



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 Boston Marathon Bombings, One Year On: A Look Back to Look Forward”

This is a powerful and emotional day for the witnesses, for me, and this Committee. It’s a time to remember the Anniversary of the Boston Marathon Bombings, and it’s a time to remember the victims. I, personally, remember walking down Boylston Street with Boston Police Commissioner Ed Davis, who is with us here today. I remember him pointing out to me the trash cans where the bombs went off, injuring 260 innocent people and killing three including a little 8 year old boy, in cold blood.

In the middle of chaos, we also witness exceptional bravery. If not for the heroic acts of the first responders and Boston citizens who ran towards danger instead of away, many more could have died.

I remember after the attack, the marathoners tying their shoes together in the hundreds in a memorial out of respect and dedication. I remember the Watertown Police Chief, who is before us today. I remember him taking Congressman Keating and me on a tour of their once-quiet neighborhood and seeing the aftermath of the gunfight to take down two of the biggest terrorists since 9/11.

What happened after that is what heroes are made of. Tamerlan threw everything he had at these officers including pipe bombs, rounds of ammunition and a pressure cooker IED. The Boston Bomber was finally subdued after the heroic acts and efforts of our local law enforcement, some of who are with us today.

What is not so well known is that had it not been for the efforts of Commissioner Ed Davis and his efforts, and those of the Watertown police force, our Nation could have been further terrorized. These terrorists had six more bombs in their car and were on their way to Times Square. If it wasn't for these heroic acts of bravery New York City could have been hit again.

We will hear from these brave individuals today for the first time before Congress. This committee, through its oversight responsibilities, conducted a thorough investigation into what happened and what went wrong.

We found that several red flags and warnings were missed. We found that Tamerlan was on the radar of the FBI and somehow dropped off. We found that Tamerlan travelled to Dagestan, known for its Chechen terrorists. This is precisely what the Russian letter warned our Intelligence Community and FBI about. He came back even more radicalized. We also found that unfortunately Customs, FBI, and the IC somehow missed it. Arrogantly, some US officials said "It would not have made a difference" if they had known about his overseas travel. We now know that a check of his public social media would have shown indicators such as Jihadists video postings. His Mosque had seen escalating behavior as well. It likely would have been clear that he was becoming more and more of a threat to the community.

Which takes me to me to my last point: State and Local police have a strong role in Counter Terrorism. They know the streets better than anybody and they know the local threats. The Boston Police Department should have been given more information throughout the entire process. They must know the terror threats in their own backyards. This process in my judgment has to change.

In an effort to do this, two weeks ago our Committee issued our report about the Boston Marathon Bombings. Over the course of the year, we held two hearings; had numerous briefings and engagements; traveled to Boston multiple times, and had a bipartisan staff delegation travel to Moscow. I personally went to Boston and Moscow with Mr. Keating and spoke with officials on the ground. I want to thank the Democrats for their participation in the investigation and the Report, and I'm pleased that their input was reflected in the final Report. Based on lessons learned, we issued our findings and recommendations to fix some of the systemic problems that led to Tamerlan Tsarnaev falling off of our radar.

I hope to think in a small way the Recommendations we made in this report can make a difference in preventing the tragedy we saw in Boston from occurring again in the homeland. I am pleased to know, to hear, and to report that both the FBI and DHS are already constructively implementing the recommendations of this Committee's report. Let us hope that such a tragic event like this never happens again.

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