

Testimony of

The Honorable William H. Webster

April 9, 2002

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Committee on behalf of the Commission for the Review of FBI Security Programs. I will keep my opening remarks brief because the Commission's true statement is its report, which I have submitted.

In March 2001, Attorney General John Ashcroft asked me to chair the Commission at the request of FBI Director Freeh. The request came in light of the newly discovered espionage of FBI Special Agent Robert Hanssen. Over the course of twenty-two years, Hanssen gave the Soviet Union and Russia vast quantities of national security information of incalculable value.

The depth of Hanssen's betrayal is shocking, but equally shocking is the ease with which he was able to steal classified material. Usually, Hanssen collected the material during his normal daily routine, gathering up classified information that crossed his desk or arose in conversation with colleagues.

The Commission concluded that internal security has often been a low priority at the Bureau, frequently trumped by operational needs. Security training has been almost non-existent, and agents usually take on security duties as collateral responsibilities, with every incentive to return to investigative operations full-time.

Although it is impossible to eliminate intelligence efforts directed against our national security, the Commission attempted to recommend changes in FBI security programs that will minimize the harm those who betray us can do. The changes should also shorten the time between the defection of these individuals and their detection.

Most globally, the Commission recommends that FBI security programs be consolidated in an Office of Security reporting to the Director. In addition to changes in Bureau policy, we also recommend that a system be established whereby security lapses in a particular intelligence entity lead to improved security measures throughout the entire Intelligence Community.

I would like to acknowledge the support afforded by the Department of Justice and the unstinting cooperation of FBI Director Mueller and Bureau personnel at all levels. The Commission also noted the many steps the Bureau has taken to improve security in light of Hanssen's treason.

Finally, I would like to recognize the dedication of our professional staff and my colleagues on the Commission: Clifford Alexander, Griffin Bell, William Cohen, Robert Fiske, Thomas Foley, and Carla Hills.

I would be pleased to answer your questions.