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Subject: FW: STATEMENT BY SECRETARY JEH C. JOHNSON ON NEW HOMELAND SECURITY MEASURES

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Press Office
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Press Release

Jan. 12, 2015
Contact: DHS Press Office, (202) 282-8010

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY JEH C. JOHNSON ON NEW HOMELAND SECURITY MEASURES

We stand with the people of France in their extraordinary display of courage and resolve following last week's attacks.

Recent world events call for increased vigilance in homeland security. The following are actions being taken by the Department of Homeland Security, along with other U.S. law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

First, in late October I directed the Federal Protective Service to enhance its presence and security at various U.S. Government buildings in Washington, D.C. and other major cities and locations around the country. Today, I have directed an enhanced presence of the Federal Protective Service at U.S. government buildings in an expanded list of major cities around the country. The precise locations at which we are enhancing security is law-enforcement sensitive, will vary and shift from location to location, and will be continually re-evaluated.

Second, last week the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) took steps to enhance the number of random searches of passengers and carry-on luggage boarding aircraft at U.S. airports. Previously, in July, I directed enhanced screening at certain foreign airports that are last points of departure to the United States. Since then, a number of foreign governments have themselves enhanced aviation security, buttressing and replacing our own measures at these airports. I have directed TSA to conduct an immediate, short-term review to determine whether more is necessary, at both domestic and overseas last-point of departure airports. These are just a few of the aviation security adjustments we have undertaken recently; we will not hesitate to take more when and if necessary, without unduly burdening the traveling public.

Third, in the last few days the Department of Homeland Security, along with the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the National Counterterrorism Center, have continued to issue joint intelligence bulletins to our colleagues in state and local law enforcement, apprising them of recent events and threats. We are also providing state and local law enforcement with FBI training concerning incident response.

Fourth, together with our colleagues in the U.S. law enforcement and intelligence communities, this Department will continue its efforts to partner with the governments of France and other key counterterrorism allies to share information about terrorist threats and individuals of suspicion. We will recommit to these engagements. As reflected in U.N. Security Council Resolution 2178 passed last September, foreign fighters will continue to be a particular focus of our discussions. Deputy Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas was in Paris this weekend and met with our European counterparts for this purpose.

Fifth, along with our interagency partners, this Department will continue its efforts to engage community organizations around the country on the topic of countering violent extremism. For this purpose, I have personally met with community leaders in Columbus, Ohio, Chicago, Minneapolis, Boston, and Los Angeles, and will continue these engagements. We look forward to the White House-hosted summit on countering violent extremism on February 18.

Public awareness, support and participation in our homeland security efforts are also essential. “If You See Something, Say Something” is more than a slogan.

The measures described above are precautionary. We have no specific, credible intelligence of an attack of the kind in Paris last week being planned by terrorist organizations in this country. But, the reasons for these measures should be self-evident to the public: the recent attacks in Paris, Ottawa, Sydney, and elsewhere, along with the recent public calls by terrorist organizations for attacks on Western objectives, including aircraft, military personnel, and government installations and civilian personnel.

We urge Americans to continue to travel, attend public events, and freely associate with others. However, given world events, this is a time for heightened vigilance by federal, state and local governments, critical infrastructure owners and operators, as well as the public.

Finally, I applaud the House Appropriations Committee for the Homeland Security appropriations bill the Committee introduced on Friday. I urge the full Congress to pass this appropriation quickly, unburdened by any restrictions on our ability to pursue executive actions to fix our broken immigration system. In these times, this Department cannot function on a continuing resolution much longer. There are homeland security and border security priorities that must be funded without delay.

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