

**Hearing before the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence**  
**Matthew G. Olsen**  
**Nominee for Assistant Attorney General for National Security**  
**July 20, 2021**

Chairman Warner, Ranking Member Rubio, and Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the nominee for the Assistant Attorney General for National Security.

I am grateful to the President for his confidence in nominating me to this important position.

I am joined here today by my son Nate, my sisters Susan and Jenna, and my nephews. I would like to take a moment to remember my parents. I was born in North Dakota and we moved to Washington when I was young, so my dad could work for the member of Congress from North Dakota. My mom was a school nurse. In my family, public service has always been the highest calling.

Exactly ten years ago, in July 2011, this Committee considered my nomination to become the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center. At the time, we were approaching the tenth anniversary of 9/11. Today, as we approach the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that day, the work of protecting the nation remains as demanding and urgent as ever.

We now face a dynamic landscape of threats and adversaries that poses new challenges and complexities. These include combatting domestic and international terrorism, countering malicious cyber activity by foreign adversaries, and ensuring confidence and integrity in the use of our intelligence authorities.

Congress created the National Security Division to lead the Justice Department's national security efforts and to foster coordination and unity of purpose across law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Congress also directed the Assistant Attorney General for National Security to serve as the Department's primary liaison to our intelligence agencies.

I believe my experience has prepared me to take on the responsibility of leading the Division at this critical time. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting its extraordinary career public servants who are dedicated to securing our country with fidelity to our founding values. They are our greatest source of strength in combating these threats.

I began my career in the Justice Department almost 30 years ago as a trial attorney in the Civil Rights Division. I then served as a federal prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney's office in Washington, D.C., for over a decade.

The terrorist attacks on September 11 changed the course of my career. I became Special Counsel to the FBI Director to support the FBI's post-9/11 transformation. In 2006 I returned to Main Justice as the senior career official in the new National Security Division, overseeing the Department's intelligence work and the implementation of Congress's landmark changes to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. I served as the General Counsel of the National Security

Agency and, from 2011 to 2014, as the Director of NCTC. Since leaving government, I have worked in the private sector on countering cybersecurity threats to U.S. companies.

I know from all of this experience, that the National Security Division works on many critical fronts to protect the nation.

First, terrorism. Recent intelligence community assessments have shown the increasing urgency of combatting terrorism motivated by domestic violent extremism. And even as we investigate and prosecute threats posed by domestic terrorists, we must remain alert to the threats of international terrorist groups like ISIS and al-Qaida. If confirmed, I will work with Justice Department leadership to remain vigilant against all of these threats, without regard to ideology. Our mission is to disrupt, investigate, and prosecute all those who would seek to attack the United States.

Next, the National Security Division plays an important part in safeguarding critical infrastructure and public and private networks against cyberattacks by our adversaries, especially hostile nation state actors. If confirmed, I will work alongside leadership in the Justice Department, the Department of Homeland Security, and Intelligence Community, as well as with foreign and private sector partners, to deter, disrupt, and prosecute those responsible for these types of attacks.

The Division also has important responsibilities for the vital national security tools authorized in the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. It is imperative that the government maintain the trust of the public, of the Congress, and of the FISA Court in the accuracy and integrity of the FISA process. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the intelligence activities carried out on behalf of the American public are consistent with our Constitution, our laws, and our values.

The members of this Committee and Congress play a critical role in intelligence oversight, in preserving the trust of the American people, and in advancing the security of the nation. If confirmed, I pledge to be a true partner to Congress and this Committee.

I look forward to answering the Committee's questions.

Thank you.