



Chairman Frank Wolf

*Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations*

FY 2015 NASA Budget and Oversight of NASA Security Hearing April 8, 2014 Opening Statement As Prepared

Good morning. I would like to welcome everyone to today's hearing on the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Our witnesses are Governor Richard Thornburgh and NASA Administrator Charles Bolden. Thank you both for being here.

Our first panel today will focus on issues in NASA's security controls that were brought to light through the work of the National Academy of Public Administration. Governor Thornburgh, a NAPA fellow, led a team of experts in a comprehensive review of NASA security practices, culminating in a report that was issued about two months ago.

That review was initiated after I drew attention to allegations of serious security problems at NASA's Ames and Langley Research Centers. Some people accused me of blowing small incidents out of proportion and insinuated that my raising of these allegations was driven by politics or personal biases rather than a well-intentioned desire to see NASA's sensitive information and technology better protected.

I hope anyone who questioned the accuracy or motivation of my allegations is listening today, because the review conducted by NAPA, along with separate reviews of the Ames and Langley incidents by the NASA Inspector General, validates that serious problems do exist at NASA and require substantial corrective actions.

To my great frustration, the full contents of those reports are restricted and the publicly available executive summaries are lacking in many of the details and examples that are needed to fully understand the scope of the problem. Nevertheless, I can say that all 3 reports drive home the need for NASA to revise, tighten and standardize its security policies; put in place review mechanisms to better identify instances of non-compliance; and more effectively communicate with its employees about security threats, countermeasures and requirements.

Perhaps most upsetting to me, the reports found serious deficiencies in NASA's culture of accountability by demonstrating that violations of security protocols can and do go effectively unpunished, a fact which provides employees with little to no incentive to make security compliance a personal and professional priority.

These circumstances must change. Security compliance is not a trivial concern, and, while much of NASA's work is intended to be widely shared, the agency is still responsible for the development and protection of technologies and information that could easily be used against us by those who seek to

damage this country's security or economy. I expect and demand better, and I know that Administrator Bolden does as well.

A framework for the necessary changes has been established through the work of Governor Thornburgh and the rest of his NAPA team, which made 27 recommendations for improvements to NASA's practices.

I understand that NASA is working now to finalize its plans to implement those recommendations. I appreciate that effort, but the agency should know that I will be following up to ensure that real and lasting institutional changes are made.

This hearing today is a first step. By establishing a public record on both the nature of the problems and the corrective actions needed to respond to them, I hope that it will be harder for NASA leadership—current or future—to walk away from the difficult task of seeing the necessary reforms through to completion.

The topic of security reforms will carry into the start of our second panel with Administrator Bolden, who will have an opportunity to respond to the findings in the NAPA report and outline the agency's proposed responses to NAPA's recommendations. In addition, the second panel will take on the task of discussing NASA's 2015 budget request and the agency's programmatic plans for fiscal year 2015.

NASA's request of \$17.46 billion represents a 1% decrease from the fiscal year 2014 enacted levels despite the relatively constant government-wide topline.

The impact of the proposed decreases—which would primarily affect perennial targets like the Space Launch System and planetary science—is actually much larger than the agency total would suggest, as the full scale of proposed cuts are obscured by several substantial requested increases, including new funding for the commercial crew program and Space Station crew and cargo transportation. I am anxious to discuss NASA's justification for these changes and their expected effect on the agency's ability to achieve its strategic goals.

I also want to consider more generally the efficiency and effectiveness of NASA's operations and its stewardship of Federal funds. I am sorry to say that my confidence in that stewardship has been reduced recently thanks to a series of reports casting doubt on NASA's decision making in areas as diverse as potential abuse of premium air travel to a lack of control over mobile IT devices to possible favoritism in the awarding of leases.

If NASA is going to continue to receive the support of this Subcommittee, it absolutely must do a better job of demonstrating a commitment to fiscal responsibility and compliance with oversight requirements.

In a moment we will begin our first, security-focused panel with some brief opening remarks from Governor Thornburgh, who will then answer questions from the subcommittee. Then we will turn to Administrator Bolden, who will provide his own opening remarks about the security report and the budget request, and proceed to questions on those topics.

Before we get started, however, I first want to recognize our ranking member, Mr. Fattah, for any opening remarks he would like to make.

#####