

Statement of Jonathan H. Cofer

Good afternoon, my name is Jonathan H. Cofer and I am a retired Army Flag Officer and retired DoD senior executive with the Department of Defense. I appreciate the opportunity to participate on this extremely important panel, and I hope that I will be able to communicate some insights that I have regarding my over forty years as a force protector, military police law enforcement officer and security infrastructure professional. My job for the previous twelve years was protection of the Pentagon, the Headquarters of the Defense Department, and several leased facilities within the National Capitol Region not the responsibility of the military services or the Federal Protective Service. I served as the Deputy Director for the Pentagon Force Protection Agency, PFPA, a Tier -2 SES position from 2006-20016 and subsequently was selected to be its Director, a SES Tier-3 position from 2016-2019.

Consistent with the OIG's findings regarding the security shortfalls during the response to the takeover of the Capitol building, in my opinion there were two overarching concerns: the lack an identified organizational structure to collect, analyze and disseminate evolving and real time threat information throughout the chain of command, and the absence of detailed contingency planning for countering worst case scenarios.

I endorse the OIG's recommendation of the need for a dedicated intelligence and countersurveillance capability. This capability must function not just for special events but should be an organizational part of a force protection entity which can tie together threat streams for pro-active mitigation across the threat spectrum.

It has been my experience that an organization cannot address unexpected escalations in events without having an established command and control structure that can be mobilized and ramped up to mitigate threats. An integrated operation center properly staffed with intelligence analysts, supported by counter surveillance assets and law enforcement officers passing field observations on the ground, were the tools I used during my tenure as the Director, Pentagon Force Protection Agency to ensure effective command and control and situational awareness.

Contingency planning is paramount and there should be a plan for every event that is out of the ordinary not just for National Special Security Events. I insisted that a contingency plan be developed and briefed for events like Rolling Thunder and Marathons. All organizational assets must contribute to the plan, brief it to all internal supporting elements and outside stakeholders. The intelligence estimate was a critical part of the plan and updates were routinely briefed to all officers at roll calls before each event.

I ensured that my law enforcement personnel were trained in the techniques of suspicious activity detection thereby expanding the collectors on the ground that could provide real time information to the senior leaders in the operations center.

If law enforcement department is to evolve into a more comprehensive protection agency, as I believe the OIG recommends and I endorse, law enforcement officers must be trained in the basics of physical security in addition to suspicious activity. My officers in the Pentagon did more than patrol check fence lines and barriers. They had the knowledge and responsibility to make recommendations to better enhance effectiveness of physical security measures.

I found the greatest challenge in transforming a law enforcement department into a protection agency was in the stigma police officers ascribe to what they view as security guard functions. This stigma is hard to address, and it was reflected in the retention challenges I experienced in my Agency. I addressed this issue by ensuring recruiting efforts told the breath of the protection mission up front including law enforcement. I expanded the professional development and leadership training opportunities available to officers within the organization as incentives. I promoted external cross training and career opportunities like embedding qualified officers within the Joint Terrorism Task Force. Retention however remained a constant challenge.

At this time I would be glad to answer any questions.