

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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September 30, 2019

The Honorable Joseph Maguire
Acting Director of National Intelligence
Office of the Director of National Intelligence
1500 Tysons McLean Drive
McLean, VA 22102

Dear Acting Director Maguire:

We write to request information about how the Intelligence Community (IC) is defending the nation against the growing threat of transnational, white supremacist terrorism. On September 20, our Subcommittees held a joint hearing on the transnational nature of the threat of violent white supremacy. During the hearing, we heard testimony from multiple witnesses that white supremacist terrorists are united by a shared ideology and strategy and that they draw inspiration from one another's violent attacks. For example:

- Dr. Kathleen Belew, a subject matter expert on the white power movement, testified, “Acts of mass violence in the white power movement are not imagined as the endpoint of this ideology; they’re supposed to awaken other activists to join the movement and to carry out similar actions.”
- Dr. Joshua Geltzer, a former Senior Director for Counterterrorism, testified, “The phrase ‘lone wolves’ is dangerously misleading, because part of what attracts these individuals is the sense that signing up for this ideology, acting in its name, makes them precisely not alone.”
- Katrina Mulligan, a former Department of Justice official in the National Security Division, cited linkages between the perpetrators of recent white supremacist attacks, testifying:

From violent attacks around the world—from Norway to Charleston, from Canada to Pittsburgh, and from El Paso to New Zealand—white supremacists are increasingly finding and sharing inspiration for their deadly acts and invoking other murderers in their manifestos.¹

¹ Committee on Oversight and Reform, Subcommittees on National Security and Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, *Hearing on Confronting Violent White Supremacy: Addressing the Transnational Terrorist Threat* (Sept. 20, 2019).

Given their historic practice of treating violent white supremacy as a domestic terrorism issue, within the almost exclusive jurisdiction of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), we are concerned that the remaining IC agencies have not aligned their strategic priorities with the commensurate transnational threat of violent white supremacy. For example, Nicholas Rasmussen, who served as Director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) from 2014 to 2017, has stated publicly that “absolutely none” of his time at NCTC was spent on domestic terrorism because after September 11, 2001, “that was seen to be in the FBI’s purview,” and “NCTC would focus, along with the other intelligence agencies, on the overseas terrorism problem.”²

However, as Dr. Geltzer testified during our hearing:

What you’ve heard today from me, from fellow panelists, is that this actually is a form of international terrorism. And that would seem to, within existing statutory authorities, activate NCTC and allow it to play the role in this area that I saw it play firsthand when it came to jihadism.³

Dr. Geltzer also recommended that NCTC revisit its mandate to ensure that it is empowered to fuse and analyze information related to both domestic and white supremacist threats and to share that intelligence with foreign partners and allies. As he testified, “We need NCTC fully in the game with respect to violent white supremacy.”⁴

In addition, Ms. Mulligan testified that the IC should “explicitly identify and distinguish violent white supremacists as threat actors, and increase the priority assigned to these threats within the National Intelligence Priorities Framework.”⁵

We are pleased that after months of prodding, DHS finally released its long-promised Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence, which identifies white supremacist violent extremists as a national security threat to the U.S. homeland. We hope and expect the remaining IC agencies will follow suit.

To that end, we request that you provide a briefing by October 18, 2019, on the IC’s strategy to combat the threat of transnational white supremacist terrorism, including an assessment of whether the Director of National Intelligence and NCTC believe that they have the necessary authorities to execute that strategy. We also request that you provide copies of any policies, strategies, or implementation documents that would help to inform our Subcommittees’ work.

² *Meet the Press Daily*, MSNBC (Aug. 6, 2019) (online at www.msnbc.com/mtp-daily/watch/full-rasmussen-absolutely-none-of-my-time-in-government-was-spent-on-domestic-terrorism-65435717748).

³ Committee on Oversight and Reform, Subcommittees on National Security and Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, *Hearing on Confronting Violent White Supremacy: Addressing the Transnational Terrorist Threat* (Sept. 20, 2019).

⁴ *Id.*

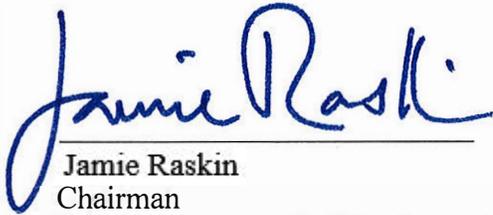
⁵ *Id.*

The Honorable Joseph Maguire

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If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Subcommittee staff at (202) 225-5051.

Sincerely,

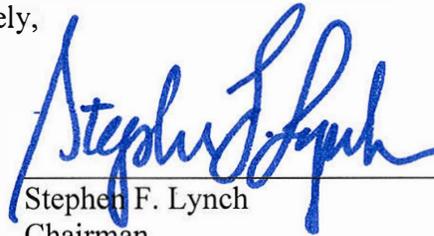


Jamie Raskin

Chairman

Subcommittee on Civil Rights and
Civil Liberties

Committee on Oversight and Reform



Stephen F. Lynch

Chairman

Subcommittee on National Security
Committee on Oversight and Reform

cc: The Honorable Chip Roy, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

The Honorable Jody B. Hice, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Security