

Statement for the Record
before the
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

The Honorable Mike Pompeo

January 12, 2017

Senator Dole, thank you for your kind words. But more importantly, thank you for the great service you have performed for Kansas and for America both in your life as an elected official, as a soldier in WWII and as a patriot who worked so hard to build the memorial to honor those who fought in that war. Every Kansan—and I think it's safe to say, all of your former colleagues here in the Senate—know that they have benefitted from your wit, your patriotism and your kindness. I know that I have.

Senator Roberts, thank you too for your kind introduction. I am especially grateful for your guidance over the years, not simply because you are the Dean of our Kansas Congressional delegation, but due to your insights as the former Chairman of this committee. As Chairman, you provided critical leadership during a pivotal and challenging period of American history – during the early years of the Global War on Terrorism and the Iraq War – and I hope I can continue to count on your advice and counsel.

Chairman Burr, Vice-Chairman Warner, Senators – I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as the nominee for the next Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Should I be fortunate enough to be confirmed by the Senate, I hope to visit you more often from Langley than I have from across the Capitol. I mean this not as a criticism of relations between the two Houses of Congress, but a recognition of how much value I would place on relations between the CIA and its Congressional overseers.

I want to thank the members and staff of this Committee for their attention to my nomination over the last few weeks. Since I first joined the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) in the 112th Congress, I have felt a special appreciation for the hard work that goes into Congressional oversight. The tremendous honor we have in overseeing the intelligence community is only tempered by the sobering burden of grappling in secret with the many national security challenges facing our country.

I would like to thank President-elect Trump for nominating me to serve in this role and for the faith he has shown in me. It is an honor to be selected as the next steward of the premier intelligence agency that is the CIA. I look forward to working with Senator Dan Coats, nominee for the Director of National Intelligence, and supporting him in his critical role, if we are both confirmed.

I want to thank my patient and patriotic wife Susan, and my son Nicholas, each whom I love dearly. They are both supporting me here this morning. The two of you have been so selfless in allowing me to return to public service— first as a member of Congress and, now, if confirmed, back working with warriors who keep America safe. I cannot tell you how much it means to have you sitting with me today.

I am also grateful to the people of the 4th Congressional District of Kansas, who have entrusted me to represent them in the House of Representatives since 2011. I am proud to have earned and kept their trust, and have cherished every minute of service to my constituents.

That said, having been a Member of the House Intelligence Committee and an overseer of our nation's intelligence enterprise, I understand full well that my job, if confirmed, will be to change roles from policymaker to information provider. My job will be to stay clearly on the side of intelligence collection and objective analysis of our national security challenges—presenting factual intelligence and sound judgments to policymakers, including this Committee. I have spent the majority of my life outside the realm of politics – as a cavalry officer in the United States Army, then as a litigator, and then running two manufacturing businesses. Returning to duty requiring hard work and unerring candor is something that is in my bones.

Today, I would like to first briefly sketch some of the specific challenges facing the U.S.; second, address trends in intelligence I have seen from my post on HPSCI; and finally, describe what I see as the CIA's role in addressing these challenges.

Threat Environment

First, as many have noted, this is the most complicated threat environment the U.S. has faced in recent memory. The litany is now familiar:

- As Director Clapper acknowledged at the beginning of 2016: “there are now more Sunni violent extremist groups, members, and safe havens than at any time in history.”

- ISIS remains a resilient movement, has metastasized, and shockingly has controlled major urban centers in the Middle East for well over two years. Whereas a few years ago, we focused on stemming the flow of foreign fighters going to Syria and Iraq, today, the concern is making sure they, and those they inspire, are prevented from expanding their reach, returning home, or slaughtering more innocent people.
- Syria is a failed state and has become one of the worst humanitarian catastrophes of the 21st century. This conflict has led to the rise of extremism, sectarianism, instability in the region and Europe, and the worst refugee crisis the world has faced in recent memory.
- Iran – the leading state sponsor of terror – has become an emboldened, disruptive player in the Middle East, fueling tension with our Sunni allies.
- Russia has reasserted itself aggressively, invading and occupying Ukraine, threatening Europe, and doing nearly nothing to aid in the destruction of ISIS.
- As China flexes its muscles and expands its military and economic reach, its activities in the South and East China Seas and in cyberspace are pushing new boundaries and creating real tension.
- North Korea has dangerously accelerated its nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities, with little regard for international pressure.
- In an increasingly inter-connected world, the cyber domain presents new and growing challenges. Using evolving cyber tools, state and non-state actors continue to probe U.S. systems, exploit vulnerabilities, and challenge our interests.

Intelligence Trends

Intelligence is vital to every national security issue facing the United States. As some have said, it is the “lifeblood” of national security and is more in demand than ever.

- Intelligence enables better-informed decisions by reducing uncertainty; it is critical in seeking to avoid strategic or tactical surprise, and to giving our armed forces superior domain awareness.
- We rely on intelligence from around the globe to keep danger from our shores. High quality precision intelligence enables our military efforts.
- More and more, intelligence is critical to making effective other elements of national power including sanctions against weapons proliferators, cyber criminals, perpetrators of war crimes, and terrorist financiers.
- We share capabilities and intelligence to improve relationships in furtherance of our national security objectives. Foreign governments and liaison services are vital partners in preventing attacks and providing crucial intelligence. It is important that we thank our foreign partners for standing with us.

As we face a deteriorating global picture, the U.S. needs to redouble its efforts by ensuring we have more intelligence, not less. Indeed, senior Intelligence Community leaders worry that recent budget cuts will have a silent, corrosive effect—weakening the fabric of the intelligence community. If confirmed, as Director, I intend to be an advocate for a strong and vibrant intelligence community and for CIA’s centrality in that community.

There are at least five long term trends making the urgency of recognizing and supporting intelligence critically important.

- First, the Intelligence Community finds itself a potential victim of a longer term negative budgetary trend. Given the vital role of intelligence in national security, and given the increasing threats we face, this makes little sense.
- Second, technological advancement across the globe, even by non-hostile countries, is challenging the U.S. advantage, as commercial technologies spread into the hands of those who wish us harm. The world is gaining on the U.S.
- We have long seen this dynamic with the proliferation of chemical and biological weapons and ballistic missile technology, but increasingly in the cyber domain, countries thought to be unsophisticated, such as North Korea, have overcome what appear to be low technological barriers of entry to engage in offensive cyber operations. The U.S. must continue to invest wisely to maintain a decisive advantage.
- The effects of dislocation, lack of governance, and the rise of non-state actors threaten our national security and present critical challenges to the Intelligence Community. This is creating new targets for CIA's intelligence collection and analysis that compete for attention with the usual state suspects and bad actors.
- Finally, the insider threat problem has grown exponentially in the digital age. Counterintelligence is a perennial issue and we must be increasingly aware that those within our agencies have access to millions of files. By the same token, the use of digital assets by foreign actors creates intelligence opportunities.

CIA's Role

I want to talk in more detail about today's challenges. The greatest threats to our national security have always been the CIA's top priorities. And the CIA has always been at the forefront of America's comprehensive efforts to meet these threats. Since September 11, 2001, the CIA's activities have been extraordinary. As the tip of the spear in the war on terrorism, the CIA has put tremendous pressure on our enemies, reducing their freedom to plan, communicate and travel.

The CIA has always played integral roles in America's fight against radical Islamic terror. It sounded warning bells before 9/11 of al Qaeda's growing global reach. CIA officers were the first into Afghanistan to lay the groundwork for the military effort that struck a major blow to al Qaeda and drove the Taliban from power. From understanding and tearing apart al Qaeda in Iraq networks, to the hunt for bin Laden, the CIA has been at the forefront of the fight every step of the way.

My outline above of hard targets and challenges merely skims the surface of the potential threats facing the United States. If confirmed, it will be the CIA's mission to bring other pressing problems, risks, and challenges from regions and countries that don't always make the front page to the attention of senior policymakers. Indeed, if we are doing our job, we will help U.S. policymakers act early to prevent such problems from becoming front page news.

- It will also be the CIA's mission, and my own, to ensure the Agency remains the best in the world at its core mission: discovering the truth and searching out information. In this

complex threat environment, we must gather intelligence from the most elusive targets and in the most difficult environments. We will need to rely on liaison services and new relationships, which are critical to gathering information around the world. Even so, U.S. intelligence must continue to expand its global coverage to keep up with these threats. While intelligence sharing relationships with our friends and allies are important, they cannot replace our own unilateral recruiting and operations. To protect America, the CIA must continue to be the world's premier espionage service.

- One obvious emerging area for increased focus – both unilaterally and in conjunction with our partners – is the cyber domain. The internet – and the connectivity of our world, systems, and devices – is a borderless, global environment, easily and frequently exploited by sophisticated adversaries like China and Russia, as well as by less sophisticated adversaries like Iran and North Korea, non-state actors, terrorist groups, criminal organizations, and hackers. While NSA and Cyber Command play leading roles, cyber has become critical to virtually every intelligence operation and CIA must continue to operate at the forefront on this issue.
- As the President-elect has made clear, one of my top priorities, if confirmed, is to assist in defeating ISIS. Radical Islamic terrorism is both a symptom and a catalyst of the terrible conflicts raging in the Middle East that have created both a humanitarian and strategic catastrophe. The enduring capability of al Qaeda and its affiliates, the rise and resilience of ISIS and Islamic extremists in Libya and across the Middle East, and the brutality of al Shabaab and Boko Haram, should remind us of the need to maintain an aggressive counterterrorism posture. It is also critical to address what manifestations of this threat and ideology emerge – beyond ISIS and al Qaeda.

- We must also be rigorously fair and objective in assessing the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. As the deal permits domestic enrichment and other nuclear research and development, U.S. policymakers will need increased intelligence collection and insightful analysis. While as a Member of Congress I opposed the Iran deal, if confirmed, my role will change. It will be to drive the Agency to aggressively pursue collection operations and ensure analysts have the time, political space, and resources to make objective and methodologically sound judgments. If confirmed, I will present their judgments to policymakers.
- The same goes for Russia. It is a policy decision as to what to do with Russia, but I understand it will be essential that the Agency provide policymakers with accurate intelligence and clear-eyed analysis of Russian activities.
- The Agency must also serve as the nation's sentinel for new and emerging threats and trends, monitoring the convergence of rogue actors and capabilities, and sources of instability that can spread across the globe and undermine U.S. national security. This means that the Agency needs the means, capabilities, reach, and awareness to understand and convey where threats are emerging and how U.S. interests may be vulnerable. This requires constant innovation, analytic rigor, and operational flexibility – hallmarks of the CIA.

As a Member of the House Intelligence Committee, I fully appreciate the need for transparency with the Congressional oversight committees. If the Intelligence Community does not secure the support of the appropriate Congressional authorities for its activities, the legislative backlash from controversial intelligence failures and controversies can be severe and counterproductive.

We owe it to our constituents to get to the bottom of intelligence failures – as this Committee did with the pre-war Iraq intelligence. But we owe it to the brave Americans of the intelligence community not to shirk our responsibility when unauthorized disclosures to the media expose controversial intelligence activities, or when Edward Snowden, from the comfort of his Moscow safe house, misleads the American people about the NSA’s surveillance activities.

I cannot stress strongly enough how proud of the CIA’s workforce Americans would be if they could peek behind the curtains, as the Committee gets to do, to see them in action. The incredible talent, bravery, and ingenuity these patriots put on the line every day in defense of our country are constant inspirations to me.

On my first visit out to the CIA headquarters a few years ago, I was walking through an analytical targeting cell. I saw a woman who appeared as though she had not slept for weeks, poring over a data set on her screen. I stopped, introduced myself and asked her what she was working on. She said she thought she was just hours away from solving a riddle about the location of a particularly bad character that she had been pursuing for months. She was not about to abandon her post. She had her mission and its completion would make America safer. A true patriot. In the past years, I have come to know that there are countless men and women just like her working to crush our adversaries with world class intelligence operations.

As these quiet professionals grapple with an overwhelming series of challenges in this increasingly uncertain world, they deserve our support and our respect. When we ask them to do

difficult things, they should not have to wonder whether we will stand beside them if things go sideways. We should have their backs. Full stop.

When there are intelligence failures, operations that go off the rails, or controversial disclosures, if I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, I pledge to come to the Committee in a timely fashion – and be as forthcoming as possible. But I believe that leaders of the Intelligence Community and Congress owe it to the young men and women who risk their lives for us to do our utmost to keep mistakes from being politicized.

This past weekend, I visited Arlington National Cemetery. I've done this many times, but on this visit, I paid special attention to the markers that commemorate CIA officers who have perished ensuring our freedom and working to meet America's intelligence demands. From Afghanistan to Korea and from Lebanon to Africa, and in so many places most Americans will never know, Agency officers put their lives at risk. Too often, because of the nature of their work, we know little about these men and women and what they do. What we do know, is that they were prepared to give so much for each of us. We know the sacrifices of the families of each CIA officer as well. As I walked among these heroes, I was reminded of the sacred trust that will be granted to me if I am confirmed. I will never fail it.

I am honored to have been nominated to lead the finest intelligence agency the world has ever known—working to keep safe the people of the greatest nation in the history of civilization. If confirmed, I will be sworn to defend the United States Constitution for the third time in my life –

first as a soldier, then as a member of the House of Representatives, and, now, to work for the President and with each of you.

I look forward to your questions today.