

Opening Statement of the Honorable Peter King
House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

June 7, 2023

Chairman Turner, Ranking Member Himes thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify at this morning's hearing alongside colleagues I had the privilege of serving with on this Committee. I am very appreciative.

There is no Committee more vital or essential to our national security than this Intelligence Committee. I'm sure each of us on this panel agrees that the greater the level of Committee bi-partisanship, the greater the likelihood of the Committee fulfilling its daunting mandate.

The issues and potential world crises facing the Committee are many: with China, Russia, Iran, cybersecurity, porous border security and the invasion of Ukraine, being just a few.

In no way would I suggest that the Committee diminish its focus on any of these critical areas. What I am urging is that - with all the legitimate concerns within the Intelligence Community, the Congress and the media on the issues I listed- the Committee keep and maintain a laser-like focus on the continued threat of Islamist terrorism and ensure that all facets of our government keep a similar focus.

As a New Yorker who lost many hundreds of friends, neighbors and constituents on 9/11, I will never forget the horror of that day. As a Member of this Committee and Chairman and Ranking Member of the Homeland Security Committee, I dedicated myself to do all I could to prevent another 9/11. The defenses and countermeasures put in place after 9/11 have been largely successful. But 9/11 is not ancient history or something to be relegated to the rear-view mirror. Nor is the continuing terror threat a parochial New York issue. It affects the entire country. Too often Americans have short term memory loss.

There was almost an 8 1/2 year gap between the first World Trade Center bombing in February 1993 and the attacks of 9/11. International terrorism was not an issue in the 2000 Presidential race. It received little if any media coverage

or discussion in the months leading up to 9/11. (Let me emphasize that one person who never lost focus was Congresswoman Harman.)

Today, while ISIS, Al Qaeda and their offshoots and affiliates have been in retreat, they are still a lethal force.

The American withdrawal from Afghanistan, the breakdown in border security and instability in the Middle East add to their lethality.

I strongly support the effort against Russian aggression in Ukraine but we cannot allow that necessary struggle take our allies' attention away from the cooperative anti-terror measures put in place after 9/11.

We have learned the harsh reality that Islamist terrorists are dedicated to destroying America and our way of life, have great capacity to adapt and adjust and have the long view of history. We must ensure that we never relive the horror of 9/11.