

**COMMISSION ON THE PREVENTION OF
WMD PROLIFERATION AND TERRORISM**

**ALEXANDER HAMILTON CUSTOM HOUSE
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10TH, 2008, 9AM**

**Senator Graham, Senator Talent, and members of the Commission:
Good morning, and thank you for inviting me to testify.**

**By holding these hearings, you are doing our entire nation a service.
Government's first and most critical responsibility has always been to
protect its citizens – and never has that responsibility been more
challenging than it is now.**

**We're currently engaged with enemies who are bent on our wholesale
destruction... who won't hesitate to unleash weapons of enough force
and magnitude to kill millions of people and wreak untold chaos.**

And no one understands this better than New Yorkers.

**Seven years ago tomorrow, a group of terrorists brazenly attacked the
city's two tallest skyscrapers, writing an ugly new chapter in the
history of horror and evil.**

**In the seven years since, New Yorkers have come together to rebuild a
city that is safer, stronger, and more welcoming than ever.**

**If anything, our incredible comeback is a shining testament to the
resilience of the American spirit.**

But even as New Yorkers have rebuilt and returned to our daily lives, we've not lost sight of the fact that our city is still squarely in the crosshairs.

In fact, just last week, a Pakistani woman with ties to al-Qaeda – and a degree from MIT – was charged with trying to kill U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan.

When she was arrested, she was ominously carrying a list of New York City icons, including the Statue of Liberty, the Brooklyn Bridge, Wall Street, and the Empire State Building.

Clearly, New York is a powerful symbol for what our enemies find so threatening: capitalism and freedom... modernity and diversity... equality and tolerance.

New York is the world's media and financial capital...

... the home of the United Nations...

...and a place where every faith and philosophy is respected.

For all these reasons... and because we are America's biggest city... we remain a prime – if not the prime – target for terrorist groups.

That presents challenges we've been determined to meet head on. And we are sparing no expense.

Although preparedness is a crucial part of our counter-terrorism efforts, I'm going to concentrate my remarks today on your Commission's primary concern: prevention.

I'm glad to see that Congress has focused this Commission on prevention – because Congress itself has lost that focus.

The people we send to Washington have been too busy spreading homeland security funds around based on votes, not threats. And that is a very dangerous thing for our country.

Prevention has been our #1 priority in New York.

When I was sworn into office less than three months after 9/11, one of the first decisions that Police Commissioner Ray Kelly and I made was to overhaul the NYPD's Intelligence Division and create a new Counterterrorism Bureau.

Both units – which now employ a total of 1,000 officers – have become models to other big-city police departments around the nation – and crucial elements in the global fight against terrorism.

In August 2004, for example, they foiled a plot to bomb the Herald Square subway station in Midtown Manhattan – just a week before the Republican National Convention. The tip-off came from an informant whom the Intelligence Division had cultivated in our city.

Today, the NYPD's intelligence and counterterrorism program reaches around the world.

In fact, we currently have 11 of our best detectives posted in Tel Aviv, London, Abu Dhabi, and other foreign cities – feeding us intelligence every day and working to obtain a full picture of the global terrorist threat.

And here at home, we've not only hired some of the best minds in the intelligence community, we've put our cultural diversity to work for us by hiring more police officers who speak the languages we need to know.

Today, more than 700 members of the police department speak 47 different languages in our growing foreign language division – and that includes 63 Arabic language speakers.

Prevention requires personnel, not just equipment, and local counterterrorism efforts like ours should be supported by the Federal government.

Hiring the best and brightest – including those with foreign language skills – is crucial to prevention.

Prevention is why we also send officers to visit chemical plants, storage facilities, parking garages, and dozens of other businesses that might unwittingly be used in a terrorist attack.

We educate the private sector on situations to be aware of, and we ask them to report any suspicious activity.

Prevention is why we now conduct random bag searches in the subway system...

It's why we conduct additional patrols of potential targets...

It's why we created an inspection special team to monitor the city's underwater tunnels.

And it's why we also continue strengthening the ties between our city's Muslim community and the city as a whole, and making sure that the antagonism and resentment which has become all too common among Europe's Muslims doesn't happen here.

Prevention is the core principle of our counter-terrorism strategy – because even though we know we remain a target, we do not believe that another successful attack is inevitable.

And we owe it to our city and our country to do everything we can to ensure that the next potential attack is not successful.

A centerpiece of the NYPD's ongoing efforts to prevent an attack on New York is our new Lower Manhattan Security Initiative.

Under this program, we've been "hardening" the highly-sensitive area south of Canal Street with massive investments in technology and personnel.

Last month, we also reached an agreement with the Port Authority that will give NYPD a clearly defined role in security at the World Trade Center site and preempt potential turf wars.

So far, we've committed more than \$70 million in City and Homeland Security funds to the Lower Manhattan Security Initiative.

Radiation detectors and the Police Department's heavily-armed "Hercules Teams" have already been deployed.

Eventually, some 3,000 public and private security cameras will be trained on this area and relay images to a new command center.

We plan to install license plate readers at all the bridges and tunnels coming into Lower Manhattan.

Some have compared our effort to the City of London's "Ring of Steel" – an extensive web of cameras and roadblocks that helped police over there identify the suspects in the 2005 tube bombings.

But the Lower Manhattan Security Initiative aims to be much more than that.

For instance, we are testing new software that can analyze the feeds from thousands of different cameras and pick up suspicious movements – like a car that repeatedly circles a city block... or someone who puts down a bag and then walks away.

The point is, this is more than a tool that police can use to respond to an attack. It's something we hope will prevent the attack in the first place... and stop terrorists before they reach their targets.

In New York, we understand that preventing terrorism and responding to any large-scale emergency also depends on smooth coordination among key Federal, State, and City agencies.

We've assigned more than 125 officers to the FBI-NYPD Joint Terrorism Task Force, including three in Washington, DC.

And the result is genuine two-way information sharing that's unique in America.

Such excellent cooperation notwithstanding, however, the federal government needs to do more to help us protect our city.

For instance, we are looking to the FBI to make its own counterterrorism program more effective and more aggressive, as called for by the 9/11 Commission and others.

Also, time and time again, we've seen huge sums of Homeland Security funding that could have been used to bolster our defenses instead treated like political pork and doled out to communities that either don't need it or don't know what to do with it when they get it.

Meanwhile, New York City – which has enormous needs... which has been attacked before... has been targeted many times since... and remains in the crosshairs – goes wanting.

From the start, I have urged that Homeland Security funding be distributed based on terrorism risk alone.

I talked about threat-based funding when I testified before the 9/11 Commission – and I was pleased that members of the Commission incorporated many of my arguments into their recommendations.

To its credit, the Department of Homeland Security has begun moving some of its grant programs toward a system of allocating funding that gives greater consideration to threat and vulnerability.

But the problem is that it's a system which gives greater consideration to every kind of threat – hurricanes... chemical spills... plagues of locusts... you name it.

The result is that the special characteristics which set New York City apart as a unique and unparalleled target of terrorism get completely overlooked.

On top of that, the total amount of Homeland Security funding requested by the Administration and appropriated by the Congress has been declining.

This simply cannot continue – not if we're serious about preventing another attack.

At the same time, we also must keep working with Congress and the Department of Health & Human Services to fix the distribution of bioterrorism preparedness funding – which is allocated essentially without regard to the risk of terrorist attack.

Because of the anthrax episodes in 2001, New York is one of only a handful of places in the nation that's ever experienced a bio-terror attack. Yet in Fiscal Year 2008, we received \$2.72 per capita, putting us an incredible 21st out of 54 eligible states and cities.

What makes the situation especially challenging is that the total pool of bioterrorism funding that's distributed across the nation continually falls far short of the actual needs of the nation.

Combined, these two facts threaten to severely hamstring our efforts to protect New York City as best as we possibly can from bioterrorism.

One potential casualty is our state-of-the-art BioWatch Surveillance System – which monitors the city's air quality for the first signs of anthrax, smallpox, and other dangerous agents – and which has been slowly stripped of its funding.

Every minute counts in a bioterrorism attack. We simply can't continue to undermine the systems which will warn us of an attack before it's too late to save lives.

Finally, we will continue challenging Congress to increase funding for another key part of our defense – the Department of Homeland Security's "Securing the Cities" initiative.

New York is actually the pilot site for this program, which involves a multi-layered ring of sensors that can detect radioactive and nuclear material before it enters the city.

Detection devices are strategically placed in New Jersey, Connecticut, and upstate New York, as well as at major entry points into Manhattan.

But in the yet-to-be-passed FY 09 Appropriations Bill, we are still \$10 million short in federal funding from fully implementing the program.

And it's not just New York City that's getting shortchanged.

Since we are acting as a test site for other cities, the longer it takes for us to get it right, the longer it will be before this system is rolled out in the rest of the country.

We cannot afford to nickel-and-dime the best hope we have for preventing the worst possible calamity. The explosion of a nuclear device could cost thousands of lives, devastate our economy, and plunge us into further conflict overseas.

We must take this threat seriously.

And for us to do that, the federal government must take New York seriously – and provide the resources we need to protect what is clearly the terrorists' number one target.

This is no place for politics.

Hopefully, this hearing will begin the process of creating a system that more fairly and equitably attends to the security of New York City and our entire homeland.

Thank you, and I'll be happy to answer any questions. ###