

**TESTIMONY
OF
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GUIDEHOUSE**

For the

**UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**“Examining the Role of the Department of Homeland Security’s
Office of Intelligence and Analysis”**

May 18, 2021

Chairman Peters, Ranking Member Portman, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you this morning, as you examine the role of DHS’ Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A). The comments I share with the Committee today are informed by my 24 years of federal service, my tenure as a founding member of DHS serving on Day 1, and the varied capacities in which I have both led and worked with DHS I&A.

During my tenure at DHS, I served in multiple leadership roles including with three Headquarters elements and three different DHS component agencies, as well as completing a nearly 3-year tour at the National Security Council (NSC). In those roles:

- I was a consumer of DHS I&A’s intelligence products, when I served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Screening Coordination in DHS’ Office of Policy, as Special Assistant to the President for Transborder Security at the NSC, and, most recently, as Deputy Administrator for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).
- I was a member of a fellow Headquarters office while at DHS Policy, working jointly with DHS I&A to lead development of strategic and policy initiatives that crossed agencies; collaborate on products for the Secretary and DHS leadership that explained DHS’ relevant strategic direction or operational activity in relation to current intelligence; and to lead DHS governance processes, including the Information Sharing and Safeguarding Committee, to ensure that those processes provided timely direction and support for DHS mission needs.
- I was a member of the Homeland Security Intelligence Enterprise, as the Assistant Director for Intelligence for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, working with I&A to inform strategic direction, policy, priorities, requirements, and production.

- And I led I&A, serving as the Acting Under Secretary while the nominee was undergoing confirmation.

Based on those experiences, I found that the highest value roles for DHS I&A were to:

- Support the Homeland Security Intelligence Enterprise. Similar to the Undersecretary for Defense for Intelligence (USD(I)), the Under Secretary, as the DHS Chief Intelligence (CINT) Officer, in collaboration with the Homeland Security Intelligence Council (HSIC), should lead development of strategy, policy, and an integrated set of priorities, including training and budget. DHS I&A should support this governance process.
- Advocate for DHS mission intelligence needs to the Intelligence Community (IC) and through the budget process. DHS I&A should enable and support the DHS mission, including advocating on behalf of DHS operators and policy personnel. This includes enabling DHS access to IC information and tools, ensuring that homeland collection needs are prioritized, and advocating for resourcing for specific capabilities through both the IC and DHS processes. During my tenure, I saw a successful example in the enhancement of DHS' counterintelligence program. I&A, working with component representatives, co-created a joint budget enhancement request that resulted in additional appropriations, and deployment of dedicated staff to both headquarters and component agencies. It's also important to note the intentional use of the word "advocate." Productive relationships exist between DHS organizations and the IC, such as those I experienced working at both ICE and TSA; DHS I&A should support and foster such partnerships, rather than on being a gatekeeper.
- Provide the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and headquarters organizations with intelligence services. DHS Policy and other headquarters elements are often tasked to attend interagency meetings to develop policy and to support the Secretary and Deputy in Departmental and interagency decision with their counterparts. DHS I&A should collaborate with other HQ offices to ensure that they, and the Secretary and Deputy Secretary, have access to the same high-quality intelligence their counterparts do. DHS I&A should also be able to provide the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, DHS and other homeland senior leaders with a complete "state of the homeland" intelligence picture to inform policy and operational decisions, and effectively manage risk.
- Coordinate production of "sense of the community" analyses to support DHS and homeland security-unique needs with the HSIC. In addition to products like the Homeland Security Threat Assessment, the CINT should seek to provide "sense of the community" products to support DHS decision making. Critical to the success of these products is that they are led by the DHS entity best positioned to speak on behalf of the entirety of the information, including not only traditional intelligence information and law enforcement information, but also analysis developed by DHS in support of its ongoing programs, and by other knowledgeable stakeholders, such as academia, think tanks, and associations, and that the products are scoped to answer the questions relevant for the conversation. These types of products must developed through a collaborative

process. While the entity best positioned to speak to the information should lead the content development, DHS I&A can manage the coordination process and support the development of these products.

As an example, DHS I&A may be best to lead the development of an assessment on terrorism in support of a discussion on issuing a National Terrorism Advisory System Bulletin. But Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection are likely best to lead an assessment of cross-border trade violations in support of a discussion about how to update programmatic direction or legislation.

- Engage the fusion centers. DHS I&A staff should support state, local, territorial, and tribal partners with training, information, and all source analysis that helps partners, based on the partner's needs. As fusion centers differ, the services provided by DHS I&A personnel assigned to those centers will differ.
- Collaborate with other DHS entities to enable an effective information sharing environment. DHS I&A should support the design and funding of technical architectures and multi-use tools that enhance DHS's ability to match and exchange information, where appropriate, to achieve their missions. To do so, they will need to collaborate with the DHS operating component as well as with a number of DHS headquarters offices, including: DHS Policy; the Chief Information Officer; Privacy; Civil Rights and Civil Liberties; and General Counsel. DHS I&A's support to the National Vetting Center, housed at Customs and Border Protection, is a positive example of this role.

Over my tenure, I've seen DHS I&A perform all of these functions. I can cite positive examples, and highlight the great work of numerous personnel. DHS I&A should work to ensure that it can perform well consistently, across these functions and with variance appropriate in approach based on needs and capabilities of its partners. I've also seen DHS I&A seek to fill other roles over that time, which overlapped or competed with existing activities already underway by others in DHS or in partner organizations. DHS I&A is an important member of DHS. DHS I&A can make the greatest mission impact by leading in those unique areas where others aren't already operating, and by supporting and enabling others in the areas already within their missions.

To effectively perform the six roles outlined above, DHS must address DHS I&A staffing and morale. Improving morale is not just good from the perspective of caring for the workforce – its also a national security imperative. Based on my experiences, there are a few areas where improvements would have some of the greatest effect on DHS I&A staff morale.

- Stabilizing organizational structure, mission, and role. At my first town hall as acting Under Secretary, I was asked if I was going to reorganize or issue updated priorities. When I said I expected to continue the direction of the previous acting, who at that point was in the confirmation process, had started, they seemed relieved. They workforce needs continuity and consistency that lasts more than the term of one Under Secretary and one Secretary.

In addition, the workforce needs a mission that is unique and valued. DHS I&A employees are understandably frustrated when they are perceived as duplicating the roles of others in DHS, or within the IC. DHS I&A leadership should identify areas that are unique, and where they can be recognized as having subject matter depth – rather than trying to synopsize or “integrate” other’s work where they don’t.

- Enhancing career development opportunities. While personnel at DHS I&A, as members of the intelligence community, are required to complete joint duty assignments, they often lack understanding of and direct experience with DHS component mission sets. Not only does this inhibit their ability to partner with others in DHS to develop well-rounded intelligence products, but it also limits their career options, particularly at senior levels. This, in turn, can limit innovation and creativity. Employees who see their career development limited are also less likely to invest in developing junior staff, or to bring in new talent to increase the diversity of perspectives needed address emerging threats.

DHS I&A leadership should invest in changes that will provide supervisors incentives to positively coach and mentor their personnel, and career paths that enable staff to change organizations – either to intelligence community entities, or to DHS component agencies – increasing their opportunities and exposure to the wider national and homeland security mission.

- De-politicizing products, and career staff. By its nature, intelligence analysis is intended to look at difficult problems and emerging threats, and assess potential vulnerabilities and risks. These assessments are not always comfortable – and may not align with what the consumer wants to hear. This is difficult when assessing foreign actors and threats; it’s all the more difficult when looking at domestic threats, such as domestic violent extremism or domestic terrorism risk given the need to appropriately address first amendment rights, privacy, and other civil liberties concerns. While politicization concerns have increased in recent years, DHS I&A has faced criticism over many administrations.

It’s entirely appropriate for, and the intelligence community expects, intelligence product consumers to closely examine and critique the analytic tradecraft and data sources used in making an assessment. It’s also appropriate for knowledgeable people to assess the same data differently. This is why the intelligence community allows for dissenting opinions.

DHS I&A should seek to enhance its strategic communications with its customers and stakeholders, particularly those who may not regularly receive intelligence products other than those from DHS I&A. Consumers need to understand how DHS I&A selects the topics it analyzes and its production development methodology, and have additional opportunity to provide feedback and input. DHS I&A should also seek support from partners and oversight, such as from this Committee, for efforts in areas that may become controversial.

As this Committee examines DHS I&A’s role, I would encourage you to think about the high-value roles, and the changes needed to improve DHS I&A morale that I outlined above, as

building blocks for a mature organization that fills a critical role in the homeland security enterprise. Organizational, transformational, and cultural change take significant investments in time, in developing and maintaining talent, in a willingness to measure impact and modify activity based on the results, and in commitment to strategic communications, both internally and externally. As you consider changes, I would encourage you to develop them in a way that will support the organization over years to come, and will survive both the test of time, and changes in Administration.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today. I look forward to your questions.