



Testimony of

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on

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Introduction

Chairman Garbarino, Ranking Member Thompson, and distinguished Members of this Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the wide range of threats the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is working to protect against, at home and around the world.

Just weeks ago, we came face to face with the evil that this nation faces every day. The day before Thanksgiving, a terrorist attacked our National Guardsmen who were stationed in Washington D.C., murdering Specialist Sarah Beckstrom and leaving Staff Sergeant Andrew Wolfe fighting for his life. That same week, we saw another terrorist threat from another Afghan national who also entered the United States under Operation Allies Welcome. This coward was planning to carry out a bombing in Fort Worth, Texas.

These are two examples of the many threats we face, and the threats that DHS works every day to prevent and stop.

Under President Trump's leadership, DHS is securing our borders, restoring the rule of law, and protecting the homeland. DHS is aggressively eliminating transnational organized crime in our communities, combating illegal immigration and bringing sanity back to our immigration system. We are combatting terrorists at our borders and beyond.

We are preventing cyberattacks from both state and non-state actors. We are holding hostile enemies accountable for undermining our economy, including those who steal our most sensitive technologies and intellectual property to use them against us.

The Trump Administration has made tremendous progress on these fronts and continues to put the American people first.

I am honored to lead the hardworking men and women of the Department of Homeland Security, who are entrusted with the mission of keeping America, its people and homeland, safe and secure. They are true American patriots, who wake up every day, determined to carry out the mission of protecting their fellow citizens from threats at home and abroad. Our world is experiencing increasing instability and complex threats. The Department of Homeland Security's unwavering commitment and dedication to protecting our homeland is vital to both our national security objectives and the continued public safety of the American people.

The threats our nation faces continue to grow. It is clear these threats demand that we work on all these fronts to ensure American resilience and preparedness. We must remain focused on combating not only the dangers in front of us today, but also what we will face tomorrow.

Threats

Threats from Four Years of Immigration Chaos

For four years, the Biden Administration allowed millions to enter this country illegally and without basic vetting. We are now facing the consequences of this exploitation and erosion of our immigration system, and complete disregard for the law. We have seen terrorist attacks and heinous crimes committed against American children and families by criminal illegal aliens who should have never been allowed into this country. This Administration is taking common sense steps to make sure we know who is in our country and to remove dangerous criminals.

After the collapse of Afghanistan, the Biden Administration paroled tens of thousands of Afghan nationals into the country and entered into the 2023 Ahmed Court Settlement, which forced U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to adjudicate almost 20,000 asylum claims on an expedited basis. On day one, the Trump Administration took action, shutting down the Afghan refugee resettlement program and signing Executive Order 14161 to aggressively vet the millions of foreigners that the Biden Administration allowed into the country.

Following the recent terrorist attack on our National Guardsmen, the Trump Administration took immediate action once again to counter the threats to the American people.

We paused all immigration processing requests relating to Afghan nationals to allow for additional review of security and vetting protocols. DHS has also placed a hold on all asylum decisions, regardless of nationality, pending a comprehensive review to make sure every alien is vetted and screened to the maximum degree possible.

Given the severe lack of vetting in the prior Administration, DHS has halted any new or pending benefit requests, including adjustment of status, green cards, or travel documents, for aliens from countries listed in President Trump's Proclamation 10949. USCIS will also begin a comprehensive re-examination for all approved requests for individuals from these high-risk countries that entered the United States on or after January 20, 2021.

Border Security

President Trump's strong and effective border and immigration policies have resulted in the most secure border in the history of the United States with 7 straight months of zero releases at the border and total nationwide encounters down 92% from their peak under the Biden Administration. These policies have significantly disrupted illegal immigration at the U.S.-Mexico border, creating and maintaining a historic decline from the record high illegal immigration driven by the Biden Administration's disastrous open border policies.

Transnational criminal organizations, cartels, and gangs operating inside and outside of the U.S. still seek to flood our communities with drugs, violent crime. They endanger the safety of the American people. These groups are highly adaptive, constantly using new tactics to try to sidestep law enforcement and profit from their heinous actions. They aim to corrupt or coerce our partner nations' security forces and undermine their rule of law. We have made it clear to

these transnational criminals that any attempt to profit from harming American communities will be met with force.

While increased law enforcement actions have decreased the amount of drugs coming into our communities, our work is not complete. Far too many Americans are dying from fentanyl poisoning. Illegal drugs smuggled into the United States by narcoterrorist cartels are still likely to kill tens of thousands of Americans in the coming year. The Mexican drug cartels, which supply most of the illicit drugs found in the United States, continue to find ways to evade law enforcement and maintain their lucrative drug smuggling.

Transnational organized crime groups, including Mexico's Sinaloa, New Generation Jalisco, and other drug cartels create instability and harm U.S. interests. This Administration has acted by designating over a dozen of them as Foreign Terrorist Organizations, which has allowed the federal government to freeze their assets, deny their travel, and prosecute their members. In response to this increased pressure from the United States, Foreign Terrorist Organizations will likely respond by taking advantage of alternative financial technologies and underground banking systems, so that their illegal drug and human smuggling operations avoid detection.

As U.S. and Mexican law enforcement increase pressure on illegal cross-border activity, we expect transnational criminal organizations in Mexico to ramp up their efforts to procure firearms in the United States and smuggle them into Mexico. Mexican transnational crime groups increasingly use commercially available Unmanned Aircraft Systems to surveil U.S. law enforcement and conduct cross-border smuggling operations. Mexican cartels also have the capability to use weaponized drones and are currently using them against Mexican security forces and rival crime groups.

It is likely that transnational criminal organizations based outside of Mexico will attempt to exploit the U.S.-Mexico border and engage in criminal activity within the United States. We anticipate that both the Salvadoran gang MS-13, and the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua will continue their attempts to smuggle humans and drugs across our Southern border. These criminals are using new and adaptive tactics to circumvent the law, allowing them to continue waging their illegal and violent terror campaign on America.

We must continue to implement President Trump's policies to enforce the law, stop criminals from targeting and entering our nation, and further enhance the security of our borders.

Critical Infrastructure Security

U.S. critical infrastructure faces a growing threat landscape, largely driven by the impact of cyberattacks from bad actors and cybercriminals.

U.S. networks are routinely targeted for espionage and intelligence collection. Threat actors may aim for credentials of U.S. corporate and government employees or exploit vulnerabilities in U.S. information technology networks to steal sensitive information for strategic, political, military, or economic advantage. These cyber campaigns are often difficult to identify and can remain undetected for years. We see no signs of these threats slowing down.

Financially motivated cybercriminals present a persistent and costly threat to U.S. critical infrastructure systems and the American public. Thanks to the leadership of President Trump, we have seen our enemies changing their behavior following successful cyber operations, such as the largest single currency seizure in Secret Service history, recovering over \$225 million of cryptocurrency from scammers targeting Americans.¹ We have also observed how available artificial intelligence platforms have enhanced the efficiency and scale of cybercriminal operations.

Terrorists and criminals with a variety of motivations continue to incite, and occasionally conduct, physical attacks against a range of targets. This past year, they mobilized against major commercial sites, government offices, transportation gateways, energy systems, and healthcare facilities. Critical infrastructure targets are often selected based on opportunistic factors, such as accessibility or the ability to wreak widespread havoc.

Unauthorized use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems over critical infrastructure is a rapidly growing threat vector due to how easily they can be obtained. They can also be difficult to detect and deter.

Despite these challenges, DHS is committed to comprehensive approach – working with state, local, tribal, territorial, and private sector partners – to protect U.S. critical infrastructure and ensure these vital systems and assets are secure and resilient.

Public Safety and National Security

American citizens are increasingly under threat from assassination attempts, intimidation tactics, and violence perpetrated by our adversaries, radical Islamist extremists, and radical Left-wing terrorists. These bad actors seek to undermine public trust, instill fear in Americans and destabilize the institutions that safeguard our national security. These individuals are on U.S. soil, radicalized and inspired by foreign terrorist organizations, and pose increasingly high threat levels to our public safety and national security.

The United States is preparing to host several major public events in 2026—most notably, the FIFA World Cup and the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. These large-scale, high-visibility gatherings represent potential targets for a range of threat actors and significantly elevate our national risk posture.

Foreign adversaries pose a strategic threat to public safety, and their objectives may include disrupting national morale, undermining public trust, or exploiting symbolic events for geopolitical messaging.

The Israel-Hamas conflict and a resurgence of English-language propaganda from groups such as ISIS and Al-Qaida have directly contributed to a rise in calls for violence on U.S. soil. These

¹ U.S. Department of Justice, “United States Files Civil Forfeiture Complaint Against \$225M in Funds Involved in Cryptocurrency Investment Fraud Money Laundering” (18 June 2025). Accessed 25 November 2025 at: <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/united-states-files-civil-forfeiture-complaint-against-225m-funds-involved-cryptocurrency>

efforts have been enabled by the permissive immigration and border policies under the Biden Administration, which allowed terrorists, extremists, and criminals to enter the country without vetting or oversight. These radical groups exploited President Biden's open borders to gain a foothold inside the United States. We are now addressing the consequences of failed policies under the previous Administration that have allowed foreign terrorist organizations to inspire, recruit, and mobilize individuals already inside our nation. This is not a distant threat—it is a direct and growing risk to homeland security that demands urgent, coordinated action.

The Trump Administration has made this threat a national security priority. DHS, using a whole-of-government approach, will continue using every available tool and authority we have to combat the risk of foreign terrorists who try to abuse our immigration system and threaten the American people.

Threats from radicalized domestic violent extremists and lone actors remain serious. Intentional targeting and murderous attacks on ICE agents in Texas, parishioners in Michigan, and here in Washington, D.C. on two National Guardsmen, horribly detail despicable acts that are sadly becoming increasingly too common. These threats underscore a clear need for security strategies that counter both large-scale attacks and precision threats against individuals. DHS will remain vigilant in its mission to protect our country and its citizens from the many threats we face, especially as we enter a historic year where America will be at the center of the world stage.

Threats to Economic Security

The U.S. economy faces challenges from anti-competitive or illicit foreign economic practices that hurt the prosperity of all Americans. These include economic espionage, intellectual property theft, and customs fraud—often through illicit front companies or abuses of the visa system to acquire sensitive U.S. equipment, information, and technology.

Exacerbating the economic threat and harm to the United States, the use of front companies and exploitation of the global shipping ecosystem sidestep U.S. export controls, evade U.S. and international sanctions, and obscure the purveyors profiting from illicit activities.

Economic security is national security, because a country that cannot feed, fuel, and provide for itself cannot defend itself. Under President Trump's leadership, we will continue to protect American economic interests and bolster American economic power and technological innovation, further enabling our economic growth and prosperity.

Conclusion

The American people depend on the Department of Homeland Security to always remain vigilant, agile, and responsive. Our nation faces relentless and evolving threats that target our people, our borders, our infrastructure, and our way of life. The Department of Homeland Security is united in our enduring commitment to protect America against all threats, across all domains.

Under President Trump's leadership, we have established the most secure border in our nation's history, prevented the entry of dangerous criminals, and removed illegal aliens who pose a threat to public safety. We continue to work with state, local, and tribal governments, law enforcement officials, and industry and international partners to detect and thwart a myriad of direct threats. We will never yield, never waver, and never back down. We will continue to do everything it takes to safeguard this great nation and all Americans.

Thank you for the privilege to speak with you today and for your continued support of DHS. I look forward to your questions.