

Opening Statement of Lisa O. Monaco

May 17, 2011

Thank you, Madam Chairman. And thank you, Vice Chairman Chambliss.

I want to thank the Committee for taking this time to consider my nomination. I know this Committee has extremely pressing business before it and many demands on its time. I appreciate the thoughtful consideration being given to this nomination.

At the outset, I would like to thank the President for his confidence in nominating me, and the Attorney General for his support. I am tremendously honored to be considered for this position.

I would not be sitting before you today if not for my parents. Their love and support have enabled me to enjoy many blessings. Of all the good fortune my three brothers and I have enjoyed, the greatest gift our parents have given us is their example – in the choices they have made, large and small. They have taught us about hard work, integrity and what it means to live one's values. Because of these lessons I am able to appear here today.

Over my career in the Department of Justice I have been privileged to work in a number of different capacities. As a federal prosecutor I saw the importance of rigorous legal argument and the power of the criminal justice system. As a senior advisor and Chief of Staff at the FBI, as well as in my roles in the Deputy Attorney General's Office, I have worked closely with colleagues across the Intelligence Community on many operational and policy matters. I have seen the value of bringing all capabilities to bear against emerging threats. Having joined the Department before the tragic events of September 11, 2001, I have participated in the fundamental changes in how the Department fulfills its national security functions. I have been privileged to work with Director Mueller to help advance the transformation of the FBI from primarily a law enforcement agency focused on investigating crime after the fact to a national security organization focused on preventing the next attack before it happens. I also witnessed the creation of the National Security Division and its maturation over the past several years into a highly effective organization. This transformation and the reorientation of the Department's national security apparatus after September 11 reflect a focus on an intelligence-led approach to combating national security threats. If confirmed, I will be privileged to continue this focus working alongside the dedicated men and women of the National Security Division and their equally dedicated partners in the Intelligence Community.

The Assistant Attorney General for National Security sits astride the law enforcement and intelligence responsibilities of the Department of Justice. This position embodies an evolution in how the Department approaches its top priority: protecting the security of the American people. The National Security Division brings intelligence lawyers together with agents and prosecutors to focus on the most serious threats – be they terrorists plotting attacks against us or spies bent on

stealing our secrets. Because Congress had the wisdom to remove barriers – both legal and structural – to allow committed professionals to share their information, their talent and their missions, today we are better able to detect, deter and disrupt national security threats. We are also better able to take advantage of the other reforms that this body has enacted – chief among them the lowering of the proverbial wall between law enforcement and intelligence. In the National Security Division, the Department now has a focal point for its interactions with the Intelligence Community on matters relating to the development of policy, coordinating law enforcement and intelligence activities, maximizing our ability to combat threats and ensuring intelligence collection is carried out appropriately under law. If confirmed, I will serve as a bridge between the Intelligence Community and the Department of Justice. This is a critical role for the National Security Division and one which this Committee had the wise judgment to create.

The creation of the National Security Division followed the creation of the National Security Branch of the FBI and the transformation of that organization into a security service. Today, the NSB and the NSD have formed a very effective partnership. If I am confirmed, one of my priorities will be to continue and build upon that partnership.

The mission of the Division fundamentally is to work with the FBI and other elements of the Intelligence Community and the military to prevent terrorism and to protect the American people. I also know that Congress has an important role to play in meeting these threats. I recognize that Congressional oversight helps promote accountability, especially with regard to national security authorities and the Intelligence Community. This Committee performs an important function in overseeing the intelligence activities of the Executive Branch. As someone who has worked in both Congress and the Executive Branch, I understand the need to respond appropriately and quickly to Congressional oversight. I am committed to building strong and cooperative relationships in that regard. If confirmed, my goal will be to help ensure that Congress receives information responsive to its oversight needs consistent with law enforcement and national security responsibilities in a thorough and expeditious manner.

Every morning for the last five and a half years, alongside talented analysts, agents and other national security professionals, I have started each day with a review of recent intelligence and an update on how the country is responding to threat streams. This experience has taught me that our Nation faces complex and evolving national security threats. To combat them we must be aggressive and agile in our approach and we must do so consistent with the rule of law. If confirmed, I pledge to give my all to that effort.

Thank you.