



Department of Justice

STATEMENT OF

KASH PATEL
DIRECTOR
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
UNITED STATES SENATE

AT A HEARING ENTITLED
“OVERSIGHT OF THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION”

PRESENTED
SEPTEMBER 16, 2025

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Good morning, Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Durbin, and Members of the Committee. Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. Each day, the men and women of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”) are making a real difference in communities across the Nation, tackling some of the most complex national security and criminal threats with perseverance, professionalism, and integrity – sometimes at the greatest of costs. On their behalf, I ask for your support and pledge to be the best possible stewards of the resources provided by Congress.

The FBI’s work to combat cartels, fentanyl, gangs, terrorism, violent crime, and all other challenges has never been more important. The FBI is meeting these threats head on by redirecting and prioritizing resources to ensure every dollar spent is supporting our employer, the American people.

Keeping Americans safe at home and abroad is a no-fail mission. The FBI currently has over 35,000 direct-funded positions. The dedicated men and women in those positions are tackling a myriad threats head on, from a surge in terrorism threats in the aftermath of the October 7, 2023, attack in Israel; to the scourge of fentanyl killing Americans from coast to coast; to an explosion of violent crime plaguing our communities.

Beginning on January 20, 2025, President Trump issued several homeland and national security Executive Orders, to include directing federal government agencies to pursue the total elimination of cartels and transnational criminal organizations (“TCOs”) in the United States. Additionally, in response to the February 20, 2025, U.S. State Department action designating six cartels and four transnational gangs as foreign terrorist organizations (“FTOs”) and Specially Designated Global Terrorists (“SDGTs”), the FBI developed the Counter Cartel Coordination Center to bring to bear all the FBI’s tools, resources, and skillsets to most effectively combat FTOs and SDGTs. Our actions in response to these designations have already yielded significant results.

For example, in March, working with our interagency partners, the FBI announced the apprehension of one of our “Ten Most Wanted” from Mexico—a key senior leader of the brutal MS-13 gang, Francisco Javier Roman-Bardales. This is the third fugitive the FBI and our partners have apprehended since the beginning of this year. Currently, FBI-led task forces are staffed with over 9,000 Federal, state, local, Tribal, and territorial partners. Many of these task forces are focused on western hemisphere TCOs, cartels, violent crime, violent gangs, drug trafficking, child exploitation, and human trafficking across our nation's communities. Since January 20, 2025, the FBI has made over 25,000 immigration-related arrests, 350 arrests of Tren de Aragua members, and 195 arrests of MS-13 members. Additionally, the FBI has seized 66,600 kilograms of cocaine, 6,675 kilograms of methamphetamine, and 1,500 kilograms of fentanyl.

Over the last few months, personnel across the FBI's 55 field offices have participated in Operation Allied Corridor, a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”) Homeland Security Investigations (“HSI”)-led operation to advance Title 8 enforcement priorities. The FBI, with support from ICE’s Enforcement and Removal Operations (“ERO”) HSI, the Drug Enforcement Administration (“DEA”), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (“ATF”), and the United States Marshals Service (“USMS”), has targeted approximately 3,000 U.S.-based criminal aliens either associated with criminal organizations (TCOs and narcotics smuggling networks) or re-entry violators with criminal histories who are eligible for deportation and removal from the United States. We are starting to see incredible results because of task forces like these, and the country is safer as a result. Since April, FBI Tampa Division’s Panama Express Strike Force, in coordination with DEA, HSI and Coast Guard, has seized approximately 66,900 kilograms of cocaine—valued in excess of \$1.6 billion USD—from illicit maritime vessels transiting the Eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea bound for Central America, Mexico and ultimately, the United States. The FBI partnerships do not stop at our borders. We are focused on collaborating with our international law enforcement partners as well. Recently, FBI Miami Division, in coordination with Legal Attaché Bogota and our Colombian Vetted Team members, seized 258 kilograms of cocaine in Barranquilla, Colombia before it was loaded onto a go-fast vessel.

The FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Forces (“JTTFs”), located in each of the FBI’s 55 field offices, support President Trump’s Executive Orders and the Department of Justice’s focus on immigration enforcement while working in partnership with Department of Homeland Security components to address terrorism-related subjects eligible for immigration enforcement action. Additionally, the FBI is combatting evolving international terrorism threats as evidenced by the October 7, 2023, attack by Hamas in Israel and continued attempts of terrorist actors to infiltrate the United States as migrants. As a co-leader of the Department’s Joint Task Force October 7 (“JTF 10-7”), created by the Attorney General on February 5, 2025, the FBI will continue to work tirelessly to seek justice for the victims of the October 7, 2023, terrorist attack and address the ongoing threat posed by Hamas and its affiliates. The continued sharing of information among our numerous partners through JTTFs, statewide and regional fusion centers, and law enforcement partners (or partner associations) across the country, and our legal attaché offices around the world, remains a critical component in identifying, preventing, and responding to terrorism threats.

Cyber threats are increasing everyday within an already crowded field of nation-state and criminal actors, which remains one of the FBI's biggest concerns. The People's Republic of China ("PRC") presents the greatest and most sophisticated cyber threat to U.S. public safety and national security. Last year, PRC actors, tracked publicly as Salt Typhoon, showed their brazenness when they broke into the networks of multiple telecommunications companies both here and abroad to indiscriminately steal customer call records data related to millions of customers. They also compromised the private communications of a limited number of individuals, and copied certain sensitive information related to law enforcement. Other nation-states, like the Democratic People's Republic of Korea ("DPRK"), Iran, and Russia use cyber espionage, cyberattacks, and outright theft to achieve their goals. Disturbingly, nation-state actors have obtained an increasing capacity for stealth in recent years, demonstrating the ability to maintain persistent, long-term access on U.S. networks without detection. Just as worrisome is their focus on compromising U.S. critical infrastructure and pre-positioning on it for malicious use during a time of crisis or conflict. We are working to make it harder and more painful for malicious cyber actors and criminals to carry on their malicious activities.

As the lead federal agency for threat response, the FBI works seamlessly with domestic and international partners to defend U.S. networks, attribute malicious activity, hold malicious actors accountable, and go on the offensive to disrupt our adversaries. We must impose consequences on cyber adversaries and use our collective law enforcement and intelligence capabilities to do so through joint, sequenced operations for maximum impact. And we must continue to work with the Department of State and other key departments and agencies to ensure that our foreign partners are able and willing to cooperate in our efforts to disrupt perpetrators of cybercrime.

Counterintelligence operations against nation-state adversaries mitigate grievous risk to U.S. national security. U.S. adversaries, including Russia, the PRC, and Iran continue to undermine our core institutions, and they are becoming more aggressive and more capable. The economic espionage threat posed by the PRC cannot be overstated. The PRC has deliberately created an environment that abuses global interconnectedness and encourages intellectual property theft, using human intelligence officers, corrupt corporate insiders, and reckless and indiscriminate cyber intrusions. We have active PRC counterintelligence investigations across all 55 FBI field offices. The FBI's Iran Threats Mission Center ("ITMC") increases collaboration across all Iran threats—cyber, counterintelligence, and counterterrorism. The center synchronizes intelligence and operations on multiple joint initiatives and increases the FBI's understanding of the Iran threat, contributing to the President's National Security Presidential Memorandum ("NSPM-2"), "Imposing Maximum Pressure on the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran" objectives. Across all of our adversary threat streams, the FBI has arrested 59 foreign intelligence operatives for spying or smuggling dangerous substances into the country since January 20, 2025.

We have built, and are continuously enhancing, a workforce that possesses the skills and knowledge to deal with the complex threats and challenges we face today—and will face tomorrow. We are building a leadership cadre that views change and transformation as a

positive tool for keeping the FBI focused on the key threats facing our nation. As criminal and terrorist threats become more diverse and dangerous, the role of technology becomes increasingly important to our efforts; and keeping pace with technology remains a key concern for the future. The FBI Laboratory, operating out of state-of-the-art facilities in Quantico, Virginia, and Huntsville, Alabama, is one of the largest and most comprehensive forensic laboratories in the world. One example of the Lab's key services and programs is the Combined DNA Index System ("CODIS"), which allows over 200 law enforcement laboratories throughout the United States to compare over 25 million DNA profiles. Over one million DNA samples are added to CODIS every year and, as a result, over 125 investigations are aided each day. In the last 20 years, CODIS has aided over 722,000 investigations, while maintaining its sterling reputation and the confidence of the American public.

Additionally, I would be remiss if I did not underscore an urgent legislative issue. On September 30, 2025, the authorities in 6 U.S.C. § 124n for the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice, including the FBI, to detect and mitigate malicious unmanned aircraft systems ("UAS") will expire unless renewed or new legislation is adopted. Small UAS are inexpensive, widely available, and ready for surveillance out of the box. With minimal accessories, they can carry payloads, creating real risks to public safety and national security from criminals, foreign intelligence services, and terrorists. Without reauthorization or new and expanded authorization, the nation's highest-risk special events, like the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the 2028 Summer Olympics, and other covered missions will be unprotected against unsafe or malicious drones. Legislative action is essential. A measured expansion is also needed so trained and certified state, local, tribal, and territorial partners can act lawfully when a credible UAS threat emerges—in a manner that does not risk the safety and efficiency of lawful aviation operations, both manned and unmanned. The FBI's National Counter-UAS Training Center in Huntsville, Alabama, is prepared to certify these partners to common national standards, so they can safely detect, identify, deconflict, and, where authorized, mitigate UAS threats in their jurisdictions.

In addition to addressing the extensive external threats facing our Nation, the FBI will focus some of its resources to address the internal risk of non-compliance with all of the laws, rules, regulations and policy that apply to our work. We have been very clear that the FBI must create a culture of compliance that gives the American public the confidence that we will do our work objectively, impartially, and in strict adherence to the Constitution. Our broad mandate and sweeping authorities come with commensurate guardrails to protect U.S. Citizens.

The FBI takes its responsibility of fiscal stewardship seriously and is looking at all available options to optimize existing resources and deliver more efficiently. Over the past few months, we commenced the process to reallocate hundreds of positions from the National Capital Region out to field offices across the country to enhance investigative capacity and provide better support to Federal, state, local, Tribal, and territorial partners. This enhancement to field resources will increase the investigative capacity in 49 of our 55 field offices and will enable the FBI to focus these resources on addressing violent crime, gangs, drugs, counterintelligence, and terrorism threats.

Lastly, the American people deserve an FBI that is open, transparent, and responsive to congressional oversight. Since January, we have produced over 33,000 pages of documents to various congressional oversight committees with jurisdiction over the FBI on myriad topics, including over 11,400 pages of productions to this Committee alone. Moreover, the FBI will continue to take on public corruption, civil rights violations, and white-collar crime to restore the American people's confidence in the institutions and leaders that serve them.

In conclusion, the threats we face as a Nation have never been greater or more diverse and the expectations placed on the FBI have never been higher. The members of this committee are important partners in our fight against every threat out there – and in our efforts to build trust and credibility.

Chairman Grassley, Ranking Member Durbin, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions you might have.