

Testimony of

Mr. Kim R. Widup

May 18, 2005

STATEMENT
KIM RICHARD WIDUP
UNITED STATES MARSHAL
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
UNITED STATES SENATE
CONCERNING
PROTECTING THE JUDICIARY AT HOME AND IN THE COURTHOUSE
PRESENTED ON
MAY 18, 2005

Mr. Chairman, Senator Leahy, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the role of the United States Marshals Service (USMS) in protecting the federal judiciary. It is vital to our democracy that those who work within our judicial system do so without any fear or intimidation. Recent tragic events in Chicago and Atlanta highlight the need for securing our courts and protecting those who work in them. I am a 26-year veteran of federal law enforcement and have been the United States Marshal for the Northern District of Illinois since April 2002. I have personal knowledge of the important task of protecting judges and our judicial process, and I was serving as United States Marshal for the Northern District of Illinois when Bart Ross murdered the husband and mother of District Judge Joan Lefkow. During my law enforcement career, I have received many hours of protective operations training, from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, the United States Secret Service Protective Training, and agency-sponsored courses. I supervised the protective detail of the Secretary of Agriculture and have been involved in the supervision of numerous protective assignments with the United States Marshals Service for the Northern District of Illinois.

Since my appointment by President Bush to serve as Marshal, I have witnessed first-hand the vital importance of protecting our federal judicial process. Just last month, members of my staff provided a safe and secure environment at the United States District Courthouse in Chicago as white supremacist Matthew Hale was sentenced for his role in the solicitation of the murder of Judge Lefkow. We have recently had several violent street gang proceedings, and in the recent past, the cases against an Iraqi intelligence officer and Al Qaeda financier Enaam Aranout, both of which required extensive security measures by my staff. Last year, we had the trial and sentencing of a defendant who was responsible for smuggling a handcuff key to Jeffrey Erickson approximately 10 years ago. Erickson in turn murdered a Deputy U.S. Marshal and Court Security Officer before being fatally shot by the same CSO.

Because failure is not an option, our security planning and execution needs to be the very best it can be. I have an excellent relationship with United States Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald, as well as with both the Chief Judge of the Northern District of Illinois and the Chief Judge of the Seventh Judicial Circuit.

My Chief Deputy and I meet with them, the Clerk of the Court, and others who have a stake in protecting the judicial process on an as-needed basis.

Additionally, threats against our judges, U.S. Attorneys, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, and others are brought to our attention on a regular basis either as direct threats or inappropriate communications. In the Northern District of Illinois, three Deputy U.S. Marshals are assigned full-time to investigate these potential

threats. In our District, we also enjoy a close working relationship with our colleagues in the FBI, JTTF, Chicago Police Department, Cook County Sheriffs Office, as well as other state and local law enforcement agencies. Because of these relationships, once a threat is received, a collaborative effort is undertaken to investigate and resolve the situation.

Throughout our 215 year history, the United States Marshals Service has given the highest priority to our judicial security mission and we are proud of our accomplishments. However, we must keep ever vigilant and ready. With threats against the judiciary on the rise, it is vitally important that we all work together to maintain a safe and secure environment for our justice system.

I would be happy to respond to any questions you may have.