

Statement of General (Ret.) Robert A. Harding
Nominee for Assistant Secretary
Transportation Security Administration
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Before the
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
United States Senate
March 23, 2010

Good Morning Chairman Rockefeller, Senator Hutchison, and distinguished Members of the Committee. It is a privilege to appear before you today as the President's nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). I am deeply honored by the President's call to service and by the support I have received from Secretary Napolitano.

With your kind indulgence, I would like to recognize my wife and my children. It is their love and support that has sustained me through the years. I also want to express my deep appreciation to those I met in the course of my 33-year career in the U.S. Army who shaped my ideals, character and vision. Who I am today is very much a product of my time in the U.S. Army. Last, but not least, I want the men and women of TSA to know that I am eager to join their ranks and to lead them in safeguarding our nation's transportation system.

The December 25, 2009, attack on Northwest Flight 253 reminded us of the ever-evolving threat our nation confronts as terrorists seek new and inventive means to defeat the security measures the global community have put into place since September 11, 2001.

Since its creation following the tragic 9/11 terrorist attack, TSA has played a vital role in securing aviation and other modes of transportation. If confirmed, I look forward to working in close collaboration with our partners in the intelligence and international community; federal state, and local governments; private industry; and, most importantly, the traveling public to continue to meet the challenge of keeping our nation's complex transportation system secure.

I believe I am uniquely qualified to lead TSA in advancing its mission. I have spent over 30 years in the Intelligence Community. I served as the U.S. Army's Deputy G2 (Intelligence) at the time of my military retirement in 2001, and as the Director for Operations at the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). At DIA, as the Department of Defense's (DOD) senior Human Intelligence (HUMINT) Officer, I managed intelligence collection program requirements and

supervised security of DOD's Defense attachés in over 200 embassies/offices around the world. I also commanded a HUMINT and Counterintelligence Battalion in Korea, and the Army's premier Counterintelligence Group, the 902nd, at Fort Meade.

Since my retirement from the U.S. Army, I have served as CEO of Harding Security Associates (HSA), a company I founded in 2003 and sold in July 2009. I built the company into a workforce of highly trained professionals providing strategic security solutions to U.S. Government agencies in the Intelligence and Defense communities. I have no current financial or ownership interests in the company and I have entered into an ethics agreement with the Department's designated agency ethics official, which has been provided to this Committee, to ensure no conflicts of interest arise.

I know the importance and value of coordinated efforts between federal agencies. As the Director for Intelligence for the Army's U.S. Southern Command, I coordinated efforts between the DIA, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), FBI, CIA and Customs on sensitive interagency counter-drug operations.

My intimate familiarity with counterterrorism matters, military assignments implementing intelligence programs throughout the world, and reliance upon ever-changing technological advances have equipped me to meet the current and future challenges of TSA.

If confirmed, I will ensure that TSA continues to work closely with and receives necessary intelligence from the Intelligence Community, and that this information is applied across transportation modes. While TSA is primarily a consumer of intelligence, I will work closely with our partners in the Intelligence Community to improve the kinds of information needed from the watchlist system; and if confirmed, I will continue the work begun from the President's review to work with our interagency partners to review and, where necessary, modify the criteria and process used to build the Terrorist Screening Database (TSDB) and nominate names for the No-Fly and Selectee Lists.

Given the global dimensions of aviation security, I will also support Secretary Napolitano's historic effort to bolster international aviation security, by working with our partners around the world to enhance information collection and sharing, increase cooperation on technological development, and modernize global aviation security standards.

Additionally, I will encourage the use of enhanced screening technologies, both at domestic airports and by our international partners, while remaining respectful of privacy, and civil rights and liberties. Our objective in using these technologies is clear: to strengthen our abilities to find dangerous materials and to stop dangerous people.

From my military service, I know all too well how important a well trained workforce is. You have my commitment to enhance training opportunities and invest in developing TSA's employees.

If confirmed, I look forward to a close working relationship with Congress and this Committee. I welcome your oversight, your suggestions, and appreciate your dedication to ensuring our nation's security. In closing, I again thank President Obama and Secretary Napolitano for their confidence and faith in my ability to lead TSA. Mr. Chairman, Senator Hutchison, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and I look forward to answering your questions and, if confirmed, undertaking the challenges that lie ahead.