

**Chairman Peters Opening Statement As Prepared for Delivery
Full Committee Hearing: Nominations of William J. Valdez to be the Under Secretary for Management at the Department of Homeland Security, Kenneth L. Wainstein to be Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis at the Department of Homeland Security, and Dimitri Kusnezov to be the Under Secretary for Science and Technology at the Department of Homeland Security**

Today we are considering three nominations to help lead the Department of Homeland Security, William Valdez to be the Under Secretary for Management, Kenneth Wainstein to be Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis, and Dimitri Kusnezov to be the Under Secretary for Science and Technology.

Welcome to each of you, and congratulations on your nominations. I appreciate your willingness to take on these important new roles.

The Department of Homeland Security, or DHS, is our nation's third largest agency, faced with the challenging task of coordinating efforts across the government to facilitate safe international trade and travel, manage disaster and pandemic response efforts, and safeguard our nation against a range of threats.

However, in the 20 years since the Department was created in the wake of the horrific 9/11 terrorist attacks, new and sophisticated threats to American communities have emerged.

DHS needs qualified, and steady leadership to help tackle these challenges, including persistent cyber-attacks that threaten our national and economic security, vile acts of domestic terrorism that terrorize communities across the country, and continued threats of violence against public officials from local school boards to elections workers.

DHS's response to these threats is compounded by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and increasingly extreme weather events that damage homes and small businesses, and endanger lives.

To successfully combat these threats, DHS must have dedicated, experienced leadership who will continue to support its nearly 240,000 employees, who work each and every day to fulfill their mission to keep Americans safe.

I look forward to more closely examining the qualifications and experience of the three nominees before us today.

Mr. Valdez, if confirmed, you will work to ensure that the dedicated workforce at DHS has the tools and resources to defend American communities. Ensuring this multi-faceted department is nimble enough to tackle today's threats, will require a multi-faceted and comprehensive management approach.

Mr. Wainstein, there is no question that the Office of Intelligence and Analysis continues to face enormous challenges, including low employee morale. It is essential that the Department's

Intelligence and Analysis workforce has the strong and steady leadership it needs to serve the American people, and not political interests.

I&A also must also improve its ability to address emerging threats, such as domestic terrorism, while respecting civil rights and liberties.

Mr. Kusnezov, DHS's Office of Science and Technology must remain vigilant and responsive in conducting groundbreaking research to help our nation identify vulnerabilities in our homeland security so we can close existing gaps and increase our capacity to address current and emerging threats.

Thank you again to each of you for joining us today and for your willingness to serve. And, I look forward to hearing more about how you intend to carry out the vital rolls that you have been nominated for, and how you work transparently with this committee, if confirmed.

With that, I will turn it over to Ranking Member Portman.