

TESTIMONY OF ROBERT A. KNOX
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BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY
AND THE
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Chairman Chaffetz, Chairman Bishop, and members of the Subcommittees, thank you for the opportunity to testify today about a recent Office of Inspector General (OIG) report on the accountability and accuracy of the United States Park Police (USPP) firearms inventory. In short, we found ample evidence that USPP's firearms management requires immediate attention to address the multitude of problems we found, which ranged from fundamental errors in recordkeeping to glaring nonfeasance by senior command officers.

We initiated our review after receiving an anonymous complaint. We initially set out to determine if USPP could account for all military-style weapons in its inventory, whether USPP had failed to perform inventories due to missing weapons, and whether officers may have used USPP weapons for their personal use. Our efforts to definitively address the allegations were hindered by the inability of the USPP property and firearms custodians to provide a reliable baseline inventory and accounting of firearms. The conditions of the USPP inventory were such that would allow for theft and misuse of firearms, and the ability to conceal any missing weapons.

Having found the firearms inventory program in utter disarray, we discontinued our efforts to prove or disprove the complainant's allegations, and changed our approach to focus on the overall management of the USPP firearms inventory program.

Following a long history of inaction and indifference on the part of USPP leadership and management at all levels, we again found that the basic tenets of property management and supervisory oversight were missing in their most fundamental forms. Commanders, up to and including the Chief of Police, have a lackadaisical attitude toward firearms management. We found historical evidence which indicates that this indifference is a product of years of inattention to administrative detail and management principles in their most basic form.

In 2008 and 2009, the OIG conducted reviews that included aspects of USPP operations, including firearms inventory controls. In our 2008 report, we had a recommendation regarding property management, which we have reiterated in the subject report of this hearing. In 2009, we focused on firearms inventory controls for all law enforcement programs at the Department of the Interior, which included the USPP. At that time, we found, and reported on, strikingly similar conditions: firearms custodians were unaware of the number of guns in their inventory or of the origin of these guns, and that guns physically present were not listed on the inventory.

In the end, we have little confidence that USPP has the managerial commitment to implement a professionally responsible firearms management program without direct and frequent oversight from the National Park Service, the Office of Law Enforcement and Security, and the OIG. Among the 10 recommendations we make in our report is a recommendation to

initiate quarterly firearms inventories, to include serial number verifications, and provide the
OIG with the results. We intend to conduct a series of future reviews and inspections to ensure
that the USPP has implemented our recommendations and that they maintain the level of
accountability expected of a law enforcement entity of the size and stature of the USPP.

Chairman Chaffitz and Chairman Bishop, this concludes my testimony today. I would be
happy to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittees may have.