



**Statement of Subcommittee Chairman John Katko (R-NY)
Transportation Security Subcommittee
House Homeland Security Committee**

*The Transportation Security Administration's FY2017 Budget Request
March 2, 2016*

Remarks as Prepared

Terrorists remain committed to attacking the West, and every day these groups are recruiting new soldiers to their cause. As 9/11 fades from the memory of many Americans, it is incumbent upon Congress to look at tragic recent events and recognize just how committed our adversaries remain to attacking us.

The harsh reality is that there are formidable new threats to the safety and security of the traveling public, and it is incumbent upon this Committee to ensure that the Transportation Security Administration has the resources it needs to protect the American people against those threats.

At the very beginning of my tenure as Chairman last year, we witnessed a marked increase in the public visibility of access control and employee vetting gaps at airports across the country with the revelations that aviation workers were involved in weapons and drug smuggling and abusing their access to secure and sterile areas of airports.

Then, in June, we learned of disturbing covert testing results from the Department of Homeland Security's Inspector General on the effectiveness of passenger screening checkpoints. Further, we saw a tragedy with the downing of a Metrojet flight over the Sinai Peninsula, which by most accounts was caused by a bomb likely planted by ISIS.

Finally, we saw a number of threats against aviation and surface transportation systems across the globe due to increased threats posed by extremists and foreign fighters and a near-tragedy aboard a Daallo airlines flight in Somalia.

Today, we will look at how the resources requested in the President's budget will mitigate these threats.

Amidst a heightened threat landscape, today's hearing will examine the recent budget request submitted to Congress by the Transportation Security Administration for Fiscal Year 2017. This hearing is a critical element of the Subcommittee's oversight of the TSA and an important opportunity for Congress to provide feedback and input on the direction the agency is taking.

As the subcommittee with primary jurisdiction over TSA, we have a front-row seat to the challenges and obstacles facing the security of our nation's transportation systems.

While I am heartened at a number of important steps taken by the recently-appointed Administrator of TSA, Admiral Pete Neffenger, I remain concerned at the sheer size and scope of the challenges facing TSA as an organization amidst a proliferating threat environment.

Because of this, I am eager to learn more about TSA's proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year and how the agency plans to use its resources efficiently to better-secure our transportation sectors.

The reality is that we must never become complacent in our attempt to stay on the cutting edge of threat mitigation, and it is particularly incumbent upon this Committee to remain steadfast in its oversight of TSA so that the American people can be confident that they can travel safely and securely.

Moreover, I would like to better understand how TSA will continue to enhance its training and intelligence-sharing efforts with its own employees, industry stakeholders, and foreign partners. I am also interested in learning more about developments in TSA's PreCheck program, which is a vital part of advancing risk-based security screening at checkpoints.

TSA has to be right 100% of the time and the terrorists only have to be right once.

With a challenging and ambitious mission, this Subcommittee stands ready to continue helping TSA in their efforts to obtain the necessary resources to keep the traveling public safe from a wide array of threats to their security.

However, we also intend to provide critical oversight of TSA in an effort to avoid instances of waste, fraud, and abuse of taxpayer dollars in the upcoming fiscal year and in years ahead.

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