

Statement of Huban Gowadia
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before the
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and
Subcommittee on Transportation Security
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Good morning, Chairmen Perry and Katko, Ranking Members Watson Coleman and Rice, and distinguished members of the subcommittees. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) counterterrorism workforce, which safeguards the traveling public and secures our nation's transportation systems. We appreciate the Committee's support in ensuring TSA maintains the highest professional standards for our workforce.

Both in the field and at headquarters, the TSA workforce is vigilant in ensuring the security of people and commerce that flow through our Nation's vast transportation networks. TSA employs risk-based, intelligence-driven operations to prevent terrorist attacks and to reduce the vulnerability of the Nation's transportation system to terrorism. At all times, our goal is to maximize transportation security to stay ahead of evolving terrorist threats while

protecting privacy and facilitating the flow of legitimate travel and commerce.

It is critical that we employ a culture of operational evolution that constantly reevaluates assumptions, plans, and processes to achieve the highest level of mission excellence to counter the plans of our determined adversaries. The United States continues to face persistent threats from terrorist groups around the world, as well as from homegrown violent extremists inspired by messages of hatred to harm the American traveling public. These threats are complex and diffuse, and pose a challenging, dynamic environment that demand our utmost dedication and professionalism. To address these complex threats, the TSA employs Transportation Security Officers (TSO) across more than four hundred and thirty (430) airports and deploys Federal Air Marshals (FAM) both for flight coverage as well as ground-based assignments, such as Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR) teams. TSA's inspectors ensure compliance with federal statutes and regulations. TSA's personnel are committed to reducing the vulnerability of the Nation's transportation system to terrorism. These dedicated employees occupy the frontline in executing the agency's transportation security duties in support of our Nation's counterterrorism efforts.

Administrator's Intent

Mission success depends on a shared understanding of objectives, unity of purpose, and alignment of values and principles. In January 2016, Administrator Peter Neffenger published TSA's first Administrator's Intent to articulate those objectives, the approach we will pursue in accomplishing our essential counterterrorism mission, and the values and principles that define TSA.

Central to our success is a commitment to a common set of values: integrity, innovation, and team spirit. Building on these, the Administrator's Intent outlines the principles we care about as an agency, which are: Focus on Mission, Invest in People, and Commit to Excellence.

- **Focus on Mission:** Focusing on our mission prioritizes our resources and operations to meet the threat. It also informs how we must invest in our workforce to achieve mission success.
- **Invest in People:** Our culture, effectiveness, and mission readiness are a direct result of consistent and career-long investment in people and set the foundation for agency success. Value-based leadership, a foundation of training, recruiting and retaining talent, and appropriate recognition are core elements of our approach.
- **Commit to Excellence:** Our standard is excellence in all mission areas. We operate in a global environment where the threat remains persistent and evolving. As we pursue our counterterrorism mission, we will relentlessly pursue excellence through a culture of constant improvement, organizational adaptation, and discipline.

Workforce Training and Development

On a daily basis, the men and women of TSA display passion, patriotism, and sense of duty while performing demanding tasks under difficult circumstances. In order to ensure our workforce is able to continue accomplishing its vital mission, Administrator Neffenger and I are committed to providing a supportive working environment for all TSA employees with an emphasis on standards, values, and accountability. To this end, we have increased our investments in training and education programs to strengthen TSA's professional foundation and build future leaders. A common foundation of training will connect our workforce to a unified

culture, strengthen the focus on mission, and build esprit de corps. As a result, TSA has expanded its leadership development opportunities with offerings that range from the Rising Leaders Development Program for entry level employees, to the Executive Leadership Program for Transportation Security Executive Service (TSES) employees, which is designed to inspire ethical leadership in a complex and demanding homeland security environment. In early 2017, we will be launching mandatory leadership training for all newly promoted senior level TSA employees. Additionally, in January 2016, TSA began sending newly hired officers to basic training at the TSA Academy, located at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Glynco, Georgia. While at the Academy, new hires are immersed in our mission, history, values, and high ethical standards. All of these vital training and professional development programs reinforce professional integrity, duty to mission, and commitment to excellence.

Disciplinary Processes

Integrity is a core value at TSA, and as the Deputy Administrator I strive to motivate our employees to fulfill their duties while upholding TSA's high standards of professionalism. TSA employees are responsible for reporting any known or suspected violation of law, rule, regulation, policy, or Standard Operating Procedure to any manager and/or to the TSA Office of Inspection (OOI). Allegations of employee misconduct are investigated and, in some cases, OOI investigators work with other law enforcement agencies.

OOI refers allegations to the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General (DHS OIG) for right of first refusal to investigate. If the OIG does not accept the case for investigation, the matter is referred back to OOI or local management for an administrative inquiry. After the completion of an investigation of alleged misconduct, OIG or OOI

investigators produce a Report of Investigation, which generally contains witness statements, relevant documents, and other evidence as well as an agent's summary of investigative activities.

Completed reports and administrative inquiries are referred to TSA's Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) or the appropriate management official for adjudication. TSA's OPR provides consistency in misconduct penalty determinations and facilitates an expeditious, standardized adjudication process. OPR adjudicates all allegations of misconduct investigated by the DHS OIG or involving senior-level employees or law enforcement officers. OPR may also exercise jurisdiction over any matter the Assistant Administrator for OPR determines should be reviewed and adjudicated by OPR. Cases that fall outside of OPR's jurisdiction are handled at the supervisory level.

TSA's Table of Offenses and Penalties provides guidance for determining appropriate corrective, disciplinary, or adverse actions for common offenses. Disciplinary penalties range from a letter of reprimand to removal. With respect to screening workforce employees, TSA requires removal for certain offenses, including failed drug or alcohol testing, sleeping on duty while assigned to a security activity, intentional serious security breaches, and cases involving theft. When removal is not required, the Table includes a recommended penalty range, as well as aggravated and mitigated penalty ranges.

TSA employs an important accountability tool for rapidly removing TSOs when egregious or serious misconduct is substantiated. The one-step removal process allows management officials to expeditiously remove an employee while ensuring due process. In the one-step removal process, a TSO may be issued a removal action after a management official has a meeting with the employee to discuss the incident or allegation, advise the employee of the possible consequences, and allow the employee an opportunity to respond to the allegations. The

offenses for which the one-step removal process may be used include cases involving theft, illegal drugs, on-duty alcohol use, intentional serious security breaches, sleeping on duty while assigned to a security activity, and arrests for specific serious offenses set forth under 49 C.F.R. § 1542.209(d).

Most disciplinary and adverse actions are handled through a two-step process. Pursuant to the two-step process, a TSA management official will first issue a notice of the proposed action and provide the employee with the opportunity to review the evidence supporting the charge(s) and to respond orally and/or in writing. Second, another management official will consider the entire record, including the input from the affected employee, and will issue a written decision. OPR issues the proposal and decision notices in the matters it adjudicates.

TSA's disciplinary policies and processes are designed to hold accountable individuals who engage in misconduct while upholding due process rights and ensuring equitable treatment for employees at all levels of the agency. TSA empowers its employees through training and professional development opportunities, but also takes prompt and appropriate action to investigate and adjudicate misconduct if an employee falls short of our high standards.

Conclusion

TSA's greatest strength is its committed, professional workforce. We must continue to recruit and retain highly capable individuals dedicated to, and focused on, our core mission. We are committed to maintaining an environment where employees and leaders can develop, employees have the tools to be successful, and the workforce is motivated by TSA's mission, vision, and strategic imperatives. To provide the most effective transportation security, the workforce must constantly be training and improving.

Our workforce places a strong emphasis on values, performance, and accountability. The traveling public expects efficient and effective screening and to be treated with dignity and respect, and we will uphold these principles by continually reinforcing this message of dignity and respect in training for our frontline workforce and management alike. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and for the Committee's support of TSA's important mission.