

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD BY
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BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, THE
FEDERAL WORKFORCE, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
OPEN HEARING ON SECURITY CLEARANCE REFORM
NOVEMBER 16, 2010

Introduction

Chairman Akaka, Senator Voinovich, distinguished Members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the progress we have made on security clearance reform. I am pleased to appear beside the principal partners of reform – Department of Defense (DoD), Office of Personnel and Management (OPM), and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) – who together work to ensure that improvements to timeliness, quality, and reciprocity are institutionalized and sustained.

The Intelligence Community (IC) continues to give time and attention to this effort, and is a key contributor in transforming the end-to-end security clearance process across the federal government. Be assured that within the IC security clearance reform remains a top priority. Through the DNI's role as the Security Executive Agent, we have led the effort for the Community.

I appreciate and welcome the strong bipartisan support this initiative has received from this Subcommittee.

As the Committee is aware, Executive Order 13467 designated the Director of National Intelligence as the Security Executive Agent. As Security Executive Agent – a permanent member of the Performance Accountability Council or “PAC” – I am charged with numerous responsibilities in overseeing security clearances across the federal government. There are two that are critical to driving reform that I would like to highlight.

- Directing the oversight of investigations and determinations of eligibility for access to classified information or assignment to a sensitive position.
- Developing uniform and consistent policies and procedures for effective, efficient and timely completion of investigations and adjudications relating to determinations of both eligibility for access to classified information and to hold a sensitive position.

In overseeing the performance of investigations and adjudications by all agencies, as the Security Executive Agent, I have the ability to provide the PAC with insight into where progress is being made and where additional emphasis should be placed.

The goals set forth in IRTPA for December 2009 required a combined 60 days for end-to-end security clearance processing, including 40 days for investigations and 20 days for adjudications. As was reported to Congress earlier this year, the December 2009 requirement was exceeded as clearances averaged a combined 57 days government-wide with 43 days for investigations and 14 days for adjudications. Each quarter since has seen sustained improvement, and as of the quarter ending in September 2010, cases took an average of 53 days government-wide, which includes 42 days for investigations and 11 days for adjudications. Overall improvement from Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 to FY2010

is significant, as security clearance processing time has decreased from 165 days to 53 days.

As Security Executive Agent, I continue to support the PAC's emphasis on sustaining timeliness performance by hosting Executive Branch-wide reform briefings where we address agencies' performance and progress. Together with the PAC, we also continue to assess agencies' progress in adopting reform practices against the technology and process improvement goals they originally established in 2009.

My office co-chairs the PAC Performance Measurement and Management Subcommittee, through which security clearance and suitability performance measures are reviewed with the agencies and prepared for PAC review. We reported our investigative, adjudicative, reciprocity and automation quality metrics to you in a joint May 2010 letter from the DoD, OMB, OPM, ODNI, and Government Accountability Office (GAO). In addition to those, we continue to develop additional metrics relative to reciprocity, timeliness, and quality. We are creating a mechanism to allow individuals with security clearances who encounter reciprocity issues to report their experiences and seek resolutions. We have also led the Performance Subcommittee in establishing a measure to capture more of the end-to-end security clearance process from an applicant's perspective, which incorporates the time required to initiate an investigation.

My office is preparing reciprocity metrics which, when finalized, will provide needed details for the PAC, Suitability, and Security Executive Agents to better monitor and ensure reciprocity across government to the extent possible.

My Security Executive Agent responsibility to promulgate investigative and adjudication policies and procedures is a critical enabler of reform. Revision of the

Federal investigative standards is intended to require implementation of proven elements of the reform process – eApplication, eAdjudication, enhanced subject interview, expandable focused investigation – and will ensure the goals of modernizing and streamlining the process are achieved. The standards, which are being developed by inter-agency expert working groups, enable improved reciprocity by including both security and suitability cases in a tiered structure that reduces the total number of investigation types, all aligned by risk level. The level of investigative effort increases commensurate with the level of clearance or risk inherent in the position. Anticipating a total of five tiers, the standards for the first three tiers are expected to go through final interagency review at year’s end.

I recognize the important role that GAO continues to play in drawing attention to the progress the Executive Branch has made with regard to security clearance reform, and also to the areas where they have identified that more work is required. Reform leaders have long been focused on the goal of removing this topic from GAO’s High Risk List. On this point, I cannot overstate the value of this Subcommittee’s continued attention to this issue. I feel confident in our collective achievements in ensuring sustained timeliness performance and improving attention to quality and reciprocity measures.

The Subcommittee is familiar with the comprehensive Strategic Framework, presented to you in February of this year that has guided reform activity in 2010, and will continue to do so until the work of reform is complete. The collaboration and joint approach to accomplishing this work reflects the principals’ strong commitment to achieving the goals of reform. Leveraging our authorities and our organizations’

capabilities, we have collectively accomplished far more in 2010 than could have been achieved separately.

I want to thank Senator Voinovich for his leadership on this important issue. He leaves a legacy that will ensure a secure and capable federal workforce for the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your efforts and attention to ensure effective and efficient processes.