



OPENING STATEMENT

October 7 , 2015

MEDIA CONTACTS

Susan Phalen, Matthew Ballard

**Statement of Subcommittee Chairman John Ratcliffe (R-TX)
Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies Subcommittee
House Homeland Security Committee**

Subcommittee Hearing: "Examining the Mission, Structure, and Reorganization Effort of the National Protection and Programs Directorate"

Remarks as Prepared

Prior to any reorganization of NPPD, Congress needs to first determine whether or not the proposal would establish a clear operational mission for the Directorate, streamline the organizational structure, and can be effectively carried out by a qualified workforce. We also have questions on how the proposed changes would help make acquisition efforts for the cybersecurity mission more effective and efficient. And perhaps most importantly, this Committee needs to know how the realignment would help build confidence in both the public and private sectors that DHS is dedicated to focusing on its emerging cybersecurity mission.

Growing cyber threats are presenting new homeland security challenges every day; and as such, this Committee needs to ensure that DHS is optimally organized to successfully combat these emerging threats.

As a nation, we seem to finally be grasping the magnitude of the potential consequences of a major cyber attack, particularly as serious cyber breaches have already become part of our daily lives. As we have seen this year with the damaging breach to the Office of Personnel Management and other similar breaches, cyber subversions are only increasing in number. We have seen cyber attacks destroy private companies' computers and data breaches that exfiltrate corporate information, employee data, emails, intellectual property. It is vitally important that we are prepared to combat this evolving threat.

Additionally, much of our nation's critical infrastructure is privately owned, and there now exists an interconnectedness of physical security and cybersecurity. This means that someone sitting at a keyboard can issue commands to blow up a gas pipeline, cause the air traffic control system to malfunction, or take control of someone's automobile - all of which would result in loss of life- not just the theft of personal information from a database.

It is NPPD's mission to work with both public and private partners to reduce these risks from both cybersecurity and infrastructure threats and make the nation's physical and digital infrastructure more resilient and secure. NPPD is also responsible for securing federal networks and working with the

private sector to secure the “.com” domain. As such, I would hope that NPPD plans on consulting with the private sector and its partners to hear their informed views on the proposed plan before moving forward. So far, I have only heard from outside stakeholders that there has been little to no outreach and that is really disconcerting.

Additionally, despite multiple media reports that DHS leadership is pushing to reorganize its cybersecurity and infrastructure protection missions, the Committee has received minimal details from DHS.

Over the past several years, this Committee had built up a collaborative working relationship with NPPD, consulting with it to pass several strong and bipartisan pieces of legislation to improve chemical security and strengthen DHS’s cybersecurity mission and stature in the federal government. Given our shared goal to protect this country, several Members of the Committee and I were very disappointed to learn about this proposal through leaked reports in the media. The Committee only received a briefing after these reports in the press, and unfortunately, only minimal details on the reorganization effort, after several requests, have been provided since.

Only last week did staff receive an additional briefing, having been met with roadblocks when trying to obtain additional information. Even more disappointing, the Committee has heard that DHS leadership had planned to move forward unilaterally on several efforts without Congressional review and approval.

I will remind the witnesses that it is *Congress’* job to create the laws and the Administration’s job to execute them. After all, the Founding Fathers purposely enumerated Congress’ role in Article One of the Constitution, before any powers were given to the Executive.

Over the past several weeks, the Committee has sent a strong message to DHS leadership making it clear that transparency with Congress and the American people is not a choice. The Committee sent a bipartisan letter to DHS leadership expressing disappointment in the process and reiterating the Congress’ oversight and authorization roles and responsibilities. Additionally, the Committee marked up several pieces of legislation last week, including one that would explicitly prohibit DHS from undertaking any reorganization or realignment of NPPD without Congressional review and approval. Just yesterday, that legislation passed the House unanimously. I hope our message is clear.

The Committee is committed to working with NPPD’s senior leadership to further strengthen its efforts and ensure that it has a clear mission, streamlined organizational structure, and a qualified workforce to carry out both its infrastructure protection and cybersecurity responsibilities – but this will be a joint effort with Congress. I look forward to hearing more about your proposal for reorganization and then turning the page to begin working together to craft authorization legislation for the National Protection and Programs Directorate that would ensure it has the tools and proper authorities to defend this nation from both cyber and physical threats.

###