



One Hundred Sixteenth Congress  
Committee on Homeland Security  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

April 29, 2020

The Honorable Chad Wolf  
Acting Secretary  
Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Acting Secretary Wolf:

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to upend every aspect of life for all Americans. As the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the interagency continue responding to the novel coronavirus, recent press reporting has suggested that the Intelligence Community (IC) was issuing reports on the growing contagion as early as November 2019, with relevant intelligence included in the President's Daily Brief many times in early 2020.<sup>1</sup> We write to inquire about the policy and operational efforts of DHS with respect to intelligence regarding the novel coronavirus as well as DHS headquarters' interactions, including the dissemination of relevant intelligence products, with DHS components who continue to interact with the public to carry out mission-essential functions.

As a member of the IC, DHS is privy to the reporting of other agencies, and senior DHS officials are recipients of a wide variety of classified briefings from IC partners. In addition to integrating intelligence into operations across all DHS components and equipping the Department itself with the intelligence and information it needs, DHS is in the unique position to deliver intelligence to State, Local, Tribal and Territorial and private sector partners in addition to developing intelligence from those partners for DHS and the IC. This critical mission, combined with the new revelations of early intelligence reporting on the spread of the virus and the President's apparent indifference to virus-related information over several critical months, leaves us with several questions as to how the Department's intelligence apparatus consumed and shared information to prepare and protect its workforce and the American public.

To that end, we respectfully request information related to what reports were shared with DHS and how its operational components on the front lines in the United States and abroad were informed and also contributed to the whole-of-government effort to protect the American public from COVID-19.

1. Intelligence products were reportedly sent to the President and other senior administration officials in late 2019 and early 2020 raising the threat of the coronavirus that was, at the

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<sup>1</sup> Greg Miller and Ellen Nakashima, *President's Intelligence Briefing Book repeatedly Cited Virus Threat*, WASHINGTON POST, Apr. 27, 2020, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/presidents-intelligence-briefing-book-repeatedly-cited-virus-threat/2020/04/27/ca66949a-8885-11ea-ac8a-fe9b8088e101\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/presidents-intelligence-briefing-book-repeatedly-cited-virus-threat/2020/04/27/ca66949a-8885-11ea-ac8a-fe9b8088e101_story.html); Shane Harris, Greg Miller, Josh Dawsey, and Ellen Nakashima, *U.S. Intelligence Reports from January and February Warned About a Likely Pandemic*, WASHINGTON POST, Mar. 20, 2020, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/us-intelligence-reports-from-january-and-february-warned-about-a-likely-pandemic/2020/03/20/299d8cda-6ad5-11ea-b5f1-a5a804158597\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/us-intelligence-reports-from-january-and-february-warned-about-a-likely-pandemic/2020/03/20/299d8cda-6ad5-11ea-b5f1-a5a804158597_story.html); Josh Margolin and James Gordon Meek, *Intelligence Report Warned of Coronavirus Crisis as Early as November: Sources*, ABC NEWS, Apr. 8, 2020, <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/intelligence-report-warned-coronavirus-crisis-early-november-sources/>.

time, present and growing in China.<sup>2</sup> Was this intelligence reporting provided or briefed to you, as Acting Secretary? Was it provided or briefed to the Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Deputy Secretary, the Undersecretary for Intelligence and Analysis, the Assistant Secretary for Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction, or the Chief Medical Officer as part of their regular intelligence briefings? If so, was this information the basis of any operational changes in late 2019 and early 2020 among DHS operational components or the operations or policy recommendations of the Chief Medical Officer?

2. Was any coronavirus-related intelligence reporting (including a lower classification than an original document) shared with DHS components operating overseas, including Citizenship and Immigration Services, Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Transportation Security Agency, the U.S. Coast Guard or the U.S. Secret Service attaches or other component or headquarters personnel operating overseas? If so, was this information the basis for any operational changes in late 2019 and early 2020 among such components?
3. Were DHS operational resources overseas leveraged in late 2019 and early 2020 to confirm any of the intelligence reporting, such as Preclearance teams, Immigration Advisory Program/Joint Security Program teams or Transnational Criminal Investigative Units? If so, in what way?

We request a response in writing to the questions above that can be answered at the For Official Use Only, Law Enforcement Sensitive, or Unclassified level by May 13, 2020. Additionally, with the understanding that several of the questions above require the handling of classified information, we request a briefing on this topic. Finally, we request any copies of coronavirus-related intelligence that were shared with or briefed to senior DHS officials.

We look forward to continuing to work with you and your team to ensure that DHS has the resources it needs to protect its workforce and the American public. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



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Bennie G. Thompson  
Chairman  
Committee on Homeland Security



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Max Rose  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Intelligence & Counterterrorism  
Committee on Homeland Security

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<sup>2</sup> *President's Intelligence Briefing Book repeatedly Cited Virus Threat*, WASHINGTON POST, *supra* note 1; Josh Margolin and James Gordon Meek, *Intelligence Report Warned of Coronavirus Crisis as Early as November: Sources*, *supra* note 1.