



Committee on
HOMELAND SECURITY
Chairman Michael McCaul

Opening Statement

February 13, 2013

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**Statement of Chairman Michael McCaul (R-Texas)
Committee on Homeland Security**

“A New Perspective on Threats to the Homeland”

**February 13, 2013
Remarks as Prepared**

In the years I have sat in this hearing room, upon the walls have hung a series of pictures taken on that day, almost twelve years ago, which served as the unfortunate catalyst for the creation of this Committee. Today those images remain to remind us of the purpose we serve here – to remind us of our promise, “never again.”

After 9/11 President Bush declared:

“We’re fighting a new kind of war against determined enemies. And public servants long into the future will bear the responsibility to defend Americans against terror.”

Over a decade later, we now know those words remain true. The threats we face have adapted, and the Department of Homeland Security’s mission and capability have yet to be solidified. The Members of this Committee are some of the “public servants” the President spoke about. It is our duty to continue to improve DHS, and defend our ‘freedom, security, and way of life.’

Essential to defending our homeland is securing our borders. Coming from Texas, I am particularly concerned with conditions on our Southwest border. We are, and will remain, a nation of immigrants, and no one denies that our immigration system is broken. However, as immigration reform takes center stage, we cannot repeat the mistakes of the past. The 1986 immigration reform did not stop the flow of illegal immigrants and we cannot support reforms today unless they hinge on gaining effective control of our borders. Until the Administration

creates a comprehensive national strategy to secure our borders-that includes a reasonable definition of operational control we can measure-we cannot quantify success or failure. My overriding goal is to prevent repeating this debate ten years from now.

All Americans – whether an immigrant or citizen born here – require a secure border that prevents drugs, weapons, and violence from damaging our communities. Drug cartels fight for primacy on our southern border, sending narcotics into our homes; smugglers weaken our economic competitiveness at our ports of entry; while terrorists still seek entry into the United States undetected. Increasingly, DHS has the opportunity to use existing technologies returning from theaters of war that make securing our border cheaper and easier than ever before. Consequently, as we embark on immigration reform we must be mindful that the first step is to control our border - and I will be introducing legislation to accomplish that goal.

I have developed a framework for legislation to compel the Department, and its components, to create and implement a strategy to control our borders that includes measurable progress, and I am working with outside groups and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and in both chambers to be sure the strategy is workable and has the support it needs.

If fully implemented, the ability exists to gain effective control of our borders within three years. The strategy must meet three key criteria. It must ascertain situational awareness of our borders. It must create metrics to measure progress based on outcomes. It must integrate Department of Homeland Security components that presently overlap or contradict.

Other threats to our nation do not cross our physical borders – they instead invade our digital networks. DHS is tasked with securing our civilian Federal networks and – equally important – protecting our critical infrastructure. DHS is responsible for coordinating the national protection, prevention, mitigation of and recovery from cyber incidents. DHS is also charged with disseminating domestic cyber threat and vulnerability analysis and investigating cyber crimes within their jurisdiction. As these threats increase, it is essential the Federal Government has the capability and capacity to defend against a cyber attack that could have devastating consequences on our economy and way of life.

I do not need to stress the importance of this mission because China is hacking major American publications and military secrets, and Iran is allegedly targeting our major financial institutions. These are just the latest in a series of increasingly regular attacks against the Homeland. Reports this week also claim that China is currently targeting U.S. trade secrets valued at tens of billions of dollars.

DHS has been building its capability to protect us from cyber attacks, and it will be a priority of this Committee to help them improve their efforts through legislation. A whole-of-government cyber-strategy that is responsive to the threat landscape is necessary, and will require insight into the most dangerous cyber actors. This Committee has a major role in crafting such a strategy, and the next hearing before this Committee will focus on the President's Executive Order on

Cybersecurity.

As we work to meet these challenges, we will not forget the present threat of terrorism. While our military efforts have scattered and decimated the core of Al Qaeda's operations and leadership, terrorist franchises such as those that attacked the BP facility in Algeria last month have found new safe havens allowing them to reconstitute. One of my constituents, Frederick Buttaccio, from Katy, Texas was killed during the terrorist takeover of this facility.

Scattered across the map are an increasing number of organizations sympathetic to al Qaeda's message, reaching out to al Qaeda operatives, and joining their global jihad. Iran continues to expand its sphere of influence, strategically advancing its position in the Western hemisphere.

To face these challenges, DHS must improve. Unorganized financial management drains resources from necessary work, while structural waste and duplication slow down solutions. To take a recent example, the Department has decided to remove 174 full-body scanners from airports across the country because they cannot adapt to new imaging requirements. One report alleges these scanners cost \$150,000 for each unit. This faulty procurement has set our travel security back, while also angering passengers.

This Committee will work toward building a better Department, so that it can rise to meet a new decade, and evolving threats, head on. Looking ahead to the 113th Congress, we will not turn our back on that goal, and I appreciate these witnesses coming here today to help us better understand the threats against us – and what needs to be done to meet them.

Before closing, I would again like to reiterate what I said at our organizational meeting last month – Mr. Thompson, we look forward to working with you to accomplish our shared goal of protecting the Homeland.

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