

**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD FOR BRIAN DUNBAR, ASSISTANT
DIRECTOR, SPECIAL SECURITY DIRECTORATE, NATIONAL
COUNTERINTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY CENTER:**

**SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
HEARING ON SECURITY CLEARANCE REFORM**

*Wednesday, 7 March 2018; 9:30 a.m.
Room 106, Dirksen Senate Office Building*

Chairman Burr, Vice Chairman Warner, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss security clearance challenges and reforms.

As the Assistant Director (AD), Special Security Directorate (SSD), National Counterintelligence and Security Center (NCSC), Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), I am responsible for supporting the DNI in his role as Security Executive Agent (SecEA) who, along with the other members of the Security, Suitability, and Credentialing Performance Accountability Council is responsible for leading and supporting security clearance standardization and reform across the U.S. Government. The National Background Investigations Bureau within the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence are partners in the security clearance reform effort, and their representatives are here with me today.

The security clearance process generally involves determining an individual's need for access to classified information or to hold a sensitive position, facilitating reciprocity for existing clearances, or completing a background investigation, reviewing investigation results, making an eligibility determination, and periodically reviewing the individual's continued eligibility.

The DNI, as the SecEA, is responsible for developing, issuing, and overseeing effective, efficient, and uniform policies and procedures governing the conduct of investigations, adjudications, and, as applicable, polygraphs for eligibility for access to classified information, or to hold a sensitive position. The NCSC has been designated as the lead staff support element to fulfill the DNI's SecEA responsibilities, and SSD serves as the primary NCSC element to address these duties. Departments and agencies are responsible for building and executing personnel security programs that are in compliance with these policies and procedures. These responsibilities extend to approximately four million national security cleared personnel.

In exercising the SecEA's responsibilities, we work closely with the agencies responsible for administering national security programs and for conducting investigations, adjudications and polygraphs. This ensures that our policies and practices are informed by those working to protect national security equities and ensure a trusted workforce.

I am going to focus my remarks on the efforts taken to improve the security clearance processes and procedures, reciprocity, and the general challenges we face. In partnership with the Performance Accountability Council, the DNI is committed to transforming the security clearance process, and remains committed to providing departments and agencies with policy direction while continuously assessing ways to improve. We have issued guidance to the community on a wide variety of issues and have achieved a number of successes to this point.

- As the SecEA, the DNI has issued six Security Executive Agent Directives (SEADs) on issues ranging from Security Executive Agent Authorities and Responsibilities to Continuous Evaluation Policy and Requirements, with two planned future SEADs on reciprocity and temporary access, respectively. These policies were extensively coordinated within the interagency and executive branch and represent consensus government-wide approaches to very complicated issues.
- The DNI has successfully launched the Quality Assessment Reporting Tool (QART), which enables the assessment of the quality of background investigations. QART will be used to inform investigative policy and training. To date, multiple agencies have registered in QART, and the tool presently contains over 10,000 investigative entries.
- We have implemented efforts to track and report on the application of security clearance reciprocity, and continue to see improvement in this area. Reciprocal acceptance of background investigations and national security determinations support employee mobility and mission accomplishment — both objectives are critical to ensuring that we use our human resources with maximum effectiveness.

To provide the Committee some metrics on reciprocity, in FY 2017, the core IC agencies — the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, the National Reconnaissance Office, and the

National Security Agency — as well as the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Energy, the Department of State, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Treasury Department, and the United States Coast Guard, reciprocally accepted 95.3% of cases reviewed. While we oversee the security clearance portion of this, there are other elements of the process involved which are beyond the control of security elements (e.g., time from human resources/industry processing to submission to security for determination).

We are actively engaged in modernizing security clearance processes, including implementing Continuous Evaluation (CE), which will conduct automated records checks on a segment of covered individuals between the periodic reinvestigation cycles when security-relevant information may go unreported to security officials. CE is being implemented across the Executive Branch in phases due to the potential increased investigative and adjudicative workload, complexity of developing the associated technology, and the unknown impact to agency workforce requirements. The initial operating capability of the ODNI CE system is available on the classified network and is performing eligibility checks. Our goal is to deploy a fully operational CE System in 2018 that will be available to all executive branch agencies.

Additionally, we partner with the Director, Office of Personnel Management (OPM), who serves as the Suitability and Credentialing Executive Agent, to align the security clearance process with suitability and credentialing. The following achievements have resulted from this collaboration:

- Creation of the National Training Standards for Background Investigators, National Security Adjudicators, and Suitability Adjudicators, which aligns training requirements across national security, suitability and credentialing.
- Issuance of the Federal Investigative Standards (FIS), which align investigative requirements for suitability and national security, building upon previous investigative work, and avoiding duplication, where possible.
- Clarifying guidance to the position designation process using the Position Designation Tool. The tool aids in the classification of national security positions regardless of a requirement for access to classified information (i.e., law enforcement officers).

While there have been improvements in some areas, we must continue to focus on the way forward. In a nutshell, the enterprise must become more nimble, agile,

modern, and reflective of advancements in information technology. While we have been engaged in implementing and refining ongoing security reform initiatives, we must continue to pursue opportunities to revolutionize the way we do business. A developing initiative is the “Trusted Workforce 2.0.” Trusted Workforce 2.0 is an enterprise effort, in concert with partner organizations, which will bring together key senior leadership, change agents, and innovative thinkers to chart a bold path forward for the security, suitability, and credentialing vetting enterprise.

While significant reform progress has taken place for our vetting processes, we still have substantial challenges that necessitate concrete and transformative action to directly reshape both the pace and scope of improvement in this arena to implement revolutionary change. We will review with a “clean slate,” and a forward-leaning approach, how we might best effectively and efficiently deliver a trusted workforce in the future. Trusted Workforce 2.0 begins in earnest this month.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee. I will be happy to address any questions.