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## U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HOUSE PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

### *Twenty-Five Years After 9/11 – Reviewing the 9/11 Commission & Intelligence Reform Impacts*

**May 20, 2026**

Good morning Chairman Crawford, Ranking Member Himes, and distinguished Members of the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you this morning.

The 9/11 Commission made fundamental changes to the way the US government anticipated, prevented and if need be, responded to terrorism attacks against the homeland. The two summary phrases that came from the Commission report that summarized much of their comprehensive work were, the USG suffered from “a failure of imagination,” and what was needed was a much improved “unity of effort.” Both of these will be discussed in more detail in my oral testimony. The 9/11 Commission report was a key driver for then President Bush signing executive orders implementing changes, and the US Congress taking action resulting in passage of the Intelligence Reform Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

As is well known, several key outcomes from this legislation were the creation of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), the Terrorism Screening Center (TSC) and several other Centers related to Counterintelligence, WMD, foreign maligned actors and border security. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was also created incorporating the disparate responsibilities and authorities of 22 different agencies in an effort to address the “unity of effort” findings of the 9/11 Commission. Additionally, the Department of Defense (now War), implemented significant changes to its structure, intelligence collection and sharing, along with CT operations, which are outside the scope of this testimony.

Significantly the 9/11 Commission recommendations and corresponding legislation significantly changed the way that the FBI conducted business. Having served as an FBI Special Agent since graduating from the FBI Academy at Quantico in 1983, I experienced first hand how significant these changes were. These changes were notably the most significant reform in its then nearly 100 year history. Director Robert Mueller, who began his tenure on September 4, 2001, quickly established ten clear priorities for the FBI to focus on including counterterrorism as our top priority, counterintelligence as a second priority, Cyber security as a third priority and then major criminal investigative matters such as public corruption and securities fraud, along with preserving Civil Rights and Liberties. Key among structural changes within the FBI was the creation of a Directorate of Intelligence with Reports Officers both at FBI headquarters and in each of the 56 field offices around the country. The ODNI started setting requirements for intelligence collection which the Bureau began collecting against to address the clarity of effort the 9/11 Commission highlighted.

As a stark example of the change in mission for the FBI, on 9/11 we had no Reports Officers because our job was to identify and hopefully prosecute criminals. Immediately after 9/11, then CIA (and DCI) George Tenet "loaned" 20 Reports Officers to FBIHQ to help us report CT information we were collecting and analyzing. This was a whole new way of doing business for most FBI Agents and Analysts. Also, on 9/11, the Counterterrorism Division (CTD) had less than 300 personnel. I became the Deputy Assistant Director (DAD) of CTD in the months after 9/11 and within a year we had over 2,000 personnel, demonstrating the fundamental shift from traditional crime-solving to prevention of terrorism in the US. (On a personal note, three years later I was honored to be named Deputy Director, the senior career position in the FBI, and served in that capacity for over 5 ½ years. I was then asked to have my name submitted as the nominee for TSA Administrator. I was confirmed in a unanimous Senate vote in June, 2010 and served 4 ½ years in that capacity before retiring and becoming the President of my Alma mater, Anderson University (IN), where I served for 10 years before retiring last summer.)

Included in some of the structural changes at the FBI were the creation of a National Joint Terrorism Task Force at FBIHQ, expansion of the approximately 35 Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs) which existed on 9/11, to over 100 across the country, all reporting to FBIHQ, CTD and the newly created DI, which became part of an Intelligence Branch.

The FBI established Fusion Centers in all of the 56 field offices and several other significant sub offices known as Resident Agencies across the country. DHS personnel, along with State and local and tribal law enforcement were embedded in these fusion centers to help guide, direct and implement necessary changes to help accomplish this paradigm shift. The goal was to ensure the best possible collection, analysis and sharing of relevant intelligence in a timely manner. In other words, to better "connect the dots."

Similarly with the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and its Directorates dealing with Intelligence and Analysis (I&A), Cyber, WMD and others, the FBI and DHS were better able to share information with the DNI on the Collection requirements for domestic intelligence. The bottom line was that the FBI was transforming from arguably the best law enforcement agency in the world prior to 9/11, to a key component of the IC, where the intelligence collection may or may not ever result in a criminal prosecution. This simply was not the case pre-9/11 where virtually all criminal and Counterterrorism information was collected with the end goal of prosecuting individuals suspected of violating one or more of the over 300 federal criminal violations that Congress had passed, typically under Title 18 United States Code.

One of the key aspects as it related to aviation security was the introduction of requirements that each traveler have what's known as Real ID, to ensure terrorists could not use "fake" IDs. Some states complied relatively quickly, but not only was it years before others converted state driver's license systems to be compliant with Real ID, citing the costs and encumbrances of doing so, but it was delayed year after year to the point where full implementation was not completed until 2025. Additionally what is known as Secure Flight was implemented as a way of more effectively and efficiently assessing the potential risk travelers may pose. Also in 2011, TSA introduced a secure traveler program called TSA PreCheck which allowed travelers to apply for an expedited screening process in exchange for providing basic information about their background, which allowed us to pre-screen passengers. This implementation of TSA PreCheck has been hugely successful with enrollment now approaching 20 million passengers and more and more lanes in the 425+ federalized airports converting standard screening lanes to PreCheck lanes. PreCheck was one of 25 different initiatives

that TSA implemented to make travel more risk based and included things such as expedited screening for World War II veterans who were traveling to Washington DC to see the World War II Memorial.

internationally, DHS and TSA worked with the 200+ foreign airports, known as the last points of departure (LPDs) to ensure that their security screening protocols, practices and policies were commensurate with those in the US as established by TSA.

One of the key recommendations from the 9/11 Commission not yet fully implemented is that Congress streamline the oversight responsibilities among the Senate and the House to have one or a very small number of committees and subcommittees with primary responsibility for oversight particularly of DHS. After the 9/11 attacks and the creation of DHS, there were over 100 committees and subcommittees with jurisdiction over DHS in Counterterrorism and related activities. Unfortunately this is one area that Congress has not acted effectively and is in still need of reform.

In conclusion, much has been accomplished as a result of the 9/11 Commission's commendable work and recommendations and the Intelligence Reform Terrorism Prevention Act. These steps, in totality, have clearly addressed the unity of effort and the failure of imagination themes articulated by the Commission.

Thank you Mr Chairman and Mr. Vice Chairman.

I look forward to any questions you may have.