

SELECT COMMITTEE ON
INTELLIGENCE

UNITED STATES SENATE



**Additional Prehearing Questions
for
Mr. Matthew Olsen
upon his nomination to be
the Director of the
National Counterterrorism Center**

Responsibilities of the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center

QUESTION 1: The National Security Intelligence Reform Act of 2004 created the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) and the position of Director of the NCTC.

- **What is your understanding of the unique role of the NCTC within the Intelligence Community (IC)?**

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA) serves as the statutory basis for NCTC's unique role within the Intelligence Community. Among other provisions, this law directs that NCTC:

- Serve as the primary organization of the U.S. Government (USG) for *analyzing and integrating* all intelligence possessed or acquired by the USG pertaining to terrorism and counterterrorism (CT), excepting exclusively domestic terrorists and domestic CT.
- Conduct *strategic operational planning* for CT activities, integrating all instruments of national power, including diplomatic, financial, military, intelligence, homeland security, and law enforcement activities within and among agencies.
- Ensure agencies have appropriate access to and receive all-source *intelligence support* necessary to execute CT plans or perform independent alternative analysis.
- Serve as *central and shared knowledge bank* on known and suspected terrorists and international terror groups, as well as their goals, strategies, capabilities, and networks of contacts and support.

The law also directs the NCTC Director to *advise the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) on the extent to which the CT program recommendations and budget proposals* of the departments, agencies, and elements of the U.S. Government conform to the priorities established by the President.

No other CT component of the Intelligence Community has this range of responsibilities. In conducting all-source analysis and maintaining the database that underpins all government watchlisting, NCTC has access to all terrorism-related information, both foreign and domestic. NCTC's cross-government role in strategic operational planning is also unique and results in a dual reporting relationship of the Director to the DNI for intelligence functions and to the President for strategic operational planning.

- **What is your understanding of the specific statutory responsibilities of the Director?**

The statutory responsibilities of NCTC and the Director of NCTC are described in Section 1021 of IRTPA. By law, NCTC is the primary organization in the federal government for analyzing and integrating all intelligence pertaining to terrorism and CT. NCTC thus has a unique responsibility to examine all international terrorism issues, regardless of where in the world they might be located.

NCTC's area of responsibility spans geographic boundaries, allowing for such intelligence to be analyzed regardless of whether it is collected inside or outside the United States. Further, the Center, by law, serves as the U.S. Government's central and shared knowledge bank on known and suspected terrorists and international terror groups. No other organization in the U.S. Government is as singularly focused on terrorism.

NCTC—in its Strategic Operational Planning role—is uniquely positioned to look beyond individual department and agency missions toward a single, unified CT effort. This distinguishes NCTC from other elements of the Intelligence Community and federal government and enables the Center to take a strategic, long term view of the counterterrorism mission. Through a single and joint planning process that integrates all instruments of national power, the Center ensures the effective integration of government CT plans and the synchronization of operations across more than 20 departments and agencies with CT responsibilities.

Thus, the Director of NCTC has two related but distinct areas of responsibility: intelligence and strategic operational planning. With respect to the first, the Director is responsible to the DNI and is charged with a variety of specific responsibilities, to include acting as the DNI's principal adviser on intelligence operations pertaining to CT, being responsible for supporting DHS and FBI for the dissemination of CT information to a variety of federal, state and local officials and government entities through entities like the Interagency Threat Assessment and Coordination Group (ITACG), and advising the DNI on the allocation of counterterrorism resources to elements of the Intelligence Community.

With respect to strategic operational planning, the Director of NCTC reports directly to the President. In this role, the Director is responsible for providing strategic operational plans—both short and long term policy planning which aims to bring all elements of national power to bear against terrorism—for all departments and agencies of the U.S. government

- **Have you discussed with Director Clapper his specific expectations of you, if confirmed as Director, and his expectations of the NCTC as a whole? If so, please describe these expectations.**

I have met with Director Clapper and have generally discussed his expectations of me, if confirmed as Director, and his expectations for NCTC. Based on these discussions, I believe he

would expect me to continue the tremendous work of former NCTC Director Mike Leiter and to work tirelessly to ensure that NCTC fulfills its mission of leading the nation's effort to combat terrorism at home and abroad. He would expect me to carry out the responsibilities of the NCTC Director in a manner consistent with the highest standards of the Intelligence Community and in strict adherence to the Constitution and all applicable laws. I also believe he would expect me to lead the workforce of NCTC with integrity and courage and to provide objective, independent advice to him and to other senior policy makers in the government.

NCTC Mission

QUESTION 2: The NCTC was designed to serve as the primary organization in the U.S. Government for integrating and analyzing all intelligence pertaining to terrorism and counterterrorism and to conduct strategic operational planning by integrating all instruments of national power.

- **What is your assessment of the NCTC's current strengths and weaknesses?**

If confirmed, I expect to fully assess on an ongoing basis NCTC's strengths and weaknesses as I guide and direct its future course. From my current perspective, NCTC's dedicated and diverse work force is its most important strength in confronting CT issues across the U.S. government. Following the failed attack on December 25, 2009, NCTC led the implementation of a number of reforms in response to the President's guidance that built upon its role as the primary CT organization of the U.S. government, as envisioned by the IRTPA. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement in analyzing and integrating intelligence, conducting strategic operational planning, and serving as the central knowledge bank on known and suspected terrorists.

- **What do you believe are the greatest challenges facing the NCTC?**

NCTC faces the challenge of an evolving and adaptive threat both within the homeland and abroad. As I explain more fully below, the terrorist threat to the United States has become more complex and diverse. While sustained counterterrorism pressure on al-Qa'ida in Pakistan has degraded the group's capabilities, al-Qa'ida remains focused on conducting terrorist attacks, particularly in the United States and in Europe. In addition, I believe al-Qa'ida's regional affiliates, particularly al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), constitute a growing threat to the United States.

In addition, as I indicated above, I believe NCTC's dedicated and diverse workforce is its greatest strength. As such, I believe maintaining this diversity through continued commitment from Intelligence Community departments and agencies will remain one of its greatest challenges.

I also believe NCTC must continue to pursue its ongoing efforts to gain access to critical data sets in accordance with applicable privacy standards and laws. As the Center gains access to data, it will face the challenge of what has been called in one study, "separating the signal from the noise"—the problem of information overload.

- **Please explain your vision for the NCTC, including your views on its current and future priorities and what the organization should look like five years from now.**

If confirmed, I will strive to build upon the successes of my predecessors and fulfill the promise of NCTC as envisioned by Congress in the IRTPA. I believe NCTC has achieved a solid foundation in analysis and greatly improved national watchlisting capabilities. The Intelligence Community as a whole has made great strides in information sharing, and NCTC continues to gain increased access to the information it needs to identify potential terrorist threats. Additional challenges remain both for information sharing and the technical challenges of analyzing the increasing amount of data. NCTC has also matured in both its National Intelligence Management and Strategic Operational Planning roles. If confirmed, I will reinforce what I find to be NCTC's strengths and review the current priorities in detail. As I identify areas for improvement, if confirmed, I will share my judgments regarding necessary changes and future priorities.

- **What specific benchmarks should be used to assess the NCTC's performance?**

The Counterterrorism Intelligence Plan (CTIP) serves as a useful tool to assess the Intelligence Community's performance against the terrorism problem and by extension the performance of NCTC. For the Intelligence Community, the CTIP outlines the mission objectives against which analytic gaps are identified. Progress is assessed on a quarterly basis against those gaps through analysis of hundreds of intelligence products. This provides a specific outcome measure that is reported to OMB and to Congress. I understand that NCTC also reviews customer satisfaction as a means to determine if it is meeting their needs. This measure is also reported annually to Congress in the Congressional Budget Justification Book.

Current Terrorist Threat

QUESTION 3: In light of the tenth anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks and the recent strike on Usama bin Ladin:

- **How do you characterize the terrorist threat that is confronting the United States at this time?**

I believe the terrorist threat to the United States has become more complex and diverse than at any point in the last decade. Sustained CT pressure on al-Qa'ida in Pakistan has degraded the group's capabilities, leaving it at one of its weakest points in the past decade. Usama bin Ladin's death probably has accelerated this trend by eliminating the group's most important decision maker and source of authority. However, al-Qa'ida remains focused on conducting terrorist attacks, particularly in the U.S., in Europe, and against our Coalition allies. We must remain vigilant in continuing our efforts to deter and dismantle the group's capabilities to conduct a homeland attack.

I believe al-Qa'ida's regional affiliates, particularly AQAP, constitute a growing threat to the homeland. As the affiliates continue to develop and evolve, the threat posed by many of these groups to U.S. interests abroad and the homeland has grown.

Yemen and North and East Africa have emerged as the primary areas from which al-Qa'ida's affiliates can plan attacks, train recruits, and facilitate the movement of operatives. AQAP remains intent on conducting attacks targeting the homeland and U.S. interests overseas while furthering propaganda efforts designed to inspire like-minded Western Muslim extremists to conduct attacks in their home countries. The Somalia-based al-Shabaab, al-Qa'ida in Iraq, and Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb continue to pose a threat to U.S. and other Western interests.

Beyond al-Qa'ida and its affiliates, al-Qa'ida's key allies in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), in particular Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), continue to pose a threat to the homeland. TTP leaders maintain close ties to senior al-Qa'ida leaders, providing critical support to al-Qa'ida in the FATA and sharing some of the same global violent extremist goals. Other al-Qa'ida allies in Pakistan have demonstrated the intent and capability to conduct attacks against US persons and targets in Afghanistan.

Lebanese Hizballah remains capable of conducting terrorist attacks on U.S. and Western interests, particularly in the Middle East if it perceived a direct threat from the United States to itself or Iran, its primary state sponsor.

Finally, in addition to threats emanating from outside the United States, homegrown violent extremists continue to pose an elevated threat to the homeland. Although they have yet to demonstrate the capability to conduct sophisticated attacks, individuals like Fort Hood shooter Major Nidal Hasan demonstrate that attacks need not be sophisticated to be deadly. Al-Qa'ida and its affiliates have publicly supported and promoted the narrative of individual extremism and the potentially anonymous and individualized nature of individual terrorists complicates efforts to detect and disrupt their plotting.

- **If confirmed, what would be your top priorities in terms of the terrorist threats facing the United States?**

I believe that the President's new National Strategy for Counterterrorism conveys clear priorities for NCTC in terms of the terrorist threat we face. If confirmed, my top priority at NCTC will be to identify and analyze those threats and thereby assist in the prevention of terrorist attacks on the homeland, our allies, and our interests abroad. Those terrorist threats may originate from al Qaeda core or its affiliates and adherents in South Asia, the Arabian Peninsula, the Horn of Africa, and North Africa. In addition to our efforts to counter these threats, an important and challenging priority will be to work with our partners to identify al Qaeda inspired homegrown violent extremists.

- **In your opinion, what terrorist threats, if any, have been overlooked or underestimated?**

From my perspective, the Intelligence Community has taken numerous steps to evaluate and prioritize which terrorist groups pose the most severe threats to the homeland and U.S. interests, and has allocated appropriate resources to combat those threats. The National Intelligence Priorities Framework provides a comprehensive, community-coordinated tool to evaluate the threat and dictate where resources are needed.

If confirmed, I will direct the NCTC workforce and our partners to continue analyzing information critically, to constantly evaluate information and assumptions, and to always keep in mind alternative possibilities, which I believe will help mitigate the potential for strategic surprise.

- **In your opinion, is the NCTC adequately staffed to address your priorities identified above?**

Based on my understanding, I believe that NCTC is staffed adequately to meet the priorities above, and its resources are aligned appropriately with the President's Strategy for Counterterrorism. Over the past several years, NCTC has conducted various reviews of its resources and has worked closely with Congress to ensure resources are adjusted to address the evolving threat environment. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress in order to ensure NCTC remains adequately staffed.

- **What actions will you take, if confirmed as Director, to ensure that each of your identified priorities is satisfied?**

If confirmed, my approach—in accordance with the National Strategy for Counterterrorism and the President's directives following the failed attack in December 2009—will be to ensure that NCTC remains agile and adaptive and continues to fulfill its unique role in the government-wide

effort to disrupt, dismantle and eventually defeat al-Qa'ida, its affiliates and adherents.

Intelligence reform and counterterrorism

QUESTION 4: What do you see as the most important outstanding priorities in the ongoing intelligence reform effort, as it relates to counterterrorism?

I believe that some of the most important priorities for NCTC in the ongoing intelligence reform effort are those identified as a result of the review ordered by the President as a result of the failed terrorist attack on Northwest Airlines Flight 253 in December 2009. The review of that incident led to community-wide resource and implementation initiatives dealing with such issues as accelerating technology enhancements (including the CT Datalayer), strengthening watchlisting, enhancing analytic rigor and raising tradecraft standards, establishing a pursuit capability within NCTC, and improving the Intelligence Community's collection and analysis regarding the threat posed by homegrown violent extremism. It is my understanding that there has been significant progress in implementing these initiatives, and if confirmed I will continue to lead and support these efforts.

- **What recommendations made by the 9/11 Commission have not been fully implemented, and how should those issues be addressed?**

With respect to those 9/11 Commission recommendations that fall within NCTC's purview, I believe substantial steps have been taken to address the recommendations through the implementation of the IRTPA the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, and Executive Orders, policies, and practices. If confirmed, I look forward to further advancing Intelligence Community and NCTC mission and enterprise performance, and will review NCTC's activities to assess whether additional steps are needed to continue to implement the recommendations by the 9/11 Commission. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress during this process.

- **Do you see any need for modifications to the statutory role or authorities of the Director of the NCTC? If so, please explain.**

I am not aware of any such statutory modifications that are necessary at this time. If confirmed, I will work with the Director of National Intelligence and others to ensure that I have sufficient authorities to accomplish NCTC's statutory responsibilities and ensure the continued success of our CT mission. If confirmed, I will also keep this committee fully informed if I identify a need for legislative modifications to my authorities.

Pursuit groups

QUESTION 5: Following the failed terrorist attack of December 25, 2009, NCTC created the “Pursuit Group” to help track down tactical leads that could lead to the discovery of threats aimed against the U.S. Homeland or U.S. interests abroad. Public testimony from NCTC states that the Group has “repeatedly identified key leads that would have otherwise been missed amidst a sea of uncorrelated data.”

- **To what extent has the creation of this Group succeeded in ensuring that tactical leads are identified and tracked?**

I believe that the creation of the Pursuit Group has provided the CT community with a group of co-located analysts that have unparalleled data access and expertise, which enables Pursuit Group to focus exclusively on information that could lead to the discovery of threats aimed against the homeland or U.S. interests abroad. While the majority of the Intelligence Community understandably follows current threats, Pursuit Group analysts can ensure that terrorism cases are examined as thoroughly as possible by pursuing non-obvious and unresolved connections, identifying unknown, known or suspected terrorists, and focusing on seemingly unimportant details that could yield relevant information.

- **How are the priorities of the Pursuit Group established?**

Although I have not had an opportunity to work directly with the Pursuit Group in my present position, it is my understanding that Pursuit Group’s priorities include intelligence reporting with a clear homeland connection, or with only partial identifying data. Pursuit Group also focuses on identifying members of terrorist networks overseas, or individuals who are part of a broader threat stream.

- **What is the role of the Director of the NCTC in establishing those priorities?**

I believe that the Director of NCTC plays a key role in ensuring that Pursuit Group’s priorities are closely aligned with overarching NCTC and U.S. government CT priorities. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure that this is the case.

- **What is the role of the Pursuit Group in integrating the tactical counterterrorism analytical efforts of the various components of the Intelligence Community?**

I understand that Pursuit Group provides investigative leads, collection requirements, and potential source candidates to its Intelligence Community partners in support of tactical Intelligence Community efforts. The role of the Pursuit Group in integrating tactical counterterrorism analytic efforts is enabled by its broad Intelligence Community makeup. With teams comprised of personnel from across the Intelligence Community, with access to the broadest range of terrorism information available, Pursuit Group analysts are able to identify actionable leads that could otherwise remain disconnected or unknown.

- **If confirmed, will you make any changes in the roles and responsibilities of the Pursuit Group?**

If confirmed, I will continue to make community participation and collaboration in Pursuit Group a priority and will work to strengthen existing interagency partnerships.

NCTC analysis

QUESTION 6: With the creation of the Pursuit Group, what do you see as the proper balance between tactical and strategic intelligence at the NCTC?

The IRTPA gave NCTC the responsibility to “serve as the primary organization in the U.S. Government for analyzing and integrating all intelligence possessed or acquired by the United States Government pertaining to terrorism and counterterrorism, excepting intelligence pertaining exclusively to domestic terrorists and domestic counterterrorism.”

Pursuant to this statutory responsibility, NCTC includes elements that cover both tactical and strategic issues, and the Center’s unique access to data makes it highly capable of performing its mission at both the tactical and strategic levels. I understand that this mission was reoriented in light of a series of plots targeting the United States, culminating in the December 2009 plot, when Nigerian national Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab attempted to detonate an explosive device aboard a Northwest Airlines flight. As a result, NCTC established the Pursuit Group to focus exclusively on information that could lead to the discovery of threats aimed against the homeland or U.S. interests abroad.

In addition to the creation of the Pursuit Group, former Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair clarified in April 2010 that NCTC also would continue to produce strategic analysis on the full range of terrorist organizations with an overseas nexus and a special focus on threats within and to the homeland. If confirmed, I will continue to seek the proper balance between tactical and strategic intelligence problems, both in the types of analysis NCTC will produce and in the application of resources against these missions.

QUESTION 7: What unique role does strategic counterterrorism analysis conducted at NCTC play, as compared to the analysis produced by other components of the Intelligence Community?

Individual Intelligence Community agencies have strong analytic programs that emphasize building core tradecraft skills that reflect the highest standards for research, critical thinking, and writing, utilization of structured analytic techniques, and exploitation of diverse collection platforms. I believe what makes the strategic analysis conducted at NCTC unique is that all of its products are vetted and coordinated throughout the Intelligence Community, which adds multiple analytic perspectives. Though the National Intelligence Council (NIC) also produces fully coordinated analysis of key terrorism-related topics, only NCTC can produce a large number of analyses against such a broad range of strategic terrorism topics. In addition, NCTC's strong analytic cadre, which consists of detailees and assignees from across the Intelligence Community, also means that NCTC products reflect the diversity of the entire Intelligence Community and not the analytic view of one group or agency. NCTC remains the only organization in the Intelligence Community that has access to the entire catalogue of reporting—both foreign and domestic—on terrorism issues.

Moreover, NCTC produces Community-coordinated assessments of a truly strategic nature on such critical terrorism issues as terrorist safe havens, state sponsors of terrorism, CT cooperation worldwide, and regional terrorism issues and groups. NCTC's analytic cadre also regularly prepares intelligence assessments that are integrated into NCTC's Directorate of Strategic Operational Planning to inform policymakers on the progress of U.S. CT efforts.

QUESTION 8: What is the role of the NCTC, including through the Interagency Intelligence Committee on Terrorism (IICT), in coordinating and publishing the Intelligence Community's assessments on terrorism?

NCTC plays a critical role in coordinating and publishing the Intelligence Community's assessments on terrorism. Virtually all of NCTC's finished intelligence production is coordinated across the IC, and every product with the NCTC seal or name on it is coordinated with its partner agencies, thereby ensuring a community-wide approach to analysis. In addition to NCTC's own production, its analysts also participate in projects undertaken by the National Intelligence Council, including all National Intelligence Estimates that focus on terrorism-related issues, as well as with the various National Intelligence Managers on their issues and products.

If confirmed as the Director of NCTC, I would serve as the Chairman of the Interagency Intelligence Committee on Terrorism (IICT). The IICT Executive Secretariat, which resides in the NCTC's Directorate of Intelligence, is the key mechanism for providing Community-coordinated threat warning products and assessments to the U.S. Government, as well as state, local, and tribal officials. The IICT staff manages the Intelligence Community Terrorist Threat Warning System and coordinates all products with the warning agencies, including the National

Security Agency, Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Defense Intelligence Agency and the Department of Homeland Security.

Watchlisting

QUESTION 9: How do you assess the improvements to the Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment (TIDE) following the failed terrorist attack of December 25, 2009?

It is my understanding that there have been a number of important improvements to the TIDE database that have improved NCTC's receipt, processing, and quality of information sharing in support of watchlisting and screening. Given TIDE's importance in our country's layered CT defenses, if confirmed I intend to give watchlisting processes a thorough review. I look forward to working with Congress in order to ensure TIDE continues to proactively improve the U.S. Government's watchlisting and screening capabilities.

QUESTION 10: According to public testimony, NCTC has developed a comprehensive training program for the counterterrorism community involved in watchlisting and screening "to ensure consistent application of watchlisting standards across the U.S. Government."

- **To what extent has this training and any related policy changes succeeded in establishing consistent standards across the government?**

Policy updates following the December 2009 failed attack are reflected in the July 2010 Watchlisting guidance. NCTC, in collaboration with the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center (TSC) and with feedback from nominator and screener agencies, developed a Watchlisting Overview Course. The course provides standardized training across the watchlisting community and helps ensure a collective understanding of the watchlisting business process and guidance, and consistent application of the standards laid out in the guidance across the government. If confirmed, I will be in a better position to assess to what extent these training and policy changes have succeeded in establishing consistent standards across the government.

- **What improvements, if any, remain to be made?**

I understand that improvements are ongoing and are critical to the training program. Updates and modifications to the Watchlisting Overview Course are based on participant feedback, current terrorism trends, and policy changes. If confirmed, I will assess if additional improvements are needed.

QUESTION 11: According to the Committee's report on the failed attack of December 25, 2009, while the NCTC processed watchlisting information it had received, its standard practice did not include conducting additional analysis or enhancing existing records with more derogatory information. To what extent has this problem been addressed?

It is my understanding that there have been a number of important improvements to the way that NCTC's Directorate of Terrorist Identities conducts analysis to enhance existing records. This includes persistent and periodic checks to obtain additional data on TIDE subjects. The TIDE enhancement mission continues to expand and evolve, enabling NCTC to construct more comprehensive terrorist identities based on a steady increase of accesses to diverse databases. Thorough and timely information sharing across the counterterrorism community continues to be a cornerstone requirement for NCTC's successful performance of this critical mission. If confirmed, I work closely with Congress and will assess to what extent this problem has been addressed.

Database integration

QUESTION 12: According to the former director's February 9, 2011 public testimony, NCTC has developed a new information technology infrastructure to integrate the databases of components of the counterterrorism community. Recent steps include the enhancement of a "Google-like" search across the databases, and the development of a "CT Data Layer" to "discover non-obvious terrorist relationships." According to the testimony, "[a]ll these efforts are being pursued vehemently, but they also require careful consideration of complex legal, policy, and technical issues as well as the implementation of appropriate privacy, civil liberty, and security protections."

- **What is the status of the development and implementation of these efforts?**

Although I currently do not have detailed knowledge of the CT Data Layer, it is my understanding that NCTC has begun to automate and mature processes to manage the wide variety of data that its CT partners provide to support this important initiative. Similarly, I believe NCTC has taken a number of steps to improve its ability to notify its CT partners when it discovers derogatory information through its ability to find non-obvious terrorist relationships. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress as NCTC continues to develop and implement the CT Data Layer.

- **How, and to what extent, have privacy, civil liberty and security issues been addressed in the development of this infrastructure? What is the role of the Director of the NCTC in addressing these issues, relative to the Director of National Intelligence, other components of the Intelligence Community, and the Department of Justice?**

Through my time at the Department of Justice and the NSA, I have come to know NCTC's deep commitment to the protection of privacy and civil liberties. In general, I understand that NCTC, as a member of the Intelligence Community, must, like NSA, implement protections for United States persons through procedures approved by the Attorney General, under Executive Order 12333. These protections are interpreted, applied, and overseen by NCTC and ODNI legal counsel, as well as by the NCTC and ODNI Civil Liberties and Privacy Officers and the ODNI Office of Inspector General.

An important set of protections are embodied in Attorney General Guidelines that are applicable to NCTC's activities in identifying terrorism information in U.S. Government datasets that also contain non-terrorism information. NCTC may only retain U.S. person information in such datasets if there is a reasonable belief that such information is terrorism information. It must also enter into and comply with appropriate protective arrangements with departments and agencies that are consistent with all applicable legal and privacy requirements pertaining to such data. I understand NCTC has included other safeguards for the CT Data Layer, based on sound security measures and community best practices such as training, access controls, and compliance monitoring. Finally, I understand that NCTC also complies with Privacy Act requirements, such as a publishing system of records notices, and data mining reporting requirements.

State and local governments

QUESTION 13: What is the role of the NCTC in producing and disseminating intelligence for state, local and tribal partners?

Although I have not yet been involved in NCTC's production process, it is my understanding that the Center collaborates closely with FBI and DHS to ensure terrorism intelligence is disseminated to state, local and tribal partners. For example, I understand that NCTC has coordinated with DHS to ensure that NCTC CURRENT—the CT Community's premier classified website for terrorism-related information—is available to state and local fusion centers. In addition, the ITACG, located at NCTC, collaborates with DHS and FBI to ensure there is a seamless bridge between traditional intelligence agencies and state, local and tribal partners.

- **How is that role different than that of the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security?**

The FBI and DHS have independent statutory missions to provide terrorism information directly to state, local and tribal governments. In compliance with its statutory charter, the IRTPA, and consistent with the statute that created the ITACG (the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007), NCTC supports FBI and DHS in carrying out their missions.

- **What is your understanding of the amount and nature of cooperation among NCTC, FBI, and DHS?**

I believe that NCTC works closely on a daily basis with FBI and DHS. NCTC leads three daily secure video conferences to discuss current threats. This regular cooperation continues with informal and formal analytic exchanges that support the development of intelligence products that are specifically tailored for state, local and tribal partners. It is also my understanding that NCTC has deployed seven representatives throughout the United States who work hand-in-hand with DHS and FBI field elements. I understand that DHS and FBI also have senior representatives assigned to NCTC who provide close coordination.

- **If confirmed, what priority would you give this issue?**

If confirmed, one of my top priorities will be to ensure that state, local and tribal governments continue to receive timely and accurate information about terrorism threats that will enhance their capabilities to recognize and effectively respond to suspected terrorism and radicalization activities, while simultaneously protecting our privacy and preserving our civil liberties.

Strategic Operational Planning

QUESTION 14: Please describe the activities of the NCTC in carrying out its strategic operational planning responsibilities pursuant to the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA).

The responsibilities of NCTC's Directorate of Strategic Operational Planning (DSOP) are outlined in the IRTPA, which provides that NCTC will "conduct strategic operational planning for counterterrorism activities, integrating all instruments of national power, including diplomatic, financial, military, intelligence, homeland security, and law enforcement activities within and among agencies." The IRTPA goes on to define strategic operational planning as including "the mission, objectives to be achieved, tasks to be performed, interagency coordination of operational activities, and the assignment of roles and responsibilities." In practice, it is my understanding that DSOP views strategic operational planning as a process that develops interagency CT plans to help translate high level strategies and policy direction into coordinated department and agency activities to advance the President's objectives in the National Strategy for Counterterrorism and the overall National Security Strategy objectives.

This process integrates all elements of national power by involving the appropriate department and agency representatives in the development, monitoring, and assessment processes, to include those not traditionally associated with the CT mission.

Although I have not had extensive exposure to DSOP in my current and past positions, it is my understanding that DSOP has evolved alongside the needs of the CT community and has enhanced its support to the National Security Council. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing to develop DSOP's strategic operational planning capabilities in support of the President and our nation's counterterrorism objectives.

- **To what extent does the Directorate of Strategic Operational Planning develop interagency plans for counterterrorism operations?**

I believe that DSOP's focus remains on conducting strategic operational planning, using its mandate to develop whole of government CT plans to engage in cross-agency collaboration as directed by the National Security Council to support policy implementation. These plans address a variety of CT objectives, to include regional issues, weapons of mass destruction-terrorism, and countering violent extremism. It is my understanding that the strategic operational planning process integrates all phases of the planning cycle—developing a plan, monitoring its implementation, and assessing its effectiveness and resource allocations—and creates communities of interest to coordinate and integrate implementation. Negotiation, facilitation and mediation are also components of this interagency planning process.

- **To what extent does the Directorate coordinate or integrate the strategic planning of components of the Intelligence Community, the Department of Defense, and other components of the U.S. Government?**

It is my understanding that DSOP has engaged and involved more than 20 departments and agencies as it developed strategic operational plans over the last six years. These organizations include Intelligence Community agencies, the Department of Defense, as well as many organizations that are not traditionally thought of as national security entities, such as the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services. Through its efforts, DSOP ensures there are representatives from all departments and agencies that provide the elements of national power that are necessary to achieve the objectives for a particular planning effort. If confirmed, I will continue this vital outreach so we are certain that NCTC's strategic operational plans are able to leverage all elements of national power against the terrorist adversary.

- **Please describe your assessment of the challenge presented by this responsibility and what should be done to improve NCTC's performance of it.**

DSOP benefits from the fact that it is viewed as an honest broker and can therefore help to coordinate issues among departments and agencies. If confirmed, I will ensure that DSOP continues to be seen by the interagency as an honest and willing partner that can effectively coordinate and integrate all elements of national power in support of our nation's CT objectives. To the extent that I identify any challenges in this effort, or ways to improve NCTC's strategic operational performance, if confirmed, I will work to expeditiously resolve these issues.

QUESTION 15: NCTC produces the National Implementation Plan for the War on Terror (NIP), first approved by the President in June 2006 and then again in September 2008.

- **To what extent does the NIP need to be updated in light of the new National Strategy for Counterterrorism announced on June 29, 2011?**

It is my understanding that with the new National Strategy for Counterterrorism, the past approach taken by the National Implementation Plan may no longer be the most effective way to address the President's counterterrorism objectives. Instead of the National Implementation Plan's single unified plan for the entire globe, the focus of the new strategy is on a series of overarching goals and areas of priority focus that provide objectives that are specific to various regions. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the National Security Council and our partners to play a key role in the implementation of the new strategy.

QUESTION 16: The NCTC also creates the Counterterrorism Intelligence Plan (CTIP) to translate the National Implementation Plan (NIP) and the National Intelligence Strategy into a common set of priority activities for the Intelligence Community, and to establish procedures for assessing how the IC is performing against those objectives. Should the NCTC establish a new CTIP in light of the new National Strategy for Counterterrorism announced on June 29, 2011?

It is my understanding that the CTIP will require adjustments to bring it in line with both the new National Strategy for Counterterrorism and the DNI's approach to Unifying Intelligence Strategies (UIS). The CTIP serves as a strategic framework that outlines our approach to managing and assessing the mission area. From a mission perspective, it seeks to build the requisite capabilities to support the needs of our customers, and its objectives are designed to cover the full range of the terrorist problem.

The CT Unifying Intelligence Strategy is an extension of the CTIP in that it will lay out our priorities, key gaps, mission and enterprise challenges, and the initiatives we will undertake in the coming year to address them.

QUESTION 17: What is the role of the Director of the NCTC in developing the National Intelligence Priorities Framework (NIPF) with regard to counterterrorism?

I understand that the Director of NCTC serves as the Chairman of the IICT. In that position, the NCTC Director has the responsibility for overseeing the work of the IICT Requirements Subcommittee, which administers the NIPF CT Priorities. The NIPF-CT feeds directly into the overall NIPF.

QUESTION 18: As the threat from regional al Qaeda affiliates increases, what is the role of the Director of the NCTC in developing regional counterterrorism strategies? How are those counterterrorism strategies related to broader U.S. policies, particularly in Yemen, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel?

As part of its statutory responsibilities under the IRTPA, NCTC conducts “strategic operational planning for counterterrorism activities, integrating all instruments of national power, including diplomatic, financial, military, intelligence, homeland security, and law enforcement activities within and among agencies.” Similarly, NCTC is given the statutory responsibility to “assign roles and responsibilities as part of its strategic operational planning duties.” It is my understanding that, consistent with these responsibilities, NCTC conducts regional counterterrorism planning and coordination in support of the President and the National Security Council. With the new National Strategy for Counterterrorism, NCTC will continue to play a key role in this process.

The National Strategy for Counterterrorism outlines a number of areas of focus, including the Arabian Peninsula, East Africa, and the Maghreb and Sahel. As part of its strategic operational planning responsibilities, I expect NCTC to continue to play a key role in the development of strategies that will help to counter the terrorist threats in each of these areas. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing NCTC’s vital strategic operational planning responsibilities in support of our nation’s CT objectives.

QUESTION 19: What is your view of the proper role of Congress in overseeing the activities of the Directorate of Strategic Operational Planning?

Congress has an important oversight role for all of the NCTC's activities, including those activities undertaken by the DSOP. Pursuant to the IRTPA, the Director of NCTC is given the statutory responsibility to "provide strategic operational plans for the civilian and military counterterrorism efforts of the U.S. Government and for the effective integration of counterterrorism intelligence and operations across agency boundaries, both inside and outside the United States." In this strategic operational planning role, the Director of NCTC reports to the President and DSOP supports the Director by responding to direction from the Executive Office of the President for planning support on CT initiatives. If confirmed as Director of NCTC, I will work closely with Congress and continue to provide to Congress the information it needs to perform its oversight duties.

National Intelligence Manager

QUESTION 20: As the Counterterrorism Mission Manager for the Intelligence Community, the Director of the NCTC identifies intelligence gaps and resource constraints and sets collection and analytic priorities.

- **What is your vision of the Director of the NCTC in the role of mission manager? Should the Director provide broad, strategic guidance, for example by prioritizing emerging regional terrorist threats? Should the Director provide guidance on the allocation of resources with regard to particular CT capabilities and platforms?**

Through my association with the Department of Justice, FBI, and NSA, I have experience in the work of intelligence and law enforcement officials who are directly engaged in the daily tasks of identifying, disrupting and defeating terrorist threats. I view the job of the mission manager, now called a National Intelligence Manager (NIM), to be one of collaboration with community partners to identify gaps and areas where the NIM can facilitate integration and thereby contribute to the counterterrorism community's overall effort. Our priorities and overall strategy are set by the National Strategy for Counterterrorism, the National Intelligence Strategy, and the NIPF. If confirmed, I would serve the DNI as his NIM for CT. In that capacity, I would participate in the development and assessment of these strategic plans and would lead the process that provides quarterly updates to the terrorist topic area under the NIPF. As the NIM, in collaboration with the CT community, I would issue a Unifying Intelligence Strategy that, in effect, sets my understanding of the key CT issues and the initiatives I believe are needed to address them. As the NIM for CT, I would also participate in the development of recommendations to the DNI that serve as the basis for his resource guidance to the community.

- **What is the role of the Director of the NCTC in providing guidance with regard to the allocation of resources among, and within elements of the Intelligence Community?**

Under the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, one of the responsibilities of the Director of the NCTC is to advise the DNI on government programs and budgets that support national counterterrorism priorities. I believe it is the Director of the NCTC's job to understand how government resources are allocated against key CT objectives and, through collaboration with the program managers, to understand where there are shortfalls or potential redundancies. If confirmed, I will serve as an advocate for the CT mission in the IC budget build processes and I will provide my recommendations to the DNI.

- **Given resource constraints, how should the Director of the NCTC identify unnecessary or less critical programs and seek to reallocate funding?**

I believe one of the responsibilities of the Director of the NCTC is to provide the DNI with an assessment of the state of our nation's CT efforts, including how our resources are aligned to meet the needs of the CT mission. I recognize that the challenging resource environment we face requires us to ensure that the nation is protected within our resources. If confirmed, this will be one of my priority tasks.

- **What are the most important counterterrorism gaps or shortfalls across the Intelligence Community?**

From my experience with CT issues, I believe we must address:

- A dynamic and adaptive threat that challenges our collectors and analysts.
- The need to sort and connect critical bits of information across disparate data sets and to avoid the potential for information overload.
- Rapid change and proliferation in communications technologies used by terrorists.
- The need to protect the privacy and civil liberties of all Americans and protect intelligence sources and methods, while also ensuring intelligence information is shared responsibly.

If confirmed, I will collaborate with the CT Community to address these issues and advocate for community-wide solutions, as appropriate.

Strategic intelligence

QUESTION 21: In the role of mission manager, the Director of the NCTC is responsible for understanding the full range of customer requirements with regard to counterterrorism. Customers of intelligence are often focused on current threats.

- **What is the role of the Director of the NCTC in balancing the “tyranny of the immediate” with the need to direct resources toward global coverage and strategic warning, as it applies to counterterrorism?**

I believe that the Director of the NCTC, in close partnership with the heads of the CT analytic organizations, plays a critical role in balancing the need to focus on immediate threat issues with the need to maintain a focus on terrorism worldwide, especially with respect to strategic warning. Achieving the proper balance between understanding the immediate threat and forecasting the future unknown terrorist threat is vitally important to protecting against terrorist attacks. This is especially true due to the diversified nature of the threats facing the United States and our partners.

If confirmed, I will work collaboratively with the CT community, through organizations such as the IICT, to ensure we strike the most effective balance between important tactical and strategic priorities. One way of doing so is to use the IICT as a vehicle through which the community can develop appropriate CT priority rankings in the NIPF. If confirmed, I look forward to playing an active role with our partners as we continue to identify and implement the best mechanisms to ensure we adequately address both tactical and strategic CT issues.

- **What priority do you place on the IC’s understanding of the strategic context for the terrorist threat? What level and what type of resources should be allocated for collection and analysis on the conditions that create terrorist safe havens and the counterterrorism capabilities of partner nations?**

It is critically important to understand the strategic context of the terrorist threat. The new National Strategy for Counterterrorism outlines a number of these important strategic considerations that inform both our understanding of the terrorist threat and our approach to countering this threat. One strategic consideration, which the National Strategy for Counterterrorism highlights, is the fact that al-Qa’ida and its affiliates and adherents rely on the physical sanctuary of ungoverned or poorly governed territories. The absence of state control in these areas permits terrorists to travel, train, and engage in attack plotting. I believe that recent terrorist incidents, including the November 2008 attacks in Mumbai, India and the attempted airliner bombing on December 25, 2009, demonstrate the dangers emanating from terrorist safe

havens.

As a result, I believe that it is important to have both comprehensive information concerning, and accurate assessments of, terrorist safe havens. If confirmed, I would use my position as the National Intelligence Manager for Counterterrorism to prioritize analysis and collection against terrorist safe havens. I would also seek to identify the most appropriate way to align the community's resources so that NCTC and its partners continue to understand the strategic context for the terrorist threat and in so doing help to enable our customers' missions.

The establishment of NCTC and the deployment of counterterrorism analysts

QUESTION 22: In the early years of NCTC, there were issues related to the co-location of NCTC, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) counterterrorism analysts and to the proper mix within NCTC of permanent cadre NCTC personnel and detailee personnel from other agencies.

- **Do you believe the issue of co-location of counterterrorism personnel has been appropriately resolved? If not, what changes would you advocate?**

In the early days of NCTC's predecessor organization, the Terrorist Threat Integration Center, the Intelligence Community struggled to identify qualified analysts and planners who were familiar with the counterterrorism mission. In recent years, as I can attest from my time at the NSA, the Intelligence Community—including NCTC—has benefitted from qualified analysts and planners dedicated to the counterterrorism mission. I believe that NCTC has benefitted from the co-location of many of these analysts and planners and, if confirmed, I look forward to further strengthening NCTC's partnerships across the U.S. Government.

- **Do you believe there is now at NCTC the appropriate mix of permanent NCTC analysts and rotational personnel from other IC agencies?**

I believe that NCTC has the appropriate workforce mix at this time. I understand that Congress has supported recent enhancements to the CT workforce at the NCTC and throughout the Intelligence Community. The Center has detailees and assignees from various other departments and agencies, including CIA, FBI, DHS, and NSA. It also has military officers in the joint military duty program. Moreover, the ITACG includes members from the state and local law enforcement community. I can assure you that, if confirmed, I will monitor the NCTC workforce mix to ensure there is the right blend of skills and perspectives.

Intelligence Community as a whole, must always act in a way that complies with the constitutional and other legal requirements that protect the freedoms and liberties of the American people.

Based on my prior experience, I recognize the value of close involvement by the Offices of General Counsel, Inspectors General, and Civil Liberties Protection Offices in the operations of government, and I intend, if confirmed, to rely heavily on the ODNI General Counsel, the Inspector General, and the Civil Liberties Protection Officer to ensure that the NCTC fulfills its mission in a manner that complies with the Constitution and all applicable laws.

- **What do you understand to be the obligation of the DNI, and the Director of the NCTC in support of the DNI, to keep the congressional intelligence committees fully and currently informed about matters relating to compliance with the Constitution and laws?**

It is my belief, formed by years of experience in government, that congressional oversight is an essential part of our constitutional system of checks and balances. Because most of the activities of the Intelligence Community must remain outside of the public eye, the oversight relationship takes on even greater consequence. It is, therefore, the responsibility of all components of the Intelligence Community, including the ODNI and the NCTC, to be responsive to the congressional oversight process.

Communication, on a regular and continuing basis, is critical for Congress to effectively perform its oversight function. Regular and continuing exchanges of information, in my view, are the best way to work with the Congress to address the threats of today, to be most effective in preventing another terrorist attack and to do so consistent with American laws and values. If confirmed as the Director of NCTC, I will continue to abide by the responsibility to keep Congress fully and currently informed, as I have in my present position.