

Kash Patel column in today's WSJ:

When President Trump told me he would nominate me to direct the Federal Bureau of Investigation, I was deeply honored. I carry not only the dreams of my parents but the hopes of millions of Americans who stand for justice, fairness, and the rule of law. My commitment to these principles is deeply rooted in my family's history.

My father fled Idi Amin's genocidal dictatorship in Uganda. My mother was born in Tanzania. They married in India and emigrated to New York, where I was born and raised in a bustling household that included my father's seven siblings, their spouses and six children. My family instilled in me a deep respect for the rule of law and the transformative power of education. These values have shaped the driving force behind my career: protecting the rights enshrined in our Constitution.

The recent terrorist attack in New Orleans, which claimed the lives of 14 innocent Americans, is a stark reminder of the persistent threats to our homeland. Whether combating child predators, terrorists or drug traffickers, the FBI plays a vital role in protecting our nation from its gravest dangers. A vigilant FBI that puts the mission first will end the explosion of violent crime and mitigate national-security threats.

If confirmed, I will remain focused on the FBI's core mission and not involve the bureau in prosecutorial decisions. Determining whether someone should be charged with a crime is the responsibility of the Justice Department, not the FBI. If confirmed, I will guide the agency in investigating criminals and safeguarding the homeland.

Each step in my career has reinforced my commitment to due process and transparency. For the first eight years after law school, I served as a public defender—first with the Miami-Dade Public Defender's Office and later in the federal Southern District of Florida. I represented defendants accused of horrific crimes. Ensuring that they receive due process is fundamental to our justice system. It is what distinguishes us from totalitarian regimes.

I joined the Obama Justice Department as a national-security prosecutor. I contributed to the successful prosecutions of terrorists from organizations such as al Qaeda and al-Shabaab, at home and abroad.

I was honored to receive the 2017 Assistant Attorney General's Award from Loretta Lynch for helping Uganda bring members of al-Shabaab to justice for the 2010 bombing that killed 76 people, including one American. I was also proud to receive the Humint Award from the intelligence community for related work.

My experiences at the Justice Department, at the National Security Council leading counterterrorism policy, as deputy director of national intelligence and as chief of staff at the Defense Department provided me with a firsthand understanding of the persistent threats to our nation and the critical role the FBI plays in keeping Americans safe.

But my time on the House Intelligence Committee revealed how the FBI's immense powers can be abused. I spearheaded the investigation that found the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act—a tool I had previously used to hunt down terrorists—had been unlawfully used to spy on political opponents. Such misconduct is unacceptable and undermines public trust.

The erosion of trust is evident: Only 40% of Americans hold a favorable view of the FBI. This must change. Public cooperation is vital for the bureau to solve crimes, and its declining reputation is already affecting recruitment efforts. Violent crime is destroying families across the nation. We can't afford a lack of trust in the institution mandated to protect them. Rebuilding that trust is vital to ensuring the FBI can carry out its mission effectively.

If confirmed, I intend to collaborate closely with the Justice Department to bring safety and relief to American communities. Gallup recently reported that nearly half of all Americans—the highest in three decades—would be afraid to walk alone at night within a mile of their home.

Little wonder when the country sees 20,000 homicides and 110,000 rapes a year and 200 drug overdoses a day. Violent crime demands immediate action.

We've also seen the FBI at its best. Recently in Oklahoma, agents foiled a planned ISIS attack, and in Colleyville, Texas, they courageously neutralized a terrorist holding synagogue congregants hostage. These examples showcase the FBI's capability to protect Americans and underscore why restoring public confidence in the bureau is critical.

I believe two foundational steps are necessary to rebuild public confidence in the FBI. First, let good cops be cops. Leadership means supporting agents in their mission to apprehend criminals and protect our citizens. If confirmed, I will focus on streamlining operations at headquarters while bolstering the presence of field agents across the nation. Collaboration with local law enforcement is crucial to fulfilling the FBI's mission.

Second, transparency is essential. Members of Congress have hundreds of unanswered requests to the FBI. If confirmed, I will be a strong advocate for congressional oversight, ensuring that the FBI operates with the openness necessary to rebuild trust by simply replying to lawmakers.

I am committed to working alongside the dedicated men and women of the FBI. They are our warriors of justice, and I will always have their backs, because they have the backs of the American people