Twitter Thread by amna



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Alejandro "Ale" Mayorkas is testifying on Capitol Hill today, as Biden's pick to lead the Department of Homeland Security - the 3rd largest federal agency.

It's not his first confirmation hearing -- previously nominated by Obama as Dep Sec in 2013, confirmed in 2014.

Mayorkas, unlike some Senators in the hearing, has kept his mask on the entire time so far -- delivering his opening statement, and even now as he begins to take questions.

Sen. Portman asking what Mayorkas learned from an investigation into his involvement in investor visa cases while he was Deputy Secretary...

Mayorkas: "I learn each and every day to be better tomorrow than I was today...these weren't the only 3 cases I was involved in, whether they involved the rich or the poor...I became involved to ensure our agency improved each day..."

Mayorkas on leveraging DHS resources to support pandemic response:

-FEMA should to ensure supply chain
-CISA (cyber security) should protect supply chain from cyber attacks and ensure other agencies' work protected

"the reach of the department is significant..."

Sen. Peters: I've often met with resistance my efforts to investigate white supremacist violence and threats...what steps will you take to tackle this persistent and growing threat?

Mayorkas on white supremacist threat:
"the threat of domestic extremism is one of the greatest challenges DHS confronts"

I&A (intel + analysis office) has critical role to play in partnering with state/locals to gather + share info

Mayorkas says wants to further "empower" I&A

Sen. Johnson holds up chart related to border crossings, titled: "Minors and Families"... asking about facilities built by Obama administration to house surge of children crossing border in 2014

Johnson: "you detained individuals correct?"

Mayorkas: correct

Johnson: "There were children separated from their parents correct?"

Mayorkas: When I was Dep Sec, I "explicitly rejected" the policy to separate children from their parents.

Johnson: will a thousand a day be a bad day? pick a number
(referring to border crossings)

Mayorkas: (whose prev boss, Sec. Johnson once said 1,000 crossings was 'bad day'-taxing resources) does not provide a number - says he looks forward to working with cmte in transparent way

Mayorkas as passionate as we've seen him so far - sharing story of getting involved in case of Guatemalan orphan adoptions that were held up, setting up task force to address issues and fix it...says he's kept close photo of child running through airport to meet adoptive family.

Sen. Hassan asks about growth of domestic terrorism - notes that even tho DHS was set up to respond to 9/11 terrorist attack, agency has not reworked resources to respond to evolving threat of white-supremacist and anti-government domestic terrorism.

Mayorkas: "I think we can do a lot better in the distribution of that information [from intel & analysis] to state and local partners"

Hassan: one thing to talk about info-sharing, another thing to coordinate. clearly we need to do better job of it.

2021 problems.

Sen Scott, dialing into Mayorkas' confirmation hearing remotely, having audio issues

"can you hear me now?"

"maybe you can turn up your microphone? or come closer to the computer?"

Sen Scott asking about border wall.

Mayorkas: when I served as Dep Sec, met with Border Patrol...what I heard from them was we need a diverse approach to border security...in some instances, physical barrier, in others boots on the ground, in others tech, air + marine...

Sen Scott: would you tear down parts of the wall? stop the construction?

Mayorkas: Pres-elect Biden has committed to stop construction. Would be my responsibility to see through that. I have not looked at costs/benefits beyond that.

Sen Scott: asks about calls to abolish ICE and abolish border patrol.

Mayorkas: ICE and CBP play critical roles in US govt and I would not abolish them

Mayorkas asked about DACA/TPS protections

Says he looks forward to working towards reform of "broken" immigration system, as laid out in Biden's plans

(reimplementing DACA, strengthening TPS protections, etc)

Mayorkas asked about Anti-Semitism:

"I am profoundly aware" of this growing threat

"My mother lost her paternal grandparents, 7 uncles, by reason of their Jewish faith, in the Holocaust. My mother fled her home, with her parents, because of the Holocaust."

Sen Hawley asks about Biden's plan for path to citizenship.
"concerns about that...do you support mass amnesty, 11 million large number?"

Mayorkas:
Biden has committed to presenting Congress on Day1 with immigration reform bill to fix what we can all agree is broken system...

Mayorkas: Biden has spoken of path to citizenship...I would be privileged to work with Congress to support that path and fix broken system...

Hawley: worried amnesty on that scale will become pull factor? i am concerned.

Mayorkas: i remember bipartisan legislation years ago with path to citizenship...spoke of certain requirements...(those who'd been here for years, had contributed to US, etc)...

Mayorkas:
I dont think severity of push factor can be overstated...

"when loving parents are willing to send their young child alone...because of the acute violence and poverty and fear of persecution...i think we need to address the push factor as gravest threat"

Sen Hawley asks about "MPP" program (remain in mexico Trump program): will you end this?

Mayorkas: Pres-Elect Biden has committed to end program, and I would execute on that should I have privilege of serving as secretary