

**U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs  
“Evolving Threats to the Homeland”**

**September 13, 2018**

**Ranking Member Claire McCaskill**

**Opening Statement**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Two days ago marked the 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the September 11 attacks on this nation. It’s a somber reminder of the threats we face and that we must continue to vigilantly protect the country from those who wish to do us harm. In the 17 years since 9/11, Congress and the American people have had spirited debates surrounding the nature of threats to the United States and how best to protect ourselves from them. A lot has changed over these nearly two decades, but until recently, one component remained constant.

Since joining the Senate over 30 years ago, my friend and colleague, Senator John McCain, was an integral part of every national security conversation that took place in this body. His commitment to public service, his dedication to the defense of our country, and his efforts to promote American values were unparalleled. I had the privilege of serving with him on this committee and on the Armed Services Committee. His conviction, insight, and sense of humor will be sorely missed. John McCain made an indelible mark on the security of this nation and I will miss him as a colleague and partner in addressing these complicated issues. I also

welcome Senator Kyl back to the Senate and to this Committee, and I look forward to working with him.

The United States has made enormous progress in preventing another 9/11-style attack, but threats to the country remain. Terrorism continues to evolve as a threat and requires innovative solutions to confront and prevent it. As the United States and the world become more digitally connected and as technology advances at a rapid pace, new vulnerabilities threaten our security. This hearing provides an opportunity for the Committee to focus on some of those concerns and explore solutions to emerging problems.

In 2013, for the first time, then-Director of National Intelligence James Clapper prioritized cyber threats above terrorism when testifying before Congress. In the years since, the problem has metastasized. The threat of cyberattacks and cyber espionage regularly dominate headlines, and with the midterms approaching, election security is of paramount concern. This Congress, Senator McCain, as chairman of the Armed Services Committee, created a cybersecurity subcommittee on which I serve, where our focus compliments the work of this Committee on identifying cyber threats and strengthening our forces and capabilities.

One area of focus that I am particularly concerned about is supply chain risk management and specifically, the information technology and telecommunications

supply chains within our government agencies and the U.S. infrastructure. This evolving threat can turn a mundane anti-virus software purchase into an unacceptable risk to our national security. We need to make sure our information technology products and services are safe from infiltration - down to the smallest component, and like most national security issues, that requires a strategy and a whole-of-government approach.

Supply chain risk management cannot be achieved piecemeal. In this regard, a threat to one agency is likely a threat to many others. In June, Senator Lankford and I introduced The Federal Acquisition Supply Chain Security Act to address this critical issue. Few understand this issue better than some of the experts on this panel. I hope this hearing will provide the Committee, federal agencies, and the public with a better understanding of the problem and how to solve it.

Similarly, this Committee has heard from numerous cabinet officials and experts in the public and private sectors about threats posed by drones. Chairman Johnson and I introduced legislation that would authorize the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice to conduct limited counter-drone operations, for a narrow set of important and prioritized missions. Our bill is just the first step in tackling this mounting problem, and we welcome additional thoughts from the witnesses on solutions to mitigate the threat.

I want to thank the Chairman for holding this hearing and look forward to the discussion.