

**STATEMENT OF ROBERT MACLEAN, CHIEF, UNITED STATES PARK POLICE,  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM,  
CONCERNING “FLYING UNDER THE RADAR: SECURING WASHINGTON, D.C.  
AIRSPACE.”**

**APRIL 29, 2015**

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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cummings, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss the United States Park Police (USPP) involvement in the April 15, 2015, gyrocopter incident in Washington, D.C.

The U.S. Park Police, established in 1791, is the oldest uniformed Federal law enforcement agency in the United States. The USPP, which is primarily responsible for safety and crime prevention in parklands administered by the National Park Service, has enjoyed a long history of partnership and coordination with the numerous public safety, protection, aviation, and defense agencies within the National Capital Region. In the District of Columbia, the USPP has primary jurisdiction over Federal parkland, which comprises approximately 22% of the District of Columbia, including the National Mall, East and West Potomac Parks, Rock Creek Park, Anacostia Park, McPherson Square and many of the small triangle parks.

The USPP officers who proudly and diligently patrol Federal parkland every day are trained to identify, report, and investigate violations of law and suspicious or unusual activity. Although the USPP has an Aviation Unit that flies law enforcement, medevac, and search and rescue missions within the National Capital Region, the USPP does not have primary responsibility of airspace defense over the Federal parklands. As such, the USPP does not have radar detection capabilities to monitor that airspace, nor does it have the appropriate tools to engage, or defend against, an aircraft in the airspace above the parks. Those primary responsibilities and capabilities rest with other Federal agencies.

On Wednesday, April 15, 2015, at approximately 1:20 pm, a Park Police officer observed and reported an aircraft (later identified as the gyrocopter operated by Mr. Doug Hughes) operating near the Lincoln Memorial and estimated it to be approximately 100 feet off of the ground and travelling eastbound towards the United States Capitol. The officer made a request to the USPP Dispatch Center to contact the U.S. Capitol Police. A supervisor confirmed the observation and requested the USPP Dispatch Center notify the USPP Aviation Unit, which, in turn, contacted the National Capital Region Coordination Center to report an aircraft in restricted airspace.

Another Park Police officer observed and followed the aircraft eastbound in his patrol vehicle to where the aircraft landed on the west grounds of the U.S. Capitol. The Park Police officer arrived at the Capitol grounds and observed the U.S. Capitol Police arresting Mr. Hughes. At that point, the USPP became an assisting agency to U.S. Capitol Police on the scene and at the U.S. Capitol Police command post.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to respond to any questions you and other members may have.