

SELECT COMMITTEE ON
INTELLIGENCE

UNITED STATES SENATE



Additional Prehearing Questions
for
VADM Joseph Maguire
upon his nomination to be
the Director of the
National Counterterrorism Center

Responsibilities of the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center

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

QUESTION 1: What is your understanding of the unique role of the NCTC within the Intelligence Community (IC)?

The National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) serves a unique and critical role within the Intelligence Community (IC) and the Homeland Security apparatus, a role that is clearly articulated in law and is paramount to the U.S. government's ability to counter terrorism. The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA) serves as the statutory basis for NCTC's unique role within the IC. Among its provisions, this law directs that NCTC:

- Serve as the primary organization of the U.S. government for analyzing and integrating all intelligence possessed or acquired by the U.S. government 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 the central and shared knowledge bank on known or suspected terrorists (KSTs) and international terror groups, as well as their goals, strategies, capabilities, and networks of contacts and support.

The law also directs the Director of NCTC 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. NCTC also plays a unique, cross-government role in strategic operational planning.

No other CT component of the IC has this range of responsibilities. NCTC alone has access to all terrorism-related information—both foreign and domestic—that it uses to conduct all-source analysis and maintain the database that underpins all government watchlisting.

QUESTION 2: What is your understanding of the specific statutory responsibilities of the Director?

The specific statutory responsibilities of the Director of NCTC are described in Section 1021 of IRTPA. The law requires the Director to report to the President of the United States when exercising the Center's whole-of-government strategic operational planning functions, and to the DNI for all other activities and functions. NCTC's mission, and therefore the mission of its Director, is focused on the prevention, detection, and disruption of acts of terrorism directed against the United States and its interests both at home and abroad.

NCTC and its Director are responsible for ensuring that federal departments and agencies are provided with all-source intelligence support to execute assigned counterterrorism activities. Under the IRTPA, NCTC is the primary organization in the federal government for analyzing and integrating all intelligence pertaining to terrorism and CT. NCTC's unique statutory authorities allow its personnel to draw upon both foreign and domestic intelligence to produce integrated analysis. In addition to supporting federal departments and agencies in the executive branch, NCTC also supports Congress with information and analysis, and—in close partnership with FBI and DHS—provides terrorism information and analysis to the state, local, tribal, and territorial partners. NCTC also provides support to FBI and DHS on purely domestic terrorism issues when assistance is requested.

By law, the Center serves as the U.S. government's central and shared knowledge bank on known and suspected terrorists and international terror groups as well as their contacts and support networks. In order to accomplish this mission, NCTC designs, operates, and maintains a classified database known as the Terrorism Identities Datamart Environment (TIDE). Following watchlisting guidance that the interagency developed and approved, NCTC provides identifying information on KSTs to the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center to support watchlisting and screening by other federal agencies and departments.

Finally, the Director of NCTC also serves as the National Intelligence Manager for CT (NIM-CT) intelligence matters for the DNI. In this role, the Director leads the CT community in identifying knowledge gaps in CT analysis and focusing collection and production resources on closing those gaps.

QUESTION 3: Have you discussed with Director Coats his specific expectations of you, if confirmed as Director, and his expectations of the NCTC as a whole? If so, please describe these expectations.

Yes, I had the opportunity to meet with DNI Coats and we discussed in general terms his expectations. We must ensure that NCTC maintains a steady pulse on the terrorism threat as our country faces an array of other national security threats. The Center must fulfill its role and obligations to coordinate and share information across the CT enterprise, and maximize its resources to protect the American people. DNI Coats also underscored the need to ensure that the CT enterprise is appropriately positioned to collect and assess intelligence against the highest priority terrorism threats at a time when there are many competing priorities.

NCTC's Mission

NCTC leads and integrates the national CT effort by fusing foreign and domestic CT information, providing terrorism analysis, sharing information with partners across the CT enterprise, and driving whole-of-government action to secure our national CT objectives.

QUESTION 4: What is your assessment of 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 perspective, two of NCTC's greatest strengths are its dedicated, integrated, diverse workforce and its unique access to terrorism-related data. Nearly half NCTC's workforce is drawn from across the IC, which creates a collaborative, inclusive atmosphere of professionals with varying IC experiences. NCTC is also undergoing an internal transformation by integrating a number of entry-level employees into the organization to expand the knowledge, skills, and abilities of its workforce to address the evolving terrorist threat. Additionally, NCTC's strong relationship with IC counterparts and its position as the only IC entity with access to all foreign and domestic terrorism data streams allow this uniquely diverse workforce to provide comprehensive, coordinated all-source analysis. I would also note that NCTC does not engage in, or direct, operations, and I see this as a strength that allows NCTC a neutral perspective for CT analysis and strategic operational planning.

NCTC is challenged in its ability to attract and retain this dynamic staff and fully exploit all data to which it has access. NCTC relies on the skills and backgrounds of military, law enforcement, intelligence, and other national security analysts, but the current environment creates challenges to maintaining this diverse workforce. For example, our partners' long-term budget uncertainty—despite the budget agreement in place for fiscal year 2019—and divestitures of assets allocated to the CT mission complicate interagency efforts to provide detailees to the Center. To manage and fully exploit the data to which it has access, NCTC must continue to invest in technology-based tools to power more comprehensive data analysis, increase the speed of information sharing and collaboration, and automate production workflows. Although the IC is investing heavily in new data analytic tools, many of these efforts will be sub-optimized unless complex data management and use issues are resolved.

QUESTION 5: What do you believe are the greatest challenges facing the NCTC?

NCTC's greatest challenge is maintaining the ability to innovate and adapt as quickly as our adversaries—both at home and abroad—whose methods are constantly shifting particularly on the technological front. One way to stay ahead is to maintain a diverse and skilled workforce; however the current environment creates challenges to appropriately staffing the Center. The processing time required to bring individuals from outside the IC hampers our ability to recruit people with critical skillsets, such as data scientists and data analytic specialists who are being competitively recruited by other government agencies and private industry.

Like many other organizations, NCTC also faces “big data” challenges and the growing role of social media in counterterrorism analysis. NCTC’s focus on technology and data analytics, including attracting and retaining data scientists, is therefore paramount.

Additional challenges include leaks of sensitive or classified information that have handicapped IC collection efforts and the proliferation of communications technology that has complicated NCTC’s efforts to identify and mitigate terrorists and plots.

QUESTION 6: 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.

In the 14 years since its establishment, NCTC has made significant progress in fulfilling the vision set out by the 9/11 Commission and Congress in 2004 and I believe that NCTC has become a recognized leader in the CT community. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of people, partnerships, information sharing, and technology to achieving Congress’s vision for NCTC, positioning NCTC for future challenges and countering the complex, evolving, and diverse threat we face as a country. If confirmed, I will continue to build on the successes of my predecessors to evolve and improve the Center’s capacity to carry out its mission.

First and foremost, the dedicated people of NCTC are its backbone. If confirmed, I will build on my predecessors’ efforts not only to recruit qualified individuals in the IC and private sectors and work with partner IC elements to ensure that NCTC draws staff from across the CT community, but also to care for and develop NCTC officers.

With NCTC’s unique role that spans foreign and domestic spheres, partnerships are key with both colleagues at home and abroad. We cannot mitigate the threat from terrorists alone, so it is of utmost importance for us to work with a range of CT partners, spanning local law enforcement to our allies overseas. I know that NCTC has robust partnerships with foreign partners as well as state, local, tribal, territorial, and private sector partners, and I would, if confirmed, continue to foster these relationships and deepen integration and collaboration to achieve our shared CT goals.

I know that NCTC has made great strides since 9/11, but still faces information-sharing and technical challenges, which impede its ability to holistically analyze an increasing amount of data. Complex policy and other issues associated with data management and use still remain within the IC and across the federal government, and overcoming these issues at NCTC is critical to the success of its watchlisting, screening, and all-source analytic efforts. If confirmed, addressing these issues would be a priority over my period of service as the director.

- For example, I will work to address the challenges of big data, including the ability to exploit and analyze relationships across unstructured data sets that can offer important insights that otherwise would not be discovered.
- I also will focus on recruiting and retaining data scientists, who bring critical skill sets to the challenges presented by rapidly evolving technology and its impact on CT.

Viewing NCTC five years from now, I would envision the Center's position as the leader and integrator of the national CT effort is further solidified, with achievements in recruiting and retaining personnel, developing partnerships, and the "big data" arena that could be applied across other mission areas.

QUESTION 7: What specific benchmarks should be used to access NCTC's performance?

I believe that measuring performance and adjusting course are necessary in any organization in order to progress and meet goals. I understand that in its NIM-CT role, NCTC uses measures to assess progress for the IC and these can, at least in part, be applied to measure NCTC's progress and complement internal Center benchmarks.

NCTC evaluates the IC's progress against high priority CT intelligence gaps and assesses customer satisfaction with overall CT intelligence. NCTC hosts experts at the end of each fiscal year to identify and develop CT priority intelligence gaps, which are topics that deserve particular analytic attention during the course of the year, and measures IC progress to fill these gaps. NCTC also annually surveys a broad range of customers from five customer segments—DoD/Warfighter, Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Policy and non-Departmental Intelligence—to determine its satisfaction with CT intelligence support.

As I mentioned earlier, NCTC also uses internal measures to assess NCTC's performance supporting key customer needs in several areas, including counterterrorism intelligence, terrorism identities intelligence, and situational awareness services. NCTC gauges readership and feedback from NCTC products online through its "Current" portal, which is available at the Top Secret/compartmented and Secret levels, and engages regularly with customers that range from federal departments and agencies to state, local, tribal, territorial and private sector partners to assess how best to serve them. NCTC monitors screening systems for timeliness, ensuring it meets the Department of State goals, and compliance requirements associated with the storage and use of information that mission partners provide.

State and local governments

QUESTION 8: What is the role of NCTC in producing and disseminating intelligence for state, local and tribal partners?

In coordination with FBI and DHS, NCTC produces and disseminates terrorism and CT intelligence for state, local, tribal, territorial and private sector partners, in support of FBI's and DHS's responsibilities to produce and disseminate intelligence for these consumers.

NCTC's primary activity for identifying, producing, and disseminating relevant intelligence to these consumers is the Joint Counterterrorism Assessment Team (JCAT). JCAT, a joint organization staffed by NCTC, DHS, and FBI and housed in NCTC, is the successor to the Interagency Threat Assessment and Coordination Group, created by the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 and decommissioned in 2012 when its authorization for appropriations expired.

JCAT's mission is to improve CT information sharing and enhance public safety in the U.S. Homeland by performing collaborative intelligence production, conducting outreach and education, and providing support to CT partners in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of exercises and training.

JCAT products are always coordinated through the intelligence analysis components of NCTC, DHS, and FBI, and reviewed by public affairs, civil liberties and privacy, domestic disclosure, pre-publication and legal entities at DHS, FBI, ODNI, and NCTC before dissemination. JCAT disseminates intelligence products through about a half-dozen U.S. government information sharing mechanisms across systems of all classification, including FBI's Law Enforcement Enterprise Portal website, DHS's Homeland Security Information Network website, and NCTC's classified Current website.

In addition to federal officers from FBI, DHS, and NCTC, JCAT is supported by non-federal public safety officers, including law enforcement, fire service, emergency medical services, and emergency management. Non-federal public safety officers assigned to JCAT receive security clearances and assist their federal counterparts in identifying, producing, and disseminating CT intelligence to state, local, tribal, territorial and private sector consumers. This unique staffing construct is the key to JCAT's success.

Separately, NCTC's Operations Center produces two situational awareness products—The Counterterrorism Weekly and the Counterterrorism Digest—at the Unclassified/For Official Use Only (U//FOUO) and unclassified levels respectively, which are compendiums of international and domestic news intended to provide a common threat picture of counterterrorism events from around the globe to domestic first responders, international partners, and the private sector. The Directorate of Intelligence also produces products at the FOUO and unclassified levels for these customers, including a widely acclaimed semi-annual magazine called "Alliance" as well as "The Beacon," aimed at private sector partners.

QUESTION 9: 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 the National Security Act of 1947, as amended, NCTC supports FBI and DHS in carrying out their missions. NCTC has access to the full range of U.S. government CT intelligence to inform products for state, local, tribal, territorial and private sector customers, in support of FBI and DHS. As the primary organization in the U.S. government for analyzing and integrating all intelligence possessed or acquired by our federal departments and agencies in regard to terrorism and counterterrorism, NCTC is uniquely qualified to ensure DHS and FBI have access to and receive all-source intelligence support to execute their missions.

QUESTION 10: What is your understanding of the amount and nature of cooperation among NCTC, FBI, and DHS?

I understand that NCTC works very closely with DHS and FBI through daily engagements, support to counterterrorism programs, and collaboration on a range of terrorism-related intelligence production. A few examples include:

- NCTC leads 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, including those that are specifically tailored for state, local, tribal, territorial and private sector partners.
- NCTC engages with DHS and FBI through its CT exercise program and intelligence support for security efforts at major domestic special events.
- NCTC regularly co-authors intelligence assessments with FBI and DHS, particularly on threats to the U.S. Homeland.
- NCTC, DHS, and FBI participate in weekly Counterterrorism Security Group meetings on threats to U.S. personnel, to provide the policy community with a common picture of such threats.
- NCTC collaborates with and includes input from DHS and FBI to develop whole-of-government CT plans, strategies, and assessments.

Additionally, I understand that NCTC integrates DHS and FBI officers into the Center and NCTC officers support DHS and FBI. This colocation of people, resources, and information ensures robust and continuous interaction, communication, and cooperation between NCTC, FBI, and DHS. I understand DHS and FBI have senior representatives assigned to NCTC who provide close coordination. Moreover, the Operations Center, which is collocated with FBI CT Watch and JCAT, hosts a Homeland desk staffed by specially-trained DHS officers who are knowledgeable of all DHS resources and data sets. It is also my understanding that NCTC has deployed eleven representatives throughout the United States who work hand-in-hand with DHS and FBI field elements.

QUESTION 11: If confirmed, what priority would you give this issue?

If confirmed, one of my top priorities would be ensuring that NCTC, DHS, and FBI continue to work together to provide state, local, tribal, territorial and private sector partners with timely and accurate information on terrorism because these partners play a unique and critical role in our national security efforts, often serving as the front line when it comes to the threat of homegrown violent extremists. Effective sharing with these partners enhances their capabilities to recognize and effectively respond to suspected terrorism and violent extremism activities, while simultaneously protecting our privacy and preserving our civil liberties.

Based upon my previous service and discussions with current NCTC staff, it is clear these partners have a critical need for NCTC information and assistance to understand and address the threat in their communities. NCTC is uniquely positioned to integrate intelligence and augment information sharing with these consumers. In addition, JCAT, with staffing from non-federal public safety partners, is positioned to recognize and tailor terrorism and counterterrorism products for state and regional fusion centers as well as first responders that enhance public safety across the U.S. NCTC is always looking for options to expand collaboration with federal partners.

Strategic Operational Planning

QUESTION 12: What unique role does strategic counterterrorism analysis conducted at NCTC play, as compared to the analysis produced by other components of the Intelligence Community?

NCTC's role as the single repository for all CT information within the U.S. government provides the Center with the unique ability to analyze and integrate all sources of intelligence pertaining to terrorism and counterterrorism, both foreign and domestic. Additionally, NCTC's lack of operational and collection equities enables it to provide unbiased assessments. Unlike other IC agencies, NCTC coordinates all of its intelligence assessments with other IC partners, enabling its products to serve as a single voice that reflects the opinions of the entire CT community.

QUESTION 13: To what extent does the Directorate of Strategic Operational Planning Develop interagency plans for counterterrorism operations?

Since the establishment of the Directorate of Strategic Operational Planning (DSOP), successive administrations have increased their reliance on DSOP's statutory role in strategic operational planning. DSOP effectively uses its mandate to develop whole-of-government CT plans to engage in cross-agency collaboration as directed by the National Security Council (NSC) to support policy implementation. NCTC plans address a variety of CT objectives to include regional and functional CT issues, such as terrorism prevention and weapons of mass destruction. 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. DSOP-led plans and strategies generally are not focused on specific counterterrorism operations, but incorporate all instruments of national power—which may include counterterrorism operations—as lines of effort within broader counterterrorism strategies and plans.

QUESTION 14: 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?

When DSOP is designated as the lead planning entity by the NSC staff, DSOP-led strategies and plans incorporate the inputs of, and are developed in coordination with, the intelligence, strategic planning, policy, and other components of U.S. government departments and agencies. DSOP has engaged and involved more than 20 departments and agencies as it developed strategic operational plans during the last six years. These organizations include IC agencies, the Department of Defense, as well as many organizations that are not traditionally thought of as national security entities, such as the Departments of Education and 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. Upon approval by the White House, DSOP-led strategies and plans also help guide the implementation of these departments' and agencies' counterterrorism plans and efforts. Once the plans are put into effect, DSOP assesses progress against the goals and objectives of the plan and whether the federal government has resourced the 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 our terrorist adversaries.

QUESTION 15: Please describe your assessment of the challenge presented by this responsibility and what should be done to improve NCTC's performance of it.

Terrorism in all of its forms is becoming increasingly diffuse and complex, making DSOP and its interagency partners' efforts to develop effective strategies and plans more challenging. The complexity of the threat has also led to a greater number and diversity of CT partners and interagency tools to integrate and coordinate. Since its creation, DSOP has been able to work collaboratively with its interagency partners to integrate U.S. government activities to counter the CT threats we face. DSOP benefits from its position 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 16: What is the role of the Director of NCTC in developing the National Intelligence Priorities Framework (NIPF) with regard to counterterrorism?

The Director of NCTC is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the NIPF-CT priorities. The NIPF-CT Priorities List is the IC's list of terrorism priorities, which informs IC decisions on collection, analysis, and resource allocation against terrorist groups, states supporting terrorist activities, and other terrorism-related issues based upon the degree of threat they pose to U.S. national security as well as policymaker interest. These priorities are updated on a quarterly basis with support from IC elements and integrated into the ODNI's overall NIPF process.

To the maximum extent possible, I want to ensure NIPF-CT priorities provide clear guidance to the IC agencies and do not generate conflicts with the other priorities identified by other elements of the IC so that we can ensure the most effective and efficient allocation of our critical resources. In addition, NCTC participates in NIPF Zero Based Reviews to present NIPF Priority topics on behalf of the chemical, biological, nuclear, and radiological community. If confirmed, I will support our important role in the NIPF-CT priority process.

QUESTION 17: What is your view of the proper role of Congress in overseeing the activities of the Directorate of Strategic Operational Planning?

I believe the Congress is obligated to exercise its oversight role over all of NCTC's activities, including those activities undertaken by DSOP. Pursuant to the IRTPA, NCTC conducts strategic operational planning at the direction of and in support of the President and the Executive Office of the President. If confirmed, I will continue to work closely with the Congress to facilitate its ability to perform its oversight function in keeping with accommodations agreed upon by NCTC and the Committee.

National Intelligence Manager

As the Counterterrorism Mission Manager for the IC, the Director of NCTC identifies intelligence gaps and resource constraints and sets collection and analytic priorities.

QUESTION 18: What is your vision of the Director of NCTC in the role of mission manager?

The role of mission manager allows the Director of NCTC the privilege to be a proactive leader in both the IC and the CT community. If confirmed, I will ensure that I prioritize this role given an increasingly diversified threat landscape and competing national security concerns to ensure that the CT community maintains a steady pulse on the terrorism threat.

I view this role to be an honest broker who can work across the CT enterprise to balance risks, find efficiencies and opportunities for collaboration, and, when necessary, communicate difficult options for senior policymaker decisions. In the IC, there is a tremendous demand placed on our limited national collection platforms, analytic resources, and other capabilities that are shared with other vital national security priorities. The NIM role is important to me because I believe it is vital to work across our community, as partners, to ensure we all understand how we are efficiently and effectively using our collective resources.

I am a believer in the importance of well-drafted strategies that are monitored and assessed. Our priorities and overall approach for the IC are set by the National Security Strategy, the National Strategy for Counterterrorism, and the National Intelligence Strategy. To effectively execute these strategies, I will promulgate a Unifying Intelligence Strategy for CT that sets our priority issues and the plan of action for addressing them. This strategy will also support the development of recommendations to the DNI that provide a basis for his resource guidance to the IC.

QUESTION 19: What is the role of the Director of NCTC in providing guidance with regard to the allocation of resources among, and within elements of the Intelligence Community? Please describe how the Director of NCTC should identify unnecessary or less critical programs and seek to reallocate funding, within resource constraints.

I believe that the role of the mission manager is to provide resource guidance to the CT community and serve as the principal adviser to the DNI for counterterrorism priorities. To fulfill this role, which is outlined within the IRTPA, the Director of NCTC is charged to collaborate with CT program managers across the IC to understand resource priorities, shortfalls, and redundancies. The Director's ability to identify critical resource investments and be an effective advocate and leader for the CT community within the intelligence planning, programming, budgeting and execution process. If confirmed, I will build close partnerships with interagency partners to position NCTC and our many partners to work as one CT enterprise.

QUESTION 20: What are the most important counterterrorism gaps or shortfalls across the Intelligence Community?

As the last 17 years have proven, terrorism is an adaptive threat and the U.S. government's ability to identify gaps and shortfalls in a timely and efficient manner is vital to our continued success. That said, three issues that most concern me are adapting to the rapid pace of technology, managing and most efficiently exploiting large volumes of IC data, and efforts to improve screening and vetting capabilities.

First, in our current environment, the rapid pace of technology has allowed opportunities to support NCTC's mission, while also providing our adversaries new abilities to use it against us. In order to stay ahead of our adversaries, NCTC must find ways to appropriately acquire and adapt new technologies while mitigating the threat of terrorist use of technology.

Second, the IC has the benefit of large datasets; however, it must identify solutions to effectively standardize, integrate, and process increasingly large holdings. This "big data" management solution must also include innovative approaches to information sharing and access. Data management and integrity is vital to NCTC's efforts supporting the No Fly list and other screening mechanisms and providing our international partners the timely and actionable information they need to keep terrorists from reaching the U.S. Homeland.

Finally, there are a myriad of challenges related to screening and vetting. One that comes to mind is the challenge of integrating biometric data, such as fingerprints and facial images, into screening of biographic data. In addition, we must move from a name-based system to a person-based system of performing identity intelligence.

All of these issues require serious investments in time and resources, but I believe they are critical advancements that must be addressed for continued IC success.

Congressional Oversight

QUESTION 21: 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?

If confirmed as the Director of NCTC, I assure you that I will continue to abide by the responsibility to keep Congress fully and currently informed, consistent with the law. I understand the standard for meaningful compliance with this obligation to mean that congressional notifications must be timely, accurate, and complete to be effective.

I believe that communicating with Congress on a regular and continuing basis enables us to further our collective ability to address the threats we face today, prevent further terrorist attacks, and remain in compliance with American laws. Given the fact that most of the activities of NCTC and the IC must remain classified, this relationship only becomes more important. Intelligence oversight is critical to the successful operation of the IC, but it can only be effective if the IC—as I do—views the intelligence committees as true partners and keeps them fully and currently informed of their activities.

Professional Experience

QUESTION 22: Please describe specifically how your experiences will enable you to serve as the Director of NCTC, and how these experiences would enable you to serve effectively in the future.

If confirmed as the Director of NCTC, I will draw on a wide range of personal and professional experiences, particularly those that have a connection to the destructive effects of terrorism. These include:

- My close personal connection to the terrorist threat our country faces gives me an unwavering sense of urgency, energy, and passion for the mission. I've lost friends in this fight, and the destruction and devastation caused by violent extremism. My family's deep dedication to public service in the military, law enforcement, and our public schools inspires me, and if confirmed, I will bring that spirit of service to work daily.
- As an officer in the U.S. military and the deputy director of NCTC's Directorate of Strategic Operational Planning, I gained an appreciation for the important role intelligence plays in supporting and informing the operations led by the U.S. military in support of CT policy. These efforts were effective because of unbiased analysis. I will speak truth to power and protect NCTC's analytic objectivity because of the vital role it plays in the security of our country.

- My experience as a member of the National Security Council’s Counterterrorism Security Group—a key forum to synchronize U.S. policy efforts and coordinate U.S. response to threats to U.S. interests globally—has cemented my view of the importance of partnering domestically and internationally for CT outcomes that support U.S. government policy, as well as the importance of personal relationships and trust as the key facilitators to those partnerships. If confirmed as the Director of NCTC, I will continue to build partnerships with foreign and domestic partners to enable NCTC’s mission of leading and integrating our national CT effort.
- My work in industry provided me with firsthand experience of how the U.S. government can partner effectively with the private sector. As NCTC addresses the rapid evolution of technology and proliferation of information, we can leverage best practices from myriad of industries to stay ahead of the terrorism threat.
- Finally, my experience serving as a career Naval Special Warfare Officer (SEAL) instilled in me the value of teamwork and the importance of people to mission. As a leader, I have witnessed how a group can truly be more than the sum of its parts. If confirmed, I will build on NCTC’s efforts to recruit, develop, and retain NCTC’s most vital resource—our people—and further NCTC’s value of collaboration.