

**Statement for the Record of Courtney Simmons Elwood  
before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence  
April 26, 2017**

Chairman Burr, Vice-Chairman Warner, Members of the Committee – It is an honor to appear before you today as the nominee to be General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency.

I want to thank President Trump and Director Pompeo for their trust and confidence in me. I also want to thank Senator Kaine for introducing me. It was a great privilege to meet not just one, but both, of my home-state Senators as part of this process.

I would like to use this opportunity to tell you more about me and what I view as essential qualifications for a CIA General Counsel.

I come from a national security family. My father devoted his life to the Marine Corps and to this country. He spent 36 years in uniform, seeing active combat in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. There is little doubt that *good intelligence* kept him and his men alive during those years. He would later write of the “remarkably good intelligence” brought by bold foreign agents during his fight at the Chosin Reservoir.

When Dad returned home from Vietnam in 1971, he formed the Marine Corps’ history division, which he led for 24 years. He was a prolific author of military histories – and supported the work of many other military historians. He did so because he believed that there were lessons to be learned from the great achievements and the mistakes of U.S. warfare . . . lessons that future generations must not forget.

My mother, in her own way, was no less brave and tough than her Marine husband. She overcame poverty and more than her share of life’s adversities to have a career in the Foreign Service before marrying and raising our family.

The lessons around our kitchen table were about personal responsibility, honor, and valor. We were taught to adhere to our principles, even if it comes at great personal or professional sacrifice. We were taught there is a clear difference between right and wrong. And we heard stories about America’s place in the world, as a force for good.

If my parents were alive today, they would take great pride in my being considered for this position. Thanks to them, I believe that I have some of the necessary qualifications.

Chairman Burr has spoken eloquently of the first prerequisite – *unwavering integrity*. In addressing Director Pompeo’s fitness for his position, Chairman Burr rightly observed that because the CIA “is an agency that works in the shadows,” it “requires a leader to be unwavering in integrity, who will ensure that the organization operates lawfully, ethically, and morally.” I believe the same holds true for its General Counsel.

I hope and believe that people who know me well would tell you that I am person of integrity. I have certainly lived my life with that goal at the forefront of my mind.

A second prerequisite for the job is *independence*.

There have been times in my life where it would have been easier for me to go-along-to-get-along, or to “be for what’s going to happen.” I have not done so. When the law or circumstances require, I have told clients and superiors things that they did not want to hear.

If I were not prepared to do the same in this job, I would not accept the challenge. And, if confirmed for this position, I will tell the attorneys of the Office that I expect the same from them.

But these qualities – integrity and independence – are already embedded in the culture of the CIA. The Intelligence Community has placed among its core values for all senior officers “the integrity and courage (moral, intellectual, and physical) to seek and speak the truth, to innovate, and to change things for the better, regardless of personal or professional risk.” [ICS 601-5]

It would be an honor to join a community that quietly lives those values, and to work side-by-side with the skilled and dedicated professionals who have labored in anonymity to keep this country safe.

Of course, an effective General Counsel of the CIA must also have strong legal skills. You have heard my background in this respect. I have had the privilege of many great teachers, mentors, and role models – more than I could possibly thank.

But today one stands above the rest, Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist, for whom I clerked.

The Chief showed us it was possible to adhere to your principles without alienating those who hold different views. A prime example is that Justice William Brennan considered Rehnquist to be his best friend on the Court. The Chief built warm personal relationships with all of his colleagues through his modesty and humor; by being unfailingly civil and fair; by focusing on points of agreement over disagreement; and by listening and making accommodations where possible. I have tried to follow his example in all parts of my life.

Finally, with your indulgence, I’d like to take a moment to [again] recognize my constant and shining example of all the attributes I’ve mentioned today . . . my husband of more than 20 years, John Elwood.

There are also two other people whom I’d like to mention and who are dearest to my heart – our two wonderful children. I hope that 50 years from now, they will look back at my service to this country with pride. So that I could give you my undivided attention, they have remained in school today.

So with that, I look forward to answering your questions.