



Committee on  
**HOMELAND SECURITY**  
Chairman Michael McCaul

*Opening Statement*

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**Statement of Chairman Michael McCaul (R-Texas)  
Committee on Homeland Security**

**“The Secretary’s Vision for the Future – Challenges and Priorities”**

“Today is the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the first World Trade Center bombing which marked the beginning of the war on terrorism. Eight years later the attacks on 9/11 changed our country and reformed our government with the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). So it’s fitting that today the new Secretary of the Department, Mr. Jeh Johnson is here to discuss his vision for DHS.

Your new position is among the most important in the federal government. You are at the helm of a Department charged with securing this nation in the midst of evolving terrorist threats, shrinking budgets and persistent management challenges.

I appreciate your outreach to me over the past few months to discuss our shared concerns about issues of national security. I am committed to solving these challenges and look forward to working constructively with you.

I just returned from New York City where I met with the new Police Commissioner Bratton and other officials to discuss current threats. Al Qaeda affiliates continue to target the United States. Iran's terrorist proxies are present throughout the Western Hemisphere.

And a growing number of ungoverned locations across the Middle East and North Africa provide safe havens for jihadist networks. With the growing concern over lone wolf attacks, we have to adapt to the reality that threats are not diminishing, they are evolving. DHS has a major role in identifying and mitigating terrorist threats to the US Homeland – whether from plots directed by jihadist networks abroad or from individually inspired radicals within our borders.

The events in Syria are now threatening to become issues for us at home. You said in your speech at the Wilson Center, "Syria has become a matter of homeland security." I agree, and I want to hear what the Department is doing to counter this threat to the homeland.

The capture over the weekend of the drug lord, "el Chapo" Guzman is a huge win for the United States and Mexico. He is responsible for thousands of deaths and his reach went far beyond Mexico.

He is public enemy number one in Chicago and carries indictments in California, New York, and my home state of Texas. His arrest is significant both symbolically and operationally and I applaud Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for their participation along with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), U.S. Marshals and Mexican authorities for this capture. I want him to face justice in the United States and make sure he is never out on the streets again.

As in the Guzman case, spillover violence from drug traffic goes well beyond border towns in the United States. Porous borders are a vulnerability to homeland security and our border security has been woefully haphazard since 9/11.

Last year this Committee unanimously passed the *Border Security Results Act*, which requires the Department to create a national strategic plan on the border complete with metrics to check our progress.

I am hopeful with your Department of Defense (DOD) experience you will be able to best organize your staff with both strategists and planners needed to address border security at the national strategic level.

I am also hopeful the Department will work with this Committee on improving our cyber defenses. The Department of Homeland Security has a critical role to play, and the *National Cybersecurity and Critical Infrastructure Protection Act of 2013*, which unanimously passed out of our Committee earlier this month takes an important step by codifying the Department's cyber security mission. The Committee would like to see a greater emphasis on building an experienced and streamlined cyber workforce and increasing the security and resiliency of federal networks.

All of these missions will only be successful if the Department is managed efficiently. Next week marks 11 years since DHS's creation, and no one should minimize the job of combining 22 different agencies, systems and cultures into one. There have been many unforeseen challenges but strong management means strong leadership.

I appreciate your sincere focus on filling vacancies at DHS. With the DHS senior leadership vacancy rate at 38%, I hope you will encourage White House Presidential Personnel to approve your recommendations quickly. DHS needs competent leaders who understand how to inspire and motivate staff but also make the tough decisions.

More than 200,000 men and women whose job it is to keep Americans safe are under your leadership now. These employees strongly believe in their mission. You briefed me on security measures prior to the Super Bowl and I believe the local, federal and private sector collaboration that took place there is a model for how our national security apparatus should work. I understand there is much to be proud of at the Department and also know there is much progress to be made. I look forward to hearing your vision and perspectives today and for the coming years.”

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