



Statement of Chairman Devin Nunes
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

Before the Committee on House Administration
Committee Budget Request for the 115th Congress

February 15, 2017

Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify about the Intelligence Committee's budget request for the 115th Congress.

During the 113th and 114th Congresses, the Committee received less funding than it did in the 107th and 108th Congresses. Since then, an entire new superstructure of the Intelligence Community was created by the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act. In fact, according to a recent article in *The Hill*, HPSCI "does not have the necessary resources to do its job" because "the Intelligence Community's budget is 18,421 times larger, than the Committee's." The rise in global terrorism, increasing threats from ISIL, homegrown violent extremists, cyber threats from our enemies, and a continual increase in the size of the Intelligence Community have stretched the ability of the Committee and its staff to conduct the vigorous oversight demanded by the current security environment.

Today, the Committee serves as the exclusive House oversight body over the Intelligence Community's 17 agencies and authorizes more than \$70 billion each year - which is more authorizing power than most committees have. Unlike most committees, the Intelligence Committee passes an annual intelligence authorization act, which involves extensive budget meetings, site visits to the respective Executive Branch agencies to discuss sensitive programs, and negotiations with multiple committees in the House and Senate.

The Committee also serves as a venue for all Members of the House to learn about sensitive intelligence programs. This requires significant staff resources to educate members within Committee spaces – a service typically not provided by other committees. For instance, this year already, committee staff individually briefed 100 non-Committee Members on a classified intelligence report related to a matter of national importance.

Additionally, the Committee faces continual pressure from other committees to review bills in areas of shared jurisdiction. In order to respond to other committees in a timely and effective fashion, the Committee requires numerous lawyers familiar with the Intelligence Community and its unique mission. The committee currently only employs five lawyers, three of whom are dual-hatted and perform other policy-related work, compared to 31 lawyers at the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

Under direction from the Speaker, the Committee also has a significant travel requirement to conduct oversight at domestic and international Intelligence Community sites. In the 114th Congress, Committee Members and staff traveled more than nearly all committees in Congress. This is especially significant considering the size of the Committee. Although most Committee travel does not have a budget impact, it does impact staff resources. Unlike other committees, HPSCI staff cannot conduct normal work on the road since much of their work is classified and therefore must be performed in a secure facility. This, in turn, reduces the Committee's ability to be responsive to agencies, Members, and other committees.



Because of the nature of the classified oversight work done by the Committee, HPSCI has a particular need to hire staff with specialized knowledge. These staff must also have the highest clearances authorized within the Federal Government. This clearance requirement causes the Committee to have higher than normal compensation levels, straining the Committee's budget.

In order to ensure that the Committee is fulfilling its mission of effective, efficient, and Constitutional oversight while providing appropriate assistance to all House Members, the Committee hopes to hire additional staff in the 115th Congress. Over the past six years, the Committee has maintained an average of 31 employees - less than half of the six-year House average of 64 employees for standing committees of the House. During this time, the Committee's staff has remained flat while the prominence of intelligence issues within the national discourse has dramatically increased.

Finally, the Committee seeks to improve security for its own computer systems by phasing out old servers and strengthening internet protection to reduce the risks of viruses, malware, and intrusion by foreign actors. Because information about the vulnerabilities of the Committee's systems is classified, we can provide a detailed briefing on the Committee's information technology needs in a secured space.

Thank you for allowing the Ranking Member and me to present our request for the 115th Congress. We welcome any questions the Committee may have.