

Response to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

Additional Questions for
Brett Holmgren upon his nomination to be
Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research



May 3, 2021

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 1
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

What do you believe are currently the highest priority national security and foreign policy issues for INR?

Answer:

The highest priority national security and foreign policy issues for INR are the priorities of the Secretary of State and other senior national security policymakers, including the President. It is clear that the United States faces several serious threats in the coming years. These include China's push for global power, the provocative actions of Russia, Iran, and North Korea, ongoing regional conflicts, and a host of transnational issues to include terrorism, cyber, climate change, and global pandemics.

If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing INR's analysis of the most urgent national security priorities, and will work to ensure that INR continues to support the Secretary of State, the President, and senior policymakers with analysis on the highest priority national security and foreign policy issues.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 2
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

What unique role does INR's analysis play, as compared to the analysis produced by other IC agencies?

Answer:

INR is unique among the other all-source intelligence agencies in that its primary mission is to harness intelligence and analysis to support the Secretary of State and US diplomats and inform the conduct of US diplomacy. INR carries out these worldwide responsibilities by providing timely and insightful analysis on all countries and region-specific issues, as well as analysis focused on transnational and global issues. INR's analysis is also unique in that it provides support for policy engagements specific to the Department of State, such as bilateral meetings and multilateral conferences, facilitates reviews of sensitive intelligence activities to ensure that such activities support US foreign policy objectives, and serves as the leader in the IC for foreign public opinion research and analysis.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 3
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

If confirmed, how would you focus INR's resources to achieve these priorities and ensure that State Department policy makers had sufficient support in these areas?

Answer:

If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing INR's resources and will evaluate whether current resources are strategically prioritized and aligned to the highest national security priorities. I will also seek feedback from U.S. Department of State officials and other senior US policymakers to determine if INR's resources are appropriately aligned to the highest priorities and sufficient to carry out its duties. I look forward to engaging with the Department of State and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to review the appropriations process to ensure INR has the resources necessary to support the Department and the IC.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 4
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

If confirmed, how would you plan to ensure that INR analysts have access to all sources of information available to the IC?

Answer:

If confirmed, I look forward to studying how INR analysts are currently granted access to intelligence reporting to understand if any current access gaps exist and whether such gaps are appropriate, taking into account the need to know principle. I understand that the IC provides opportunities for INR to coordinate on all IC products, and that INR works with the IC to arrange temporary access to intelligence to allow relevant analysts to coordinate on such products when needed. To the extent access issues exist or emerge in the future, I would work through the existing IC procedures for granting access to INR analysts and escalate the matter to the appropriate head of the IC element for resolution as warranted.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 5
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

If confirmed, how would you ensure that INR analysts provide independent analysis and assessments? How would you ensure that differing assessments are incorporated into final analyses?

Answer:

INR has a long history of “telling it like it is” and providing independent analysis to policymakers. If confirmed, I intend to reaffirm the vital role that INR and the broader IC play in providing objective, apolitical analysis to policymakers, regardless of whether policymakers agree with the conclusions. As a leader, it will be my highest priority to maintain and nurture a work environment and culture within INR where analysts are comfortable saying and writing what they believe to be the truth without regard to policy or politics.

Analytical dissents are a normal part of the IC coordination process. If confirmed, I will support INR analysts who offer well-grounded dissents and ensure that the relevant IC agency incorporates INR’s dissent into the final product so that policymakers are aware of alternative views.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 6
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

Whom do you consider to be INR's primary customers?

Answer:

INR's primary customers are the Secretary of State, other Department of State officials, the President, and senior US policymakers. INR supports its customers through a variety of means, including standalone INR analysis, INR-authored articles in the President's Daily Briefing, other IC joint products, and regular briefings and engagements with Department of State officials and other senior US policymakers.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 7
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

If confirmed, how would you direct INR's analytical resources to fulfill its mission to those different customers?

Answer:

I understand that INR's Program of Analysis is developed in consultation with INR's policy clients and reflects the priorities of the Department as well as the President's Intelligence Priorities and the National Intelligence Priorities Framework. If confirmed, I look forward to engaging INR's various clients and reviewing the current allocation of INR's analytic resources to ensure that INR can effectively support its various customers.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 8
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

If confirmed, how do you envision utilizing INR's Office of Analytical Outreach (INR/AO), which exchanges analyses with the private sector to benefit the IC with outside expertise?

Answer:

INR plays a leading role in analytic outreach in the IC and has been designated as the outreach coordinator on behalf of the National Intelligence Council. In this capacity, INR convenes experts from the private sector, academia, think tanks, and international and nongovernmental organizations to share their research and analytic insights with IC analysts and US policy makers to inject a variety of views and new thinking to help inform intelligence analysis. All of INR's exchanges are designed for a broad U.S. government audience in an off-the-record and not for-attribution setting to foster candid discussion with outside experts. I believe this function is vitally important to expose the IC and policymakers to diverse perspectives and guard against group think. If confirmed, I look forward to evaluating how we can further leverage these analytic exchanges to inform the IC's understanding of new and emerging threats where outside experts may have unique insights, such as global health security, emerging technologies, and cyber.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 9
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

What do you understand to be the obligation of the Assistant Secretary of State to keep congressional intelligence committees fully and currently informed about matters relating to compliance with the Constitution and laws?

Answer:

I fully appreciate and respect the important oversight role of Congress. I believe that some of the IC's greatest reforms and achievements have historically been driven by effective Congressional oversight. If confirmed, I will keep the committees fully and currently informed about matters relating to compliance with the Constitution and laws. I will make myself, my senior team, and INR staff available for meetings and briefings as requested.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 10
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

If confirmed, how would you manage and achieve INR's obligations to the Secretary of State and to the Director of National Intelligence?

Answer:

INR's mission is to ensure that timely, objective analysis informs foreign policy decisions and that intelligence and counterintelligence activities support America's foreign policy. INR is a bureau of the Department of State and operates under the Department's personnel system, budget, and guidance in a number of respects. However, pursuant to Executive Order 12333, INR is also a member of the IC and has important statutory responsibilities to collect, analyze, produce, and disseminate information, intelligence, and counterintelligence to support the DNI, IC and other departmental missions. In many ways, INR serves as the bridge between the worlds of diplomacy and intelligence, playing a role that is critical for both the Secretary of State and the DNI.

If confirmed, I will engage with the Secretary of State and the DNI to better understand how INR can most effectively support their needs and priorities.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 11
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

How do you view INR's role within the Department of State versus INR's support to the IC?

Answer:

I view INR's role in the worlds of diplomacy and intelligence as complementary and vital to the success of the Department of State and the IC. While INR's primary focus is to supply intelligence and analysis for the Secretary of State and other Department policymakers, INR also serves as one of the three strategic level all-source analytic agencies (in addition to CIA and DIA). As an all-source intelligence agency, INR analysts fully participate in the President's Daily Briefing and the IC production processes, regularly coordinating and collaborating with other IC elements on a wide range of analytic products intended for a broader national security community. INR intelligence coordination officers also work closely with other IC elements on collection, evaluation, and intelligence operational and policy issues.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 12
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

If confirmed, what would be your role in mediating any differences that should arise between the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the Department of State regarding National Intelligence Program resource allocation?

Answer:

If confirmed, I would work with both the DNI and the Secretary of State to find a solution that would ensure that the Secretary and other policymakers continue to receive the intelligence support from INR they need. Should a collection resource issue arise that impacts INR equities, I would refer the issue to OMB to achieve a satisfactory resolution.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 13
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

Please describe the role of INR in ensuring that the programs and operations of the IC are consistent with, and support, United States foreign policy.

Answer:

INR has an important policy coordination role to play in ensuring that US intelligence activities support US foreign policy objectives and do not undermine the foreign policy interests of the United States. INR's Office of Intelligence Policy and Coordination fulfills these responsibilities by coordinating with Department of State policymakers, including the Secretary of State, Chiefs of Mission, the IC, and the National Security Council staff to ensure that intelligence collection and operational activities support, are informed by, and are consistent with US foreign policy, IC policy, and the Department of State's interests. Among other things, I understand that INR officers brief Department policymakers on intelligence activities, including the likely gains and risks, so that policymakers can make informed judgments.

If confirmed, I will work with the appropriate IC agencies and the DNI to ensure that INR's coordination staff continues to have direct access to the information needed to support the Department's most senior officials, including the Secretary, so that they can make fully informed policy decisions.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 14
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

What role should INR play in advocating on behalf of Department of State policymakers for expanded “read in” to compartmented collection activities (and analyses derived from those activities) and covert action programs?

Answer:

As the Department of State’s primary interlocutor with the IC, I believe INR staff have a role to play in advocating on behalf of Department policymakers for access to sensitive intelligence or compartmented collection activities if policymakers need such information to perform their duties. If confirmed, I will be prepared to advocate with the relevant IC agency for such access, while taking into account the need to protect sensitive sources and methods.

With respect to covert action programs, if confirmed, I will ensure that relevant INR staff and Department policymakers are provided appropriate access to such programs, consistent with the security guidelines set forth by the National Security Council.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 15
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

Do you believe that INR has the structure and resources necessary to support United States foreign policy and Department of State policymakers? Upon what factors do you base your answer?

Answer:

If confirmed, I look forward to examining closely the current structure and staffing posture of INR to ensure the organization has the resources necessary to support its mission. In doing so, I look forward to reviewing INR's resources and structure relative to the highest national security priorities.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 16
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

Please describe what you believe should be INR's role in supporting United States Chiefs of Missions, in terms of analytic support and in facilitating policy guidance related to collection and covert action programs and operations.

Answer:

Pursuant to Executive Order 12333, INR has an important role to play in supporting United States Chiefs of Mission in discharging their responsibilities pursuant to law and presidential direction. INR fulfills this responsibility by ensuring that Chiefs of Mission understand their intelligence oversight authorities and responsibilities, including their responsibility to concur on sensitive intelligence activities in their respective area(s). To support Chiefs of Mission, INR provides analysis and information on the intelligence activities in question, conducts intelligence oversight training for new Chiefs of Mission and Deputy Chiefs of Mission, arranges briefings with IC elements as needed, and transmits reporting requirements and advisory taskings of the IC to Chiefs of Mission abroad.

INR staff is available on a 24/7 basis, via the INR Watch, to respond to requests for information and assistance from Chiefs of Mission.

INR also provides regular access to its analytic products, including foreign public opinion research analysis, to Chiefs of Mission and other embassy staff, as appropriate. In addition, INR analysts travel to U.S. Missions around the world to provide in-person briefings and conduct consultations.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 17
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

Is the IC obligated to cease intelligence activities that do not have the concurrence of the Chief of Mission, absent presidential direction?

Answer:

Absent separate guidance from the President, the IC is obliged to suspend intelligence activities that do not have the concurrence of the Chief of Mission, with disputes escalated directly to the Secretary of State and the head of the appropriate IC element for resolution.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 18
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

Is Chief of Mission concurrence required for intelligence activities, such as certain signals intelligence and cyber operations, that affect the country in question but may not be conducted by members of the U.S. mission? What should be the role of INR in ensuring that Chiefs of Mission are aware of these activities?

Answer:

Yes, Chiefs of Mission would have a role to play in reviewing and providing concurrence for certain types of signals intelligence collection or cyber operations even if the activity was not being conducted by members of the U.S. mission. When these elements are under Combatant Commander control, the Combatant Commander is responsible for coordination and gaining concurrence as well as country clearance if required.

INR's role is to ensure that policymakers in the Department and Chiefs of Mission overseas have the opportunity to provide foreign policy review and conduct a cost-benefit analysis of such activities when appropriate, with any issues escalated to the Secretary of State and the head of the appropriate element for resolution.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 19
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

Should INR have a role in resolving disagreements that arise between Chiefs of Mission and the Department of Defense?

Answer:

Whether INR would have a role in resolving any disagreements between the Department of Defense and Chiefs of Mission would depend on the nature of the issue. To the extent the Department of Defense activity involves intelligence equities, INR would work with the Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security or the Defense Intelligence Agency to obtain the information needed to help resolve coordination issues and support the Chief of Mission's analysis of the activity in question.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 20
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

Section 1.8 of Executive Order 12333 tasks the Secretary of State with transmitting reporting requirements and advisory taskings of the Intelligence Community to Chiefs of Mission and disseminating reports received from U.S. diplomatic and consular posts. What should INR's role be in identifying intelligence gaps that could be addressed through diplomatic reporting? What should INR's role be in ensuring that diplomatic reporting is disseminated throughout the Department of State and the Intelligence Community?

Answer:

I understand that INR works with the National HUMINT Requirements Tasking Center (NHRTC) to develop National HUMINT Collection Directives and transmits these Directives to U.S. missions overseas. NHRTC's taskings are considered advisory taskings for the Department, and INR serves as an advocate for diplomatic reporting to ensure embassy officers help fill information gaps with diplomatic reporting where possible. If confirmed, I will continue to support INR's role in ensuring that diplomatic reporting helps address IC collection gaps.

With respect to the distribution of diplomatic reporting, there are well established mechanisms in the Department and the IC to distribute the Department's diplomatic reporting through official channels. While responsibility for the distribution of diplomatic reporting lies outside of INR, if confirmed, I will work with the relevant departmental offices to address any issues with distribution in a timely manner.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 21
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

If confirmed, what modifications (if any) do you envision for INR personnel, in terms of hiring, structure, promotion, and retention?

Answer:

INR's greatest asset is its people. I understand INR has a highly competitive selection process associated with INR positions to ensure top quality candidates for positions in the bureau. The combination of Civil Service officers who have spent many years on the same account and Foreign Service officers who bring an overseas perspective contributes to INR's reputation for strong, independent analysis. I also understand that INR recently received Schedule B Hiring Authority from OPM for a period of 24 months. Under this authority, INR will be able to process new hires more expediently into the bureau. I understand INR also plans to incentivize foreign language use and proficiency by establishing a foreign language pay program. I strongly support these recent improvements and will advocate for sustaining them moving forward.

If confirmed, I will also focus heavily on increasing diversity and inclusion by ensuring that INR is tapping into a cross-sectional candidate pool representative of a broad spectrum of demographics.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 22
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

Please describe any specific goals that you would have to improve INR?

Answer:

If confirmed, I will focus on supporting and enhancing the INR workforce, including by elevating diversity recruitment and retention, providing sufficient opportunities for rotational assignments and professional development, and ensuring that INR's talent and expertise can support new and emerging national security priorities.

In addition, I will focus on accelerating INR's information technology (IT) modernization effort to ensure that INR staff have the latest tools and resources to carry out their responsibilities. A successful IT modernization effort will be critical to enhancing how INR delivers its products and analytic services to its primary customers, in the United States and abroad.

I also will reassess the strategic vision and priorities for INR to ensure that INR's work is aligned with current national security priorities and that INR is prepared to address new threats and capitalize on opportunities over the horizon.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 23
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

How do you intend to protect whistleblowers, ensure that their complaints are treated appropriately, and that they are protected from reprisals?

Answer:

If confirmed, I will foster a culture where all staff members feel comfortable raising issues of concern, strongly support the statutory rights of whistleblowers, honor their anonymity in accordance with the law, and steadfastly protect whistleblowers from reprisal at every step in the process. I will also review the current whistleblower protections and procedures for INR personnel to determine whether any changes or updates are appropriate.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 24
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

Do you plan on pursuing the use of IC authorities for INR personnel benefits?

Answer:

If confirmed, I intend to study INR's personnel benefits to understand any disparities relative to IC personnel. Should I determine the need to pursue the use of IC authorities for INR personnel, I commit to engaging closely with Congress on the matter.

**Prehearing Question Submitted to
INR Nominee Brett Holmgren
Question # 25
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
May 3, 2021**

Question:

Please describe your past experiences and interactions with other IC all-source elements.

Answer:

Throughout my career, I have had extensive experience interacting with other IC all-source elements. As a former analyst at both the DIA and the CIA, I understand each organizations' analytic mission, roles, responsibilities, and customers, as well as the processes used to develop and produce analytic products. In these roles, I also worked closely with INR analysts by, among other things, sharing information and coordinating on analytic products.

In addition, while serving as the Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Intelligence Programs on the National Security Council (NSC) staff from 2015 to 2017, I was a regular consumer of the IC's all-source analytic products (DIA, CIA, INR, and various Office of the Director of National Intelligence components). In my capacity as a policymaker, I routinely provided feedback to analysts with respect to the timeliness, relevance, and impact of their work on informing and supporting NSC policy deliberations.