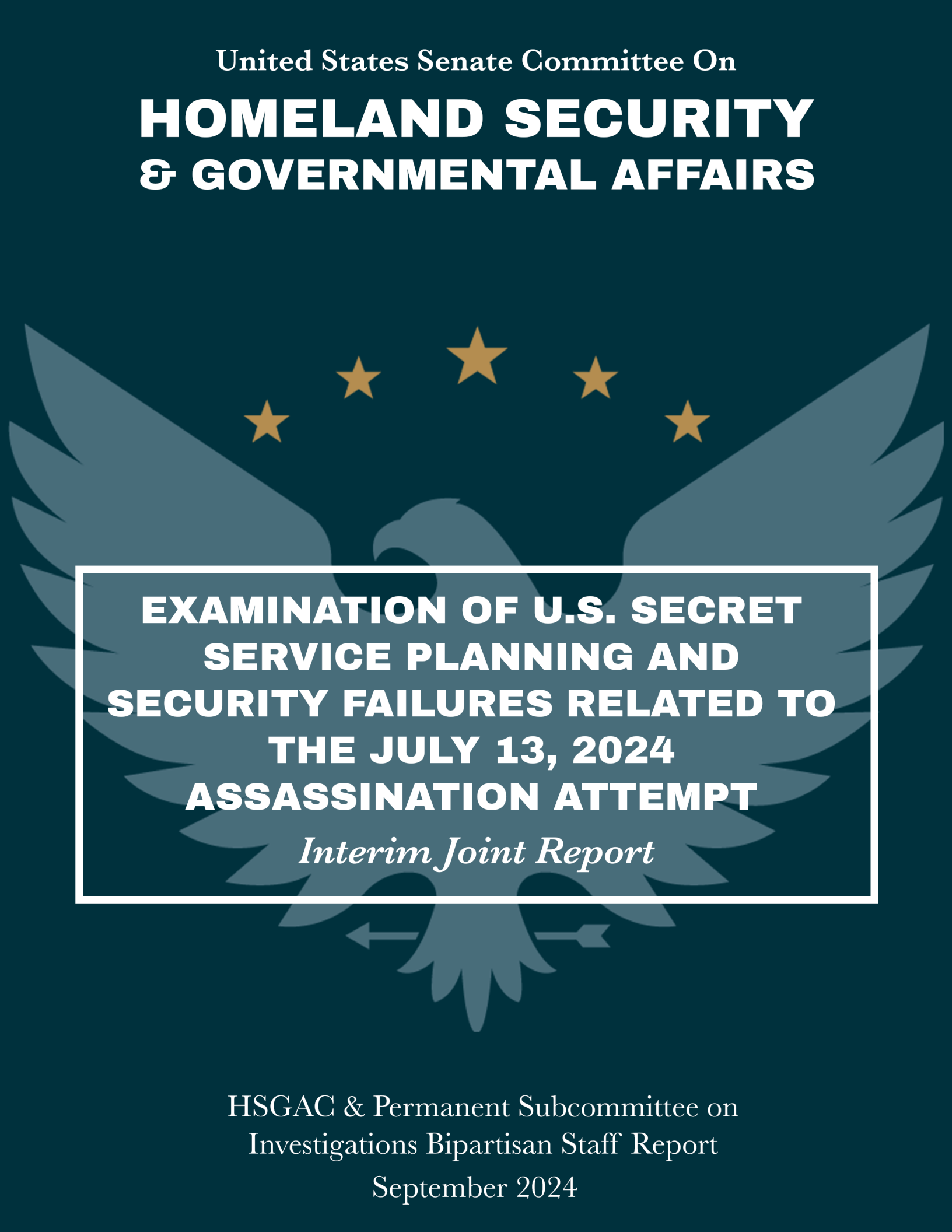


United States Senate Committee On  
**HOMELAND SECURITY  
& GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

A stylized eagle with its wings spread, rendered in a light blue color against a dark blue background. Above the eagle's head are seven gold stars. The eagle's body is partially obscured by a white rectangular box containing text.

**EXAMINATION OF U.S. SECRET  
SERVICE PLANNING AND  
SECURITY FAILURES RELATED TO  
THE JULY 13, 2024  
ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT**

*Interim Joint Report*

HSGAC & Permanent Subcommittee on  
Investigations Bipartisan Staff Report  
September 2024

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## I. INTRODUCTION

On July 13, 2024, Thomas Matthew Crooks bought 50 rounds of ammunition on his way to Butler, Pennsylvania, drove to former President Donald Trump’s campaign rally at the Butler Farm Show grounds, and climbed onto the roof of the American Glass Research (AGR) building less than 200 yards away from where the former President was speaking, where at 6:11 pm, he fired eight rounds from an AR-15 semiautomatic rifle, killing one person and injuring three others including the former president.<sup>1</sup> That day, he was able to fly a drone 200 yards from the site, use a rangefinder capable of gauging the distance to the former president less than an hour before he began speaking, and bring two explosive devices within proximity of the site of the rally.<sup>2</sup> The United States Secret Service’s (USSS’) planning, communications, intelligence sharing, and related security failures in advance of and during July 13 directly contributed to Crooks’ ability to carry out the assassination attempt and kill and injure people in Butler, PA that day.

On July 30, 2024, Ronald L. Rowe, Jr., the Acting Director of the USSS, testified in a joint hearing before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC) and Judiciary Committee that the attempted assassination “was a failure on multiple levels.”<sup>3</sup> Acting Director Rowe testified before the Committees that he has since initiated several reforms to address clear deficiencies in how USSS provides security for its protectees.<sup>4</sup> During the July 30 hearing, Acting Director Rowe acknowledged USSS responsibility for protecting former President Trump.<sup>5</sup> In a series of transcribed interviews conducted by HSGAC and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, key USSS personnel responsible for planning, coordinating, communicating, and securing the Butler, PA rally on July 13, declined to acknowledge individual areas of responsibility for planning or security as having contributed to the failure to prevent the shooting that day, even when as an agency, the USSS has acknowledged ultimate responsibility for the failure to prevent the former president of the United States from being shot.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Investigative Updates on the Butler, Pennsylvania, Assassination Attempt* (July 29, 2024) (<https://www.fbi.gov/news/speeches/investigative-updates-on-the-butler-pennsylvania-assassination-attempt>).

<sup>2</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Investigative Updates on the Butler, Pennsylvania, Assassination Attempt* (July 29, 2024) (<https://www.fbi.gov/news/speeches/investigative-updates-on-the-butler-pennsylvania-assassination-attempt>).

<sup>3</sup> Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Opening Statement of U.S. Secret Service Acting Director Ronald Rowe, *Examination of the Security Failures Leading to the Assassination Attempt on Former President Trump*, 118<sup>th</sup> Cong. (July 30, 2024) (S. Hrg. 118-XX).

<sup>4</sup> Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Opening Statement of U.S. Secret Service Acting Director Ronald Rowe, *Examination of the Security Failures Leading to the Assassination Attempt on Former President Trump*, 118<sup>th</sup> Cong. (July 30, 2024) (S. Hrg. 118-XX).

<sup>5</sup> Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Testimony of U.S. Secret Service Acting Director Ronald Rowe, *Examination of the Security Failures Leading to the Assassination Attempt on Former President Trump*, 118<sup>th</sup> Cong. (July 30, 2024) (S. Hrg. 118-XX).

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Secret Service, Transcribed Interviews with Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (on file with Committee).

At the direction of U.S. Senators Gary Peters and Rand Paul, Chairman and Ranking Member of HSGAC and Senators Richard Blumenthal and Ron Johnson, Chairman and Ranking Member of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (the Committee), Majority and Minority Committee staff are conducting a bipartisan investigation of planning and security failures that contributed to the attempted assassination on July 13, 2024.

This interim report details the information the Committee has learned to date, as well as the Committee's preliminary findings. The Committee finds that USSS failures in planning, communications, security, and allocation of resources for the July 13, 2024 Butler rally were foreseeable, preventable, and directly related to the events resulting in the assassination attempt that day. The Committee also finds that siloed communications and coordination problems between federal, state, and local law enforcement officials remain unaddressed and were a contributing factor to the failures at the July 13 Butler rally.

On September 15, 2024, a suspect was taken into custody in West Palm Beach, Florida after being identified by USSS hiding in a tree line with a semiautomatic rifle and a scope approximately 300 to 500 yards from where former President Trump was playing golf at Trump International Golf Club.<sup>7</sup> On September 16, the Department of Justice (DOJ), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), USSS, and Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office held a press conference to provide an update on the investigation.<sup>8</sup> On September 16, the suspect was charged with possession of a firearm and ammunition by a convicted felon, among other charges.<sup>9</sup> According to the complaint, the suspect's mobile phone was in the vicinity of the area along the tree line for approximately 12 hours prior to the incident.<sup>10</sup> The FBI has said it is investigating the incident as an apparent assassination attempt.<sup>11</sup> The Committee has requested briefings from the USSS and the FBI. The Committee will be pursuing additional information from the USSS, FBI, and other relevant federal agencies as the Committee continues its investigation.

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<sup>7</sup> See News Conference on Apparent Assassination Attempt on Former President Trump in Florida with Palm Beach County Sheriff Ric Bradshaw (Sept. 15, 2024); United States of America vs. Ryan Wesley Routh, S.D. Fla., Criminal Complaint (Case No. 24-mj-8441-RMM) (Sept. 16, 2024).

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Secret Service, *Media Advisory: Justice Department, FBI, U.S. Secret Service, and Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office to Provide Investigation Update* (Sept. 16, 2024) (<https://www.secretservice.gov/newsroom/releases/2024/09/media-advisory-justice-department-fbi-us-secret-service-and-palm-beach>).

<sup>9</sup> United States of America vs. Ryan Wesley Routh, S.D. Fla., Criminal Complaint (Case No. 24-mj-8441-RMM) (Sept. 16, 2024).

<sup>10</sup> United States of America vs. Ryan Wesley Routh, S.D. Fla., Criminal Complaint (Case No. 24-mj-8441-RMM) (Sept. 16, 2024).

<sup>11</sup> FBI Special Agent in Charge update to the West Palm Beach, Florida Assassination Attempt Investigation (Sept. 16, 2024).

## **Committee Actions to Date**

On July 15, 2024, Chairman Peters and Ranking Member Paul announced their investigation into the assassination attempt on former President Trump and called for a briefing and public hearing within 15 days.<sup>12</sup> On July 24 and 25, 2024, Chairmen Peters and Blumenthal and Ranking Members Paul and Johnson sent ten letters requesting documents and information to the USSS, FBI, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Intelligence and Analysis, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Beaver County District Attorney, Butler County District Attorney, Butler County Sheriff, Butler Township Police Department, Pennsylvania State Police (PSP), and Clairton Sportsmen’s Club as well as a letter requesting voluntary transcribed interviews with USSS individuals responsible for planning and security on July 13.<sup>13</sup>

On July 25, 2024, Acting USSS Director Rowe and FBI National Security Branch Executive Assistant Director Wells provided a closed-door unclassified briefing for HSGAC and Judiciary Committee Members.<sup>14</sup> And on July 30, 2024, Acting Director Rowe and FBI Deputy Director Paul Abbate testified at a joint public hearing before the Senate HSGAC and Judiciary Committees.<sup>15</sup>

On August 14, 2024, the Committee wrote DHS Secretary Mayorkas and FBI Director Wray seeking additional information about the July 12, 2024 arrest of Asif Merchant for

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<sup>12</sup> Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Chairman Gary Peters and Ranking Member Rand Paul letter to Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security and Honorable Christopher Wray, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice (July 15, 2024).

<sup>13</sup> Letters from Chairman Gary Peters and Ranking Member Rand Paul, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and Chairman Richard Blumenthal and Ranking Member Ron Johnson, Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, to Acting Director Ronald Rowe, U.S. Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security (July 24, 2024), Director Christopher Wray, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice (July 24, 2024), Undersecretary Kenneth Wainstein, Office of Intelligence and Analysis, Department of Homeland Security (July 24, 2024), District Attorney Nathan Bible, Beaver County District Attorney’s Office (July 24, 2024), District Attorney Richard Goldinger, Butler County District Attorney’s Office (July 24, 2024), Sheriff Michael Slupe, Butler County Sheriff’s Office (July 24, 2024), Acting Chief of Police Lt. Matthew Pearson, Butler Township Police Department (July 24, 2024), Commissioner Colonel Christopher Paris, Pennsylvania State Police (July 24, 2024), Acting Director Ronald Rowe, U.S. Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security (July 25, 2024); Clairton Sportsmen’s Club (July 25, 2024); Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (July 25, 2024).

<sup>14</sup> Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Secret Service, and Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Briefing with Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Senate Committee on the Judiciary (July 25, 2024).

<sup>15</sup> Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Examination of the Security Failures Leading to the Assassination Attempt on Former President Trump*, 118<sup>th</sup> Cong. (July 30, 2024) (S. Hrg. 118-XX).

allegedly orchestrating a plot to assassinate U.S. government officials and politicians, and any information related to security decisions made by the USSS in advance of July 13.<sup>16</sup>

As part of its bipartisan investigation, Committee staff traveled to Butler, PA on July 26 to conduct a site visit walk-through of the Butler Farm Show and AGR building and receive briefings from local law enforcement officials. Specifically, Committee staff spoke with law enforcement officials from Butler and Beaver Counties' Emergency Services Units (ESUs) that provided support to USSS on July 13, including the local snipers posted in the AGR building that day. During the visit, Committee staff examined the roof and interior of the AGR building with those officials. The Committee has also interviewed four local law enforcement officers who provided support on July 13 (three local snipers and one Quick Response Force operator), the President of the Clairton Sportsmen's Club, and two rally attendees.

The Committee has also examined state and local operational plans and other related information provided by PSP, Butler County ESU, and Beaver County ESU; reviewed local radio communications on July 13 provided by Butler County Emergency Services; and reviewed body worn camera footage provided by Butler Township Police Department. The Committee has also reviewed transcripts and audio recordings of several PSP interviews of state and local law enforcement officials who helped provide support on July 13.

On August 13, 2024, the Committee began a series of transcribed interviews with USSS personnel. To date, Committee staff have examined over 2,800 pages of documents provided by USSS and conducted 12 transcribed interviews with USSS personnel responsible for the planning and security in Butler, PA on July 13, 2024.

As discussed at the conclusion of this interim report, key requests to FBI, DHS, ATF and USSS remain outstanding. The majority of documents provided by the USSS and DHS are heavily redacted. This has unnecessarily hindered the Committee's ability to carry out its constitutional authority to investigate and acquire information necessary to identify needed reforms. These overly burdensome redactions, including of communications related to the same individuals who the Committee interviewed, only served to delay the Committee's ability to conduct these interviews and carry out its investigation efficiently and effectively. Despite these impediments, the Committee recognized the need to conduct transcribed interviews with USSS personnel as soon as possible before memories faded.

In addition, as detailed in the report below, several USSS individuals responsible for planning and security for the July 13 rally provided contradictory or incomplete information, some of which ran counter to responses from state and local law enforcement officials and even

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<sup>16</sup> Letter from Chairman Gary Peters and Ranking Member Rand Paul, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, and Chairman Richard Blumenthal and Ranking Member Ron Johnson, Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, to Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, Department of Homeland Security, and Director Christopher Wray, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice (Aug. 14, 2024).

other USSS personnel. This interim report highlights preliminary findings based on the Committee’s transcribed interviews and the limited document productions it has received to date. These preliminary failures and findings consider the actions of the USSS in the period leading up to the July 13 assassination attempt. They do not consider the extent to which other agencies or individuals may have contributed to these events, if at all. The Committee is choosing to present these preliminary findings while its investigation remains ongoing to ensure that the public has the most accurate and up-to-date information.

The Committee will continue to pursue all information it deems necessary to carry out its oversight responsibilities and will, if necessary, take steps to ensure that it obtains the information it is seeking.

### **KEY FAILURES**

#### **1. USSS failed to clearly define responsibilities for planning and security at the July 13 rally.**

- **USSS personnel responsible for planning in advance of the July 13 rally denied that they were individually responsible for planning or security failures and deflected blame.**
- **USSS Advance Agents told the Committee that planning and security decisions were made jointly, with no specific individual responsible for approval.<sup>17</sup>**

#### **2. USSS failed to ensure the AGR Building was effectively covered.**

- **USSS identified the AGR building as a concern due to the line-of-sight from the roof to the stage, but did not take steps to ensure sufficient security measures were in place.**
- **USSS knew that local snipers planned to set up inside the AGR building and USSS did not express objections or concerns about that placement.**
- **USSS personnel, including the USSS Counter Sniper Team Leader, did not enter the AGR building or go on the roof prior to the shooting.**
- **One USSS Counter Sniper team, whose responsibility included scanning the area around the AGR building for threats, had an obstructed view of the AGR roof.**

#### **3. USSS failed to effectively coordinate with state and local law enforcement.**

- **USSS did not give state or local partners specific instructions for covering the AGR building, including the positioning of local snipers.**

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<sup>17</sup> Prior to events requiring USSS Protection, USSS assigns personnel to serve as “Advance Agents” responsible for planning security, coordinating with state and local law entities, and requesting needed assets to secure the upcoming event, among other tasks. USSS assigned seven Advance Agents for the July 13 Rally in Butler, PA.



- **USSS did not adequately consider state and local law enforcement operational plans.**
  - **Communications at the July 13 rally were siloed and USSS did not ensure it could share information with local law enforcement partners in real time.**
- 4. USSS failed to provide resources for the July 13 rally that could have enhanced security.**
- **USSS denied specific requests for additional Counter Unmanned Aircraft Systems (C-UAS) capabilities and a Counter Assault Team liaison.**
  - **A USSS Counter Surveillance Unit – which could have helped patrol the outer perimeter that included the AGR building – was not requested by USSS Advance Agents.**
- 5. USSS failed to communicate information about the suspicious person to key personnel, and failed to take action to ensure the safety of former President Trump.**
- **At approximately 5:45 pm, USSS personnel were notified that local law enforcement observed a suspicious person with a rangefinder near the AGR building. By 5:52 pm, at least eight USSS personnel had been informed.**
  - **Approximately two minutes before shots were fired, the USSS Security Room, located on the rally grounds, was told that there was an individual on the roof of the AGR building.**
  - **Shortly before shots were fired, a USSS Counter Sniper observed local officers running towards the AGR building with guns drawn.**

## II. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### FINDINGS

As detailed below and throughout this report, the Committee has identified several key findings as part of its ongoing investigation.

- 1. USSS personnel were notified of a suspicious person with a rangefinder around the AGR building approximately 27 minutes before the shooting.** The report of a suspicious person with a rangefinder near the AGR building was relayed to the USSS Security Room at approximately 5:44 pm and to the USSS Counter Sniper Team Leader at 5:45 pm. Shortly after, USSS personnel, including a Counter Sniper Response agent, engaged in an on-the-ground effort to locate the individual. However, the USSS Lead Advance Agent, Site Agent, and Site Counterpart all told the Committee they did not receive this information and therefore did not know local law enforcement had identified a suspicious person with a rangefinder – and that those local officers later lost track of this individual – until after shots were fired.
- 2. USSS was notified about an individual on the AGR roof approximately two minutes before Crooks fired from the AGR roof.** Three minutes before shots were fired, a local law enforcement officer sent out a radio alert that there was an individual on the AGR roof. This information was passed to the USSS Security Room approximately two minutes before Crooks fired. Approximately 22 seconds before Crooks fired, a local officer sent out a radio alert that the individual on the AGR roof was armed, but that was not relayed to key USSS personnel that the Committee spoke with.
- 3. Shortly before shots were fired, a USSS counter sniper saw local law enforcement running toward the AGR building with their guns drawn, but he did not alert former President Trump’s protective detail to remove him from the stage.** The USSS counter sniper told the Committee that while seeing officers with their guns drawn “elevated” the threat level, the thought to notify someone to get Trump off the stage “did not cross [his] mind.”
- 4. USSS counter snipers – including the one who shot and killed Crooks – were sent to the rally in response to “credible intelligence” of a threat.** The July 13 rally was the first time a USSS counter sniper team was assigned to a protectee other than the President, Vice President, or a presidential candidate who had been formally nominated by his or her party. USSS provided the counter snipers in response to “credible intelligence” of a threat. However, FBI has said that Crooks “was not known to the FBI prior to” the assassination attempt. According to the USSS Assistant Director of the Office of Protective Operations, a decision to assign counter snipers to former President Trump’s events occurred sometime in the first week of July. Of the USSS personnel interviewed by the Committee, nearly all – including the Intelligence Advance Agent and the Special Agent in Charge (SAIC) of the Pittsburgh Field Office – said they were unaware of any credible intelligence of a threat.

5. **USSS Advance Agents for the July 13 rally denied individual responsibility for planning or security failures, deflected blame, and could not identify who had final decision authority for the rally.** USSS planning and execution of security measures for the July 13 rally appears to have lacked a clear chain of command. USSS Advance Agents told the Committee that planning and security decisions were collaborative and could not agree on who at USSS was responsible for final approval or decisions. USSS Advance Agents interviewed by the Committee could not identify who was responsible for determining the security perimeter for the July 13 rally.
6. **Local law enforcement raised concern about the security coverage of the AGR building.** A member of Butler ESU told the Committee that he notified USSS Advance Agents during a walkthrough on Thursday, July 11 that local law enforcement did not have the “manpower” to lock down the AGR building. USSS Advance Agents interviewed by the Committee gave conflicting accounts and told the Committee that state and local law enforcement were responsible for covering the AGR building because it was in the outer perimeter. Prior to the July 13 rally, the USSS Lead Advance Agent, Counter Sniper Team Leader, and Site Counterpart did not go into the AGR building. None of the USSS Advance Agents shared planning documents with state or local law enforcement, or requested state or local operational plans – and those plans reveal no post-standers or patrol assigned to cover the AGR building or roof.
7. **USSS advance personnel identified multiple line-of-sight concerns at the Butler Farm Show grounds, including the AGR building.** USSS advance personnel proposed positioning large trucks or heavy equipment in the area between the stage and nearby buildings to mitigate line-of-sight concerns. USSS told the Committee they relied on multiple measures, including USSS counter sniper teams and bleachers, to mitigate lines-of-sight. USSS ultimately did not use the trucks or heavy equipment to mitigate line-of-sight concerns from the AGR building. A USSS counter sniper in the Hercules 2 position told the Committee he believed the mitigations were sufficient and the USSS Site Counterpart told the Committee she believed they had a “good security plan” for the July 13 rally.
8. **There were two separate communications centers at the July 13 rally – one run by USSS and one by local law enforcement.** The posts were anywhere from 120 to 300 yards apart from each other and the primary means of communication between the posts was by cell phone. Local law enforcement and USSS operated on separate radio channels. All of the local channels were recorded on July 13, but USSS radio transmissions were not.
9. **Crooks was in the USSS counter sniper’s sights for “mere seconds” before he fired at Crooks.** The USSS partner of the USSS counter sniper who shot Crooks told the Committee he observed that “mere seconds” after his partner identified Crooks in his sights, the USSS counter sniper fired at Crooks. USSS counter snipers confirmed to the Committee that they did not require permission before they fired.
10. **USSS Advance Agents requested additional resources that would have been helpful, but those assets were denied.** The USSS C-UAS operator told the Committee he requested additional C-UAS equipment and personnel in the days before the rally. However, these

requests were denied, at times without explanation. The USSS Lead Advance Agent told the Committee former President Trump's USSS detail requested Counter Assault Team liaisons to help coordinate tactical assets in advance of the July 13 rally, but USSS denied this request. The USSS Site Agent and the Site Counterpart told the Committee that a Counter Surveillance Unit would have been helpful, but this asset is typically not provided for a former President and USSS Advance Agents did not request a Counter Surveillance Unit for the July 13 rally.

11. **USSS' C-UAS system experienced technical problems and was inoperable until 4:33 pm, after Crooks flew his drone near the rally site.** With no backup system, the USSS agent responsible for overseeing the C-UAS capabilities at the July 13 rally called a toll-free 888 tech support hotline "to start troubleshooting with the company," which took several hours. That agent had only three months of experience working with that equipment and lacked knowledge about it.
12. **Several USSS officials reported experiencing technical problems with their radios at the rally, and told the Committee such problems are common for USSS.** A USSS Hercules 1 counter sniper was offered a local radio on July 13 but said he did not have time to pick it up because he was occupied fixing technical problems with his USSS radio. In addition, at the Pittsburgh airport before the motorcade left for the rally, the USSS SAIC of the Pittsburgh Field Office gave the Lead Advance Agent his radio because the Lead Advance Agent's radio was not working. As a result, the SAIC did not have a working radio on him during his entire time at the July 13 rally. While he did not "hold a post or a sector" and was "not part of any protective formation," he did claim that he was there to "act more in a liaison capacity." However, he did not have any means to communicate on the radio with his USSS counterparts.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Planning and Coordination:** Congress should require USSS to identify defined roles and responsibilities for USSS personnel responsible for advance planning of any protective event.
  - For all protective events, USSS should improve coordination and specify roles and responsibilities between and among federal, state, and local law enforcement partners.
  - USSS policies and protocols should require advance planning leads to request and review state and local operational plans in advance of any protective event to ensure a shared understanding of security responsibilities and vulnerabilities as well as other critical planning and security components.
2. **Responsibility:** In advance of each protective event, USSS should designate a single individual responsible for approving all plans, including the responsibility for approving security perimeters.
3. **Communications:** DHS and USSS should ensure communications plans between federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies and first responders are properly executed and should ensure records retention capabilities.

- Congress should require that USSS record its radio transmissions at all protective events.
  - Congress should require DHS and USSS to evaluate the steps it needs to take to ensure communications plans with state and local partners are fully executed when conducting law enforcement and/or first response activities at a given location. Congress should require that DHS and USSS report to Congress any steps taken to remedy past failures to execute communications plans and to ensure compliance with those plans in the future.
4. **Intelligence:** USSS should consider sending additional assets, including counter snipers, to all future outdoor protective events as it evaluates intelligence and threats against protectees. USSS should also ensure that the appropriate agents working protective events are informed of relevant intelligence and threats against protectees.
5. **Resources:** Congress should evaluate USSS budget and resources. Security requirements should be determined depending on various threat levels, ranging from less severe threat environments to the highest level of security at National Special Security Events.
- Congress should require that USSS allocate assets and resources based on the threat level, not the position or title of the protectee.