

Statement for the Record

Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

&

House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

Joint Hearing to Mark the 10th Anniversary of 9/11



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Director of National Intelligence

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Chairman Feinstein, Chairman Rogers, Vice Chairman Chambliss, Ranking Member Ruppertsberger and Members of both committees, thank you for convening this Hearing today and for the essential oversight you provide to the Intelligence Community on behalf of all Americans.

The committees meet today in this extraordinary session on a subject of profound importance. This Nation, the Intelligence Community, CIA, and indeed I, are all singularly fortunate that a man of Dave Petraeus' capability, stature, leadership, and patriotism is not only willing, but wants to continue to serve. I am pleased and proud to appear with him today in this crucial Hearing, and honored to be his teammate.

This past week has seen many reflections on those terrible events ten years ago, reflections that have centered on the impact of the attacks and on the state of the terrorist threat today. But no reflections have been more important than those that have centered on the loss of those who perished, and on the sacrifices that have been made by the families and loved ones they left behind.

We all remember where we were on that bright morning that turned so dark. And we have worked with resolve since that day to honor those losses and those sacrifices, and to fight against the scourge that caused—and still seeks to cause—such horrible destruction.

We have seen further sacrifices by those who carry out that fight—in the field and at home, in uniform and in the civilian services. We have lost intelligence officers—courageous men and women—and placed burdens on our families, bringing great sorrow and grief to some. We have done this with the certainty that there is no other course—that the safety and the security of Americans depends in great measure on the work that we do.

In the last ten years the Intelligence Community has made significant contributions to the effort to combat terrorism and violent extremism. The attacks of 9/11 were the work of al-Qa'ida. That organization is not what it was a decade ago. The relentless pressure we have placed on al-Qa'ida has forced it to change, weakened its central character and capabilities, and caused it to seek other modes of operation.

We have vigorously attacked its leadership, striving to keep it off balance and to cut down those who would direct its activities. We have worked to deny al-Qa'ida any sense of security, to complicate and disrupt its flow of resources, and to undermine its ability to plan and train with well-considered and central direction.

Most notably of course, we have sent Usama bin Ladin to the fate he so clearly deserved.

These accomplishments are substantial and real, and they stand as testimony to the dedication and the skill of many intelligence officers and operating elements, and to the extraordinary capabilities they bring to bear in this struggle. The Nation is in many respects safer because of their work—and because of the many actions that have been taken as well by the broad range of federal, state, local, and tribal elements concerned with our security. We have seen ten years of dedicated and relentless effort by all in this fight, and the men and women of the Intelligence Community have worked hard to stand alongside our partners and help to ensure their success.

We have reason, then, to take pride, but it would be an error to conclude that we have reason to gloat, reason to soften our focus, or reason to reduce our concerns or relax our efforts. The hard fact is that we remain threatened—that terrorists still wish to do us harm, to destroy our institutions, to kill Americans without conscience or concern, and they have the capability to do so.

The nature of the terrorist threat has evolved. Core al-Qa'ida is indeed weaker and less able to recruit, train, and deploy operatives. But it remains the ideological leader of the global extremist movement and it continues to influence terrorists and would-be terrorists through public statements. Its leadership continues to seek openings to push their destructive narrative, and it retains an ability to plot attacks. The group's intent to strike us at home remains strong.

Beyond the threat posed by core al-Qa'ida, we have seen the rising importance of its regional affiliates, groups that support al-Qa'ida's strategy of creating a self-sustaining global extremist movement. These affiliates have increased the scope of their operations, seeking to strike U.S. and Western targets both inside and outside their respective regions.

Perhaps the best known and currently most dangerous of the affiliates is Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), based in Yemen. AQAP's two attempted attacks against the U.S. homeland—the unsuccessful airliner attack in December 2009, and its follow-on effort to down two U.S.-bound cargo planes in October 2010—were sobering indications of a determined enemy capable of adjusting tactics to achieve its goals. We have substantial concerns about this group's capability to conduct additional attacks targeting the U.S. homeland and U.S. interests overseas, as well as its continuing propaganda efforts designed to inspire like-minded Western extremists to conduct attacks in their home countries.

There are other important al-Qa'ida affiliates in the Maghreb and in additional regions. These groups, which have varying levels of capability, pose a threat to U.S. interests and remain committed to al-Qa'ida's illegitimate ideology.

We are also concerned about the potential threat posed by homegrown violent extremists who are inspired by al-Qa'ida's global agenda. Increasingly sophisticated English-language propaganda that provides extremists with guidance to carry out attacks on the U.S. homeland remains easily available via the Internet. The Internet has been used, for example, to provide instructions on the use of weapons and the construction of explosives, along with targeting ideas. English-language web forums also foster a sense of community and further indoctrinate new recruits, predicates that can lead to increased levels of violent activity.

Homegrown extremists may be motivated to carry out violence on the basis of a variety of personal rationales. Such individuals, who may independently plan attacks with no guidance from associates in the U.S. or overseas, are difficult to detect and disrupt, and could carry out attacks with little or no warning.

Homegrown violent extremists are examples of the difficulty and the complexity of defending against terrorist attacks generally, and of the asymmetric measure of success. Whether initiated by an individual acting alone, or by an international group, a single terrorist success may offset many failures, while our defense against terrorists must seek to prevent or disrupt all attacks.

We confront other sources of terrorism besides al-Qa'ida and its partners, including state-sponsored organizations. I have not touched on those groups in this statement, but I would note that they certainly remain a focus of our interest.

In seeking to counter terrorism, the success of the Intelligence Community has been—and will continue to be—rooted in three critical factors.

The most important factor is the dedication, the skill, and the sharply focused attention of the Community's workforce. No counterterrorism strategy or structure can prevail without the professional achievement of these men and women and their devotion to the intelligence mission, grounded in their oaths to support and defend the Constitution. In the past ten years, we have developed an exceptional workforce that is equipped with singular capabilities. As we look to the years ahead, it will be imperative to preserve and enhance the expertise, the remarkable talents, and the high levels of competence and integrity that are routinely found in the Intelligence Community.

The other two critical factors that determine the success of the Community in countering terrorism are the integration of intelligence activities and the expansion of responsible information sharing, which is enabled by our focus on integration.

The Community has made substantial progress integrating its efforts since 9/11. The mission itself and the lessons learned from 9/11, as well as subsequent events such as the attempted AQAP attacks, underscore the importance of continuing to drive toward greater integration. We have learned a great deal and have taken numerous steps to significantly improve our counterterrorism posture, including the sharing of considerably more counterterrorism information:

- We have instituted policies and mechanisms that permit wider, responsible sharing of the most important information. At the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), we have created a central and shared repository for all known and suspected terrorists that catalogues interagency information and serves as the basis for sharing relevant information for the screening of airline passengers, visa applicants, immigrants, and other uses. We are pushing for even greater information integration at NCTC through the establishment of a Counterterrorism Data Layer that ingests terrorism intelligence to better position the Community to identify threats.
- Like the rest of the Community, the Central Intelligence Agency has placed principal emphasis on the prevention of another attack on the homeland and the defeat of terrorists abroad. CIA has a highly integrated partnership of analysts and operators who team routinely with U.S. military forces, other agencies, and foreign partners to pursue and preempt terrorists abroad.
- The Federal Bureau of Investigation has transformed from its virtually exclusive concern with law enforcement to become an intelligence-driven organization that effectively cooperates with Intelligence Community partners and state and local officials to identify and prevent terrorist threats to the homeland. This transformation has notably included the expansion of the FBI-led interagency Joint Terrorism Task Forces, which are now based in 106 cities nationwide. The magnitude of the FBI's transformation is profound.
- The National Security Agency has continued to devote significant resources against high priority threats. As terrorists' operational security practices become increasingly sophisticated, NSA is adapting to address terrorists' use of the latest technologies, while taking great care to protect the civil liberties and privacy of Americans.
- The Department of Homeland Security has established an intelligence component and strengthened its ties to state, local and tribal (SLT) authorities to ensure that they can effectively identify vulnerabilities and respond to threats. In partnership with NCTC and FBI, DHS leads an Interagency Threat Assessment and Coordination Group. This Group is staffed by former and current SLT officials who review intelligence reporting and identify opportunities to further disseminate information to our SLT partners and private sector officials. DHS has also played a leading role in interaction with the National Fusion Center Network covering 50 states and 22 major urban areas.
- The Defense Intelligence Agency has established the Joint Task Force-Combating Terrorism to better support the force protection requirements of the Department of Defense and Combatant Commands, and to provide all-source, national-level terrorism intelligence analysis, warning, and enterprise integration to enable the Department's counterterrorism operations, planning, and policy.
- The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency has worked to embed and integrate geospatial intelligence analysts and capabilities with its counterterrorism mission

partners in the field and in the national community. This has allowed more direct and responsive support to the counterterrorism mission.

- The Department of Defense has partnered with select IC agencies to embed their representative at the Joint Intelligence Operations Centers to improve the support national intelligence agencies provide to combatant commanders.

All other IC components are contributing to this comprehensive mission as well, according to their unique capabilities. The Treasury Department's intelligence professionals, for example, work closely with Community partners to identify terrorist financing sources and often disrupt them through official designations.

I want to particularly note the role of NCTC, which serves as the principal analytic center for the integration of all counterterrorism intelligence, except intelligence that pertains exclusively to domestic terrorists and domestic counterterrorism. In addition, NCTC fulfills an Intelligence Community leadership role with its Director serving on my behalf as the National Intelligence Manager for Counterterrorism. In this role, NCTC identifies opportunities to advance community integration and brings Intelligence Community elements together daily to exchange information and integrate actions as needed.

We have also taken steps to ensure that we promote counterterrorism integration from the most senior levels. I chair regular sessions with the Secretary of Homeland Security and the senior leaders of the FBI, CIA, NSA, DIA, and NCTC to review critical information sharing and integration needs and drive faster responses to them.

There is no better example of the importance—and the power—of intelligence integration than the operation against Usama bin Ladin. As President Obama stated at the time, the success of that mission “marks the most significant achievement to date in our Nation's effort to defeat al-Qa’ida.” The success of the operation was the direct result of the determined collection and exhaustive analysis of all available information by Intelligence Community partners across a number of agencies.

That kind of integration has increasingly become routine. As important as the bin Ladin operation was, the high level of integration it illustrated can be seen in intelligence activities every day, and is most clearly evident in the field. In Afghanistan and in many other corners of the globe, intelligence officers from different agencies routinely support each other as second nature in common efforts to achieve their missions and support those they serve.

Broadening and deepening the integration of intelligence activities is particularly important to enable and promote the expansion of responsible information sharing, which remains a critical element in our effort to improve intelligence performance.

The Intelligence Community today is producing and sharing more and better streams of intelligence. We are connecting people to people, people to data, and data to data through enhanced collaboration, automation and connectivity. By overcoming policy, technical, and cultural obstacles to sharing, the Intelligence Community is working to ensure that information

can be discovered, accessed, evaluated, and integrated faster and more comprehensively than ever before, while remaining consistent with the protection of civil liberties and privacy.

It is clear that the progress we have made on information sharing over the last several years has been extensive, profound, and responsive to the 9/11 Commission recommendations, the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, and Presidential Executive Orders. There are many examples of this improvement, ranging from the better sharing on counterterrorism matters I have noted to the creation of secure communities of interest that facilitate sharing of highly compartmented intelligence data among analysts working on a particular subject. We have also put in place mechanisms to promote easier and greater collaboration among the Community's analysts, aiming to produce more richly informed intelligence judgments and to enhance our ability to provide intelligence warning.

Moreover, we have developed new and updated information sharing agreements with international partners that have enhanced our ability to track and disrupt terrorist threats and transnational criminal activities, and to bolster protection of our borders.

It is also clear, though, that more must be done. As we work towards greater sharing, we are especially mindful of the need to ensure that sharing takes place in a manner that protects against the unauthorized disclosure of information. That need was underscored by the WikiLeaks disclosures, but the importance of our mission demands that we find the best possible solutions to the inherent tension that exists between the need to share information and the need to protect its sources from disclosure. As we seek those solutions, the volume and complexity of the information that we manage and the missions and partners that we support require a broad strategy, with goals and objectives synchronized across the Intelligence Community and the Federal Government.

We are committed to that effort and to such a strategy. An essential element of our approach is improving our capabilities to safeguard our networks and classified information. Stronger access controls will greatly increase our ability to share intelligence responsibly, and will allow us to increase the amount of intelligence that can be discovered by analysts to further improve intelligence performance.

The principal responsibility of the Director of National Intelligence since establishment of that office has been to spur such improvements and to oversee the development of the most effective Intelligence Community possible. In carrying out that responsibility, my predecessors and I have focused our efforts on three principal concerns underlying intelligence reform.

First, we have worked to improve management and cohesion of the Intelligence Community. To that end, we have:

- Provided direction in the National Intelligence Strategy, with new emphasis on supporting homeland security missions, including the sharing of intelligence with law enforcement and homeland security officials at the state and local levels;

- Developed and implemented a planning, programming, budgeting and evaluation system to shape the National Intelligence Program to ensure focus on our critical missions while balancing costs and benefits;
- Led the updating and implementation of Executive Order 12333 to strengthen the ability of the DNI to lead the Intelligence Community as a unified enterprise, and to close seams between the sharing of intelligence collected domestically and intelligence collected overseas; and
- Led security clearance reform efforts, in partnership with the Department of Defense, which have updated investigative standards and reduced timelines for investigations, enabling quicker placement of individuals into key positions and supporting our efforts to keep taking the attack to al-Qa'ida.

Second, we have worked to facilitate and improve the secure sharing of intelligence and information across the Community and with a broader range of recipients. I have already noted improvements, but as a general summary we have:

- Led IC efforts to develop and implement policies that have improved the discovery and availability of intelligence;
- Established strategies for improved information sharing across the Intelligence Community and with federal, state, and local partners; and
- Led efforts to ensure the broadest possible access to, and integration of, information relating to counterterrorism, with appropriate regard for civil liberties and privacy.

Third, we have worked to improve the integration and effectiveness of intelligence. We have:

- Led efforts, in cooperation with these Committees and the Congress, to modernize the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) to enable collection against emerging information technologies while protecting the privacy of U.S. citizens and legal residents;
- Integrated the Drug Enforcement Agency into the Intelligence Community, enhancing the integration of intelligence and counternarcotics efforts;
- Established National Intelligence Managers to more comprehensively focus the Community's efforts against the hardest intelligence problems;
- Worked to expand intelligence production for the most senior policymakers to include broader homeland security information and analysis from DHS and the FBI; and

- Developed the Comprehensive National Cyber Initiative to enhance the Intelligence Community's capability to understand, detect, and counter threats to the Nation's information infrastructure, and to contribute to the neutralization of foreign cyber threats while incorporating privacy safeguards.

These and related efforts that we have undertaken have been aimed at increasing the ability of the Intelligence Community to take collective action in a coordinated way, working towards a more integrated enterprise than the Community that existed ten years ago. Today more than ever we are closing the seams between organizations and people, and working as one team to protect the Nation.

The progress that the Intelligence Community has achieved has been made possible by the support of the Congress, and especially by the work and the interest of the intelligence oversight committees. Over the past ten years the Congress, through legislation and oversight, has worked to ensure that the Intelligence Community's elements function effectively and efficiently and have the tools that we need.

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act, for example, in addition to establishing the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to lead the Community, provided a foundation to improve information sharing and the integration of intelligence activities. The Congress has also taken action to strengthen critical intelligence capabilities in the fight against terrorism, most notably in the USA PATRIOT Act and in amendments to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

It is essential that the Community continue its close engagement in this oversight and support relationship as we jointly look to further improve the performance of intelligence. This relationship is critical not only on matters of resources and capabilities, but also on matters of legislation that will be required to keep pace with changes in technology and other developments that affect the dynamics of intelligence.

Certainly in an era when the resources allocated to the Nation's security capabilities will be reduced, it will be critical to ensure that Congress has the best possible information on the demands placed on intelligence and the resources needed to meet those demands. We have a responsibility to provide the context and insight that will be necessary to support the decisions that Congress will make on the scope and the capacity of the Intelligence Community's capabilities.

In providing that context, we have to be clear on the extent of the work that we in the Intelligence Community must do. Our highest priority is to provide the best possible intelligence to protect the people of the United States. As this hearing today demonstrates, the threat from terrorism must be—and is—a principal concern for our resources and our energy.

The Intelligence Community is also called on, though, to provide critical support to protect the Nation—and the Nation's interests—in many other contexts. For example, we live in a world in which the dangers posed by nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons proliferation are clearly evident. We certainly have concerns about the prospect of such weapons, or other weapons of mass destruction, finding their way into the hands of terrorists. But we also have

concerns with broader proliferation issues and implications as nations continue to seek these capabilities.

The Intelligence Community must also provide support to help meet the increasingly complex demands placed on U.S. foreign policy, including support for efforts to capitalize on opportunities that lie in the dynamics of the shifting international environment. As we have all seen, U.S. interests are international and the consequences of events abroad are often felt here at home.

I cite these points as examples, not to distract from the focus of today's hearing, but rather to be clear, without being exhaustive, about the breadth and the importance of the work that the Intelligence Community is charged and relied upon to do.

The Intelligence Community's men and women are carrying out that work with distinction and the Community's leaders, along with the Congress, have a responsibility to ensure that they can continue to do so in the future. To build on the progress that has been made since the attacks of 9/11, further improvements must be pursued in two main spheres of effort.

The first sphere is continued improvement in the management of the Intelligence Community, and especially the management of the National Intelligence Program (NIP) that provides the resources for the Community's capabilities. For sound reasons, the Community is constituted as a group of independent and departmental elements. This is an organizational structure that reflects the disparate demands and missions of intelligence support, yet recognizes the common purpose and the shared strengths of intelligence capabilities. Structural control and management responsibility for the resources of this enterprise, though, are similarly dispersed across departments. This disposition poses problems for the most efficient and effective management of intelligence capabilities, particularly as we move to an era of austerity in resources.

There are steps that can be taken to improve this management arrangement and enable the NIP to be managed as a coherent "whole." These steps would promote agility, accountability, efficiency, and most important, operational effectiveness. Achieving this will require considerable groundwork and will require Congressional support.

The second sphere where we will continue to seek improvement is the broad range of activities that fall into the areas of intelligence integration and information sharing.

We have begun the important work of providing the necessary safeguards, through auditing and other measures, to protect intelligence in such a way that it can be shared more readily and responsibly. We will continue that work and we have a strategy in place that will maximize and integrate our sharing and protection capabilities, and strengthen the governance framework that is needed to promote further improvements.

We are similarly focused on greater integration of intelligence activities and are working to make further advances in several areas. Our highest priorities are integration measures that will:

- Better enable analysts to support operations and policymakers;
- Further integrate national intelligence assets with our military partners;
- Increase appropriate sharing with foreign partners to defeat al-Qa'ida abroad and enhance our perspectives on other issues; and
- Support closer working relationships with federal, state, local, and tribal partners.

Working to achieve these improvements will make us more efficient and make responsible information sharing a fact of life in the Intelligence Community.

Before closing, I want to emphasize an important point, which is that we in the Intelligence Community recognize that in all of our work we must exemplify America's values. We must carry out the Intelligence Community's missions in a manner that draws strength from the richness and diversity of American communities, that retains the trust of the American people, and that remains true to the oaths we have taken to support and defend the Constitution. Those oaths, along with the nature of intelligence work and the trust placed in us by the American people, demand that we have the highest respect for the rule of law and the protection of civil liberties and privacy. While we move forward aggressively to protect the Nation, we are committed to upholding that trust and exemplifying those values.

In summary, then, I can say that the work of the Intelligence Community over the past ten years has contributed greatly to the safety of Americans. Our efforts have taken place alongside those of many others, from first responders through the whole range of local, state, and federal elements concerned with the defense of the homeland. They have also taken place in concert with the courageous and dedicated efforts of the military and diplomatic services, whose members have carried out much of the counterterrorism effort overseas.

We have put in place remarkable capabilities and achieved significant successes. The nature of terrorism, though, and the nature of the ruthless extreme groups and individuals who subscribe to terrorist ideology, make it impossible to guarantee that every planned attack will be thwarted and every plot disrupted.

Nonetheless, we know that the character and the resilience of the United States and its people will prevail despite the efforts of those who wish to instill fear in our daily routines and alter our way of life. This Nation has risen to every challenge in its history and will continue to do so. All of us in the Intelligence Community are dedicated to taking every possible action to protect Americans and to defeat the scourge of terrorism. I can promise you and the American people that we will not relent in that effort.

Thank you for your attention and for the opportunity to appear today. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you and the other Members of the committees may have.