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MARYLAND
THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
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"Oversight of the January 6 Attack: Reforming the Capitol Police and Improving Accountability for the Capitol Police Board"

Good afternoon Chairwoman Lofgren, Ranking Member Davis, and members of the Committee; thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I am Dr. Linda Singh, a retired Major General and the former Adjutant General of Maryland with over 38 years of leadership, organizational and individual change, and systems integration experience. I have served in various senior executive-level positions, with a blend of public and private sector experience that spans health, defense, state, and local government.

Today I will briefly discuss several areas I consider fundamental to the success of any organization. In reviewing the three flash reports produced by the United States Capitol Police, Office of the Inspector General, and the United States Capitol Police Department Strategic Plan for 2021-2025, it is clear that leadership, execution, communication, and accountability all played a significant role on January 6, 2021.

Culture

At the heart of any organization is culture. Culture can be part of what leads an organization to success, but it can also be an organization's demise. Often when things go wrong organizationally, our first reaction is to make wide-sweeping changes in the hopes of correcting past issues. While I am not advocating that change is unnecessary, I am strongly asking each of you not to underestimate the

role that culture played in the actions and behaviors of leadership and the officers on January 6. Without addressing culture but making broad sweeping organizational changes to increase its effectiveness, it will not lead to the organization's success. We must understand that culture is just as much of a culprit in an organization's performance as the measures are themselves. The culture that I am referring to is also the culture that makes this institution unique yet highly challenging. For instance, the Capitol Police are used to visitors and individuals that are, for the most part, orderly, compliant to rules, and respect our Capitol. What they are not used to is what they experienced on January 6. The Capitol Police Board is not without its challenges, but without this type of organization, the Capitol Police would be required to report to the Committees. In my opinion, eliminating the Capitol Police Board with nothing to replace it would be similar to eliminating the Service Secretaries, and all services were left to engage with the Secretary of Defense. I would go a step further to say that the problem with the Capitol Police Board from the past was more about personalities and leadership experience than it was about the process of the board. Personalities and inexperience with the threat we were facing was the problem. The deep-seated culture of this amazing institution clouded the view and actions of leaders. It appears they were operating with a business as usual mindset. When it comes to force protection, it is not business as usual. Whether you are the police force, police board, or force protection agency, culture is fundamental in setting the course for behavior. Changing an organization's business as usual mindset to a more focused and intentional mindset is the fueling mechanism to change behavior, thus changing their culture. Culture is what allows us to recruit, retain and create a high-performing organization. We can't wait to get the proper organizational construct is in place to address the culture. We must define the desired values and behaviors, align culture with strategy and connect culture to accountability. But before we can get to that point, we must understand the level at which culture is standing in the way of success.

Responsible Leadership

It is clear from the Inspector General's report and there are leadership challenges within the Capitol Police. But based on my experience, leadership begins at the top and ends with the execution of the strategy. Most leaders cannot effectively operationalize or communicate their strategy, which shows up in the inability to execute on it either. Leadership is more than just behavior; it is about having an overall attitude of responsibility. It means staying on top of problems and not assuming someone else will step in. It means ensuring your team is trained, equipped, adequately staffed, and ready to execute their mission. Responsible leadership is having a results-based mindset and knowing that you are only as effective as your team's results. You are responsible for ensuring your team moves in the direction necessary to achieve the desired results. Leadership is about not shirking away from the tough decisions and takes steps to fix problems.

Responsible leadership begins with the leader's visceral connection with the organization. The leader feels pride when the organization succeeds and is pained during challenging periods. They don't shy away from the necessary planning, preparing, and training for uncertainty. Leadership is about preparing your organization for what is to come when you rarely know when the next crisis will hit.

The leaders of the Capitol Police and the organization itself ill-prepared for the events leading up to 1/6. No crisis action planned being implemented and based on testimony that I've heard from many of the leaders of the Capitol Police, and it did not exist. According to Gene Klann, the author of Crisis Leadership, leaders must be visible, present, and available during a crisis. They must seek credible information, communicate and use appropriate channels to distribute information promptly. I would argue that this is crucial during a crisis and even more crucial during steady-state operations. Transparency is more than just a buzzword; it is about ensuring the information is pushed out, updated, reviewed and pushed out again. You can't assume that it will be read or more importantly acted upon if it is pushed out via email once. You have to do the rinse and repeat cycle multiple times.

During the initial onset of a crisis, there is immense pressure to act — and act quickly. In most cases, you have to begin tackling a problem before you have a solid grasp of what's happening. If you are in charge, take charge. Be proactive; take the initiative. Take action when leading through a crisis, communicate those actions truthfully and honestly. Leaders need behaviors and mindsets to prevent them from overreacting to yesterday's developments and help them look ahead.

Communication

The most basic and perhaps the most essential item highlighted in the Inspector General's report is communication. As we have seen, effective communication can make or break a leader as well as the organization. It must be clear, precise, and honest. Leaders who communicate effectively and learn from their mistakes are poised for success. Those who flounder, vacillate, and communicate poorly by not providing trustworthy information or failing to follow through can harm their organization. Leaders need to realize that organizational readiness relies on leaders to be out front, on the field, and know that it is not business as usual.

In the military, we say you must lead by example. Your team will see what you do and hear what you say as the model of how they should behave under certain circumstances. Employees tend to emulate how they see leaders acting and communicating.

Execution

Most organizations miss the mark when operationalizing their strategic plans, and the execution missies are prevalent in the Inspector General's reports. Research in the Harvard Business Review shows that 71 percent of employees in companies with weak execution believe strategic decisions are second-guessed instead of 45 percent of employees from companies with strong execution. Execution relies heavily on leadership's ability to communicate the strategy and plans internally and externally to the organization. Execution depends on each member of an organization to perform when leadership is not accessible, so it's vital to ensure everyone understands it is their responsibility to help their leaders achieve. Strategy execution relies on having key performance indicators, metrics, and measures while continually assessing progress toward goals.

Measure, verify and validate

This area can be the simplest yet hardest to achieve because we don't establish the right metrics and measures. Again, the Inspector General's report focused on not having adequate internal controls, measures, and comprehensive plans. Leadership must put into place the right metrics to understand whether the organization is making progress. They also must not put this on cruise control and forget about verifying and validate information, processes, and, most importantly that their teams are performing.

While deciding to reform the Capitol Police can not be taken lightly. If the fundamental leadership and culture issues are not addressed, they will still be pervasive regardless of what you call the organization. These issues will also still prevail if we ignore the fact that leadership is about more than who is at the top, it is also about those leaders responsible for the execution of the day-to-day mission. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before this Committee.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have.