



# COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Subcommittee Hearing Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)**  
***Resourcing DHS' Cybersecurity and Innovation Missions: A Review of the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Request for the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and the Science and Technology Directorate***

**March 11, 2020**

Around this time last year, this Subcommittee held a hearing to discuss the FY 2020 budget request.

At the time, Acting Secretary McAleenan had just replaced Secretary Nielson amid a flurry of leadership changes throughout the Department of Homeland Security.

Today you report to Acting Secretary Chad Wolf, the fifth person to serve as Secretary during this Administration and the third to serve as Secretary since CISA became an operational component in November 2018. I have raised concerns about the lack of consistent leadership at the Department in the past, but I think it is particularly relevant in conversations about the future of CISA and S&T.

Both CISA and S&T play critical roles in defending the homeland. CISA is charged with coordinating the Federal efforts to defend critical infrastructure against physical and cyber attacks and protecting the .gov. S&T is responsible for putting cutting-edge technologies into the hands of DHS' boots on the ground to enable the workforce to do their jobs better and safer.

Despite their critical missions, neither of these agencies are without their challenges. CISA has been an operational component for less than two years.

As foreign adversaries increasingly rely on cyber tools to undermine our democratic institutions, surveil critical infrastructure networks, and hold State and local government networks hostage, Congress and the public have demanded more of CISA. But Trump Administration has **never** provided Congress with a candid assessment of how much funding is necessary for CISA to accommodate the increased demands for its services. And the White House has been without a White House Cybersecurity Coordinator for nearly two years, leaving Federal agencies to coordinate cybersecurity activities amongst themselves.

Although CISA's leadership has been steady and widely respected both within the Federal government and among the private sector stakeholder community, a strong, only a strong, Senate-confirmed Secretary can effectively advocate for CISA's budget need and policy positions at the White House.

In the absence of strong DHS leadership, the White House proposes to gut CISA's budget by over \$250 million, cutting funding for cybersecurity activities and eliminating the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards Program (CFATS).

As a Member of Congress with a number of chemical facilities in my Congressional District and a long-time advocate for ensuring chemical facilities across the nation are not weaponized by terrorists, I was particularly troubled learn the Administration supports eliminating the program.

I believe that if DHS had a permanent Secretary in place, the White House would not have proposed eliminating the program. Accordingly, on Monday, I introduced legislation to extend the CFATS program for 18 months, and I expect CISA to support that effort. I would also note that the lack of consistent leadership at DHS has similarly undermined S&T's mission.

The Science and Technology Directorate has been victim too many "course corrections" to count and has struggled to solidify its position as the research and development hub among DHS' components.

Moreover, its budget is most frequently raided to pay for the President's political promises or to cut spending in order to comply to budget caps. The President's FY 2021 budget request is no different – reducing cyber R&D and cutting University Programs in half.

We cannot continue to defer investments in R&D for homeland security technologies. A permanent Secretary would understand that. I will not ask either of you to explain how these proposed cuts will make us safer because they will not. Instead, I hope that you will be frank with Congress about the resources you need to do your jobs.

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Media contact: Adam Comis at (202) 225-9978