *homeland security* is central to *economic security*. It would provide funding to ensure DHS components are able to facilitate lawful trade and travel, mitigate threats, hold violators accountable, counter foreign economic aggression, and advance America's economic interests. For instance, the Department is focused on maintaining a level playing field for the \$2.4 trillion dollars of imports crossing our border each year, which is why the President's Budget includes funding to enhance the Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) and to put more attention on high-risk imports while facilitating smaller, legitimate shipments more quickly. The request also includes funding for additional attorneys, trade specialists, and financial specialists to provide adequate support for trade facilitation and enforcement activities.

The men and women of the U.S. Secret Service (USSS) also protect our Nation's financial infrastructure, and the FY 2019 Budget supports the USSS in its use of advanced technologies and task force partnerships to enforce counterfeiting laws and to safeguard the payment and financial systems of the United States from financial and computer-based crimes. The agency also protects our highest elected officials, visiting foreign dignitaries, select Federal facilities, and major events. The request would allow for an additional 450 USSS agents, officers, and professional staff and would fund critical protective infrastructure and technology upgrades.

Last year our country experienced one of the most costly and damaging seasons for natural disasters in recent history. DHS is committed to helping our communities in the wake of these catastrophic events, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will devote the

resources and attention needed—in cooperation with state, local, and tribal governments across the country—to ensure we recover. The President’s Budget supports the DRF, which sustains FEMA’s response and recovery efforts and funds a variety of federal assistance programs that enable state and local governments to prevent, protect, respond, and recover from incidents of terrorism and other catastrophic events. The Budget also focuses on other efforts that will help create a “culture of preparedness” nationwide and make our nation more resilient to disasters.

The 2019 President’s Budget is committed to ensuring that every American dollar is spent wisely, and DHS continues to identify efficiencies to meet this goal. The Budget funds the construction of a new headquarters building for FEMA at the St. Elizabeths campus, which will consolidate a wide range of DHS entities in a common location when complete. This will not only foster integrated decision making and collaboration, but it will provide for more efficient use of shared resources across the Department, while also reducing the Department’s rent costs.

Ultimately, the President’s FY 2019 Budget request recognizes current fiscal realities, as well as the persistent and evolving dangers we face. We have outstanding men and women working at DHS committed to protecting our homeland and the American people. You have my commitment to work tirelessly to ensure that they are equipped and empowered to do their jobs. And I appreciate your support in doing so.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today and for your continued support of DHS. I remain committed to working with Congress, and I look forward to forging a strong and productive relationship to secure our homeland.

I am pleased to answer any questions.