

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD OF
GARRY P. REID
DIRECTOR FOR DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE
(INTELLIGENCE & SECURITY)
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
before the
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
on
SECURITY CLEARANCE INVESTIGATION CHALLENGES AND REFORMS

October 11, 2017

Chairman Meadows, Ranking Member Connolly, and Committee Members, thank you for the invitation to offer testimony on behalf of the Department of Defense on the status of personnel security clearance reform and the challenges that we continue to face.

The background investigation backlog is a matter of significant concern for the Department of Defense. Long delays in obtaining security clearances are causing turmoil in personnel management, mission effectiveness, and technology development across the department. This is within our military services, our civil workforce, and our cleared industry contractors.

Despite focused efforts to mitigate the backlog and the resultant negative effects on DOD, our senior leaders have called for new and innovative approaches to address issues of cost performance and timeliness within the personnel vetting enterprise.

As the committee is aware, section 951 of the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act require DOD to develop plans for assuming control of our background investigations, as is already done by 23 other federal agencies. On August 25th, Secretary Mattis approved the section 951 plan and notified Congress, the Director of National Intelligence, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget of his intent to look beyond the realm of incremental improvements and take full advantage of today's technology to alleviate the burdens of costly, time-intensive investigations that are hampering our mission readiness.

The Department of Defense is well postured to take these bold steps and cognizant of the risks associated with such an endeavor. In recent years, with the support of Congress, DOD has developed and tested new processes and capabilities for continuous evaluation and automated records checks to enhance, automate, and accelerate background investigations. As of this month, the Department of Defense has 1.1 million personnel enrolled in a continuous evaluation program, exceeding our annual goal. This program has demonstrated clear and compelling benefits of ongoing and more frequent vetting of cleared personnel. These methods, which significantly decrease risk associated with periodic reinvestigations, have shown convincing results and provide the basis for new approaches to modernize the vetting enterprise.

Executing the section 951 plan will provide DOD with a unique opportunity to build on our existing continuous evaluation and automated records checks architecture. This work will be done hand- in-hand with the security and suitability executive agents, collaboratively developing alternative vetting procedures that ensure continued adherence to federal standards.

We are ready to begin this process in early 2018 and incrementally shift new investigative casework to DOD and process them through approved, innovated architectures developed in collaboration with the executive agents. By optimizing our investigations and simplifying service delivery, we can achieve significant cost savings and cost avoidance, while more effectively driving system efficiency.

As we implement the section 951 plan, we will remain committed to our task to design, build, and operate secure and maintain the National Background Investigative Service, or NBIS. This is the single end-to-end IT shared service solution for all personnel vetting in the government, not only for NBIB, but for other federal agencies that conduct background investigations. DOD will remain committed to resourcing NBIB and NBIS throughout this transition process..

We will also continue to work very closely with the executive agents to streamline the legacy process, the process that exists today, to continue to identify ways to economize on field investigative work. We recently proposed and gained approval from colleagues here and in the Performance Accountability Council for a series of actions that are expected to produce near-term reductions in the submission of investigative requests and reductions in fieldwork. We will continue to collaborate to identify these additional measures in parallel with our work to implement the section 951 plan.

And as a result of this work, NBIB will continue to process every case that DOD has already sent to NBIB from now and until any point in the future. Once we stand up the 951 plan and develop alternative processes that are approved and vetted, we will route new work into that pipeline. This will take new work off of NBIB's plate, allow them to focus on the existing work, as we continue to develop automated processes and feed them back into the overall architecture.

Chairman, I'd be happy to discuss the plan in more detail. I look forward to your questions.
Thank you.