



OPENING STATEMENT

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MEDIA CONTACTS

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**Statement of Subcommittee Chairman Peter King (R-NY)
Counterterrorism and Intelligence Subcommittee
House Homeland Security Committee**

“Safeguarding our Nation’s Surface Transportation Systems Against Evolving Terrorist Threats”

Remarks as Prepared

I would like to thank Chairman Katko for holding this joint hearing with the Counterterrorism and Intelligence Subcommittee today on terror threats to surface transportation.

With the recent attempt by a terrorist on a high-speed rail in Europe to take multiple lives, we are more cognizant than ever of the vulnerability of our public transportation infrastructure. That day, as Chairman Katko mentioned, passengers were fortunate to have among them four brave Americans—including two members of America’s armed forces—who reacted swiftly and bravely to take down the Islamist extremist who, armed with a rifle and ample ammunition, intended to take as many innocent lives as possible that day. But the odds are when the next would-be terrorist attacks passengers on a train or subway, the public may not be so fortunate as to have such capable and selfless persons on board and ready to react.

The easy access to rail transportation is one of the features that make it so popular. Compared with air travel, most of us individually appreciate the relative ease of using subways like the Metro here in DC or MTA in New York, or commuter rail, such as the MARC train in Maryland or the Long Island Railroad. Everyone values and enjoys simple and easy access. However, we have seen the vulnerability inherent in easy access in most mass transit services, including in attacks in London, Mumbai, Madrid, Tokyo, and now in Paris.

With ISIS urging supporters to carry out attacks in the U.S., we have to continuing evaluate the threat, vulnerability and related security measures within our surface transportation infrastructure.

I look forward to hearing from the witness about efforts to deter and prevent attacks, as well as how we are balancing the efficiency of public transit with security.

A key issue is how the Federal government is assisting state, local, and regional partners to better protect the traveling public against the threat of terrorism on America’s public transportation and commuter rail systems.

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