

**HEARING TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATION  
OF MR. NICHOLAS J. RASMUSSEN TO SERVE  
AS DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL  
COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER**

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**HEARING**  
BEFORE THE  
**SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE**  
OF THE  
**UNITED STATES SENATE**  
**ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS**  
SECOND SESSION

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2014

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**HEARING TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATION  
OF MR. NICHOLAS J. RASMUSSEN TO SERVE  
AS DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL  
COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER**

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2014**

U.S. SENATE,  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE,  
*Washington, DC.*

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 3:22 p.m. in Room SD-562, Dirksen Senate Office Building, the Honorable Dianne Feinstein (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Committee Members Present: Senators Feinstein, Chambliss, Warner, Heinrich, King, Burr, Risch, Rubio, and Collins.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. DIANNE FEINSTEIN,  
CHAIRMAN, A U.S. SENATOR FROM CALIFORNIA**

Chairman FEINSTEIN. Let me just say to the soon-to-be Chairman of this Committee that this is not my usual way of operation. I like to be on time. We got into a bit of a problem in the caucus, and I just wanted to say that to you.

The Committee will come to order. We meet today in open session to consider the President's nomination of Mr. Nick Rasmussen to be the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center or, as we call it, NCTC. Mr. Rasmussen is well known and respected by the Committee. He has appeared numerous times in closed session as the Deputy Director of NCTC and, since Matt Olsen's resignation, as the Acting Director. It is my intention, pending today's session, to move this nomination quickly to the Senate and seek his confirmation before our adjournment in December.

Mr. Rasmussen has been the Deputy Director of NCTC since 2012. Prior to this, he served from 2007 to 2012 as the Senior Director for Counterterrorism at the National Security Council. He is well versed in terrorist threats to the United States and the growth of terrorist groups around the country.

Mr. Rasmussen's government service goes back to 1991, with a series of positions at the Department of State, the NSC, and NCTC. Mr. Rasmussen, I enjoyed reading in the background materials for this hearing that public service is part of your family, and I'm pleased to welcome your family here who have been in public service as well.

I know that I speak for the Vice Chairman of the Committee, Senator Chambliss, who regrets he can't be here with us today, and for myself when I say that we need a full-time, Senate-confirmed

Director of the National Counterterrorism Center as soon as possible. I won't go into the threats to our Nation, but they will go into the record, and it's clear I think to all of us who deal in this situation, with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL in Iraq and Syria, we continue our efforts to defeat Al-Qaeda in the FATA of Pakistan, and the number of AQ affiliates and other terrorist groups across the world is growing.

So it is a real problem and it is escalating. These groups now have safe havens in Syria, in Libya, across other parts of North Africa, and in many places on line. The threat from ISIL, the Khorasan Group, AQAP in particular, pose a direct threat to the United States homeland, both from external attack and from directed and inspired lone wolf attacks from within the United States.

The NCTC needs to be at the front of our efforts to identify these attacks, as it has done many times in the past. At the same time, the Director of NCTC is the National Intelligence Manager for Counterterrorism and the official in charge of government-wide strategic operational planning to defeat terrorism.

So, Mr. Rasmussen, you have a big job before you. I've gone through the answers to the questions that you've submitted. I see no problem whatsoever, but it's a great pleasure to welcome you and your family here today.

I would like to ask unanimous consent to put into the record the letter of support for Nick's nomination from former NCTC Directors Mike Leiter and Matt Olsen, Admiral William McRaven, former Director, FBI—former Deputy FBI Director Sean Joyce, and former Deputy National Security Adviser Juan Zarate.

In the interest of moving forward, let me stop, welcome the nominee, and ask Senator Burr for his opening statement.

[Letters received by the Committee regarding the nomination of Mr. Rasmussen follow:]

**SSCI# 2014 - 3346**

**Michael Evan Leiter**  
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...

November 15, 2014

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Chairman  
Select Committee on Intelligence  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss  
Vice Chairman  
Select Committee on Intelligence  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Feinstein and Vice Chairman Chambliss:

I write to provide my enthusiastic endorsement for the nomination of Nicholas J. Rasmussen as Director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC). As a former director of NCTC, as well as a supervisor and colleague of Nick's, I can think of no person more qualified and suited to take NCTC's reins during this critical period. In my view Nick has the intellect, experience, temperament, and integrity that is necessary to be an exemplary Director.

On the first point, Nick is simply brilliant. His knowledge of terrorism and critical regions like Syria and East Africa is both deep and broad. He has an incisive and inquisitive mind that represents the best of critical thinking. His appreciation for how regional dynamics influence terrorist movements lends a sophistication that is rarely found in counterterrorism circles. In short, he is a first class mind and the American people will benefit from these intellectual gifts if Nick is confirmed.

Second, Nick's experience make him an ideal leader of NCTC. Having served at the Center twice before is of course helpful. But equally if not more important Nick's service at the Department of State and the National Security Council are indispensable experiences for bringing all members of the counterterrorism community together. If one looks at all counterterrorism professionals in the U.S. Government since 9/11, Nick is surely at the head of the class when it comes to understanding the many organization that must work together to help protect the United States and our allies.

Third, Nick's temperament is ideal for the admittedly high pressure--and high stakes--of being the Director of NCTC. Nick is calm in the most tumultuous of storms and his easygoing manner has enabled him to navigate the trickiest of bureaucratic rivalries. His many friends from multiple Administrations, both Democratic and Republican, are testament to his ability to forge both friendships and professional partnerships. This will undoubtedly continue should he be confirmed.

Last but most certainly not least Nick is of the highest integrity. I can think of no trait more important for the Director of NCTC, who must provide hard truths to the President, Congress, and many others. Nick has the integrity to push aside any political or untoward pressure and speak the truth as he understands it.

In sum, I have the utmost confidence that should the Senate confirm Nick, the NCTC will be in extraordinarily able hands. Nick is a fine leader who I believe will continue to ensure that NCTC fulfills its critical mission in service of the American people.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of any further assistance to the committee.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Leiter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "M".

Michael Leiter  
Director, NCTC (2008-2011)  
Acting Director, NCTC (2007-2008)

**SSCI# 2014 - 3346**

Matthew G. Olsen  
9608 Old Spring Road  
Kensington, MD 20895  
(240) 780-6226

November 16, 2014

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Chairman  
Select Committee on Intelligence  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss  
Vice Chairman  
Select Committee on Intelligence  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Feinstein and Vice Chairman Chambliss:

*Re: Letter of Recommendation for Nick Rasmussen*

This letter is in support of the President's nomination of Nick Rasmussen for the position of Director the National Counterterrorism Center.

I have known Nick for the past several years, first in his role as the Senior Director for Counterterrorism for two Administrations and then for the past two and a half years as the Deputy Director of NCTC. Based on my first-hand experience working with Nick, I can say without reservation that there is no finer public servant or more worthy candidate for this position.

Nick possesses the professional and personal attributes that make him uniquely qualified to serve as the next Director of NCTC. First, he has a wealth of relevant substantive experience in counterterrorism. For over a decade, Nick has served at the forefront of our nation's counterterrorism efforts. As the Deputy Director of NCTC during my tenure as Director, Nick's expertise was indispensable. We worked side-by-side to integrate and analyze terrorism information and to inform the development of counterterrorism actions and policies. In his former role as senior staff member on the National Security Council, Nick gained an unsurpassed understanding of the evolution of the terrorism landscape and the diverse threats facing the country. Moreover, Nick's status as an expert is widely recognized among intelligence agencies and across the government. His superb reputation has been an asset for NCTC as the organization has established its central role in the counterterrorism community.

Second, Nick is a proven leader. As Deputy Director of NCTC, he effectively balanced the daily challenge of tracking tactical threat information and, at the same time, driving strategic change for the Intelligence Community. He consistently has led NCTC's analytic efforts to monitor and assess developing plots and threats, making sure that this work met the highest possible standards for rigor and objectivity. He also developed and implemented a vision for collaboration and partnership across counterterrorism agencies to ensure that our efforts are synchronized and effective. Beyond these attributes, Nick is regarded as a go-to leader both within NCTC and throughout the government. He attained this status first during his time at the NSC, where he established his reputation as a well-informed and objective senior staff member and leader of interagency coordination meetings. Nick further demonstrated his leadership capabilities in guiding and building the NCTC workforce, which responded enthusiastically to Nick's steady leadership during my time as Director.

Third, Nick is a dedicated and selfless public servant. Since starting with the State Department, Nick's overriding professional goal has been to work tirelessly to protect the country. Without hesitation, he has taken on some of the toughest challenges in government. Nick's dedication is evident in his many years of work at the NSC to organize our counterterrorism efforts, including the hunt for Osama bin Laden. This spirit is also evident in his devotion to NCTC and his efforts to lead the organization to fulfill the role that Congress envisioned ten years ago in establishing the Center. Nick was one of the original NCTC staff members, helping to set up the Center a decade ago. His willingness to lead NCTC now is further proof of his commitment to service and our country's security.

A closing note: Nick holds himself to the highest possible standards for integrity and professionalism. Every decision he makes is based on the facts. I have seen firsthand that he rigorously analyzes threat information and informs policy discussions without regard to politics or personal views. And he demands this same approach from everyone around him. This gives Nick the credibility and stature to lead other elements of the counterterrorism community. This reputation also means that this Committee and the rest of Congress can always count on Nick to be an absolutely reliable source of information to help inform the many difficult decisions that lie ahead.

In sum, in my view, Nick is the right person to serve as the next Director of NCTC and to lead the Center into its next decade of service. Please feel free to contact me if I can provide any additional information as the Committee considers Nick's nomination.

Sincerely,



Matthew G. Olsen

SSCI# 2014 - 3346

November 14, 2014

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Chairman  
Select Committee on Intelligence  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss  
Vice Chairman  
Select Committee on Intelligence  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Feinstein and Vice Chairman Chambliss:

Let me cut to the chase. I have known Nick Rasmussen since October 2001 when we served together in the Office of Combatting Terrorism on the National Security Council staff. I can say, without hesitation, that no one—absolutely no one, is better qualified to lead the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), than Nick Rasmussen! Nick is the consummate professional. He is wickedly smart, incredibly hardworking, one of the most dedicated public servants I know and, he's just one hell of a good guy.

Nick and I spent 2001-2003 on the NSC drafting policy and strategy for the war on terrorism. When I departed in 2003 to go the Joint Special Operations Command, Nick stayed on and continued through the Bush administration and into the new Obama administration. We continued to stay in close contact even while I was deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Nick quickly became recognized as a true expert on counterterrorism (CT) and was pulled over to NCTC to work in the Office of Strategy, Operations and Plans. While at his first NCTC assignment, he reached out to everyone in the interagency and to the military CT practitioners to get their thoughts on how best to frame the CT problem and the possible solutions. It was his willingness to engage outside NCTC that earned him the respect of everyone he encountered.

After some time at NCTC, it was apparent that the Administration needed him back in the Office of Combatting Terrorism. When he returned to the National Security Council it was in the role of the Senior Director, one of the most influential CT positions in government. Once again, Nick demonstrated that he was a "big tent" guy and he worked broadly, across the interagency, to provide the President the best advice possible on counterterrorism operations. During my three years as the Commander of the Joint Special Operation Command (JSOC), Nick Rasmussen was invaluable in

getting the support from the White House to conduct some of the most important and consequential missions in the history of military CT. Nick, of course, was also a critical player during the planning and execution of the operation to get Osama bin Laden. It was Nick Rasmussen that provided me the guidance and counsel I needed as I interacted with the President and members of the NSC.

Nick's time on the NSC staff and in NCTC put him at the center of Deputy's and Principal's Committee Meetings on CT where he was exceptionally good at articulating the problem, outlining options, and helping drive the solutions. Policy makers listened to Nick's advice because it was so thoughtful and so very well presented.

Since departing the NSC in 2012, Nick has been serving as the Deputy at NCTC and once again, his ability to work across the interagency, to see the "big picture" and to make progress where others might have failed is a credit to his experience, his inclusiveness and his dedication.

I have had the honor of working with the finest CT professionals in the Nation. We are blessed as country to have so many dedicated men and women working this challenging issue, but of all the people I have worked with, none are finer than Nick Rasmussen! I strongly urge the Committee to confirm Nick as soon as possible.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very respectfully,



William H. McRaven

Admiral, (Retired)

SSCI# 2014 - 3346



The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Chairman  
Select Committee on Intelligence  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss  
Vice Chairman  
Select Committee on Intelligence  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

14 November 2014

Dear Chairman Feinstein and Vice Chairman Chambliss:

I was pleased to hear that Nick Rasmussen was nominated as the next Director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) by President Obama. I have known and worked with Nick for approximately five years in my former positions as Executive Assistant Director of the National Security Bureau and as Deputy Director of the FBI.

Nick has been a dedicated public servant for many years and is well respected within the intelligence community (IC). Nick brings an open mind, deep experience, and integrity to a vital position within the IC that we all depend on to predict and identify threats to our national security. In my interaction with Nick, he has displayed exceptional interpersonal skills and has handled difficult situations with poise and determination. Nick is an outstanding communicator and has the ability to distill many concepts and facts into a clear and concise picture – a unique and valuable trait within NCTC. Also, Nick shares the values important to you and your fellow committee members: honesty, teamwork, and a commitment to protecting the American people. Last, Nick is a leader. He has held various positions with both formal and informal authority and has exhibited the skills necessary to bring a team together and accomplish the mission.

Senator, I want to thank you and the other Committee members for considering this appointment. I hold Nick in high regard and know, if confirmed, he will be an exemplary public servant.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. M. Joyce", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sean M. Joyce  
Partner for the Firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP  
Sean.Joyce@us.pwc.com

**SSCI# 2014 - 3348**

**THE HONORABLE JUAN C. ZARATE**  
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November 17, 2014

**The Honorable Dianne Feinstein**  
Chairman  
Select Committee on Intelligence  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

**The Honorable Saxby Chambliss**  
Vice Chairman  
Select Committee on Intelligence  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

**RE: Nomination of Nicholas J. Rasmussen as Director, NCTC**

**Dear Chairman Feinstein and Vice Chairman Chambliss:**

**I am writing to support enthusiastically the confirmation of Nicholas J. Rasmussen to be the next Director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC).**

**I have known and worked closely with Nick since 9/11, and consider him a close colleague and friend. No one is more prepared than Nick to take on the challenges of being the next NCTC Director in a period of dangerous and more diverse terrorist threats. If confirmed, Nick will serve the country well -- with integrity, ingenuity, and passion for NCTC's mission of protecting the country.**

**Nick is a longtime counterterrorism professional, having served in senior roles for three different Presidents at the National Security Council (NSC). He has served at NCTC twice, initially helping with its founding in 2004, and then most recently as the Deputy Director. In 2007, I asked Nick to return to the NSC to work with me when I was serving as the Deputy National Security Advisor for Combating Terrorism and the Deputy Assistant to President George W. Bush. It was Nick's standing in the counterterrorism community, his deep understanding of the evolution of our counterterrorism architecture and policies, and his unparalleled expertise and integrity that made his selection clear.**

Nick served as the Senior Director and helped us lead and shape policies and strategies in the final months of the Bush Administration, especially as we looked to transition these policies to a new administration in 2009. I relied on Nick's solid judgment, instincts, and expertise to manage our broad portfolio of transnational and terrorism threats – including emerging regional groups and threats, the challenge of piracy off the coast of East Africa, the rescue of American hostages in Colombia in July 2008, and America's response to the Mumbai terror attacks in November 2008.

When hiring Nick, I knew that he would represent critical continuity and institutional memory within the White House as we transitioned to a new administration and that any new team would need and want to rely on Nick. And the Obama Administration did. Nick served President Obama and then Assistant to the President John Brennan through the transition until June 2012, when he returned to NCTC as the Deputy Director. At the White House, he was a source of stability and sober professionalism during a period of political transition. Nick led the Counterterrorism Security Group (CSG) and supported some of the most important counterterrorism policies and measures in this period, including the operation that led to the death of Usama bin Laden.

Nick's nearly two decades of experience give him deep insights into the changes in the counterterrorism threat environment and the shifts in our policies and strategies to counter global terrorism. This is a critical time to have an experienced leader like Nick running NCTC. He understands intimately the substance, policy, and processes of America's counterterrorism work. In recent years as a member of the NCTC Director's Advisory Board, I have been impressed with the leadership Nick has provided NCTC as its Deputy Director. Nick understands the pivotal role NCTC plays for the intelligence and counterterrorism communities as threats morph, as well as its role in the policymaking and planning arenas.

Nick has always commanded the respect of the counterterrorism community and those with whom he has worked. His experience at the State Department, NCTC, and the White House, along with his strong relationships on both sides of the aisle, have deepened the confidence and trust people have in Nick. Importantly, he has earned the respect and admiration of the NCTC workforce, having risen through the ranks of the young institution while treating everyone with respect and dignity.

Nick has lived through some of the most dangerous times in our country's history and has always proved reliable, calm, and measured in his management of the terrorist threat. He has done so with integrity – always committed to substance and the counterterrorism mission. He will be a candid and serious partner to you and Congress in securing the country.

I have the utmost confidence in Nick and am proud to say that I know and have worked with him. As a father, husband, and private citizen, I sleep better at night knowing he is leading NCTC.

If confirmed, Nick is poised to take on the role of NCTC Director, and I respectfully encourage you and the Senate to confirm him without hesitation.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for your time, attention, and service to our country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Juan C. Zarate", written in a cursive style.

Juan C. Zarate

○ SSCI# 2014 - 3396

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November 18, 2014

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The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Chairman  
Select Committee on Intelligence  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss  
Vice Chairman  
Select Committee on Intelligence  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Feinstein and Vice Chairman Chambliss:

I understand that you are holding a hearing this week to consider President Obama's nomination of Nicholas Rasmussen as Director of the National Counterterrorism Center. I am writing to strongly support Nick's nomination and confirmation. I have known Nick for two decades and have worked closely with him on a number of occasions on the most sensitive of issues and operations. Nick's character, integrity, management skills, temperament, and experience make him superbly qualified to serve as Director of the NCTC.

I worked most closely with Nick during the 4 1/2 years that I served as Principal Deputy National Security Advisor and National Security Advisor to President Obama. During that period Nick served as Senior Director for Counterterrorism on the National Security Council staff. Nick, who had served in the same role on President Bush's NSC staff, was the indispensable person in formulating and implementing the President's counterterrorism strategy. He was really the heart and soul of our counterterrorism efforts and coordinated the analysis and operations of all relevant departments, agencies, and global partners while leading his own team at the NSC. His professionalism was evident in many successful operations, including the raid on Osama Bin Laden's compound in Abbotabad.

Nick has a solid grasp of the complex policy issues we face in the counterterrorism arena while at the same time deep experience in all the operational aspects of the nation's counterterrorism efforts. The President relied repeatedly on Nick's firm grasp of the risks and possibilities of a number of operations. A key reason that so many of us from the President on down looked to Nick's judgment is his integrity. Nick can be counted on to defend the nation, but always act consistent with the nation's laws and values.

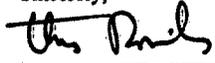
O'MELVENY & MYERS LLP  
November 18, 2014 - Page 2

Nick has strong relationships with the institutions that are key to an effective counterterrorism effort. He works well and closely with the intelligence, military, and policy communities. And finally, Nick knows the organization he is being nominated to lead as well as anyone either serving at NCTC or working closely with NCTC for a decade.

Nick is an outstanding nominee and if confirmed will be an outstanding Director of the NCTC. I support his nomination in the strongest terms.

I am available to speak to you or your staff at any time to discuss the nomination.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Donilon

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**SSCI# 2014 - 3306**

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November 18, 2014

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Chairman  
Select Committee on Intelligence  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss  
Vice Chairman  
Select Committee on Intelligence  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Recommendation of Nicholas J. Rasmussen

Dear Chairman Feinstein and Vice Chairman Chambliss:

I write this letter in unqualified support for Nicholas Rasmussen's nomination for the position of Director of the National Counterterrorism Center.

Having worked in the law enforcement and national security fields at the Justice Department and the White House for 20 years, I was blessed to be colleagues with many exceptional public servants. Nick Rasmussen was a stand-out even among that group.

Nick and I worked closely together in 2008-2009, when I served as Homeland Security Advisor and he was the Senior Director for Counterterrorism on the National Security Council staff. Nick had been in position for a while before I came to the White House, and I quickly identified him as a go-to person. He has that rare combination of experience, knowledge and judgment that made him both a valuable day-to-day resource and an invaluable advisor during times of crisis. He also has the good judgment, the openness to different opinions and the humility we need in those we entrust to make critical national security decisions.

In addition, Nick is completely focused on the national security mission and conducts himself without regard to politics or political considerations. He is a career professional in the truest sense, and he has no agenda other than the safety and security of the American people.

Over the years, Nick has earned the trust and admiration of multiple National Security and Homeland Security Advisors and other high-level officials in the White House and the Intelligence Community. He has served with exceptional distinction as the Deputy Director at

CADWALADER

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
The Honorable Saxby Chambliss  
November 18, 2014

NCTC, and I have absolute confidence that he will continue to prove himself a credit to the Intelligence Community as NCTC Director.

Please feel free to contact me if you should have further questions about Nick's qualifications. I am honored to speak on his behalf.

Sincerely,



Kenneth L. Wainstein

Senator BURR. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Nick, let me first say that I want to thank you for your many years of government service at the State Department, the White House, the ODNI, and at NCTC. And I thank you for the time that you spent with me the other day and your insight into the areas of interest that we had an opportunity to talk about.

I'd like to welcome your wife, your parents. I know all three of you are proud of the progress of his career and I thank you for sharing him with the country, because it is invaluable.

Over the last 10 years, you've focused primarily on analyzing the terrorist threat to our country and devising policies to address those threats. NCTC is going to need your experience in the years to come. 13 years after 9-11, we continue to face Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, Al-Qaeda affiliates in Somalia, Yemen, North Africa, Syria, and now the Indian subcontinent. Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al-Shabab in Somalia, ISIL and Al-Nusra Front in Syria and request, and the list goes on and on and on and on.

These groups raise money via criminal acts, growing business enterprises, and in some cases state sponsorship. Extremists with technical degrees, special skills and expertise, building IEDs or being lured to support complex attack plotting. Western fighters, to include Americans, are exploiting local and regional conditions to train extensively before returning home.

Here at home, we face the threat by home-grown violent extremists, extremists who often utilize the information and connections from on-line and plan smaller-scale simple plots that are harder to detect. These terrorists are capable, well organized, well financed, and they aspire to attack U.S. persons and facilities abroad and at home. The terrorist threat is more distributed and complex than ever before. We no longer have the luxury of focusing our attention on one group or on one region.

You're being asked to lead our Nation's primary agency for integrating and analyzing all intelligence related to the terrorist threat and you do have your work cut out for you. This Committee will endeavor to provide you with the resources you need to address the threat and to keep our Nation safe. But the truth is that we're going to have to make some difficult choices in the years to come. NCTC is a capable organization with excellent people. I fully expect you to lead an effective agency, under our watchful eye. But I can also assure you that, moving forward, we're going to challenge you to improve the center to search for efficiencies. We're going to ask tough questions and we're going to push you to be better, and I look forward to you giving us direct and candid answers.

I thank the chair and pledge on behalf of Vice Chairman Chambliss and this side of the aisle, Madam Chairman, that you can't move too fast on this nomination for us.

Chairman FEINSTEIN. Thank you very much.

Would you stand, please, Mr. Rasmussen. Would you repeat after me:

I, Nick Rasmussen, do solemnly swear that I will give this Committee the truth, the full truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God.

**TESTIMONY OF NICHOLAS J. RASMUSSEN, NOMINATED TO SERVE AS DIRECTOR, NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER**

Mr. RASMUSSEN. I, Nick Rasmussen, do solemnly swear that I will give this Committee the truth, the full truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God.

Chairman FEINSTEIN. Thank you.

Do you agree to appear before the Committee here or in other venues when invited?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Yes, ma'am.

Chairman FEINSTEIN. Do you agree to send officials from the NCTC and designated staff when invited?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Yes, ma'am.

Chairman FEINSTEIN. Do you agree to provide documents or any other materials requested by the Committee in order for it to carry out its oversight and legislative responsibilities?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Yes, ma'am.

Chairman FEINSTEIN. Will you ensure that the NCTC and its officials provide such material to the Committee when requested?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Yes, ma'am.

Chairman FEINSTEIN. Do you agree to inform and fully brief to the fullest extent possible all members of this Committee on intelligence activities and covert actions, rather than only the Chairman and Vice Chairman?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Yes, ma'am.

Chairman FEINSTEIN. Consistent with past commitments from the Director of National Intelligence, will you promise to brief the Committee within 24 or 48 hours of any terrorist attack or attempted terrorist attack if requested by the Committee?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Yes, ma'am.

Chairman FEINSTEIN. Thank you very much. Please be seated, and we'd be interested in your opening statement.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Thank you, Madam Chair. Senator Feinstein, Senator Burr, and members of the Committee: Let me start by thanking you all very, very much for considering my nomination to be the next NCTC director. I also want to express my appreciation for the efforts of the Committee staff. I know there's a tremendous amount of work that goes into the preparation and review to support any confirmation hearing, and I'm very grateful.

I'd also like to recognize and introduce my parents, Mary Jo and Gary Rasmussen, and my wife Maria Rasmussen. Their love and support means everything to me and I'm very glad they're here with me today.

As you remarked, Madam Chair, I've briefed this Committee several times, as recently as last week, in closed session in my capacity as the Deputy Director of NCTC. But this is my first opportunity to appear before the Committee in open session and I truly welcome that opportunity.

I'm honored by the President's trust and confidence in my ability to continue to serve in our national counterterrorism enterprise. Public service came naturally to me growing up in the Washington area, as I had to look no further than to my own family for example and inspiration. My father Gary and my mother Mary Jo moved to northern Virginia and Fairfax City from Wisconsin in 1962 so

that my father could pursue a career in public policy. He was a career Federal employee, beginning at Department of Agriculture, working here on Capitol Hill for a short time as a junior staff member on the House side, and then retiring almost 40 years later as the most senior career official at the Department of Education.

My mother was for a time a public school teacher in Fairfax County, while also playing an extremely active role in our local church and serving for over ten years on the board of the Northern Virginia Community College. Among my siblings, I have one who is an active duty military officer with two tours of duty in Afghanistan and another brother who proudly works in local government in Fairfax and volunteers in his church community. Again, everything I ever needed to learn about public service and public commitment I learned first-hand from my immediate family.

I obviously have a long way to go before serving in government as long as my father, but I am currently on year 23 of my own public service career. I started my Federal Government career while I was a student at Wesleyan University, worked as an intern at the Department of Defense, working on the Korea Desk. After finishing graduate school at Princeton, I joined the Department of State as a Presidential Management Intern, a PMI, just as the United States was liberating Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm.

During my tenure at the State Department, I was given many, many extraordinary opportunities, whether it was working on efforts to dissuade North Korea from pursuing nuclear ambitions, establishing a formal structure to implement the Dayton Peace Accords in Bosnia, or, latest in my State Department career, working towards a lasting resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

But my career took a sudden turn in mid-2001 when I accepted a position on the National Security Council staff working on terrorism issues. My first day on the job was Monday, September 17, 2001, six days after the 9-11 attacks.

Since that day 13 years ago, I have been singularly focused for every day of my career on the Nation's counterterrorism efforts. Those years include career positions at the White House under both Presidents Bush and Obama and at NCTC under Directors Brennan, Redd, Leiter, and of course Matt Olsen, who asked me to serve as his Deputy in June of 2012. Over those years, I've seen what I believe are vast improvements in our counterterrorism capabilities, structures, and policies. But that said, significant challenges remain and there is much, much work to be done. This is what makes the work of the men and women at NCTC so central to our national security. It's exactly why I would very much like the opportunity to lead them and to serve alongside them as their director.

The U.S., the United States, working with our allies and partners, has made great strides in dismantling the Al-Qaeda organization that attacked us in September 2001, but the relationship threat we face continues to evolve, as both of you indicated in your opening remarks. As the President said in May at West Point, "For the foreseeable future," quote, "the most direct threat to America at home and abroad remains terrorism."

As the Committee well understands, instability in the Levant, the broader Middle East, and across North Africa has accelerated

the decentralization of the Al-Qaeda movement. The movement's once global focus under Usama bin Laden is now increasingly being driven by local and regional conflict and factors. All across these unstable regions, we are confronting a multitude of threats to the U.S. and our interests, from longstanding, well-known terrorist groups, but also from newer and much more loosely connected networks of like-minded violent extremists who operate without regard to national borders or established organizational norms.

This Committee, better than almost any audience I ever engage with, understands in great detail the diverse and multifaceted threat picture we face from Al-Qaeda and its various affiliates. That threat picture also includes other Sunni terrorist groups, to include ISIL. It also includes Shia-aligned groups like Hezbollah and Iran's Quds Force. It even includes home-grown violent extremists who live amongst us here inside the United States.

So to sum up that threat picture, in my view we face a broader array of threats from a greater variety of terrorist groups and individual actors than at any point since 9–11.

Further complicating this threat picture are, of course, our losses in collection as a result of unauthorized disclosure, the spread of extremist messaging via social media in new and different ways, and the need we face to balance technology-based analytic tools with people-focused, human resource-intensive, eyes-on analysis.

If I'm confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to working and helping the counterterrorism community overcome these challenges in the years ahead.

Ten years ago, when Senator Susan Collins and Senator Joe Lieberman first put pen to paper in what would become the Intelligence Reform and Testimony Prevention Act of 2004, most in the country truly believed that a second large-scale catastrophic attack in the homeland was possible, perhaps even probable in the near term. Today the threat we face is quite different from then and I would argue that we are far better equipped to respond to it than we were perhaps in 2004.

Earlier this year, as NCTC commemorated its tenth anniversary, we were very honored to host both authors of that landmark legislation in our auditorium. Senator Collins, you told the assembled workforce, quote: "There's no doubt that information-sharing is far superior to what it was prior to the passing of the law in 2004, and there's no doubt that the talented workforce here at NCTC has made a huge difference." Unquote. Senator, I'm not sure that you could see the crowd very well through the stage lights at the auditorium there, but I can assure you that the members of our workforce at NCTC were beaming with pride when they heard your words.

Ten years later, Senator Collins, I firmly believe that we can declare that your vision, that the Congress's vision for NCTC, has in fact taken hold. That vision called for an integrated and motivated NCTC workforce, fully empowered with access to the right information, and armed with the best training and tools. I believe that vision for NCTC is growing stronger every day.

Yet, we all know this is no time for complacency, for self-satisfaction, either at NCTC or anywhere else in the CT community. We understand well that significant challenges remain. The terrorist

adversaries we face are persistent and adaptive, and so we too must learn and change and get better and improve every day. We must match and exceed their determination to attack us with our own will to make certain that they don't succeed.

In the current position I have as Deputy Director and now Acting Director, I'm reminded of 9-11 and the threat we face every single day. If confirmed by the Senate, I would bring the focus and urgency borne of that terrible day 13 years ago to everything I do as Director. I would aim to ensure the best and brightest continue to fill our ranks at NCTC and I would aim to ensure that they are equipped with the tools and the training they need to meet the terrorist threat.

In my 23 years in government service, I've worn a number of hats, working in a number of difficult government organizations. No label means as much to me personally over that time as the label "member of the counterterrorism community." Every day I'm privileged to work with truly outstanding friends and partners all across that CT community—at FBI, at CIA, NSA, the Defense Department, Homeland Security, Justice, State, and the Treasury, with our State and local partners around the country, with our international partners, at the White House, and here on Capitol Hill, with you and with your staff.

The job for which I've been nominated demands very much, but I'm thankful for the loving support of my family, my wife Maria, my parents; and I'd like to take this rare opportunity to thank her and to thank them publicly today. They've always been there to support me as I've pursued my career.

Madam Chair, I've been part of the NCTC family since its inception in 2004. Even when serving President Bush and President Obama for several years on the NSC staff at the White House, I still felt very personally connected to the remarkable organization at NCTC, its vital mission, its uniquely qualified workforce, and its terribly critical place within the intelligence community. There's no place in government where I would rather serve.

Chairman Feinstein, Senator Burr, Senators, thank you as always for your steadfast support for the women and men who work every day at NCTC and for considering my nomination to be its next Director. I look forward to your questions. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Rasmussen follows:]

**Hearing to Consider the Nomination of Mr. Nicholas J. Rasmussen  
to Serve as Director of the National Counterterrorism Center**

**Mr. Nicholas J. Rasmussen  
Acting Director, National Counterterrorism Center  
Statement for the Record  
November 20, 2014**

Chairman Feinstein, Vice Chairman Chambliss, and members of the Committee, let me start by thanking you all very much for considering my nomination to be the next Director of the National Counterterrorism Center. I also appreciate the efforts of the Committee staff, as I know there is a tremendous amount of preparation and review that goes into any confirmation hearing. Given the Senate's busy schedule and the many competing demands you face, it is clear the importance you bestow upon this position and I am grateful.

I would also like to introduce my parents, Mary Jo and Gary Rasmussen, and my wife, Maria Rasmussen. Their love and support means everything to me and I am very glad they are here with me today.

I have briefed this committee several times in closed, classified session in my capacity as NCTC's Deputy Director, but this is my first opportunity to testify before you in open session. I truly welcome this opportunity today. On several occasions I have cited this summer's report from the 9/11 Commissioners and its encouragement of government officials to speak openly and publicly about the threat we face and the actions we're taking to prevent terrorist attacks. I consider this public hearing to be one such opportunity and look forward to describing the threat and the challenges we face in a few moments.

I am honored by the President's trust and confidence in my ability to continue to serve our nation's counterterrorism enterprise. Public service came naturally to me as I had to look no further than to my own family for example and inspiration. My father Gary and my mother Mary Jo moved to northern Virginia in 1962 from Wisconsin so that my father could pursue a career in public policy. He was a career federal employee, beginning at the Department of Agriculture, then working here on Capitol Hill for a short time as a junior staff member, and retiring almost 40 years later as the most senior career official at the Department of Education. My mother was -- for a time -- a public school teacher in Fairfax County, while playing an active role in our local church as well as serving for over a decade on the board of the Northern Virginia Community College. Among my siblings, I have one active duty military officer with two tours of duty in Afghanistan and another who proudly serves his community by working in local government and by volunteering in his church community. Again, everything I ever needed to learn about public service and commitment, I've learned first-hand from my immediate family.

Although I have long way to go before serving as long as my father, I am currently on year 23 of my public service career. While a student at Wesleyan University, I started my

federal government career as an intern in the Department of Defense, working for then-Assistant Secretary for International Security Affairs Rich Armitage on the Korea Desk in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. After finishing graduate school at Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, I joined the Department of State as a Presidential Management Intern just as the United States was liberating Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm. My first portfolio was focused on the Arabian Gulf region. I was humbled to work alongside some of our country's most talented and dedicated national security practitioners as they focused on creating a stable security architecture for that critical region.

Throughout my tenure at the Department of State, I was given many extraordinary opportunities, whether it was working on efforts to dissuade the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from continuing its nuclear ambitions, establishing a structure to implement the Dayton Peace Accords in Bosnia, or working towards a lasting resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Then in mid-2001, I accepted a position on the National Security Council staff working for Richard Clarke, the National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection, and Counterterrorism at that time. My first day on the job was Monday, September 17, 2001, six days after the 9/11 attacks.

Since that day thirteen years ago, I have been singularly focused on our nation's counterterrorism efforts every day, moving between career positions at the White House under Presidents Bush and Obama, and at the National Counterterrorism Center under Directors Brennan, Redd, Leiter, and of course Matt Olsen who selected me as his Deputy in June 2012. Over these years, I have seen vast improvements in our counterterrorism capabilities, structures and policies. That said, significant challenges remain.

The United States, working with allies and partners across the globe, has made great strides in dismantling the al-Qa'ida organization that attacked us in September 2001, but as the 9/11 Commissioners noted in their July report, "the terrorist threat is evolving, not defeated." In fact, the President said as much in his May address to the graduating class at West Point, noting that, "For the foreseeable future, the most direct threat to America at home and abroad remains terrorism." This is what makes the work of the men and women at the National Counterterrorism Center so central to our national security, and why I would very much like the opportunity to lead and serve alongside them as their Director.

As this Committee is well aware, instability in the Levant, the Middle East, and across North Africa has accelerated the decentralization of the al-Qa'ida movement. The movement's once global focus under the direction of Usama bin Laden is now increasingly being driven by local and regional factors and conditions. All across these regions, we are confronting a multitude of threats to the United States and our interests and allies overseas: from longstanding established terrorist groups to new and much more loosely connected networks of like-minded violent extremists that operate without regard to established organizational norms or national borders. As I noted in public testimony before another Senate Committee in September, this less centralized, more geographically dispersed threat is likely to result in more frequent low-level attacks against U.S. and Western interests overseas.

Most notably, the threat from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant—or ISIL—persists, with that ISIL threat being most acute in Iraq, Syria, and the surrounding region. But attacks either linked to or inspired by ISIL in Belgium and Canada, and recent arrests in Europe and Australia demonstrate that the threat beyond the Middle East is real, although thus far limited in sophistication. However, if left unchecked, over time we can expect ISIL's capabilities to mature, and the threat to the United States homeland ultimately to increase.

In addition to ISIL, we are also very concerned about the threat from the Syria-based Khorasan Group. The counterterrorism community is continuously updating our assessments on the threat posed by the Khorasan Group to account for the impact of our military strikes. We remain particularly concerned about threats to commercial aviation from this group as well as from al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula, which has tried three times in the past five years to take down commercial passenger and cargo aircraft destined for the United States.

In addition to the high priority groups and networks I have already mentioned, the counterterrorism community works every day to understand and counter threats from a range of other terrorist groups, many of which receive less public attention. These include Sunni terrorist groups active in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, as well as Shia-aligned groups such as Lebanese Hezbollah and the Iranian-backed Qods force.

Despite the array of threats we face from international terrorist groups, our analysts at NCTC have assessed for the past three years that the most likely immediate threat here in the United States is that of a relatively unsophisticated attack from a homegrown violent extremist (HVE), probably inspired or motivated by the Sunni extremist narrative that is so pervasive on the Internet. HVEs make use of a dynamic, evolving online environment to connect themselves virtually to a global movement of Sunni violent extremists. The threat these individuals pose to Americans here at home is being fueled by the conflict in Syria and Iraq and is proving particularly difficult to disrupt.

Thus, the terrorist threat persists, and challenges abound. Further complicating the threat picture are losses in collection as the result of unauthorized disclosures, the spread of extremist messaging via social media, and the need to balance technology-based analytic tools with people-intensive eyes-on analysis. If confirmed by the Senate, I look forward to helping the counterterrorism community overcome these challenges in the months and years ahead.

Madam Chairman, I have been part of the NCTC family since its inception in 2004. Even when serving on the National Security Council staff at the White House, I still felt personally connected to this remarkable organization, its vital mission, its uniquely qualified workforce, and its terribly critical place within the Intelligence Community. There is no place in government where I would rather serve.

Ten years ago, when Senators Susan Collins and Joe Lieberman first put a pen to the paper that would become the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004—effectively codifying the existence of a National Counterterrorism Center—the country still believed a large-scale, catastrophic attack was possible, even probable in the near term. Earlier this year, as NCTC commemorated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we were honored to host both Senators in our auditorium, where they spoke to the workforce about the many obstacles they faced in bringing about true intelligence reform. For NCTC, they envisioned an integrated and motivated workforce with broad access to information in support of a single counterterrorism mission. Ten years later, I firmly believe we can declare their work to have been a success. That vision has taken hold, and I believe it is growing stronger every day. Yet this is no time for complacency or self-satisfaction, either at NCTC or elsewhere in the counterterrorism community. Our terrorist adversaries are persistent and adaptive, and so too must we learn and change and improve every day.

In my current position, I am reminded of 9/11 and the threat we face every day. If confirmed, I would bring the focus and urgency born of that day to all of my efforts as Director. I would continue to build upon the joint nature of the Center and improve our information sharing at the federal, state and local levels and with key foreign partners. I would ensure the best and brightest continue to fill our ranks, and are equipped with the tools and training they need to meet the terrorist threat. They—and their colleagues throughout the intelligence, law enforcement, diplomatic, homeland security and military communities—are our best defense as a nation.

In my 23 years of government service, I've worn a number of hats: intern, State Department and NCTC officer, NSC staffer, and now most recently, Senior National Intelligence Service officer. But none of those labels means as much to me personally as does the label "member of the Counterterrorism Community." I am privileged every day to work with truly outstanding friends and partners all across that CT Community—at FBI, CIA, NSA, at the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, Justice, State, and Treasury, with our state and local partners, with our international partners, at the White House and here on Capitol Hill as well.

The job for which I have been nominated demands much, but I am thankful for the loving support of my wife Maria and the rest of my family, who have been and will continue to be there to support me.

Chairman Feinstein, Vice Chairman Chambliss, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your consideration of my nomination, and I look forward to your questions.

Chairman FEINSTEIN. Thank you very much. That was excellent. Thank you very much.

Mr. Rasmussen, in your written statement for the record you wrote, and I quote: "Attacks, either linked or inspired by ISIL, in Belgium and Canada, recent arrests in Europe and Australia, demonstrate that the threat beyond the Middle East is real, although thus far limited in sophistication. However, if left unchecked, over time we can expect ISIL's capabilities to mature and the threat to the United States homeland ultimately to increase."

Could you expand on NCTC's view of the threat from ISIL to the extent you can here in an unclassified setting, please?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. I'd be happy to, Madam Chair. I tend to think of the threat ISIL poses currently as being somewhat in concentric circles. Because their capability is greatest in Iraq and Syria right now, I think our personnel there are potentially greatest at risk, particularly in Iraq, where our embassy security is, of course, as you know, a serious concern.

In the front-line states around Iraq and Syria—Jordan, Turkey, Syria—Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia—there also we worry that ISIL has the capability and ability to potentially carry out attacks, to identify and mobilize personnel who could engage in attacks against U.S. personnel and interests.

Beyond that, the next ring, the next outer ring I would look at, is into Western Europe, where the very language that you cited in your question indicates that ISIL looks at Europe as a potential theater of operations where it may carry out attacks against Western interests.

Then lastly, the homeland, where we certainly believe that ISIL has aspirations over time to develop the kind of capability it would need to carry out a homeland attack. At this point, though, we assess that we're far more at risk presently of attack from an individual home-grown violent extremist who may be inspired by, but not necessarily directed by, ISIL here in the homeland.

Then the point about if left unchecked; we worry that the longer ISIL is left unchecked and is allowed to pursue and develop a safe haven, the more that capability is allowed to grow to carry out attacks in each of those theaters that I mentioned.

Chairman FEINSTEIN. Thank you.

I saw in your responses to our pre-hearing questions that you wrote that'll be hiring more than 40 officers this year. It's my understanding that, in addition to these 40, NCTC still has many vacant positions it needs to fill. So the question is, with respect to contractors, which we have some concerns about, how do you plan to fill the vacant spots at NCTC?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. First of all, thank you, Madam Chair. The support NCTC receives from this Committee in our efforts to maintain the best possible workforce could not be better. We're very grateful for that.

Chairman FEINSTEIN. We'll keep it going.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. The numbers you cite of 40 individuals who we're looking to hire this year reflects what we call ODNI cadre, people who are hired and work in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. As you know and as most of the Committee knows well, NCTC has a blended workforce which includes perma-

ment cadre employees, but also detailed personnel from other intelligence community, and not just intelligence community, but other government organizations as well. To me that is the real lifeblood of NCTC, the expertise, the talent that we get from other departments and agencies.

Chairman FEINSTEIN. Well, will the 40 be essentially transfers? Will they be a mix, and if so—

Mr. RASMUSSEN. 40 will be new cadre direct hire. At the same time, in parallel we're pursuing an accelerated effort to try to get our detailee numbers up, for exactly the reason I just said: We need the talent that comes from other intelligence community partners. All of those partners are willing and very strong, strong supporters of NCTC as an enterprise. The challenge comes year in and year out as you try to keep the numbers up. They have their own staffing needs. In a period of budget uncertainty, they themselves sometimes struggle to meet their own internal efforts to staff themselves. So it's a constant dialogue with them, as I would say, it's a very positive dialogue with them, to make sure we can get talented officers from places like FBI, CIA, and other partners in the intelligence community.

Chairman FEINSTEIN [continuing]. Thank you.

Senator Burr.

Senator BURR. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Nick, the Committee, as you know, is charged with providing vigilant oversight. A couple of questions that really go in line with what the Chairman had you rise and raise your hand and swear to. Would you agree that the Committee, to conduct effective oversight, that we should have access to the intelligence products produced by the intelligence community and in some cases be provided with the raw reporting that contributed to that analysis?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Yes, I believe that in some specific cases it would make sense to have access to that reporting.

Senator BURR. Will you commit to providing the Committee complete and timely access to all NCTC products, reporting, and staff, if necessary, to assist in our oversight responsibility?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Yes.

Senator BURR. I won't get into staffing because I think you covered that with Senator Feinstein. Earlier this week, the Institute of Economics and Peace released its 2014 Global Terrorism Index. The report indicates that the deaths from terrorism are at an all-time high. Significantly—specifically, the number of deaths attributed to terrorism is five times higher than it was in 2000, and we've witnessed a 61 percent increase in the last year alone.

Would you agree that the threat from terrorism is at an all-time high?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. I think as measured in the array, variety, and dispersion of terrorist threats across many different regions, the answer is certainly yes.

Senator BURR. What is NCTC as the executive agent for our Nation's strategy against terrorism going to do about it?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. The role that NCTC plays in carrying out strategic operational planning in support of the government is one that has us tied very closely to the National Security Council staff and the policy development percent for pursuing strategies on counter-

terrorism. We work with the National Security Council staff to develop whole of government plans to address our counterterrorism concerns in each of the theaters around the world, not just one single theater. As you would well expect, Senator, the effort to develop strategies against ISIL is at a particularly energetic pace right now. But our strategic operational planning capability is also brought to bear on the whole array of CT challenges we face in Africa, in Asia, in South Asia, every region you can think of.

So I would consider our job at NCTC to make sure that we aren't leaving any holes in that fabric of strategy as we look out across all of the different CT challenges that we face, while at the same time prioritizing where effort needs to be most energetically directed. That of course right now would argue for a lot of effort to be directed at the challenges we're facing in Syria and Iraq.

Senator BURR. Are you confident that NCTC can discover and are enabled to disrupt plots here in the homeland?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. I would say that our ability to detect and potentially disrupt a plot involving a complex objective with a number of terrorist actors and a fair amount of communication, I would assess our odds as being very, very good at being able to detect and disrupt that, that kind of plotting.

The more the plotting looks like what you and Chairman Feinstein talked about in terms of being an individual lone wolf actor, perhaps with no direct connection or even indirect connection to an overseas terrorist group, perhaps only a self-radicalized individual working alone on the Internet to develop his own capabilities, that decreases pretty dramatically our ability to use traditional CT tools to detect and potentially disrupt. So it's hard to guarantee you or give you extreme high confidence that we would be able to detect and deter, disrupt, that kind of attack.

Senator BURR. Do you think the administration and-or Congress should do more publicly to let the American people know the threat from terrorism and the fact that it's growing, not declining?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. I would certainly agree with you, Senator Burr, and that's one of the reasons why this hearing being in open session I think is such a good thing. The 9-11 Commissioners during the past year, as they reviewed where we are this many years later, one of their calls was on the policy community to speak more often, more publicly, more forthrightly about the threat environment that we face. I would certainly look to contribute to that in my own way from NCTC.

So much of what we do is necessarily in closed session and with you, with your staff, but there are certainly opportunities where we can speak more directly, particularly to the homeland aspects of the threat, which I referred to a minute ago, and the presence of home-grown violent extremists and the threat they pose to our communities.

Senator BURR. Nick, last question. In your response to the Committee's pre-hearing questions, you indicated that big data was one of NCTC's biggest challenges. The IC and the United States Government as a whole are really struggling with that challenge. At NCTC, however, the correlation of big data is a life and death matter. I'm concerned that this issue doesn't receive the proper attention and resources at NCTC.

Can you assure us that you'll make this a top priority and that this effort will get the attention it needs?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Senator, you're right to point to this issue as being one of our biggest challenges, and I can commit to you wholeheartedly to embrace this as one of my top priorities. On his way out the door, during his last couple of months of service at NCTC, Matt Olsen directed the creation inside NCTC of an office, of a new office, an Office of Data Strategy and Innovation, to do a better job than we thought we were doing of organizing our short, medium, and long-term vision in terms of how to make best possible use analytically of the data we have access to.

Some of that will also involve developing new technological tools, taking advantage of broader efforts by the DNI, by Director Clapper, to create a new architecture for terrorism and for intelligence information for the entire intelligence community. We hope to leverage NCTC's work as an early benefactor of that work to create a more cloud-based architecture for intelligence information across the IC.

Senator BURR. I thank you for that and I hope you'll keep the community updated on the progress that we make on that.

Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman FEINSTEIN. Thanks very much.

Senator COLLINS.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

First of all, congratulations on your appointment, which I think is an excellent one. I appreciate very much that the President chose to put a career expert in this vital position and I thank you very much for your generous comments about the role that former Senator Joe Lieberman and I played in creating the NCTC.

I do hope that you'll let this Committee know if you encounter difficulties in getting detailees who are well qualified and experienced to come work at NCTC. I know it's very hard for other components of the intelligence community and the FBI to let go of some of their most talented analysts, but for NCTC to be fully effective in these very dangerous times it is essential that we achieve that goal of jointness by having those detailees. So please do not hesitate to come to the Chairman, Ranking Member, any of us, if you do anticipate problems in that area.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. I will. Thank you.

Senator COLLINS. One of the findings of the 9-11 Commission was that border security and immigration were not seen as national security concerns prior to the attacks on our Nation on 9-11-01. The 9-11 Commission specifically found that 15 of the 19 hijackers could have been intercepted through more diligent enforcement of our immigration laws.

As the Acting Director of the NCTC, were you or any of your staff asked to scrub the President's proposals for immigration changes that he will be announcing tonight?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. To my knowledge, NCTC or any of the personnel at NCTC were not involved in any effort? I'm not aware of whether there was elsewhere in the intelligence community such an effort, but not at NCTC, ma'am.

Senator COLLINS. When President Obama created the 2009 Guantanamo Review Task Force to evaluate which detainees could

be transferred or released from Guantanamo, as I recall the head of NCTC was the executive director of that task force; is that correct?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Yes. In prior service, Matt Olsen held that position as chair of the task force.

Senator COLLINS. Matt Olsen has told me that when the decision was made to exchange what have become known as the Taliban 5 for the release of Sergeant Bergdahl, that NCTC was not consulted in that decision. To your knowledge, was anyone at NCTC consulted?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. My understanding is that in the context or in the process of moving to the transfer of those detainees there was a request for an intelligence assessment from the ODNI, from the intelligence community, and such an assessment was in fact prepared. It was prepared by another element of the ODNI, not at NCTC.

Senator COLLINS. And that was despite the fact that the NCTC was acting as the executive director for the commission?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Well, I would—

Senator COLLINS. Or for the task force.

Mr. RASMUSSEN [continuing]. Matt had that role in a previous, at a previous time. In the current processes that the administration is following for considering transfer of detainees, NCTC is being asked typically to produce threat assessments of what impact on security the potential return of a detainee may have. That did not happen in the case of the issue you're referring to, madam.

Senator COLLINS. I just want to be clear on this. So the normal process is for NCTC to be involved in putting together the package that is used by decisionmakers on how to classify the detainees; is that part correct?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. That's correct.

Senator COLLINS. But in the case of the Taliban 5 the NCTC was not asked to put together a new analysis that went beyond the previous analysis, which according to press reports found that these detainees were too dangerous to be released; is that correct?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Again, we did not have direct involvement in the production of the intelligence assessment.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Again, I want to thank you for your willingness to serve in what is a 24-7 very demanding job, and I think we're very fortunate to have someone with your background and expertise.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator COLLINS. Thank you.

Chairman FEINSTEIN. It looks like this is going to be a tough vote.

Senator Rubio.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

I too want to—

Chairman FEINSTEIN. For TV, I was jesting.

Senator RUBIO [continuing]. Thank you for your service to our country and congratulations on your appointment, and we look forward to moving forward quickly.

Let me ask you a number of questions that are of interest to me and I think to everyone on the Committee. The first has to do with

the planned reduction in U.S. commitment to Afghanistan and the growing concern that that would have implications on our ability to conduct effective counterterrorism operations in the region. There's been one success in all of this has been the ability to erode core Al-Qaeda's presence, for example in the FATA. If we lose territory in Afghanistan back to the Taliban, we could very easily be once again in a position where many of those elements reconstitute strength in an ungoverned space somewhere in Afghanistan. If the government is no longer capable of exercising presence in that region and with less of a U.S. commitment, that could be accelerated.

What are your thoughts on the current plans to draw down forces in Afghanistan and the impact it would have on our counterterrorism efforts?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. As an intelligence community, we also are concerned about what potential effect the drawdown of U.S. forces may have on the ability of Al-Qaeda to regenerate capability, particularly in the northeastern parts of Afghanistan. The effort to train and equip a competent Afghan national security force is an important part of the effort to make sure that there is a capability to disrupt potential activity inside Afghanistan. We of course will maintain as robust as possible an intelligence collection framework to allow us to continue to monitor, track, and if necessary disrupt Al-Qaeda resurgence in that part of Afghanistan or certainly in Pakistan. But it will be a more challenging and more difficult collection environment than we face today.

Senator RUBIO. My second question has to do with Iran. There's been a lot of talk about some sort of deal with regard to their nuclear ambitions and the relaxation of sanctions against them. What has not been discussed enough is that Iran is the world's leading sponsor of terrorism as a state, and certainly any economic growth and prosperity that would come about as a result of the relaxation of sanctions I believe would have an impact on their ability to fund and expand their already robust sponsorship of terrorism around the world.

I was hoping you could share some thought with us, not just about what Iran does now, but what they might be able to grow and do if in fact these sanctions are relaxed and they have more access to global capital, more money basically, to sponsor these operations.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. The willingness and ability of Iran to support various Shia terrorist groups has always been very, very high on the list of concerns of the counterterrorism community and the intelligence community. One of the pathways to addressing that challenge has been to try to get Iran out of the business of thinking that carrying out those kind of acts advances their national interest, and ultimately they would see that as self-defeating and not advancing their interests.

So I guess, speaking personally, in my own personal analysis anything that puts us in a position where we are more effectively dealing with Iran in a normal way would reduce the incentive for them to use that proxy network of Shia terrorist groups that they do in fact have at their disposal. There's no doubt, Senator, you're absolutely right, the capability of the terrorism apparatus sponsored by Iran is something that is threatening to the United States,

not just in the region, in the Middle East, but all around the world and even potentially here at home.

So I would place a priority in trying to, not necessarily seek to defeat that terrorism apparatus on the battlefield, as we have in our efforts against Al-Qaeda, but in effect trying to take them out of the business in some other fashion. That's how I would think about it. But there's no question, as we watch and worry about how Sunni-Shia tensions in the Middle East play out and how our interests in the region are put at risk by Shia-sponsored terrorist groups. But the focus on Iranian intentions will continue and be a very high priority.

Senator RUBIO. Your statement about putting them out of the business of sponsoring terrorism, it calls to mind the potential that any sort of sanctions relaxation perhaps should be linked not just to a nuclear program, but to their sponsorship of terrorism, as a leverage point to get them to abandon those sorts of things.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. I can't speak to the policy context in which we would relax sanctions.

Senator RUBIO. Thank you.

Chairman FEINSTEIN. Thanks, Senator Rubio.

Senator King.

Senator KING. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Rasmussen, I have been to your office, I've been to the CIA, I've been to the Pentagon, and have traveled recently, and the one major conclusion I have taken from those visits is the incredible quality of the people that we have working for us. They're patriotic, idealistic, smart, and capable. And you're Exhibit A today, and I just want to thank you, and I'm honored to serve this country along with you and your colleagues, and I hope you'll take that word back.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Thank you, Senator. I really do appreciate that.

Senator KING. We've talked about this before. Here's my concern, and I urge you—I know that in the day to day work you're focusing on threats and attacks and dealing with fires around the world, and that's your basic mission. But we have to be thinking more strategically and long-term, it seems to me. We cannot simply kill these people and call that the solution to the worldwide terrorism problem.

I'm looking—I remember from the fifties we had the containment strategy of George Kennan, that really worked with the Soviet Union. It took a long time, but it worked. And it was a strategy. It was a conscious, deliberate, well-developed strategy. I urge you to work with your colleagues, with the think tanks, with Rand Corporation or Brookings, whoever, to really work on a strategy for dealing with this problem other—in addition to the military response.

Do you have any thoughts on that?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. It's a terrific suggestion, Senator, and obviously the expertise about how to carry out effective counterterrorism policy does not reside only within the government. As you alluded to, research organizations, think tanks, not just in Washington, but all around the country and all around the world, have a role to play in helping us get this right.

The strategies that we try to help produce at NCTC in support of the National Security Council staff in my answer to Chairman Feinstein are typically whole of government strategies, not just relying on our intelligence capabilities or our military capabilities, but also trying to take advantage of the abilities, the resources we have across the government, to try to produce the conditions that would over time eat away at support for terrorism in some of these conflict locations overseas.

At the same time, we all go into it understanding well that those efforts will ultimately take years, if not decades, to play out and for us to reap the benefits of those kinds of strategies, and in the mean time you're left to manage a very difficult threat environment.

Senator KING. I just want to be sure that we're not simply putting out the fires. We've got to put out the fires, but we also have to be thinking long-term, it seems to me. Otherwise we're in for a 100-year war.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Exactly right, sir.

Senator KING. This morning at a hearing at the House Intelligence Committee, an open hearing, I should mention, NSA Director Rogers said: "There shouldn't be any doubt in our mind that there are nation states and groups out there that have the capability to forestall our ability to operate our basic infrastructure, whether it's generating power or whether it's moving water and fuel."

How concerned are you about terrorist groups using their own capacity or what I call hackers for hire to attack our infrastructure? How serious is the cyber attack threat?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. I would agree with the NSA Director in what he said this morning. I think, as I understand it, the threat he's referring to is more acute from state actors at present than from individual terrorists or established terrorist groups.

Senator KING. Well, ISIL has shown a pretty good capability with the Internet.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Exactly, and it's certainly a capability they aspire to develop and exercise. So, knowing that, we're looking for ways to be ahead of them, both in our ability to defend our infrastructure, but also in our ability to detect key individuals who are engaged in that kind of activity and disrupt their activities.

Senator KING. Edward Snowden, you alluded to this. You didn't use the word. Isn't it true that we've lost a lot of capability in terms of tracking some of these groups because they have gone dark, in part based upon their awareness that was given to them by the Snowden revelations, and that's compromised our ability to protect ourselves?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. I would agree with you. Not just the Snowden disclosures, but other disclosures of classified information and our collection capabilities, have caused our terrorist adversaries to adapt, to look for new ways of doing business, to find new platforms, to go dark in some cases, or just simply, as I said, find new ways in an attempt to keep us in chase mode as they move from potential platform to potential platform.

This is an ongoing challenge for the intelligence community. I know our colleagues at NSA are particularly focused on this. But you're absolutely right, sir.

Senator KING. And it's a particularly serious danger because, in my view, with the terrorist threat intelligence is the first line of defense. These aren't people that we can line up the Army or the Navy and shoot. We need to know where they're coming and when, and intelligence is really—that's why it's so absolutely critical.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. I would agree with you, sir.

Senator KING. Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairman FEINSTEIN. And thank you, Senator.

Senator—I was going to say "Warner"—Heinrich. Excuse me, Martin.

Senator HEINRICH. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Rasmussen, I want to thank you for being here today and for all of your public service. As you can see, you have an enormous amount of respect from this body. I wanted to ask you. Given your experience with the National Counterterrorism Center really going back to its inception, it's clear that there are few in the Federal Government with your knowledge of the NCTC and its mission. In your responses to unclassified questions from the Committee, you talk a little bit about that unique role, particularly of NCTC analysis as outlined in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, as well as the mission objectives assigned to NCTC through the DNI's national intelligence strategy.

I want to dig a little deeper, if I can, into the unique nature of the analysis that NCTC does relative to that done by a number of other intelligence community agencies. As you know, even though NCTC is effectively the primary U.S. Government organization tasked to analyze terrorist organizations, there are several other agencies within the IC track and they analyze terrorists as well. Can you articulate for us, how is the analysis conducted by NCTC truly unique compared to that done by these other agencies?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. One element that puts NCTC in a unique position to carry out the best possible analysis of terrorism information is our access to the full body of that terrorism information. That was the unique insight of the IIRTPA, the effort to bridge the domestic-foreign intelligence divide. So an analyst sitting at NCTC will have access to whatever is available to the U.S. Government in terms of intelligence reporting from overseas collection efforts, as well as from domestic law enforcement investigations here at home, and that is not true of every other element of the intelligence community. So that puts NCTC, I would say, in a uniquely advantaged position.

Now, that obviously plays out, that advantage, plays out more profoundly when you're talking about homeland threats, where the bridge between domestic and foreign intelligence matters so much. I would not quibble at the talent, capability, or insight that analysts from most of my intelligence community partners could bring to the analytical effort on some of our key challenges overseas. During the period of—I'll just give one example. During the period of our extended military involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Defense Department, the Defense Intelligence Agency and their in-

telligence analysts were doing terrific work, most of it informed by time on the ground, and I would never do anything to suggest otherwise.

But to answer your question, I think it's access to information that makes that critical difference.

Senator HEINRICH. Would you characterize the most unique thing as being able to see a bigger picture from multiple sources, and particularly when we're talking about a combination of foreign and domestic?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Yes, I would.

Senator HEINRICH. In your response to questions from the Committee, you also discussed the growing importance of monitoring social media and exploiting big data in tracking terrorist threats and conducting analysis. In your comments you mentioned that technology could help, quote, "implement privacy and civil liberty protections beyond the current basic safeguards that are already in place."

Could you elaborate a little bit on what you mean by that, and also sort of describe for us the shortfalls as you see them in the privacy and civil liberties safeguards that are currently in place?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. I wouldn't so much describe it as shortfalls as much as—I guess what I was referring to with that answer, Senator, was the more we can do to automate and make happen technologically segregation of information, deletion of information, all of the things we commit to do as part of our adherence to the Attorney General guidelines, the more we can take the human element of that, where a human makes a mistake and inadvertently sees something, retains something, holds onto something that they did not have authorization to do, the more we can automate that process through technology and give ourselves the ability also to audit ourselves more effectively and therefore train more effectively, that's what I was trying to get at with that.

Senator HEINRICH. So it's more about technology and implementation effectiveness than any sort of change in authorizations?

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Exactly, because on those rare occasions when we have had something go awry in terms of handling of information, we have found that it has almost universally been a matter of human error rather than any intent to mishandle, misuse, or not protect information.

Senator HEINRICH. Thank you again.

Chairman FEINSTEIN. Thank you very much, Senator.

I believe this completes the questions. I would like members to know that it's my intention to vote on this nomination as soon as possible when the Senate returns. It may be off the floor after Thanksgiving. Any member should submit questions for the record by next Monday so we can have the answers by the time the vote is taken, please. And we will do our level best to move this just as quickly as we can, Mr. Rasmussen.

Mr. RASMUSSEN. Well, I'm very grateful for that, Madam Chair, and we'll commit to getting every answer back to you as quickly and as expeditiously as possible.

Chairman FEINSTEIN. That's fine. Can't do better than that. So thank you very much for being here.

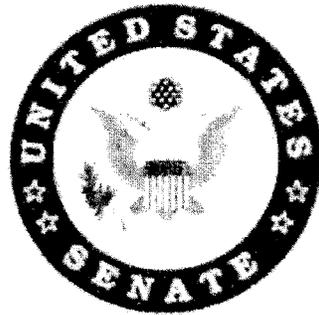
Mr. RASMUSSEN. Thank you.

Chairman FEINSTEIN. The hearing is adjourned.  
[Whereupon, at 4:13 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

## **Supplemental Material**

SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
INTELLIGENCE

UNITED STATES SENATE



QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMPLETION BY  
PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE  
UNITED STATES SENATE

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMPLETION BY  
PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES**

**PART A - BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

1. NAME: Nicholas J. Rasmussen
2. DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH: 02/28/1965 Fairfax County, VA
3. MARITAL STATUS: Married
4. SPOUSE'S NAME: [REDACTED]
5. SPOUSE'S MAIDEN NAME IF APPLICABLE: [REDACTED]
6. NAMES AND AGES OF CHILDREN:
- | <u>NAME</u> | <u>AGE</u> |
|-------------|------------|
| None        |            |

7. EDUCATION SINCE HIGH SCHOOL:

<u>INSTITUTION</u>	<u>DATES ATTENDED</u>	<u>DEGREE RECEIVED</u>	<u>DATE OF DEGREE</u>
Princeton University	1988 – 1990	Master's in Public/International Affairs	1990
Wesleyan University	1983 – 1987	B.A.	1987

8. EMPLOYMENT RECORD (LIST ALL POSITIONS HELD SINCE COLLEGE, INCLUDING MILITARY SERVICE. INDICATE NAME OF EMPLOYER, POSITION, TITLE OR DESCRIPTION, LOCATION, AND DATES OF EMPLOYMENT.)

<u>EMPLOYER</u>	<u>POSITION/TITLE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DATES</u>
ODNI/NCTC	Deputy Director	Liberty Crossing	2012 – Present
National Security Council Staff (on detail from ODNI/NCTC)	Sen Dir for CT	White House	2007 – 2012
ODNI/NCTC (initially on detail from State Department before being permanently hired by ODNI)	Chief, Strategic Assessment	Liberty Crossing	2004-2007

National Security Council Staff (on detail from State Department)	Director for Regional CT Affairs	White House	2001 -2004
Council on Foreign Relations (fellowship was considered a long term training assignment while at State Department)	International Affairs Fellow		2001
Department of State	Special Asst to Middle East Coordinator	State Dept.	1996-2001
Department of State	Special Asst to North Korea Coordinator		1994-1996
Department of State	Foreign Affairs Officer		1991 – 1994
Law firm of Stevens, Davis, Miller & Moser (temporary job after completion of graduate school pending security clearance from State Department)	Messenger/driver		1990
Department of State / US Embassy Manila	Summer Intern		1989
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace	Research Fellow		1988
Office of the Secretary of Defense	Intern		1987

9. GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE (INDICATE EXPERIENCE IN OR ASSOCIATION WITH FEDERAL, STATE, OR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, INCLUDING ADVISORY, CONSULTATIVE, HONORARY, OR OTHER PART-TIME SERVICE OR POSITION. DO NOT REPEAT INFORMATION ALREADY PROVIDED IN QUESTION 8):

All previous government experience is included in question #8.

10. INDICATE ANY SPECIALIZED INTELLIGENCE OR NATIONAL SECURITY EXPERTISE YOU HAVE ACQUIRED HAVING SERVED IN THE POSITIONS DESCRIBED IN QUESTIONS 8 AND/OR 9.

As set forth below, in the course of my 23+ years of government service, and particularly during the last 13 years when I have worked almost exclusively on terrorism and counterterrorism issues, I have gained significant experience with and perspective on terrorism related intelligence issues, including the analytic, operational, policy/strategy and management aspects of those issues.

NCTC Deputy Director

- Responsible for all aspects of NCTC operations and management, including serving as Acting Director when current Director is away.
- In support of the NCTC Director, responsible for setting the strategic direction and vision for NCTC workforce and leadership team.
- Responsible for representing NCTC in senior level interagency fora, with foreign partners, and with the Congress.

Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for CT, National Security Council Staff

- Managed and led team of 12 counterterrorism professionals providing staff support to the President, the National Security Advisor and the President's CT/Homeland Security Advisor on all aspects of intelligence, policy, strategy and operations related to terrorism.

- Conceptualized and developed CT strategies and policies. Managed and led the Counterterrorism Security Group (CSG), the primary Assistant Secretary level interagency policy coordinating body for CT issues.

Chief of Strategic Assessments, NCTC (and other senior positions at NCTC from 2004 – 2007)

- Participated in “standup” of NCTC, including creation of Directorate of Strategic Operational Planning.
- Drafted first NCTC Strategic Assessment of USG counterterrorism efforts.
- Advised NCTC Director on policy/strategy issues.

Director for Regional CT Affairs, National Security Council Staff

- Contributed to development of policy and strategy against al-Qa’ida and affiliated terrorist groups in the period directly after the 9/11 attacks.
11. HONORS AND AWARDS (PROVIDE INFORMATION ON SCHOLARSHIPS, FELLOWSHIPS, HONORARY DEGREES, MILITARY DECORATIONS, CIVILIAN SERVICE CITATIONS, OR ANY OTHER SPECIAL RECOGNITION FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE OR ACHIEVEMENT):

In 2000/2001, I was awarded an International Affairs Fellowship (IAF) by the Council on Foreign Relations. For the period Jan – Aug, 2001, I served as an IAF Fellow in Residence at the CFR offices in Washington DC. I terminated the fellowship in August 2001 in order to accept a detail assignment to the National Security Council staff.

During my tenure at the State Department, I was the recipient of multiple Superior Honor Awards, both for individual and team accomplishment.

While serving at NCTC, I was awarded The NCTC Director’s Award in 2005, as well as several performance awards.

12. ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS (LIST MEMBERSHIPS IN AND OFFICES HELD WITHIN THE LAST TEN YEARS IN ANY PROFESSIONAL, CIVIC, FRATERNAL, BUSINESS, SCHOLARLY, CULTURAL, CHARITABLE, OR OTHER SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS):

<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>OFFICE HELD</u>	<u>DATES</u>
None		

13. PUBLISHED WRITINGS AND SPEECHES (LIST THE TITLES, PUBLISHERS, BLOGS AND PUBLICATION DATES OF ANY BOOKS, ARTICLES, REPORTS, OR OTHER PUBLISHED MATERIALS YOU HAVE AUTHORED. ALSO LIST ANY PUBLIC SPEECHES OR REMARKS YOU HAVE MADE WITHIN THE LAST TEN YEARS FOR WHICH THERE IS A TEXT, TRANSCRIPT, OR VIDEO.) IF ASKED, WILL YOU PROVIDE A COPY OF EACH REQUESTED PUBLICATION, TEXT, TRANSCRIPT, OR VIDEO?

My only published writing consists of a short, opinion-editorial piece related to the Middle East peace process published in the Los Angeles Times during the time when I was serving as a Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations during the spring of 2001. I am prepared to provide the Committee with a copy of the publication.

On several occasions as NCTC Deputy Director, I have given speeches or appeared at conferences as a panelist on a counterterrorism (CT)-related panel discussion. None have been formally published as speeches, but I have attached prepared remarks for five such events which took place in a public setting where press or other attention might have been generated.

## **PART B - QUALIFICATIONS**

### 14. QUALIFICATIONS (DESCRIBE WHY YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE QUALIFIED TO SERVE IN THE POSITION FOR WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN NOMINATED):

I believe I have the experience and qualifications necessary to serve as Director of NCTC based on over 20 years of service in the national security field.

The first phase of my career – spent in the State Department from 1991 through 2000 – provided me with exposure to some of our nation’s most challenging national security issues, including North Korea nuclear ambitions, the Middle East Peace Process, and our efforts to create stable security architecture in the Arabian Gulf region after the first Gulf War. These experiences allowed me to develop critical thinking and analytical skills which proved transferrable as my career progressed and I began working in the CT field.

In the period since 9/11, I have held a series of demanding, high-impact positions in organizations dedicated to protecting the American people from terrorist attack, advancing our efforts to disrupt and defeat our terrorist adversaries. I have gained a tremendous amount of experience with terrorism-related issues and demonstrated the leadership, collegiality and professional integrity required to run a large organization with a critical mission. I have a deep understanding of terrorism-related subject matter, including the gaps we have in our understanding of terrorism and terrorism organizations.

My prior service on National Security Council staff (2001-2004) and later at NCTC (2004-2007) provided me with several years of intensive training and experience in the details of CT policy, strategy and analysis, beginning in the aftermath of the 9/11 attack. Working in an often highly pressurized environment, those earlier periods of service afforded me the opportunity to develop crisis management skills by observing our most senior officials in action.

Immediately prior to my service as NCTC Deputy Director, I served as Senior Director for Counterterrorism at the National Security Council staff at the White House. In this capacity, I served both President Bush and President Obama in their efforts to develop CT strategies and policies aimed at defeating al-Qa’ida and mitigating the full range of terrorist threats to U.S. interests. For approximately four years, I chaired the Counterterrorism Security Group (CSG), the Assistant Secretary level policy committee that meets weekly to review terrorism threats and to develop appropriate policy responses.

Leadership of the CSG required that I have an in-depth understanding of the capabilities, resources and authorities resident within each of the key federal agencies/departments engaged in CT work, including the departments/agencies that are part of the Intelligence Community. It also required that I develop and maintain a network of productive professional relationships with key CT leaders across the federal government. That network of professional peers and colleagues continues to serve me well in my current position at NCTC, and I have no doubt that my relationships with these peers/colleagues would deepen and expand if I am confirmed by the Senate to serve as NCTC Director.

As Deputy Director and now as the Acting Director of NCTC, I have spent the last two years fully immersed in all aspects of NCTC’s missions. As our highest priority, the NCTC Director and I ensured that all available terrorism information was analyzed and assessed and shared as appropriate with the widest possible set of partners, customers and consumers. I represented NCTC and the Intelligence Community in hundreds of interagency meetings aimed at mitigating threats to U.S. interests and developing more effective CT policies and strategies. The result has been, in my view, a growing sense that NCTC is at the cutting edge of the federal government’s response to the challenge of terrorism.

In the wake of specific terrorism-related incidents affecting U.S. citizens or interests, I have led internal NCTC processes to review critically our own performance and capabilities and to identify and develop concrete ways in which we can more effectively carry out our CT mission. I have sought to inculcate in our workforce a desire to constantly improve and enhance our performance and our support to our CT partners.

During the last year, I have led efforts to establish NCTC as a center of gravity for the national CT effort, placing greater emphasis on our efforts to collaborate, cooperate and add value. As part of that effort, NCTC's Director and I recently created an Office of Data Strategy and Innovation, which we have charged with the task of making sure NCTC is at the cutting edge of our nation's efforts to extract maximum analytic value from the terrorism-related information we have at NCTC. If confirmed by the Senate and given the opportunity to serve as Director of NCTC, I believe I would be well positioned to advance NCTC's organizational growth and development, and to make a meaningful contribution to our national security through my leadership of NCTC's extremely talented and dedicated work force.

### **PART C - POLITICAL AND FOREIGN AFFILIATIONS**

15. POLITICAL ACTIVITIES (LIST ANY MEMBERSHIPS OR OFFICES HELD IN OR FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OR SERVICES RENDERED TO, ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ELECTION COMMITTEE, POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE, OR INDIVIDUAL CANDIDATE DURING THE LAST TEN YEARS):

None

16. CANDIDACY FOR PUBLIC OFFICE (FURNISH DETAILS OF ANY CANDIDACY FOR ELECTIVE PUBLIC OFFICE):

None

17. FOREIGN AFFILIATIONS

(NOTE: QUESTIONS 17A AND B ARE NOT LIMITED TO RELATIONSHIPS REQUIRING REGISTRATION UNDER THE FOREIGN AGENTS REGISTRATION ACT. QUESTIONS 17A, B, AND C DO NOT CALL FOR A POSITIVE RESPONSE IF THE REPRESENTATION OR TRANSACTION WAS AUTHORIZED BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IN CONNECTION WITH YOUR OR YOUR SPOUSE'S EMPLOYMENT IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE.)

A. HAVE YOU OR YOUR SPOUSE EVER REPRESENTED IN ANY CAPACITY (E.G. EMPLOYEE, ATTORNEY, OR POLITICAL/BUSINESS CONSULTANT), WITH OR WITHOUT COMPENSATION, A FOREIGN GOVERNMENT OR AN ENTITY CONTROLLED BY A FOREIGN GOVERNMENT? IF SO, PLEASE FULLY DESCRIBE SUCH RELATIONSHIP.

No

B. HAVE ANY OF YOUR OR YOUR SPOUSE'S ASSOCIATES REPRESENTED, IN ANY CAPACITY, WITH OR WITHOUT COMPENSATION, A FOREIGN GOVERNMENT OR AN ENTITY CONTROLLED BY A FOREIGN GOVERNMENT? IF SO, PLEASE FULLY DESCRIBE SUCH RELATIONSHIP.

No

C. DURING THE PAST TEN YEARS, HAVE YOU OR YOUR SPOUSE RECEIVED ANY COMPENSATION FROM, OR BEEN INVOLVED IN ANY FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS WITH, A FOREIGN GOVERNMENT OR ANY ENTITY CONTROLLED BY A FOREIGN GOVERNMENT? IF SO, PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS.

No

D. HAVE YOU OR YOUR SPOUSE EVER REGISTERED UNDER THE FOREIGN AGENTS REGISTRATION ACT? IF SO, PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS.

No

18. DESCRIBE ANY LOBBYING ACTIVITY DURING THE PAST TEN YEARS, OTHER THAN IN AN OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT CAPACITY, IN WHICH YOU OR YOUR SPOUSE HAVE ENGAGED FOR THE PURPOSE OF DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INFLUENCING THE PASSAGE, DEFEAT, OR MODIFICATION OF FEDERAL LEGISLATION, OR FOR THE PURPOSE OF AFFECTING THE ADMINISTRATION AND EXECUTION OF FEDERAL LAW OR PUBLIC POLICY.

None

**PART D - FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

19. DESCRIBE ANY EMPLOYMENT, BUSINESS RELATIONSHIP, FINANCIAL TRANSACTION, INVESTMENT, ASSOCIATION, OR ACTIVITY (INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, DEALINGS WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ON YOUR OWN BEHALF OR ON BEHALF OF A CLIENT), WHICH COULD CREATE, OR APPEAR TO CREATE, A CONFLICT OF INTEREST IN THE POSITION TO WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN NOMINATED.

None

20. DO YOU INTEND TO SEVER ALL BUSINESS CONNECTIONS WITH YOUR PRESENT EMPLOYERS, FIRMS, BUSINESS ASSOCIATES AND/OR PARTNERSHIPS, OR OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IN THE EVENT THAT YOU ARE CONFIRMED BY THE SENATE? IF NOT, PLEASE EXPLAIN.

Not Applicable

21. DESCRIBE THE FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS YOU HAVE MADE OR PLAN TO MAKE, IF YOU ARE CONFIRMED, IN CONNECTION WITH SEVERANCE FROM YOUR CURRENT POSITION. PLEASE INCLUDE SEVERANCE PAY, PENSION RIGHTS, STOCK OPTIONS, DEFERRED INCOME ARRANGEMENTS, AND ANY AND ALL COMPENSATION THAT WILL OR MIGHT BE RECEIVED IN THE FUTURE AS A RESULT OF YOUR CURRENT BUSINESS OR PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS.

Not Applicable

22. DO YOU HAVE ANY PLANS, COMMITMENTS, OR AGREEMENTS TO PURSUE OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT, WITH OR WITHOUT COMPENSATION, DURING YOUR SERVICE WITH THE GOVERNMENT? IF SO, PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS.

No

23. AS FAR AS CAN BE FORESEEN, STATE YOUR PLANS AFTER COMPLETING GOVERNMENT SERVICE. PLEASE SPECIFICALLY DESCRIBE ANY AGREEMENTS OR UNDERSTANDINGS, WRITTEN OR UNWRITTEN, CONCERNING EMPLOYMENT AFTER LEAVING GOVERNMENT SERVICE. IN PARTICULAR, DESCRIBE ANY AGREEMENTS, UNDERSTANDINGS, OR OPTIONS TO RETURN TO YOUR CURRENT POSITION.

As a career civil servant, it is my current intention to continue in government service until I am eligible to retire. After completing government service, I would hope to remain engaged in government affairs and/or national security policy in some capacity. At this point, I have no specific plans, nor do I have any agreements or understandings in place related to employment after I complete the period of my government service.

24. IF YOU ARE PRESENTLY IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE, DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS OF SUCH SERVICE, HAVE YOU RECEIVED FROM A PERSON OUTSIDE OF GOVERNMENT AN OFFER OR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST TO EMPLOY YOUR SERVICES AFTER YOU LEAVE GOVERNMENT SERVICE? IF YES, PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS.

No

25. IS YOUR SPOUSE EMPLOYED? IF YES AND THE NATURE OF THIS EMPLOYMENT IS RELATED IN ANY WAY TO THE POSITION FOR WHICH YOU ARE SEEKING CONFIRMATION, PLEASE INDICATE YOUR SPOUSE'S EMPLOYER, THE POSITION, AND THE LENGTH OF TIME THE POSITION HAS BEEN HELD. IF YOUR SPOUSE'S EMPLOYMENT IS NOT RELATED TO THE POSITION TO WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN NOMINATED, PLEASE SO STATE.

My spouse is not currently employed.

26. LIST BELOW ALL CORPORATIONS, PARTNERSHIPS, FOUNDATIONS, TRUSTS, OR OTHER ENTITIES TOWARD WHICH YOU OR YOUR SPOUSE HAVE FIDUCIARY OBLIGATIONS OR IN WHICH YOU OR YOUR SPOUSE HAVE HELD DIRECTORSHIPS OR OTHER POSITIONS OF TRUST DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

<u>NAME OF ENTITY</u>	<u>POSITION</u>	<u>DATES HELD</u>	<u>SELF OR SPOUSE</u>
-----------------------	-----------------	-------------------	-----------------------

None

27. LIST ALL GIFTS EXCEEDING \$100 IN VALUE RECEIVED DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS BY YOU, YOUR SPOUSE, OR YOUR DEPENDENTS. (NOTE: GIFTS RECEIVED FROM RELATIVES

AND GIFTS GIVEN TO YOUR SPOUSE OR DEPENDENT NEED NOT BE INCLUDED UNLESS THE GIFT WAS GIVEN WITH YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND ACQUIESCENCE AND YOU HAD REASON TO BELIEVE THE GIFT WAS GIVEN BECAUSE OF YOUR OFFICIAL POSITION.)

I have received gifts from non-federal entities in the performance of my government duties. In each instance, government ethics attorneys and ethics officials have provided guidance and approval for the acceptance of any gifts.

28. LIST ALL SECURITIES, REAL PROPERTY, PARTNERSHIP INTERESTS, OR OTHER INVESTMENTS OR RECEIVABLES WITH A CURRENT MARKET VALUE (OR, IF MARKET VALUE IS NOT ASCERTAINABLE, ESTIMATED CURRENT FAIR VALUE) IN EXCESS OF \$1,000. (NOTE: THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO SCHEDULE A OF THE DISCLOSURE FORMS OF THE OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT ETHICS MAY BE INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE, PROVIDED THAT CURRENT VALUATIONS ARE USED.)

<u>DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY</u>	<u>VALUE</u>	<u>METHOD OF VALUATION</u>
--------------------------------	--------------	----------------------------

[ INFORMATION REDACTED ]

29. LIST ALL LOANS OR OTHER INDEBTEDNESS (INCLUDING ANY CONTINGENT LIABILITIES) IN EXCESS OF \$10,000. EXCLUDE A MORTGAGE ON YOUR PERSONAL RESIDENCE UNLESS IT IS RENTED OUT, AND LOANS SECURED BY AUTOMOBILES, HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, OR APPLIANCES. (NOTE: THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN RESPONSE TO SCHEDULE C OF THE DISCLOSURE FORM OF THE OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT ETHICS MAY BE INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE, PROVIDED THAT CONTINGENT LIABILITIES ARE ALSO INCLUDED.)

<u>NATURE OF OBLIGATION</u>	<u>NAME OF OBLIGEE</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
-----------------------------	------------------------	---------------

[ INFORMATION REDACTED ]

30. ARE YOU OR YOUR SPOUSE NOW IN DEFAULT ON ANY LOAN, DEBT, OR OTHER FINANCIAL OBLIGATION? HAVE YOU OR YOUR SPOUSE BEEN IN DEFAULT ON ANY LOAN, DEBT, OR OTHER FINANCIAL OBLIGATION IN THE PAST TEN YEARS? HAVE YOU OR YOUR SPOUSE EVER BEEN REFUSED CREDIT OR HAD A LOAN APPLICATION DENIED? IF THE ANSWER TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS IS YES, PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS.

[ INFORMATION REDACTED ]

31. LIST THE SPECIFIC SOURCES AND AMOUNTS OF ALL INCOME RECEIVED DURING THE LAST FIVE YEARS, INCLUDING ALL SALARIES, FEES, DIVIDENDS, INTEREST, GIFTS, RENTS, ROYALTIES, PATENTS, HONORARIA, AND OTHER ITEMS EXCEEDING \$200. (COPIES OF U.S. INCOME TAX RETURNS FOR THESE YEARS MAY BE SUBSTITUTED HERE, BUT THEIR SUBMISSION IS NOT REQUIRED.)

[ INFORMATION REDACTED ]

[INFORMATION REDACTED]

32. IF ASKED, WILL YOU PROVIDE THE COMMITTEE WITH COPIES OF YOUR AND YOUR SPOUSE'S FEDERAL INCOME TAX RETURNS FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS?

**Yes**

33. LIST ALL JURISDICTIONS IN WHICH YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE FILE ANNUAL INCOME TAX RETURNS.

**In addition to our federal income tax returns, we file an income tax return in the Commonwealth of Virginia.**

34. HAVE YOUR FEDERAL OR STATE TAX RETURNS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF AN AUDIT, INVESTIGATION, OR INQUIRY AT ANY TIME? IF SO, PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS, INCLUDING THE RESULT OF ANY SUCH PROCEEDING.

**No**

35. IF YOU ARE AN ATTORNEY, ACCOUNTANT, OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL, PLEASE LIST ALL CLIENTS AND CUSTOMERS WHOM YOU BILLED MORE THAN \$200 WORTH OF SERVICES DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS. ALSO, LIST ALL JURISDICTIONS IN WHICH YOU ARE LICENSED TO PRACTICE.

**Not applicable**

36. DO YOU INTEND TO PLACE YOUR FINANCIAL HOLDINGS AND THOSE OF YOUR SPOUSE AND DEPENDENT MEMBERS OF YOUR IMMEDIATE HOUSEHOLD IN A BLIND TRUST? IF YES,

PLEASE FURNISH DETAILS. IF NO, DESCRIBE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS FOR AVOIDING ANY POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.

No

37. IF APPLICABLE, LIST THE LAST THREE YEARS OF ANNUAL FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE REPORTS YOU HAVE BEEN REQUIRED TO FILE WITH YOUR AGENCY, DEPARTMENT, OR BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT. IF ASKED, WILL YOU PROVIDE A COPY OF THESE REPORTS?

Yes, for years 2011, 2012 and 2013.

**PART E - ETHICAL MATTERS**

38. HAVE YOU EVER BEEN THE SUBJECT OF A DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDING OR CTED FOR A BREACH OF ETHICS OR UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT BY, OR BEEN THE SUBJECT OF A COMPLAINT TO, ANY COURT, ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY, PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION, DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE, OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL GROUP? IF SO, PROVIDE DETAILS.

No

39. HAVE YOU EVER BEEN INVESTIGATED, HELD, ARRESTED, OR CHARGED BY ANY FEDERAL, STATE, OR OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY FOR VIOLATION OF ANY FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY, OR MUNICIPAL LAW, REGULATION, OR ORDINANCE, OTHER THAN A MINOR TRAFFIC OFFENSE, OR NAMED AS A DEFENDANT OR OTHERWISE IN ANY INDICTMENT OR INFORMATION RELATING TO SUCH VIOLATION? IF SO, PROVIDE DETAILS.

No

40. HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CONVICTED OF OR ENTERED A PLEA OF GUILTY OR NOLO CONTENDERE TO ANY CRIMINAL VIOLATION OTHER THAN A MINOR TRAFFIC OFFENSE? IF SO, PROVIDE DETAILS.

No

41. ARE YOU PRESENTLY OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN A PARTY IN INTEREST IN ANY ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY PROCEEDING OR CIVIL LITIGATION? IF SO, PLEASE PROVIDE DETAILS.

[INFORMATION REDACTED]

42. HAVE YOU BEEN INTERVIEWED OR ASKED TO SUPPLY ANY INFORMATION AS A WITNESS OR OTHERWISE IN CONNECTION WITH ANY CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATION, FEDERAL, OR

STATE AGENCY PROCEEDING, GRAND JURY INVESTIGATION, OR CRIMINAL OR CIVIL LITIGATION IN THE PAST TEN YEARS? IF SO, PROVIDE DETAILS.

**Yes. I was interviewed during 2013 in connection with an FBI investigation concerning compromise/leak of classified information related to a disrupted terrorism plot in 2010. I was also interviewed during 2014 in connection with an FBI counterintelligence investigation. In both cases, I was interviewed because I was included in a large number of people who had access by virtue of position to the information that was reportedly compromised. In neither case was I the subject or the target of the investigation.**

43. HAS ANY BUSINESS OF WHICH YOU ARE OR WERE AN OFFICER, DIRECTOR, OR PARTNER BEEN A PARTY TO ANY ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY PROCEEDING OR CRIMINAL OR CIVIL LITIGATION RELEVANT TO THE POSITION TO WHICH YOU HAVE BEEN NOMINATED? IF SO, PROVIDE DETAILS. (WITH RESPECT TO A BUSINESS OF WHICH YOU ARE OR WERE AN OFFICER, YOU NEED ONLY CONSIDER PROCEEDINGS AND LITIGATION THAT OCCURRED WHILE YOU WERE AN OFFICER OF THAT BUSINESS.)

No

44. HAVE YOU EVER BEEN THE SUBJECT OF ANY INSPECTOR GENERAL INVESTIGATION? IF SO, PROVIDE DETAILS.

**I have never personally been the subject of an inspector general investigation. I have cooperated with and participated in inspector general investigations or reviews of component organizations in which I served.**

#### **PART F - SECURITY INFORMATION**

45. HAVE YOU EVER BEEN DENIED ANY SECURITY CLEARANCE OR ACCESS TO CLASSIFIED INFORMATION FOR ANY REASON? IF YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN IN DETAIL.

No

46. HAVE YOU BEEN REQUIRED TO TAKE A POLYGRAPH EXAMINATION FOR ANY SECURITY CLEARANCE OR ACCESS TO CLASSIFIED INFORMATION? IF YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN.

**Yes. In 2004, I was required to take a polygraph examination in order to accept a detail assignment from the State Department to the National Counterterrorism Center. The exam was administered by the United States Secret Service on behalf of the State Department. In 2013, I was required to take a polygraph exam in connection with my ODNI/NCTC security clearance reinvestigation.**

47. HAVE YOU EVER REFUSED TO SUBMIT TO A POLYGRAPH EXAMINATION? IF YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN.

No

**PART G - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

48. DESCRIBE IN YOUR OWN WORDS THE CONCEPT OF CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT OF U.S. INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES. IN PARTICULAR, CHARACTERIZE WHAT YOU BELIEVE TO BE THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER AND THE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEES OF THE CONGRESS RESPECTIVELY IN THE OVERSIGHT PROCESS.

The concept of congressional oversight for intelligence activities is grounded in both law and established practice. Under sections 501-503 of the National Security Act of 1947 (as amended), the President, and by extension the leaders of the Intelligence Community, have an affirmative obligation to keep the responsible congressional intelligence committees fully and currently informed of significant intelligence activities – including any significant anticipated intelligence activities and significant intelligence failures. This obligation applies to the National Counterterrorism Center and the Director of NCTC.

In the late 1970s, both the Executive and Legislative Branches of government determined that formal oversight of the Intelligence Community (IC) was both necessary and desirable. Congress, as the elected representatives of the American public, would execute this oversight of the IC on behalf of the American public, while maintaining the security and secrecy necessary for intelligence agencies to perform their mission. In turn, the Intelligence Community and its leaders were obligated to keep the Congress fully and currently informed on their activities.

IC policies and procedures for meeting this obligation are delineated in Intelligence Community Directive 112, requiring Intelligence Community elements to provide full and current written notification to the congressional intelligence committees of significant anticipated intelligence actions, significant intelligence failures, and illegal activities. In my current position and during my tenure as Acting Director, I have fully carried out this obligation. If confirmed, I intend to continue carrying out in full this obligation as set forth in both law and IC policy.

In keeping with established House and Senate rules, the majority of the NCTC's congressional oversight is conducted by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI), the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) and the Defense Subcommittees of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. Collectively, these are referred to "congressional intelligence committees."

Beyond being required by statute, congressional oversight of intelligence activities is critical and essential to the proper functioning of a representative democracy. Because a high degree of secrecy is required to protect much of what the IC does, the American public is not afforded the opportunity to speak for or against those activities, to question their purpose or necessity, or to evaluate their continued effectiveness. The congressional intelligence committees provide this function and service by representing collectively the opinions and perspectives of their constituents and the broader American public. It is my belief that the members of these committees, and their staffs, have invested significant time and effort in developing an advanced understanding of the complex issues associated with intelligence collection, analysis and operations, thereby establishing themselves as the recognized subject matter experts on intelligence matters within their respective chambers.

The unfortunate series of leaks and disclosures we have seen in recent years has led the Congress to re-examine intelligence activities previously authorized in the period following the 9/11 attacks on our country. While the public way in which this debate is proceeding produces difficult challenges and is not without risk in terms of bringing some degree of advantage to our adversaries, debate and dialogue over these issues is necessary and essential, and in my view, should be welcomed. The members of the Intelligence Community, like all federal public servants, serve as stewards of the public trust. Should the public's elected representatives choose to modify or change the laws that authorize and bound the activities of the IC, the leaders of the Community are obligated to operate within those revised boundaries.

If I were to be confirmed as the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, I would pledge to operate within the boundaries of the law, and to keep the congressional intelligence committees fully and

currently informed of NCTC activities in order to facilitate the conduct of proper oversight of NCTC by the legislative branch.

49. EXPLAIN YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER.

The statutory responsibilities of the National Counterterrorism Center and its Director are delineated in section 1021 of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004. 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 Director of National Intelligence for all other activities and functions.

NCTC's mission, and that of its Director, is focused singularly on the prevention, detection and disruption of acts of terrorism directed against the United States and its interests both at home and abroad. The largest share of NCTC resources is aimed at providing all-source intelligence analysis, ranging from strategic to tactical, and incorporating source information from across the full spectrum of collection disciplines. NCTC's unique statutory authorities allow its personnel to draw upon both foreign and domestic intelligence to produce integrated analysis.

Beyond its analytical mission, 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. NCTC has positioned itself as the information sharing and collaboration hub of an Intelligence Community architecture focused on terrorism issues. NCTC has developed a regular battle rhythm of written products, secure video teleconferences and other mechanisms to ensure that federal departments and agencies have access to the latest, timeliest reporting and analysis on CT issues. In addition to serving federal partners in the executive branch, NCTC also supports the Congress with a constant flow of information and analysis, both to the appropriate committees of the Congress, as well as to the Capitol Police Executive Board. NCTC is also playing an increasingly important role in providing terrorism information and analysis to the state, local and tribal community of customers, working closely with FBI and DHS.

The Center and its Director are also responsible for maintaining the central and shared knowledge bank on known and suspected terrorists (KSTs), international terror groups, as well as the networks of support associated with KSTs and known terrorist groups. NCTC accomplishes this mission through the design, operation and maintenance of a classified database called TIDE, or the Terrorism Identities Datamart Environment. Operating under interagency developed and approved watchlisting guidance, identifying information on KSTs is provided to the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center (TSC) to support watchlisting and screening by other federal agencies and departments.

Finally, NCTC conducts whole-of-government planning to support the government's CT strategies and plans. This is one area of its mandate where NCTC responsibilities extend beyond the bounds of the Intelligence Community, requiring that NCTC planners engage and coordinate with partners all across the federal government to ensure that all elements of national power are mobilized to counter our terrorist adversaries. Working in close cooperation with the National Security Council staff, NCTC supports the President in the development of appropriate CT strategies and plans.

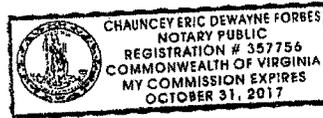
Finally, the Director of NCTC also serves as the National Intelligence Manager on CT intelligence matters for the Director of National Intelligence. In this capacity, NCTC leads the CT Community in identifying knowledge gaps in CT analysis and then focusing collection/production resources on closing those gaps.

**AFFIRMATION**

I, Nicholas J. Rasmussen, DO SWEAR THAT THE ANSWERS I HAVE PROVIDED TO THIS QUESTIONNAIRE ARE ACCURATE AND COMPLETE.

11/13/2014 [SIGNATURE]  
(Date) (Name)

[SIGNATURE]  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Notary)



TO THE CHAIRMAN, SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE:

In connection with my nomination to be the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, I hereby express my willingness to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

\_\_\_\_\_ [SIGNATURE]  
Signature

Date: 11/13/2014



United States  
**Office of Government Ethics**  
1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20005-3917

NOV 17 2011

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Chairman  
Select Committee on Intelligence  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Madam Chairman:

In accordance with the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, I enclose a copy of the financial disclosure report filed by Nicholas J. Rasmussen, who has been nominated by President Obama for the position of Director, National Counterterrorism Center, Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

We have reviewed the report and have obtained advice from the agency concerning any possible conflict in light of its functions and the nominee's proposed duties. Also enclosed is an ethics agreement outlining the actions that the nominee will undertake to avoid conflicts of interest. Unless a date for compliance is indicated in the ethics agreement, the nominee must fully comply within three months of confirmation with any action specified in the ethics agreement.

Based thereon, we believe that this nominee is in compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing conflicts of interest.

Sincerely,

[SIGNATURE]

Walter M. Shaub, Jr.  
Director

Enclosures

NOV 14 2014

Susan Gibson  
Designated Agency Ethics Official  
Office of the Director of National Intelligence  
Washington, D.C. 20511

Dear Ms. Gibson,

The purpose of this letter is to describe the steps that I will take to avoid any actual or apparent conflict of interest if confirmed for the position of the Director, National Counterterrorism Center, Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

As required by 18 U.S.C. § 208(a), I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that has a direct and predictable effect on my financial interests or those of any person whose interests are imputed to me, unless I first obtain a written waiver, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 208(b)(1), or qualify for a regulatory exemption, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. 208(b)(2). I understand that the interests of the following persons are imputed to me: any spouse or minor child of mine; any general partner of a partnership in which I am a limited or general partner; any organization in which I serve as an officer, director, trustee, general partner or employee; and any person or organization with which I am negotiating or have an arrangement concerning prospective employment.

I understand that as an appointee I am required to sign the Ethics Pledge (Exec. Order No. 13490) and that I will be bound by the requirements and restrictions therein in addition to the commitments I have made in this ethics agreement.

I have been advised that this ethics agreement will be posted publicly, consistent with 5 U.S.C. § 552, on the website of the U.S. Office of Government Ethics with other ethics agreements of Presidential nominees who file public financial disclosure reports.

Sincerely,

[SIGNATURE]  
Nicholas J. Rasmussen

**Executive Branch Personnel PUBLIC FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE REPORT**

Date of Appointment, Candidacy, Election, or Nomination (Month, Day, Year)	Reporting Status (Check Appropriate Boxes)	Incumbent <input type="checkbox"/>	Calendar Year Covered by Report	New Entrant, Nominee, or Candidate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Termination Filer <input type="checkbox"/>	Termination Date (If Applicable) (Month, Day, Year)	<b>Fee for Late Filing</b> Any individual who is required to file this report and does so more than 30 days after the date the report is required to be filed, or, if an extension is granted, more than 30 days after the last day of the filing extension period, shall be subject to a \$200 fee.  <b>Reporting Periods</b> Incumbents: The reporting period is the preceding calendar year except Part II of Schedule C and Part I of Schedule D where you must also include the filing year up to the date you file. Part II of Schedule D is not applicable.  Termination Filers: The reporting period begins at the end of the period covered by your previous filing and ends at the date of termination. Part II of Schedule D is not applicable.  Nominees, New Entrants and Candidates for President and Vice President:  Schedule A--The reporting period for income (BLOCK C) is the preceding calendar year and the current calendar year up to the date of filing. Value assets as of any date you choose that is within 31 days of the date of filing.  Schedule B--Not applicable.  Schedule C, Part I (Liabilities)--The reporting period is the preceding calendar year and the current calendar year up to any date you choose that is within 31 days of the date of filing.  Schedule C, Part II (Agreements or Arrangements)--Show any agreements or arrangements as of the date of filing.  Schedule D--The reporting period is the preceding two calendar years and the current calendar year up to the date of filing.
Reporting Individual's Name	Last Name	First Name and Middle Initial					
Position for Which Filing	Title of Position	Department or Agency (If Applicable)					
Location of Present Office (or forwarding address)	Address (Number, Street, City, State, and ZIP Code)		Telephone No. (Include Area Code)				
Position(s) Held with the Federal Government During the Preceding 12 Months (If Not Same as Above)	Title of Position(s) and Dates Held						
Presidential Nominee Subject to Senate Confirmation	Name of Congressional Committee Considering Nomination		Do You Intend to Create a Qualified Diversified Trust?				
Certification	Signature of Reporting Individual			Date (Month, Day, Year)			
Other Review (If desired by agency)	Signature of Other Reviewer			Date (Month, Day, Year)			
Agency Ethics Official's Opinion	Signature of Designated Agency Ethics Official/Reviewing Official			Date (Month, Day, Year)			
Office of Government Ethics Use Only	Signature			Date (Month, Day, Year)			
Comments of Reviewing Officials (If additional space is required, use the reverse side of this sheet)							
per ethics official, OODT, 11/17/14. (Check box if filing extension granted & indicate number of days _____) <input type="checkbox"/>							
(Check box if comments are continued on the reverse side) <input type="checkbox"/>							

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Do not complete Schedule B if you are a new entrant, nominee, or Vice Presidential or Presidential Candidate

Reporting Individual's Name <b>RASMUSSEN, NICHOLAS J.</b>		<b>SCHEDULE B</b>			Page Number 3 of 5
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**Part I: Transactions**

Report any purchase, sale, or exchange by you, your spouse, or dependent children during the reporting period of any real property, stocks, bonds, commodity futures, and other securities when the amount of the transaction exceeded \$1,000. Include transactions that resulted in a loss.

Do not report a transaction involving property used solely as your personal residence, or a transaction solely between you, your spouse, or dependent child. Check the "Certificate of divestiture" block to indicate sales made pursuant to a certificate of divestiture from OGE.

None

Line	Identification of Assets	Transaction Type (a)			Date (Mo, Day, Yr.)	Amount of Transaction (b)											Certificate of Divestiture	
		Purchase	Sale	Exchange		\$1,001 - \$15,000	\$15,001 - \$50,000	\$50,001 - \$100,000	\$100,001 - \$250,000	\$250,001 - \$500,000	\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	Over \$1,000,000	\$5,000,001 - \$25,000,000	\$25,000,000 - \$50,000,000	Over \$50,000,000			
1	Example Central Airlines Common				2/1/99													
2																		
3																		
4																		
5																		

\*This category applies only if the underlying asset is solely that of the filer's spouse or dependent children. If the underlying asset is either held by the filer or jointly held by the filer with the spouse or dependent children, use the other higher categories of value, as appropriate.

**Part II: Gifts, Reimbursements, and Travel Expenses**

For you, your spouse and dependent children, report the source, a brief description, and the value of: (1) gifts (such as tangible items, transportation, lodging, food, or entertainment) received from one source totaling more than \$350 and (2) travel-related cash reimbursements received from one source totaling more than \$350. For conflicts analysis, it is helpful to indicate a basis for receipt, such as personal friend, agency approval under 5 U.S.C. § 4111 or other statutory authority, etc. For travel-related gifts and reimbursements, include travel itinerary, dates, and the nature of expenses provided. Exclude anything given to you by the U.S. Government given to your agency in connection with official travel; received from relatives; received by your spouse or dependent child totally independent of their relationship to you; or provided as personal hospitality at the donor's residence. Also, for purposes of aggregating gifts to determine the total value from one source, exclude items worth \$140 or less. See instructions for other exclusions.

None

Line	Source (Name and Address)	Brief Description	Value
1	Examples Notl Assn. of Book Collectors, NY, NY Frank Jones, San Francisco, CA	Airline ticket, hotel room & meals incident to national conference 8/11/99 (personal activity unrelated to duty) Leather briefcase (personal friend)	\$300 \$385
2			
3			
4			
5			

Reporting Individual's Name: **RASMUSSEN, NICHOLAS J.** Page Number: **4 of 5**

**SCHEDULE C**

**Part I: Liabilities**  
 Report liabilities over \$10,000 owed to any one creditor at any time during the reporting period by you, your spouse, or dependent children. Check the highest amount owed during the reporting period. Exclude a mortgage on your personal residence unless it is rented out; loans secured by automobiles, household furniture or appliances; and liabilities owed to certain relatives listed in Instructions. See instructions for revolving charge accounts. None

Creditor (Name and Address)	Type of Liability	Date Incurred	Interest Rate	Term if applicable	Category of Amount or Value (x)													
					\$10,001 - \$15,000	\$15,001 - \$25,000	\$25,001 - \$50,000	\$50,001 - \$100,000	\$100,001 - \$250,000	\$250,001 - \$500,000	\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	Over \$1,000,000*	\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000	\$5,000,001 - \$25,000,000	\$25,000,001 - \$50,000,000	Over \$50,000,000		
<i>Example</i> First District Bank, Washington, DC	Mortgage on rental property, Delaware	1991	8%	25 yrs.														
<i>Example</i> John Jones, Washington, DC	Promissory note	1999	10%	no demand														
1 Wells Fargo Bank	Mortgage on primary residence	2012	3%	15								X						
2																		
3																		
4																		
5																		

\*This category applies only if the liability is solely that of the filer's spouse or dependent children. If the liability is that of the filer or a joint liability of the filer with the spouse or dependent children, mark the other higher categories, as appropriate.

**Part II: Agreements or Arrangements**  
 Report your agreements or arrangements for: (1) continuing participation in an employee benefit plan (e.g. pension, 401k, deferred compensation); (2) continuation of payment by a former employer (including severance payments); (3) leaves of absence; and (4) future employment. See instructions regarding the reporting of negotiations for any of these arrangements or benefits. None

Status and Terms of any Agreement or Arrangement	Parties	Date
<i>Example</i> Pursuant to partnership agreement, will receive lump sum payment of capital account & partnership share calculated on service performed through 1/00.	Doe Jones & Smith, Hometown, State	7/85
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

Reporting Individual's Name <b>RASMUSSEN, NICHOLAS J.</b>	<b>SCHEDULE D</b>	Page Number 5 of 5
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**Part I: Positions Held Outside U.S. Government**

Report any positions held during the applicable reporting period, whether compensated or not. Positions include but are not limited to those of an officer, director, trustee, general partner, proprietor, representative, employee, or consultant of any corporation, firm, partnership, or other business enterprise or any non-profit organization or educational institution. Exclude positions with religious, social, fraternal, or political entities and those solely of an honorary nature. None

	Organization (Name and Address)	Type of Organization	Position Held	From (Mo., Yr.)	To (Mo., Yr.)
Examples	Hart Assn. of Book Collectors, NY Doe Jones & Smith, Hometown, State	Non-profit education Law firm	President Partner	6/92 7/85	Present 1/00
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

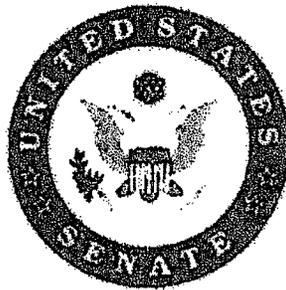
**Part II: Compensation in Excess of \$5,000 Paid by One Source**

Report sources of more than \$5,000 compensation received by you or your business affiliation for services provided directly by you during any one year of the reporting period. This includes the names of clients and customers of any corporation, firm, partnership, or other business enterprise, or any other non-profit organization when you directly provided the services generating a fee or payment of more than \$5,000. You need not report the U.S. Government as a source. None

	Source (Name and Address)	Brief Description of Duties
Examples	Doe Jones & Smith, Hometown, State Meru University (Client of Doe Jones & Smith), Hometown, State	Legal services Legal services in connection with university construction
1		
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SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
INTELLIGENCE

UNITED STATES SENATE



**Additional Prehearing Questions  
for  
Mr. Nicholas Rasmussen  
upon his nomination to be  
the Director of the  
National Counterterrorism Center**

*Responsibilities of the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center*

**QUESTION 1:** The National Security Intelligence Reform Act of 2004 created the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) and the position of Director of the NCTC.

- 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), one that is clearly articulated in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA), which serves as the statutory basis for NCTC. 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 and 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 NCTC Director 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.

No other CT component of the IC has this range of responsibilities. In conducting all-source analysis and maintaining the database that underpins all government watchlisting, NCTC is authorized access to all terrorism-related information, both foreign and domestic. NCTC's whole-of-government role in strategic operational planning is also unique.

Beyond the statutory framework that sets NCTC apart from other IC components, the Center also enjoys a unique position within the IC due to the composition of its workforce. The mix of permanent employees, detailees, and contractors brings a unique diversity of skills, abilities, and backgrounds into NCTC.

- What is your understanding of the specific statutory responsibilities of the Director?

The statutory responsibilities of NCTC and its Director are delineated in Section 1021 of the 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 that of its Director, is focused singularly on the prevention, detection and disruption of acts of terrorism directed against the United States and its interests both at home and abroad. The largest share of NCTC resources is allocated to providing all-source intelligence analysis—from strategic to tactical—that incorporates information from the full spectrum of collection disciplines. NCTC's unique statutory authorities allow its personnel to draw all of the both foreign and domestic intelligence possessed or acquired by the U.S. government to produce its integrated analysis.

Beyond its analytic mission, 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. NCTC has positioned itself as the information sharing and collaboration hub of the IC counterterrorism architecture. NCTC has developed a regular battle rhythm of written products, secure video teleconferences, and other mechanisms to ensure that federal departments and agencies have access to the most current reporting and analysis on CT issues. In addition to serving federal partners in the executive branch, NCTC also supports the Congress with a constant flow of information and analysis, both to the appropriate committees of the Congress, as well as to the Capitol Police Executive Board. NCTC is playing an increasingly important role in providing terrorism information and analysis to the state, local, and tribal community of customers, working closely with and often through FBI and DHS.

The Center and its Director are responsible for maintaining the U.S. government's central and shared knowledge bank on KSTs, international terror groups, and their contacts and support networks. NCTC accomplishes this mission through the design, operation and maintenance of a classified database called TIDE, or the Terrorism Identities Datamart Environment. Operating under interagency-developed and -approved watchlisting standards, identifying information on KSTs is provided to the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center (TSC) to support watchlisting and screening by other federal agencies and departments.

NCTC conducts whole-of-government planning to support CT strategies and plans. This is one area of its mandate where NCTC responsibilities extend beyond the bounds of the IC, requiring that NCTC planners engage and coordinate with partners all across the federal government to ensure that all elements of national power are mobilized to counter our terrorist adversaries. Working in close cooperation with the National Security Council (NSC) staff, NCTC supports the President in the development of appropriate CT strategies and plans.

Finally, the Director of NCTC serves as the National Intelligence Manager for CT intelligence matters for the DNI. In this capacity, NCTC leads the CT community in identifying knowledge gaps in CT analysis and then focusing collection/production resources on closing those gaps.

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

Director Clapper and I have discussed his expectations of me. First, I was gratified to learn that the DNI supported me to succeed Matt Olsen as Director of NCTC and sought consensus across the Executive Branch for my potential nomination.

Second, the DNI, respectful of the need not to assume confirmation, has simply told me to "do no harm" as Acting Director. If confirmed, I will be the third Director of NCTC during the DNI's tenure, and he has indicated that he is interested in continuity and stability—not revolutionary change.

So, I believe that if I am confirmed he would look to me to sustain the themes he has emphasized over the last four plus years. In my conversations with Director Clapper, he has consistently directed me—and former Director Olsen—to ensure that NCTC is fully and completely embracing and executing the roles and missions envisioned for NCTC in the IRTPA, most specifically with respect to the sharing of terrorism information and the production of terrorism analysis. He has further directed that NCTC continue to look for ways to reduce and ultimately eliminate unnecessary redundancy from across the IC with respect to terrorism analysis, while ensuring that we provide appropriate scope for competitive/alternative analysis. As NCTC addresses its challenges regarding analysis of large data holdings, Director Clapper has urged that NCTC integrate our information technology (IT) investment strategies such that we are able to take full advantage of IC efforts to evolve toward a common cloud-based platform where we can easily and securely share information across the IC. NCTC stands to benefit greatly from that effort as it takes shape.

### *NCTC Mission*

**QUESTION 2:** The NCTC was designed to serve as the primary organization in the U.S. Government for integrating and analyzing all intelligence pertaining to terrorism and counterterrorism and to conduct strategic operational planning by integrating all instruments of national power.

- What is your assessment of the NCTC's current strengths and weaknesses?

NCTC's two greatest strengths are its exceptional workforce and its unique access to counterterrorism-related data. NCTC has a dedicated, diverse, and integrated workforce with nearly half of its personnel drawn from across the IC. This creates a collaborative, inclusive atmosphere of professionals with varied IC experiences. Additionally, NCTC's strong relationship with IC counterparts and its position as the only IC entity with access to all foreign and domestic data streams allows this uniquely diverse workforce to provide the most comprehensive, coordinated all-source analysis. I would also note that NCTC does not engage in, or direct, operations, and we see this as a strength that allows us a unique and neutral perspective for CT analysis and strategic operational planning.

Because of NCTC's reliance on the skills and background of military, law enforcement, intelligence and other national security professionals, the current fiscal environment creates challenges to maintain a diverse workforce that draws fully from and represents the IC. Budgeting uncertainty is complicating interagency efforts to provide detailees to the Center. NCTC is also challenged 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 at which information sharing, analysis and collaboration can occur, and automate production workflows. NCTC's new Office of Data Strategy and Innovation will help integrate mission and technology.

- What do you believe are the greatest challenges facing the NCTC?

NCTC's greatest challenge is the evolving and adaptive threat we face—both at home and abroad—including addressing the growing risk posed by self-radicalized and “lone wolf” threats. In assessing the threat and how best to mitigate it, NCTC relies on the skills and background of military, law enforcement, intelligence and other national security analysts who are detailed to NCTC from across the U.S. government. As I noted previously, the current fiscal environment creates challenges to maintain a workforce that is diverse and draws fully from and represents the IC. NCTC is also grappling with how to best address “big data” and the growing role of social media in counterterrorism analysis, which is why our focus on technology is paramount. The task of identifying terrorists and plots is further complicated by collection challenges that have grown even more acute in the context of unauthorized disclosures. Increasingly terrorists are using secure means to communicate, greatly reducing our access to critical information about their plans, capabilities and intentions. As secure applications are more available, our job will become even harder. Finally, NCTC must continue to institutionalize its role in strategic operational planning by helping the CT community think and plan strategically in the midst of immediate threats and issues. Ensuring our efforts to implement CT policy and strategy are integrated and incorporate a whole-of-government approach will reduce gaps in planning and avoid the unnecessary duplication of efforts.

- 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.

My vision is for an NCTC that is fully staffed, with an agile, diverse workforce armed with the tools and data necessary to tackle the challenges I have previously described—an evolving and adapting threat, “big data,” and a more security-conscious terrorist enemy.

In the ten years since its establishment, NCTC has made significant progress in fulfilling the vision set out by the 9/11 Commission and the Congress in 2004. I believe NCTC has become a recognized center of gravity in the counterterrorism effort. 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.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of people, technology, and information sharing. These tools are all critical to achieving the vision set out for us by the Congress. We face a complex, evolving and diverse threat. We will only meet this threat through realizing the synergy of effective information sharing, constantly seeking innovation, and finding the right expertise from across disciplines.

If confirmed, I would continue to focus investment on people and technology—the keys to increasing NCTC's success. I would support efforts to deepen integration and collaboration with state, local and tribal partners, as well as key foreign partners. I would also continue to promote information sharing and the integration of data necessary in our counterterrorism efforts, ensuring that appropriate technology is deployed to support NCTC's missions.

- What specific benchmarks should be used to assess the NCTC's performance?

We are a partner-and customer-oriented organization and, as such, we find that the best measure of our performance is the degree to which we are relied on by our partners and customers. We seek to be the first one they turn to, and the one partner they always want at the table when decisions are being made. By that measure, NCTC is performing at a very high level.

When looking at NCTC's performance, I would use a few key metrics to assess how we are doing in each of our core mission areas. For our analysis, we gauge readership and feedback from our products online through our CURRENT portal, which is available at the Top Secret/compartimented level, as well as the Secret level. We also get daily feedback from partners and senior leaders in department and agencies and from the White House. With respect to watchlisting, we use the number of enhancements as an indicator of progress, as that is the best measure of how much useful information is contained or added in the database. We also monitor timeliness for Kingfisher visa screening systems to ensure we meet our and the Department of State's stated goals. We are mindful of any backlog in our processing of KST nomination, enhancement, or removal requests.

NCTC's performance also can be measured by the same standards NCTC, as the CT mission manager, uses to assess the IC's counterterrorism performance:

1. We evaluate the IC's progress against high priority CT intelligence gaps using objective measures.
2. We assess customer satisfaction with overall CT intelligence support through a subjective survey.

To evaluate our progress against high priority CT intelligence gaps, we bring together senior CT analysts and analytic managers from across the IC annually. These experts collaborate to identify and develop CT Priority Intelligence Gaps—topics that these experts identify as deserving particular analytic attention over the course of the next year.

We also use a subjective approach to assess customer satisfaction with overall intelligence support to the CT mission. We annually survey a broad range of customers from five customer segments (DOD/Warfighter, Homeland Security, Law Enforcement, Policy, and non-Departmental Intel) to determine their satisfaction with CT intelligence support.

Lastly, we recognize we are in a zero tolerance environment for our business. Any time we experience a terrorist attack on U.S. personnel at home or abroad, we go through a rigorous process of self-examination to ensure we continue to achieve the high standards to which we hold ourselves.

### *Current Terrorist Threat*

**QUESTION 3:** The United States is arguably facing the most challenging threat environment since the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks over a decade ago.

- How do you characterize the terrorist threat that is confronting the United States at this time?

The terrorist threat to the U.S. homeland is evolving. It is being driven by instability in critical regions, shifting local and regional factors and conditions, the increasing diffusion of the al-Qa'ida movement, and a more diverse and adaptive enemy. The terrorist threat today emanates from a more geographically dispersed area, increasing the likelihood of low-level attacks against U.S. and other Western interests overseas and also unsophisticated plots by individuals and small groups in North America.

The instability in the Levant, the Middle East, and Africa has contributed to a less centralized, more geographically dispersed threat environment than the South Asia-focused threat we encountered with the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks.

In the Levant and the Middle East, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has exploited the failure of the Syrian and Iraqi states to maintain control over their more remote regions or to oppose them with effective fighting forces. ISIL represents a growing threat to U.S. personnel and facilities in the region, and has called on ISIL supporters to conduct attacks against the United States and U.S. interests in retaliation for coalition airstrikes.

The threat posed by the so-called Khorasan Group—a network of al Nusrah Front and veteran al-Qa'ida terrorists who share a history of training operatives, facilitating the movement of fighters and money, and planning attacks against U.S. and Western targets—remains a critical concern.

The scope of the foreign fighters who are traveling to Syria to participate in the conflict is adding to the complexity of the threat environment we face. Western fighters, to include Americans, are joining with ISIL, Khorasan, and al-Nusrah, raising the possibility those groups will successfully direct and deploy fighters for attacks in the West or more individual extremists will return to their home countries and commit self-initiated attacks, as we saw in an attack on a Jewish Museum in Belgium in May.

Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) continues to prioritize efforts to attack the U.S. homeland, with a particular focus on aviation. Iran, Lebanese Hizballah, and Shia-aligned groups in the region remain on our radar. Lebanese Hizballah remains committed to conducting terrorist attacks against Israeli targets worldwide, while maintaining the capability for attacks against U.S. targets overseas.

In Africa, the range of extremist/terrorist groups exploiting local and regional conditions across north and west Africa, to include al- Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), al-Murabitun, Boko Haram and Ansar al-Sharia groups in Tunisia and Libya, present a serious challenge and threat to U.S. interests in the region. Al-Shabaab has consistently and publicly threatened the United States, but the group has not attempted an attack outside of East Africa and does not appear at present to have the capability to carry out plotting beyond the East Africa region.

In South Asia, the threat from al- Qa'ida core has been degraded but not defeated. As al-Qa'ida core's capabilities in Afghanistan and Pakistan have been degraded, attack planners have placed a greater emphasis on smaller and simpler plots against soft targets. The group continues to aspire to conduct larger-scale attacks against the West and here in the U.S. homeland. The recent announcement of the formation of al- Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and enduring threats from Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Lashkar-i-Tayyiba are a reminder of the volatility of threat we face from South Asia thirteen years after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, and at a time when we are drawing down our military presence in the region.

Here at home, the evolving threat is being driven by both foreign-directed terrorist organizations and by homegrown violent extremists (HVEs). As we saw in Canada last month, HVEs who are unable to travel overseas for violent jihad may choose instead to plot against targets locally. HVEs, reacting to multiple motivating factors, have posed the most likely threat here in the United States for the past three years. They make use of a dynamic, evolving online environment to connect themselves virtually to a global movement of jihadists. HVEs likely will continue trying to carry out simple plots that do not require advanced skills, outside training, or communication with others, based on past plots and guidance promoted by overseas terrorist groups.

- In your opinion, is the NCTC adequately staffed to address your priorities identified above?

We have focused our staff resources on existing mission priorities. As the threat we face has become more diverse and as we have assumed a more central role in the CT community, we have been constantly reevaluating our staffing needs and adjusting how we use our staff. As we encounter "surge" requirements like we are currently experiencing with respect to Iraq and Syria, we are sometimes compelled to put fewer resources against lower priorities and assume the risks that this approach entails. The heavy burden we place on our workforce is clearly reflected in the amount of overtime and compensatory time they have earned during the past two years. I am extremely proud of the dedication and hard work of NCTC's workforce.

- What impact does a shortage of detailees have on your mission?

Obtaining sufficient detailee support to reach our authorized levels would allow NCTC to focus additional resources in key priority areas and enhance our efforts on select lower priority issues. I am committed to having a diverse detailee workforce that constitutes between forty and fifty percent of our workforce.

NCTC was designed to have a reliance on detailees, and we draw strength from the diversity of hosting officers from across the U.S. government. As I noted earlier, this diversity is one of our greatest strengths. Having the opportunity to integrate people into the Center from other organizations gives us the opportunity to form an effective network across all of the agencies that have a stake in the CT mission. They have been and will continue to be key contributors to our mission. Some of our best partners in other agencies are those who came to NCTC at some point in their career and who understand who we are and what we do. A shortage of detailees degrades our available expertise, diminishes our surge capacity, and keeps us from being the interagency center of CT excellence we were designed to be.

- The National Counterterrorism Center is housed within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, but the NCTC workforce and the rest of the ODNI workforce have very different demographics. Are there ODNI workforce policies that do not fully take into account the differences in the NCTC workforce?

NCTC's senior leaders work closely within the ODNI to develop and tailor workforce policies that meet the specific requirements of the mission-driven NCTC workforce. ODNI recognizes that NCTC's workforce differs from that of the broader ODNI and we have been able to collaborate with ODNI and evolve workforce-related policies to be able to account for NCTC's workforce, especially with respect to managing our ODNI cadre members' career development. NCTC has also collaborated very effectively with ODNI to execute a new hiring initiative this year which will result in more than 40 newly hired officers joining NCTC's ranks this year.

- What actions will you take, if confirmed as Director, to ensure that NCTC is fully staffed?

If confirmed, I would continue to consider the adequate resourcing of the Center among my highest priorities. I have discussed the status of our staffing with the DNI and PDDNI and they understand the Center's staffing situation and are supportive of the Center's recruiting efforts. Since early this year, we have hired more than 40 new ODNI officers. Our greatest focus in terms of staffing is on ways to maintain and increase our detailee totals. I have personally worked with my IC peers to ask agencies to support joint duty rotations. A key strength of NCTC remains the expertise drawn from our multi-agency composition.

We are also working closely with the ODNI to hire additional ODNI permanent hires, and to streamline the processes we rely upon to get detailees from other IC agencies into NCTC jobs.

### *Intelligence reform and counterterrorism*

**QUESTION 4:** What do you see as the most important outstanding priorities in the ongoing intelligence reform effort, as it relates to counterterrorism?

While the IC has made significant progress implementing the IRTPA, there is work that remains to be done. Among the key priorities is to continue to advance information sharing. In some instances, the public disclosures of classified information have created a reluctance among foreign partners to share the classified, sensitive data that most illuminates analysts' understanding and identification of terrorists. This reluctance could migrate to the wider information sharing community. We cannot allow this to happen.

The IC will also continue to grapple with how to exploit big data and social media for CT analysis. As a community, we must continue to address policies and technological limitations that have the effect of potentially constraining how completely we exploit the data available to the U.S. government. The community will need to invest in technology-based tools to power more comprehensive data analysis, increase the speed at which information sharing and collaboration occur, and automate production flows. Technology can also help implement privacy and civil liberty protections beyond the current basic safeguards in place.

- How do intelligence gaps and the current collection environment more generally impact NCTC's mission?

The dynamic and diverse nature of the terrorist threat requires continued NCTC and IC emphasis on targeting, collection, and analysis. Based on our understanding of intelligence gaps and IC posture against them, NCTC works with interagency partners to enhance the

IC's ability to address evolving terrorism threats as an integrated team. As a result, the IC is able to adjust its posture to focus limited analytic and collection capabilities to address the highest CT priorities and to advance capabilities to address future challenges over the long term.

The current counterterrorism collection environment is challenging. The diverse set of nefarious actors operating across a broadening swath of geography is straining existing resources. In those areas that are most difficult to operate human sources, the community is increasingly reliant on imagery and signals intelligence. Unfortunately, frequent unauthorized disclosures and leaks have compromised certain signals intelligence collection efforts and reduced our ability to track terrorist communications. The IC is working to identify new opportunities to restore collection against our most significant threats.

- Do you see any need for modifications to the statutory role or authorities of the Director of the NCTC? If so, please explain.

I do not see a need for any such modifications at this time. If confirmed, I would work with the DNI and others to use the existing authorities to accomplish NCTC's statutory responsibilities. I would also keep this Committee fully informed if I identify a need for legislative modifications to my authorities.

### *Pursuit teams*

**QUESTION 5:** Following the failed terrorist attack of December 25, 2009, NCTC created the "Pursuit Group" to help track down tactical leads that could lead to the discovery of threats aimed against the U.S. Homeland or U.S. interests abroad.

- To what extent has the creation of this Group succeeded in ensuring that tactical leads are identified and tracked?

By seeking less obvious connections, previously unknown identities, and seemingly unimportant details, rather than focusing on the high-profile elements of terrorism cases, Pursuit analysts ensure that more aspects of a terrorism case are explored. Pursuit has successfully worked with IC partner agencies to use data and tools to identify and pass actionable intelligence.

The Pursuit Group uses specialized analytic tools that integrate and search multiple sources of data, assist with data visualization, and promote information sharing and knowledge management of research and connections identified.

In 2013, the Pursuit Group identified and started tracking twenty categories of actions that IC agencies are taking based on the leads it developed. Since 2013, Pursuit disseminated more than 600 lead cables and recorded almost 800 actions taken by other IC agencies. Some of

these actions include FBI opening investigations, CIA and FBI engaging liaison partners, and State Department revoking visas.

- How are the priorities of the Pursuit Group established?

The Pursuit Group prioritizes any terrorism threads that have potential links to the homeland. Pursuit's first priority is intelligence reporting with a clear homeland connection. Pursuit's second priority is intelligence reporting that contains unique selector information on individuals allowing Pursuit analysts to search all systems and identify—or rule out—possible homeland linkages. Pursuit's third priority is intelligence reporting identifying members of terrorist networks overseas, or individuals who are part of a broader threat stream.

Additionally, Pursuit analysts work collaboratively with their counterparts in the IC to ensure that they are adding value to the effort and not duplicating what other agencies are already working on.

- What is the role of the Director of the NCTC in establishing those priorities?

The previous Director of NCTC worked with Pursuit to evaluate and update existing priorities, and consulted the expertise of his Director's Advisory Board to provide an outside perspective and input on these priorities.

If confirmed, I would continue to shape the direction of the Pursuit Group's priorities and ensure that they are appropriately aligned with both the U.S. government's overarching terrorism priorities and the intent behind the Group's creation.

- What is the role of the Pursuit Group in integrating the tactical counterterrorism analytical efforts of the various components of the Intelligence Community?

Pursuit Group integrates tactical counterterrorism analytic efforts through its employment of detailees from across the IC. Given its mission—to identify non-obvious connections and linkages—some duplication in efforts across the departments and agencies is desirable.

Pursuit Group analysts bring a deep understanding of their home agency's collection capabilities and authorities with them. Pursuit analysts also are embedded in various interagency task forces and war zone deployments, further integrating Pursuit capabilities and accesses throughout the IC. Pursuit employs these exclusive capabilities and accesses to identify new actionable leads by incorporating data from numerous agencies. Pursuit analysts are expected to explore leads more fully, optimize analytic tools for data analysis, and exploit data holdings from a tactical optic unavailable to individual agencies.

To support the tactical IC efforts, Pursuit provides investigative leads, collection requirements, and potential source candidates. Additionally, Pursuit supports information sharing among agencies with related investigations, and coordinates interagency meetings to promote communication. Pursuit's diverse workforce facilitates collaboration among IC components by providing a distinct perspective based on a fusion of intelligence data and tools.

- In partnership with Treasury's Office of Intelligence and Analysis, Pursuit hosts the Integrated Financial Intelligence Group, which conducts comprehensive CT and other financial intelligence research, enabling Pursuit to track CT financial leads.
- Pursuit is closely tied with FBI's CT officers and synchronizes efforts on homeland threats coming from Pakistan, Yemen, Europe, and the Horn of Africa.
- If confirmed, will you make any changes in the roles and responsibilities of the Pursuit Group?

If confirmed, I do not see anticipate making changes to the roles or responsibilities of the Pursuit Group. I will continue to strengthen and expand the interagency partnerships that are critical to the Pursuit mission and to the Group's continued success.

#### *NCTC analysis*

**QUESTION 6:** What unique role does strategic counterterrorism analysis conducted at NCTC play, as compared to the analysis produced by other components of the Intelligence Community?

In accordance with the IRTPA, NCTC was designated by the Congress as the primary organization within the U.S. government for analysis of terrorism and terrorist organizations. NCTC directly supports the President and the NSC, the Congress, and other elements of the CT policy, intelligence, law enforcement, and homeland security communities through a wide range of CT analysis.

NCTC's strategic CT analysis fulfills the mission objectives outlined in the DNI's National Intelligence Strategy by providing senior policymakers and key stakeholders strategic intelligence analysis on enduring counterterrorism issues and anticipatory intelligence analysis on emerging conditions, trends, threats and opportunities to support national security decision-making.

NCTC draws on the broad-based skills and backgrounds of a diverse analytic workforce drawn from across the IC, our unique access to the full range of CT information possessed or acquired by the U.S. government, an unparalleled track record of coordination and collaboration with key IC partners, and a strong emphasis on the employment of structured

analytic techniques to produce a unique body of work on strategic CT analysis.

Unlike agency-specific analysis, nearly all NCTC's analysis is community-coordinated. This ensures policymakers are provided authoritative counterterrorism analysis that is consistent across the IC. Where analytic conclusions differ between agencies, those differences are highlighted and explored.

**QUESTION 7: What is the role of the NCTC, including through the Interagency Intelligence Committee on Terrorism (IICT), in coordinating and publishing the Intelligence Community's assessments on terrorism?**

The Director of NCTC chairs the IICT, oversees the Directorate of Intelligence production of strategic intelligence, and works closely with the National Intelligence Officer for Transnational Threats to ensure the broader IC is producing the full range of assessments on terrorism required to support effective development of policy.

There are presently more than 100 U.S. government agencies, departments, and other organizations involved with the IICT, and it is one of the few entities in the federal government that includes contact with all three branches of government. The Capitol Police represents the Legislative Branch; the Office of the Marshal of the Supreme Court represents the Judicial Branch, and there are approximately 100 agencies from throughout the Executive Branch. All of these organizations are invited to the IICT's community twice-monthly meetings covering terrorism warning and other key counterterrorism issues.

**Terrorist Threat Warning Products**

The IICT has five types of threat warning products:

- **Alert:** Alerts are the highest level of Intelligence Community Terrorist Threat Warning. An Alert warns of a *credible, specific, imminent attack against U.S. personnel, facilities, or interests* with information the Community considers sufficiently specific and credible to enable implementation of local security measures. Alerts expire 30 days after issuance and cannot be extended. There is a requirement for a SECRET version for wide distribution.
- **Advisory:** An Advisory warns of a terrorist threat to *U.S. personnel, facilities, or interests with information that is credible but general in timing and/or target*. Advisories expire 45 days after issuance and may be extended for an additional 45 days if it is determined that a valid threat remains. There is a requirement for a SECRET version for wide distribution.
- **Standing Advisory:** A Standing Advisory warns of a *persistently high threat environment for U.S. personnel, facilities, and interests from terrorists who have the intent and capability to conduct anti-U.S. attacks* and is based on a body of credible intelligence indicating the threat will remain high for the next 180 days. It can be

updated or rescinded prior to expiration if the threat environment changes. Upon expiration, the Community will determine if a new Standing Advisory will be issued. Alerts and Advisories can be issued in addition to a Standing Advisory to warn of specific threats. There is a requirement for a SECRET version for wide distribution.

- **Assessment:** Assessments may warn of credible but non-specific threats, or provide in-depth analysis on a specific terrorism topic, trend, or development for decision-making and policy support.
- **Memorandum:** A short-form Assessment.

Intelligence Community Terrorist Threat Warning products may be suggested by any organization. Alerts and Advisories are voted on by the "Warn-8": NCTC, CIA, DIA, NSA, State/INR, FBI, DHS, and NGA. The IICT Executive Secretariat at NCTC polls these agencies on the need for Alerts and Advisories, and concurrence of five of the Warn-8 agencies is required for a warning. For all products, the IICT Executive Secretariat identifies the drafting agency; coordinates language with Warn-8 and other agencies as-needed; and produces the warning product for wide distribution across U.S. government circles, including at the Secret level to ensure widest possible dissemination.

In addition to the IICT process, NCTC interprets its role as the primary organization within the U.S. government for analysis of terrorism and terrorist organizations to include a responsibility to coordinate its assessments with IC partners and to invite IC partners to publish their assessments in NCTC product lines.

- NCTC analytic products are considered IC products, and represent the analysis of the entire CT community, to include highlighting analytic differences between IC agencies.
- IC partners, including CIA, DIA, FBI, and DHS now author or co-author about a third of NCTC analytic products.

### *Watchlisting*

**QUESTION 8:** How do you assess enhancement efforts to the Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment (TIDE) following the Boston Marathon Bombing of April 15, 2013?

In the aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombing, NCTC reviewed its enhancement processes and assessed that overall they were functioning as intended. At the time of the attack, Tamerlan Tsarnaev was in TIDE and properly watchlisted based on the information provided by our nominating partners. While our process was found to be functioning appropriately, NCTC did identify specific areas of improvement with regard to enhancements that could be used to improve the data within TIDE. NCTC's internal after action report was provided to the Intelligence Community's Inspector General in support of their review which was published this spring. We have attempted to use the lessons learned from the Boston

Marathon bombing case to help us devise more effective procedures to enhance the TIDE nominations process.

**QUESTION 9:** According to the Committee's report on the failed attack of December 25, 2009, while the NCTC processed watchlisting information it had received, its standard practice did not include conducting additional analysis or enhancing existing records with more derogatory information. To what extent has this problem been addressed?

The Congress and NCTC examined the Center's processes and systems in the wake of the attempted terrorist attack on Northwest Flight 253, and identified several gaps and shortcomings. Based on these lessons learned, significant changes were made to the watchlisting process. In January 2010, the President directed NCTC to focus more efforts on enhancing the records in the TIDE database. To support this effort, NCTC created the Directorate of Terrorist Identities (DTI), whose sole purpose would be to maintain TIDE and enhance those records.

- Prior to 12/25, our efforts centered on collecting information and building the database to support screening agencies. What we learned after 12/25 was that it was equally important that we try to develop the most complete record possible to enable us to positively identify an individual, thus establishing TIDE as an analytic tool rather than solely a repository of information.
- Concurrent with these enhancement efforts, the threshold for information on subjects to be included in TIDE and subsequently watchlisted was lowered as a matter of policy. This was a key decision point because as we learned with Abdulmutallab, sometimes not all information on a known or suspected terrorist (KST) is immediately available but given time, analysts can piece information together.
- In 2013, the U.S. government revised its watchlisting practices to account for these changes.

#### *State and local governments*

**QUESTION 10:** What is the role of the NCTC in producing and disseminating intelligence for state, local and tribal partners?

In partnership with the FBI and DHS, NCTC produces and disseminates terrorism and CT intelligence for state, local and tribal (SLT) partners. NCTC acts in support of FBI's and DHS's responsibilities to produce and disseminate intelligence for SLT consumers.

NCTC's primary vehicle for identifying, producing, and disseminating relevant intelligence to SLT consumers is the Joint Counterterrorism Assessment Team (JCAT). JCAT is the

successor organization to the Interagency Threat Assessment and Coordination Group (ITACG), which was created by the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, but decommissioned in 2012 when its authorization for appropriations expired.

ITACG, a joint organization staffed by DHS, FBI, and NCTC, was created by Congress to provide tailored federal intelligence through DHS and FBI that supports public safety and first responders within their state, local, and tribal jurisdictions. JCAT's mission, organization, and processes closely mirror those conducted by ITACG. JCAT's mission is to improve information sharing to enhance public safety, in coordination with FBI and DHS. NCTC notified the Congress about the standup of JCAT through a congressional notification on April 29, 2013.

JCAT products routinely are coordinated through the intelligence analysis components of NCTC, DHS, and FBI before dissemination. JCAT disseminates intelligence products via FBI's Law Enforcement Online website, DHS's Homeland Security Information Network website, and also posts SLT products on NCTC's classified CURRENT website.

FBI, DHS, and NCTC staff JCAT through resource burden sharing. In addition to federal officers from each of these three organizations, SLT officers also serve within JCAT. They receive equivalent security clearances, and assist their federal counterparts in identifying, producing and disseminating CT intelligence to SLT consumers. This unique staffing construct is the key to JCAT's success.

- How is that role different than that of the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security?

DHS and FBI are primarily responsible for producing and disseminating intelligence to SLT consumers. Because NCTC is the primary organization in the U.S. government for analyzing and integrating all intelligence possessed or acquired by our federal departments and agencies with regards to terrorism and counterterrorism, NCTC is uniquely qualified to ensure DHS and FBI have access to and receive all-source CT intelligence support they need to execute their missions. This activity is in keeping with the NCTC Director's responsibilities in the IRTPA.

- If confirmed, what priority would you give this issue?

If confirmed, I would continue to place this unique information-sharing role as one of NCTC's top priorities. NCTC is uniquely positioned to integrate intelligence and augment information sharing relevant to SLT consumers. In addition, as a joint NCTC, FBI, and DHS activity, JCAT adds significant value as an organization staffed jointly with federal, state, local, and tribal officers who can recognize and tailor terrorism and counterterrorism products for state and regional fusion centers, and first responders that enhance public safety across the United States.

### *Strategic Operational Planning*

**QUESTION 11:** Please describe the activities of the NCTC in carrying out its strategic operational planning responsibilities pursuant to the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA).

In accordance with Section 1021 of the IRTPA, NCTC works to integrate all elements of national power in U.S. counterterrorism efforts, ensuring a unity of effort. NCTC's Directorate of Strategic Operational Planning (DSOP) regularly supports the NSC in this effort by providing strategic operational plans in support of U.S. counterterrorism objectives. This planning entails developing objectives and tasks, coordinating across departments and agencies, and assigning roles and responsibilities. NCTC then monitors the implementation of plans in concert with other agencies and produces impact assessments of key strategies in order to inform policy discussion and deliberation.

- To what extent does the Directorate of Strategic Operational Planning develop inter-agency plans for counterterrorism operations?

NCTC's DSOP develops CT plans in response to requests made by the NSC staff for plans to support specific policy objectives established by the President or the NSC. These requests generally originate from intensive interagency deliberations carried out through the PPD 1 process. In addition, NCTC has proposed the creation of new strategies or plans based on NCTC's analyses, assessments, or exercises conducted for the NSC.

- Do you believe the Directorate of Strategic Operational Planning is performing its mission as directed in statute?

Yes, I believe DSOP is performing its mission as envisioned by and in accordance with the IRTPA.

**QUESTION 12:** As the threat from regional al Qaeda affiliates increases, what is the role of the Director of the NCTC in developing regional counterterrorism strategies? How are those counterterrorism strategies related to broader U.S. policies, particularly in Pakistan, Syria, Libya, Yemen, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel?

NCTC supports NSC efforts to develop CT strategies, integrate whole-of-government CT actions, and assess their effectiveness in protecting the homeland, our people, and our interests. The Director of NCTC does not have a role in the direct execution of any operations in support of broader U.S. government CT efforts. As such, NCTC is well positioned to serve as the honest broker in the interagency planning process.

Through DSOP, NCTC coordinates with the departments and agencies to facilitate informed decision making among senior U.S. government officials, ensuring the experience and expertise available across the government is effectively leveraged when developing regional CT strategies. This planning process drives the government to align ways and means with our desired CT ends, and also makes sure that our CT end states are nested under—and supportive of—broader U.S. government policy.

The United States has policy priorities in Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel that are much broader, and often much more complex, than CT objectives. For example, while protecting the American people is always paramount, we also have an interest in the democratic transition and future stability of Yemen. In sub-Saharan Africa, U.S. priorities include democratization, improved governance, and economic growth. In Syria, the United States has concerns with human rights violations, a refugee crisis, and an end to a civil war. The United States must pursue its CT priorities while also working to alleviate the conditions terrorists exploit for safe haven and recruitment.

**QUESTION 13:** Historically, the Committee has had difficulty in obtaining the strategies that are produced by NCTC's Directorate of Strategic Operational Planning. If confirmed, will you abide by the current accommodation that has been reached between the Committee and NCTC?

Yes. I am familiar with the accommodation that has been reached with the Committee with respect to the strategies that DSOP produces and, if confirmed, I would continue to abide by it.

**QUESTION 14:** 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. 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 would 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*

**QUESTION 15:** As the Counterterrorism Mission Manager for the Intelligence Community, the Director of the NCTC identifies intelligence gaps and resource constraints and sets collection and analytic priorities.

- What is your vision of the Director of the NCTC in the role of mission manager? Should the Director provide broad, strategic guidance, for example by prioritizing emerging regional terrorist threats? Should the Director provide guidance on the allocation of resources with regard to particular CT capabilities and platforms?

If confirmed, as the CT Mission Manager, I would continue to promote organizing and prioritizing analysis and collection activities for terrorism and CT intelligence, with a particular focus on areas in which there are identified intelligence gaps or newly emerging requirements. Through the Unified Intelligence Strategy for CT, the Director of the NCTC provides strategic guidance to components of the IC regarding threat-driven priorities.

- What is the role of the Director of the NCTC in providing guidance with regard to the allocation of resources among, and within elements of the Intelligence Community?

The IRTPA mandates that the Director of NCTC advise the DNI on government programs and budgets that support national counterterrorism priorities. Accordingly, I believe that the Director of NCTC is obligated to work with CT program managers to understand where there are shortfalls and redundancies wherever resources are allocated against key CT objectives. As a matter of practice, the Director, in his National Intelligence Manager for CT role, should continue to serve as an advocate for the CT mission in the IC budget process and to provide recommendations to the DNI. NCTC is uniquely suited to offer these recommendations.

- Given resource constraints, how should the Director of the NCTC identify unnecessary or less critical programs and seek to reallocate funding?

Under IRTPA, the Director of NCTC is required to “advise the Director of National Intelligence on the extent to which the counterterrorism program recommendations and budget proposals of the departments, agencies, and elements of the United States Government conform to the priorities established by the President.” In support of this responsibility, NCTC’s Office of National Intelligence Management regularly reviews the performance of the IC’s counterterrorism activities by department and agency, and makes recommendations for adjustments as appropriate. Additionally, given NCTC’s position within the ODNI, the NCTC Director and his staff support the DNI’s Chief Financial Officer in its consideration of Department and agency counterterrorism budgets.

### *Congressional Oversight*

**QUESTION 16:** The Intelligence Reform Act (Section 102A of the National Security Act) provides that the DNI shall ensure compliance with the Constitution

and laws of the United States by elements of the IC through the host executive departments that manage the programs and activities that are part of the National Intelligence Program.

- What are the principal matters to which this obligation relates, and what specific functions of the NCTC are of particular significance with regard to these matters?

One of the responsibilities of the DNI, as outlined in IIRTPA, is to ensure that the IC complies with both the Constitution and laws of the United States. This responsibility applies across the entirety of NCTC's functions. Like the rest of the IC, NCTC has the duty to analyze, produce, and disseminate critical intelligence to protect America and its interests abroad. Of note, NCTC is not a traditional intelligence "collector" but rather relies on the lawful collection of other departments and agencies in the execution of its mission. NCTC has the additional obligation to conduct strategic operational planning for counterterrorism activities. In carrying out all of its responsibilities, NCTC, like the Intelligence Community as a whole, must always act in a manner that complies with the Constitution and other legal requirements, protecting fully the freedoms and civil liberties, and privacy rights of the American people.

Based on my prior experience, I recognize and value the close involvement of the Offices of the General Counsel, the Inspectors General, and the Civil Liberties Protection Officers in the operations of government. If confirmed, I would rely heavily on the staffs of these critical offices to ensure that the NCTC fulfills its mission in a manner that complies with the Constitution and all applicable laws.

- 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?

During my career in public service, I have viewed congressional oversight as an essential part of our constitutional system of checks and balances. Given the fact that most of the activities of the NCTC and the IC must remain secret, this relationship only becomes more important. As such, it is an integral responsibility of all components of the Intelligence Community, including the ODNI and the NCTC, to be responsive to the congressional oversight process and to ensure our obligation to keep the congressional intelligence committees fully and currently informed of intelligence activities is taken very seriously.

Intelligence oversight is critical to the successful operation of the IC, but it can only be effective if the IC views the intelligence committees as true partners and keeps them fully and currently informed of their activities. This entails communication with Congress on a regular and continuing basis. In furtherance of that partnership, NCTC regularly provides

this Committee with written notifications, briefings on intelligence issues and priorities for NCTC and the Committee, and hosts Committee members and staff. By doing so, we advance our collective ability to address the threats we face today, prevent further terrorist attacks, and remain consistent with American laws and values.

If confirmed as the Director of NCTC, I assure you that I would continue to abide by the responsibility to keep Congress fully and currently informed, consistent with the law.

### ***Presidential Policy Guidance***

**QUESTION 17:** Please describe your role in developing the “U.S. Policy Standards and Procedures for the Use of Force in Counterterrorism Operations Outside the United States and Areas of Active Hostilities.”

While I was serving at the NSC staff as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Counterterrorism, I participated in May and June of 2012, in the production of the very initial drafts of the policy document that ultimately became the classified Presidential Policy Guidance (PPG). After moving to NCTC as Deputy Director in June 2012, I was intermittently involved in interagency policy discussions as the draft was reviewed and refined before it as ultimately approved by the President in May 2013.

a. Has the Presidential Policy Guidance made our counterterrorism operations more effective?

The PPG has allowed the U.S. government to effectively pursue terrorist targets while also institutionalizing the rigorous review process and legal and policy standards that guide these operations. In this way, the PPG forms a sustainable framework for our use of direct action against terrorist threats.

At the time the effort to create the PPG was begun, the principal goals of the effort as I understood them were to:

- Institutionalize and document the careful and deliberate approach that the USG and the CT Community was already employing with respect to use of force in CT operations outside the United States and areas of active hostilities.
- Spell out in written form the procedures, steps and the policy standards that were being routinely applied to the conduct of such operations, that they could form the basis for these operations going forward.

- Contribute to the goal of greater transparency in our CT operations by documenting the careful, deliberate processes and the standards by which decisions about CT operations—particularly lethal operations—were being made.

By refining and documenting the careful and deliberate way in which these operations are approved and conducted and by contributing to greater transparency in our CT operations, I believe the PPG has made it easier for some of our key allies and CT partners to support those operations by sharing intelligence and/or providing other forms of support for our CT operations. I believe the PPG has likely contributed to making some of our CT operations more effective by making critical forms of CT cooperation with key partners more sustainable. By standardizing and institutionalizing the considerations and processes that inform our policymaking on direct action operations, we have become more effective in reviewing these operations and ensuring all appropriate national security equities are considered prior to approval.

- b. Do you believe the Presidential Policy Guidance is a good long term solution for this type of irregular warfare?

I believe the PPG represents an important step forward in the effort to make our CT policies and operations more sustainable as threat conditions and the security environment change over time. The PPG appropriately places direct action in context with other CT tools and provides a sustainable framework for the use of this important tool. The document contains provisions designed specifically to account for the fact that threat conditions may evolve over time and may cause the government to decide to review and potentially adjust either the procedures outlined in the document governing conduct of CT operations and/or the standards applied to certain proposed CT operations. In that regard, I believe the PPG has sufficient flexibility to serve as long-term policy guidance for addressing the CT threat faced by the United States.

**SSCI# 2014 - 3425**

**Questions for the Record from Senator Wyden  
20 November 2014  
Hearing to Consider the Nomination of Mr. Nicholas J. Rasmussen  
to Serve as Director of the National Counterterrorism Center**

**Responses of Mr. Nicholas J. Rasmussen  
Acting Director, National Counterterrorism Center**

**Question #1:**

**In recent years there have been numerous instances of intelligence officials making inaccurate public statements and refusing to correct the record when asked to do so. Examples include former NSA Director Alexander's repeated claims that the NSA was not engaged in the mass surveillance of Americans, and CIA Director Brennan's claim that the CIA had not secretly spied on Senate computer files. Please explain how you will avoid falling into this culture of misinformation.**

If confirmed as Director, I intend to continue to be forthright in response to questions from the Committee, whether posed in open or closed session. If I am constrained by classification in responding to questions in open session, I will say that and defer discussion to closed session. If in closed session, I am ever constrained in responding fully or completely, I will explain why and work with partner agencies to provide the Committee timely and complete answers.

**Question #2:**

**A big part of your job as NCTC Director will be ensuring data quality, since this is what allows the United States to focus on pursuing actual terrorists, instead of wasting time and resources pursuing innocent people. In a recent Oregon case the TSA removed several people from the no-fly list after they sued the government, and this case illustrates the challenge fairly well – there is widespread agreement that terrorists should be kept off of planes, and there is also widespread agreement that it would be better if innocent people did not have to sue the government simply to be removed from the no-fly list. While the ultimate responsibility for the no-fly list rests with the TSA, the list is based in large part on data that comes to the TSA via the NCTC. With this in mind, please discuss how you approach the issue of ensuring data quality as an NCTC manager.**

Part of NCTC's responsibility in maintaining the Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment (TIDE) database includes ensuring the quality of the data, making sure we have the right information on known and suspected terrorists which in turn enables timely and accurate identification by law enforcement, screening entities, and other partner agencies. This commitment means we must also ensure records are accurate and as complete as possible to minimize mis-identification of innocent persons.

This issue commands high attention within NCTC, where we take the following steps to ensure the quality of information:

- Entire teams within NCTC are dedicated to quality assurance and accuracy, from the regular auditing of staff to make sure they comply with standards to regular checks of U.S. person records within TIDE.
- NCTC works closely with its law enforcement and intelligence community partners to correct or remove inaccurate information in TIDE.
- Before an individual is placed on the No Fly List, three agencies – the nominating agency, NCTC, and the Terrorist Screening Center (TSC) – review the nomination.
- In addition, NCTC maintains a robust enhancement process and regularly adds information to TIDE records. Enhanced records lead to stronger, positive identification of known or suspected terrorists while decreasing false identification of innocent travelers.

Additionally, NCTC is participating in the interagency effort to reform the redress process. As a community, we are also actively seeking ways to be as transparent as possible with the public about watchlisting, while remaining cognizant of our responsibility to protect sources and methods, and to assist in continuing to protect the American people.

**Question #3:**

**As the US counterterrorism apparatus continues to adapt from focusing on a single large, fairly coherent terrorist organization to the more decentralized threat presented by ISIL and AQAP, what do you think the US government is currently doing well, and what you believe needs to be done better?**

The U.S. counterterrorism community effectively tracks and disrupts terrorist plotting, and monitors and targets terrorist networks, when we are able to collect timely and accurate intelligence. We have global reach and resources that exceed those of most other states.

Terrorist groups—such as ISIL and AQAP—justifiably draw much of our attention; these groups present the most significant threats to our interests here in the homeland and overseas, and have the resources to execute attacks against us. Even as the global terrorist movement has become more diversified, it is the lone actor—the person operating outside scope of a known extremist group—who most challenges the U.S. counterterrorism community’s disruption efforts.

The decentralization of the threat and the challenges we face in our effort to disrupt that threat requires effective engagement with foreign partners and successes in building their CT capacity. Through improved intelligence sharing relationships and by bolstering the capabilities of partner nations, we will be better positioned to monitor and disrupt threats wherever they arise, without relying solely on our own capabilities. The effort to build CT capacity in key partners faces many challenges and our success has been uneven and difficult to sustain over time.

Unauthorized disclosure of classified information has given terrorists greater insight into our collection capabilities, and complicated our collection efforts. Terrorists are using new and

different means to communicate, and this greatly reduces our access to critical information about their plans, capabilities, and intentions.

