

**OPENING STATEMENT
U.S. SENATOR JOHN HOEVEN (R-N.D.)
HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 29, 2015
HEARING ON THE TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION**

(GAVEL)

The Subcommittee will come to order. Good morning. I would first like to welcome our witnesses. Administrator Peter Neffenger is the recently confirmed Assistant Secretary of the Transportation Security Administration. The Coast Guard's loss is TSA's gain and we look forward to working with you in this capacity.

And the Department of Homeland Security's Inspector General, John Roth. Thank you both for being here.

Thank you also to Ranking Member Shaheen and other subcommittee members for your time and attention to this important issue.

This month marks the 14th Anniversary since the attacks on September 11th. Our nation's response to that terrible day's events included a significant and immediate investment in aviation security. Billions of dollars were spent on new people, processes, and technology to build new "layers" of security.

These layers start with intelligence programs and passenger pre-screening in advance of travel and end in the plane itself with hardened cockpit doors and aware passengers and crew members.

These layers are intended to be adaptive and agile, responding to current threats and tactics. This is important given the adversary's continued fascination with aviation as a target.

However, it now appears that the security provided by the most visible – and expensive layer – the screening checkpoint itself, was overestimated. Specifically, media reports cited that TSA had a failure rate of over 90 percent in covert testing of checkpoints.

For obvious reasons, we cannot elaborate on the details of those tests in an open hearing. However, the failures call into question the effectiveness of: (1) the people we have hired and trained; (2) the processes we have instituted; and (3) the technology we have procured.

All three legs of the stool – people, process, and technology – have to be strong and balanced to maintain the security system. And, it seems to me, that we need to review our entire system and make changes to ensure it is effective.

With respect to people, TSA screeners have a challenging job. They must stay focused on their security mission while performing monotonous tasks in a high pressure, high throughput

environment. Meanwhile, organizations like al-Qaeda disseminate inventive ways to smuggle contraband onto airplanes and avoid security measures.

Supporting this workforce must be the right processes. These procedures must be tested and trained as well as applied consistently. Many of these processes – as we're all aware – are uncomfortable for both the screeners and passengers. An appreciation of both points of view is critical.

Lastly, TSA has always sought – with varying degrees of success – to embrace cutting edge technology. The 2009 Christmas Day plot and the use of non-metallic explosives aboard a commercial aircraft demanded a solution. But the Advanced Imaging Technology we have deployed is not a silver bullet.

All of these facets: the people, the processes, and the technology, must work in concert. A failure of one weakens the entire system.

Today, the Inspector General issued the final report associated with the leaked testing information. To the extent possible in an open hearing, I have asked the Inspector General to lay out the findings and recommendation in that report. He will also outline his office's other work on passenger screening in recent years.

Secretary Johnson responded quickly to the leak back in June outlining a 10-point plan of action. That plan is now Administrator Neffenger's to shape and execute. I look forward to questioning him about the plan in detail, including the resource implications and the right metrics by which to measure progress and success.

With that, I'd turn it over to Senator Shaheen for any opening remarks she might have.