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Counterintelligence at the State and Local Level: Strengthening America's Security Through Trusted Partnerships

Chairman Crawford, Ranking Member Himes, and distinguished Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the increasingly important role that state and local partners play in protecting the United States from foreign intelligence threats.

My name is Jay Moseley, and I serve as the Director of the Alabama Fusion Center and Governor Kay Ivey's Homeland Security Advisor. Prior to my current position, I served twenty-six years in the United States Air Force, Alabama Air National Guard, retiring as a Chief Master Sergeant. Throughout my career—both in uniform and in public service—I have seen firsthand that our Nation's security depends not only on military strength or federal capabilities, but also on trusted partnerships built across every level of government and with the private sector.

The threat landscape confronting the United States has changed dramatically over the past two decades. Foreign intelligence services no longer focus exclusively on federal agencies or classified information. Today they actively target state governments, local communities, universities, defense contractors, critical infrastructure, emerging technologies, research institutions, and private industries. Their objectives extend well beyond traditional espionage. They seek to acquire sensitive technologies, steal intellectual property, exploit supply chain weaknesses, collect proprietary research, influence decision-makers, and identify vulnerabilities that can be leveraged to advance their national interests at the expense of our own.

Because these activities frequently occur outside Washington and often below the threshold of traditional criminal investigations, state and local partners have become an essential component of the Nation's counterintelligence enterprise.

Fusion Centers were established after September 11, 2001, to improve information sharing and ensure that critical information no longer remained isolated within individual agencies or jurisdictions. While that original mission remains vitally important, today's threat environment has expanded considerably. Fusion Centers now serve as trusted information-sharing hubs that help connect federal intelligence with state and local observations, facilitate collaboration across jurisdictions, and support informed decision-making before vulnerabilities become crises.

The Alabama Fusion Center does not investigate espionage cases, nor do we duplicate the responsibilities of the Federal Bureau of Investigation or the United States Intelligence Community. Our mission is different, but equally important.

Our mission is to connect people, information, and intelligence so decision-makers have the best possible understanding of emerging threats.

That mission depends upon something more valuable than technology or databases.

It depends upon trust.

Technology helps us move information. Policies establish authorities. But relationships determine whether critical information is shared quickly enough to matter.

Those relationships are built every day through collaboration with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Intelligence and Analysis, state and local law enforcement, emergency management, the military, academia, critical infrastructure owners and operators, and private industry. When those relationships are strong, information moves faster, decisions improve, and opportunities to prevent harm increase significantly.

Counterintelligence is ultimately a prevention mission. Success is not measured solely by arrests or prosecutions. More often, success is measured by vulnerabilities identified before they are exploited, organizations that make informed decisions because they received timely information, and incidents that never occur because trusted partners recognized indicators early and acted together.

The observations and recommendations that follow reflect Alabama's experience, but they also represent lessons shared across the National Network of Fusion Centers. While every state is unique, foreign intelligence services do not respect state boundaries. The partnerships we build, the information we share, and the trust we earn collectively strengthen not only Alabama's security, but our Nation's security as well.

Why Alabama Matters

When many people think about foreign intelligence threats, Alabama is probably not the first state that comes to mind. But it should be.

Alabama is home to strategic military installations, world-class research institutions, critical infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, and one of the Nation's strongest defense industrial bases. Collectively, these assets make Alabama an attractive target for foreign intelligence

services seeking to acquire technology, collect sensitive information, exploit research, or identify vulnerabilities that could be leveraged against the United States.

The Port of Mobile serves as a vital gateway for international commerce and supply chains. Redstone Arsenal is home to some of the Nation's most important defense, missile, aviation, and space organizations, including the U.S. Army Materiel Command, the Missile Defense Agency, NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, the FBI's growing presence in Huntsville, and the headquarters of United States Space Command. Fort Rucker remains the home of Army Aviation, training military aviators from across the United States and partner nations. Alabama is also home to the Air Force's fifth-generation fighter, the F-35, in Montgomery and the Air Force's KC-135 aerial refueling mission in Birmingham, further underscoring our state's importance to America's national defense.

Beyond our military installations, Alabama's economy is increasingly driven by innovation. Our universities conduct cutting-edge research in agriculture, engineering, cybersecurity, biotechnology, aerospace, advanced manufacturing, and other emerging technologies. Our defense industrial base includes globally recognized companies such as Airbus, Austal USA, Lockheed Martin, Boeing, and Northrop Grumman, along with hundreds of small and medium-sized businesses that support national defense, critical infrastructure, and advanced manufacturing.

These organizations generate intellectual property, conduct sensitive research, manufacture critical technologies, and contribute directly to our Nation's military and economic strength. As a result, they also become attractive targets for foreign intelligence collection.

It is important to emphasize what this discussion is **not** about.

Alabama welcomes trusted international partnerships, lawful foreign investment, equitable trade, academic collaboration, and responsible scientific research. Those relationships strengthen our economy, our universities, and our global competitiveness.

Our concern is not legitimate international engagement.

Our concern is those who exploit that openness to steal American innovation, proprietary research, sensitive technologies, trade secrets, or other information that has been developed through the hard work and investment of the American people.

The distinction is important.

America's openness has long been one of our greatest strengths. At the same time, our adversaries increasingly seek to exploit that openness for strategic advantage. Protecting our innovation while preserving the openness that fuels it is one of the defining counterintelligence challenges of our time.

Today, economic security and national security are inseparable. Protecting Alabama's research institutions, defense industries, critical infrastructure, and technological innovation is not simply

a state responsibility; it is an essential component of protecting the security and competitiveness of the United States.

Counterintelligence Has Changed

Counterintelligence is no longer confined to protecting classified information or responding to traditional espionage investigations. While those missions remain critically important, today's threat environment is far broader, more persistent, and more complex.

Foreign intelligence services now pursue long-term strategies designed to acquire economic advantage, accelerate technological development, influence decision-making, and position themselves to exploit vulnerabilities during future crises. Rather than focusing exclusively on federal facilities or classified programs, they increasingly target the innovation ecosystem that supports America's economic prosperity and national security.

That ecosystem exists in every state.

It includes research universities developing breakthrough technologies, defense contractors supporting military modernization, manufacturers producing critical components, public utilities operating essential infrastructure, healthcare organizations conducting advanced medical research, and state and local governments responsible for safeguarding sensitive information and delivering essential public services.

Many of these organizations possess information that may be unclassified but is nonetheless valuable to a foreign adversary when combined with information collected from other sources.

Today's adversaries are patient.

They collect information over time from multiple organizations, jurisdictions, and sectors. What appears insignificant in isolation can become highly valuable when combined with other seemingly unrelated pieces of information. Understanding that broader picture requires collaboration that extends well beyond any single agency or level of government.

At the same time, rapidly evolving technologies have fundamentally changed how foreign intelligence services operate. Artificial intelligence, cyber capabilities, commercially available data, unmanned systems, social media, and other emerging technologies enable adversaries to collect information faster, identify potential targets more efficiently, and operate at a scale that would have been unimaginable only a decade ago.

As these threats continue to evolve, so must our approach to countering them.

Counterintelligence can no longer be viewed solely as a federal responsibility. It requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach built on trusted partnerships, timely information sharing, and shared situational awareness across federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, private-sector, academic, and critical infrastructure partners.

Foreign intelligence services deliberately look for gaps between organizations and jurisdictions.

Fusion Centers exist to help close those gaps.

The Role of Fusion Centers in the National Counterintelligence Enterprise

The Alabama Fusion Center is one of 80 state and major urban area Fusion Centers that comprise the National Network of Fusion Centers. While each Fusion Center serves the unique needs of its state or region, together we provide a nationwide information-sharing capability that strengthens homeland security and supports our Nation's counterintelligence efforts.

Every Fusion Center reflects the unique characteristics of its jurisdiction. Some support major ports, others support border security, financial centers, defense industries, research universities, critical infrastructure, agriculture, or major metropolitan areas. Although our priorities may differ, our mission is the same: to connect information, build trusted partnerships, and improve situational awareness for those responsible for protecting our communities and our Nation.

The Alabama Fusion Center does not investigate espionage or conduct counterintelligence operations. Those responsibilities appropriately belong to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the United States Intelligence Community.

Our role is to ensure that information does not remain isolated within a single agency, jurisdiction, or sector.

Every day, Fusion Centers facilitate two-way information sharing between federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, and private-sector partners. We help ensure that federal intelligence reaches state and local stakeholders who can act upon it, while observations made by state and local partners contribute to the broader national understanding of emerging threats.

That two-way exchange is one of the National Network's greatest strengths.

A local observation in one community may appear insignificant on its own. When combined with information from other jurisdictions across the country, however, it may reveal a broader pattern that would otherwise go unnoticed. Likewise, intelligence developed at the federal level often has the greatest value when it reaches the state and local officials responsible for protecting critical infrastructure, supporting public safety, and reducing vulnerabilities within their communities.

Fusion Centers do not replace the FBI or the Intelligence Community. We strengthen the nation's information-sharing environment by helping connect people, organizations, and information across jurisdictional and organizational boundaries.

Foreign intelligence services deliberately look for gaps between agencies, sectors, and jurisdictions.

The National Network of Fusion Centers helps close those gaps through trusted relationships, timely information sharing, and a shared commitment to protecting the United States.

That is the value the National Network brings to the Nation's counterintelligence enterprise every day.

Relationships and Trust: The Foundation of Effective Counterintelligence

Throughout my military career and my time leading the Alabama Fusion Center, I have learned one lesson that applies across every mission, every organization, and every level of government.

Relationships matter.

In the counterintelligence environment, they matter even more.

Technology enables us to collect, analyze, and share information more efficiently than ever before. Policies establish authorities, define responsibilities, and create the framework within which we operate.

But relationships determine whether information is shared quickly enough to make a difference.

Trust cannot be created during a crisis.

It must be built long before the crisis occurs.

That trust is established through consistent collaboration, transparency, professionalism, and a demonstrated commitment to helping one another succeed. It develops over years of working together, solving problems together, and demonstrating that information entrusted to a partner will be handled appropriately and shared responsibly.

When trust exists, people pick up the phone.

They call before a concern becomes a crisis.

They share information that may not seem significant at first because they know someone will help determine whether it matters.

Those conversations occur every day across the National Network of Fusion Centers.

State and local law enforcement officers, FBI personnel, Department of Homeland Security professionals, emergency managers, military organizations, private-sector security leaders, university officials, critical infrastructure owners and operators, and countless others exchange information because relationships have already been established.

Those relationships cannot be built overnight, nor can they be mandated through policy.

They require sustained engagement, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to protecting our communities and our Nation.

This is one of the National Network of Fusion Centers' greatest strengths.

Every Fusion Center invests daily in building and maintaining trusted relationships across its jurisdiction. Collectively, those local relationships create a national capability that strengthens information sharing, improves situational awareness, and supports the broader counterintelligence mission.

The result is a network built not simply on technology or formal agreements, but on trust.

That trust enables information to move more quickly, decisions to be made with greater confidence, vulnerabilities to be identified earlier, and threats to be addressed before they become incidents.

In my experience, that is one of the most important—and often least visible—advantages our Nation possesses in confronting today's counterintelligence challenges.

Case Study One: Recognizing Counterintelligence Indicators

One example illustrates how trusted partnerships and timely information sharing can strengthen our Nation's counterintelligence posture.

Several years ago, an employee working at the Alabama State Capitol observed an individual photographing the Capitol complex. The photographs focused on parking areas, building access points, and other security-related features rather than the landmarks or attractions typically photographed by visitors. Recognizing that the activity appeared unusual, the employee documented what they observed and reported it through established security channels.

That information ultimately reached the Alabama Fusion Center.

Working closely with our FBI and Department of Homeland Security Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) partners, we evaluated the information, coordinated with the appropriate federal agencies, and leveraged the National Network of Fusion Centers to determine whether similar activity had been observed elsewhere in the country.

As information was shared across jurisdictions, a broader picture began to emerge.

What initially appeared to be an isolated observation in Alabama became more meaningful when viewed alongside reporting from other states. While I cannot discuss the investigative outcome in an open hearing, the combined efforts of federal, state, and local partners provided a far more comprehensive understanding of the activity than any one organization could have developed independently.

Several important lessons emerged from that experience.

First, counterintelligence indicators are often first observed by individuals who are not intelligence professionals. They may be state employees, local law enforcement officers, university personnel, private-sector security officials, or ordinary citizens who simply recognize that something does not seem right.

Second, awareness training works. Individuals who understand what types of activities warrant reporting are far more likely to recognize potential indicators and bring them to the attention of the appropriate authorities.

Third, timely reporting matters. Information loses value when it remains isolated. Prompt reporting allows federal, state, and local partners to determine whether a seemingly routine observation has broader significance.

Finally, the National Network of Fusion Centers plays an important role in connecting information across jurisdictions. A single observation may not reveal much on its own. When combined with observations from other states, however, it can contribute to a much more complete understanding of a potential threat.

This case demonstrates that effective counterintelligence is not solely about responding to incidents after they occur. It is about recognizing indicators early, sharing information responsibly, and enabling the appropriate authorities to act before vulnerabilities can be exploited.

Case Study Two: Protecting Public Safety Through Intelligence Sharing

A second example demonstrates the value of proactive information sharing and trusted partnerships in reducing vulnerabilities before they can be exploited.

The FBI and the Alabama Fusion Center partnered to distribute a national counterintelligence awareness product regarding potential risks associated with certain unmanned aircraft systems being acquired and operated by public safety agencies.

The concern was not about an ongoing criminal investigation or allegations of wrongdoing. Rather, it involved the potential exposure of sensitive infrastructure information, imagery, emergency response capabilities, and other operational data that could be collected through those systems.

The Alabama Fusion Center shared this information with state and local stakeholders across Alabama, while the National Network of Fusion Centers gathered feedback from Fusion Centers nationwide to better understand the scope of potential vulnerabilities and inform the broader national picture.

This example highlights another important aspect of counterintelligence.

Success is not measured solely by arrests or prosecutions.

More often, success means identifying vulnerabilities before they are exploited, educating partners before they unknowingly assume unnecessary risk, and helping decision-makers make informed choices before damage occurs.

Sometimes the greatest success in counterintelligence is the incident that never happens because organizations were aware of a potential vulnerability and took appropriate action.

This case also demonstrates the strength of two-way information sharing. Federal partners shared timely intelligence with state and local stakeholders, while Fusion Centers across the country provided valuable feedback that helped develop a more complete national understanding of the issue. That continuous exchange of information is one of the National Network of Fusion Centers' greatest contributions to the Nation's homeland security and counterintelligence efforts.

Strengthening the National Counterintelligence Enterprise

The threat environment continues to evolve, and so must the partnerships and capabilities that protect our Nation.

Recognizing this, the National Fusion Center Association recently established a Counterintelligence Working Group to bring together Fusion Center professionals from across the country to share best practices, identify emerging trends, strengthen partnerships, and improve counterintelligence awareness throughout the National Network of Fusion Centers.

The creation of this working group reflects an important reality: foreign intelligence threats are no longer isolated to a handful of states or federal agencies. They affect every region of the country in different ways, and addressing those threats requires continued collaboration among federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, and private-sector partners.

The Alabama Fusion Center is proud to participate in that effort, but this is not about one Fusion Center. It is about ensuring that all 80 Fusion Centers are better equipped to recognize emerging threats, share information more effectively, and contribute to a stronger national counterintelligence posture.

I also appreciate this Committee's bipartisan efforts to strengthen the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Intelligence and Analysis and its partnership with state, local, tribal, and territorial organizations. Continued implementation of reforms that improve two-way information sharing, strengthen engagement with Fusion Centers, and expand field-based intelligence capabilities will further strengthen our Nation's information-sharing environment.

Counterintelligence is not a mission that can be accomplished by any single organization.

It requires sustained investment in trusted partnerships, timely information sharing, professional development, and continuous collaboration across every level of government.

The National Network of Fusion Centers stands ready to continue supporting that mission.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Foreign intelligence services will continue to adapt, evolve, and seek new opportunities to exploit vulnerabilities wherever valuable information exists. As those threats become increasingly complex, the Nation's counterintelligence posture must continue to evolve as well.

The National Network of Fusion Centers is an important part of that evolution.

Every day, Fusion Centers strengthen relationships, improve situational awareness, facilitate two-way information sharing, and help connect local observations with the broader national intelligence picture. Collectively, the Network provides a nationwide capability that complements the work of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Homeland Security, and the United States Intelligence Community.

As Congress considers the future of our Nation's counterintelligence enterprise, I respectfully offer three recommendations.

First, continue strengthening the partnership between the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Intelligence and Analysis and the National Network of Fusion Centers. Timely, actionable, and operationally relevant intelligence remains one of the most valuable services the federal government can provide to state and local partners. Continued implementation of the

bipartisan reforms considered by this Committee will further strengthen that partnership and improve two-way information sharing.

Second, provide sustained investment in the National Network of Fusion Centers through homeland security grant programs, training, technology, and analytic capabilities. Building trusted relationships and maintaining an effective information-sharing environment requires long-term commitment and stable resources.

Finally, continue supporting counterintelligence awareness efforts across all levels of government and the private sector. The first indication of a foreign intelligence threat is often observed by someone who is not an intelligence professional. Increasing awareness, encouraging responsible reporting, and strengthening trusted partnerships will continue to improve our Nation's ability to identify vulnerabilities before they are exploited.

Throughout my career, I have learned that technology alone cannot protect our Nation.

Policies alone cannot protect our Nation.

People do.

Relationships built over years of collaboration enable information to move quickly, decisions to improve, and threats to be recognized before they become crises.

Foreign intelligence services look for seams between agencies, jurisdictions, and sectors.

The National Network of Fusion Centers helps close those seams.

Chairman Crawford, Ranking Member Himes, and Members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today and for your continued support of the partnerships that strengthen our Nation's homeland security and counterintelligence enterprise. I appreciate your time and look forward to your questions.