

Chairman Johnson's Opening Statement
"Resources Needed to Protect and Secure the Homeland"
Thursday, May 23, 2019

As prepared for delivery:

I would like to thank Acting Secretary McAleenan not only for testifying before the Committee today, but also for his willingness to lead the Department during this critical time. The Department of Homeland Security currently faces a number of urgent and pressing challenges. One in particular—the crisis at our southern border—highlights the chaos that can result when Congress fails to act, whether not closing legal loopholes or not properly resourcing the Department and its components.

As you know, we have a crisis at our southern border. According to the Department, Customs and Border Protection will likely apprehend one million migrants by the end of the year. We have not seen numbers like this in over a decade, and the nature of the problem has changed fundamentally: unlike past migration spikes, the migrants crossing today are mostly families and unaccompanied children. This presents a significant challenge for the Department, which was not set up to process a substantial number of family units and children. Congress needs to take action, including a serious look at the resources and authorities that DHS requires to address the crisis and secure our open borders.

There are many other serious challenges facing the Department: the Department must secure our border, safeguard our critical infrastructure from physical and cyber threats, protect our nation's transportation systems, and prepare and help the nation recover from natural disasters. Drugs and human smuggling not only occur along our porous borders, but also through our maritime borders. The U.S. Coast Guard apprehended an estimated \$6.1 billion in drugs and detained over 600 suspected smugglers in Fiscal Year 2018. As the nation's drug epidemic devastates our communities, the Coast Guard needs sufficient resources now more than ever.

Adversary countries and non-state actors continue to look for cyber vulnerabilities in our nation's critical infrastructure. Last year, this Committee authorized the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, an agency within the Department with the authority to lead public-private engagement about how we protect and secure our cyber networks. Congress should continue to provide the necessary resources to defend the country in cyberspace.

Emerging and evolving threats to the homeland need our attention. Malicious actors search for new ways to threaten the homeland, including by using drones and new ways of developing and deploying weapons of mass destruction—both threats this Committee addressed with meaningful legislation last Congress. However, more work is needed; specifically, Congress and the Department must implement mitigation solutions for a potential electromagnetic pulse attack or geomagnetic disturbance to our electric grid.

The Department has requested \$92 billion, including \$19.4 billion in FEMA disaster relief funding. Additionally, on May 1st, the Administration sent Congress a request for supplemental appropriations including \$1.1 billion for DHS's border operations. I thank Mr. McAleenan for stepping up and leading the Department during a time of crisis, and I look forward to discussing how Congress can help the Department carry out its missions.