



## HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

### Statement of Subcommittee Chairman Pete King (R-NY) Counterterrorism and Intelligence Subcommittee

“The Future of Counterterrorism: Addressing the Evolving Threat to Domestic Security”  
February 28, 2017

Remarks as Prepared

In the weeks and months after the terror attacks of September 11th, 2001, Congress and the Administration worked together to fix the weaknesses our enemies had exploited to carry out their attacks. We created the Department of Homeland Security, restructured the Intelligence Community, and launched a war on terror to take the fight to our enemy – all to ensure that a similar attack would not happen again.

In the years that followed, however, much of the energy behind these reforms has been lost. Budgets were cut and important legislative initiatives were delayed. By 2013, leaders in national security warned that the country was paralyzed with “terror fatigue.”

At the same time, the al Qaeda network evolved and spread, ISIS began to take root, and hundreds of Americans have been radicalized. One year ago, senior national security leaders testified that the U.S. is facing its highest terror threat level since 9/11.

Few could have predicted in 2001 how the world would change over the next sixteen years. There has yet to be another spectacular attack claiming thousands of lives – due largely to the heroes in the ranks of our intelligence community, armed forces, first responders and law enforcement, and vigilant citizens. Nonetheless, the increase of small-scale attacks across the United States carried out by adherents to the global jihadist ideology and the rapid evolution of terrorist tactics reveal that our enemy has changed with the times. We must prepare for even more change: increased pressure on terror safe havens and the “caliphate” in Syria may result in a new terrorist diaspora as thousands leave the conflict zone. Our adversaries – including a newly emboldened Iran – will continue to exploit any available chaos.

As the new Administration settles in, there is no doubt that we are at a crossroads in U.S. counterterrorism strategy. We must have an aggressive, long-term strategy for addressing the Islamist terror threat abroad and in the homeland.

For years, this Committee has worked hard to identify and eliminate weaknesses in U.S. security defenses. Professionals and experts have warned repeatedly about failures to connect the dots and share information between agencies. After action reviews of various terrorist attacks have identified individual and systemic failures that remain unaddressed.

We have an opportunity to carefully, but considerably, improve the homeland security of the United States. To whatever extent possible, this must include bipartisan cooperation and an eye on the vital issue of the

safety and security of Americans. It is absolutely necessary to make progress, as our adversaries will only continue to evolve.

This hearing provides us our first step. To build on the foundation of our work in previous Congresses, the witnesses here today will offer perspectives on both the current homeland threat picture, and how Congress, working with this Administration, can fight to once again fix the weaknesses our enemies now exploit. I look forward to hearing their suggestions for where improvements can be made across our counterterrorism programs and policies.

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