

UNCLASSIFIED

***Statement by Vice Chairman Chambliss
Ten-Year Anniversary of the September 11th Attacks,
September 13, 2011***

General Clapper, General Petraeus, thank you for joining us and sharing your assessments of the state of the Intelligence Community (IC) ten years after the September 11th attacks. We also extend a special thanks to all our law enforcement officers, first responders, and the men and women of our military and IC who work so hard every day to keep this country safe. As our nation observes the anniversary of one of the darkest days in our history, we are reminded of the lives lost and of the sacrifices made by so many to protect and defend this country. We all share the resolve that these sacrifices will not be in vain.

We have made significant progress since 9/11. The operation against Usama bin Laden was a great success, especially in terms of cooperation between our military and IC. We have seen amazing improvements in our ability to go on the offensive against terrorists, our counterterrorism analysis and collection have greatly improved, and

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

more information is being shared, especially between the CIA and the FBI—which has made huge strides in transitioning to a full member of the IC.

But, as we look back over the last 10 years, there have been failures as well, including the Fort Hood shooting, the attempted Christmas Day bombing of Northwest Flight 253, and the attempted bombing in Times Square. These attacks remind us that more work remains to be done and that we must be vigilant and resist complacency. The stovepipes we worked so hard to break down cannot be permitted to slowly build up again. Congress created the National Counterterrorism Center to lead the fight against terrorism, but NCTC still struggles to get access to some government information that could be used to identify terrorists. Congress itself is given little insight into the Executive Branch's counterterrorism strategy and spending, a lack of visibility that is troubling given the variety of threats and the budget realities we face.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

We must make sure that our policies and laws promote the most effective counterterrorism operations, not those that are the most politically expedient. The Administration remains intent on closing Guantanamo Bay, even as we remain without a facility for long-term detention and questioning of terrorists and even as the recidivism rate among former detainees continues to rise. Given my concerns about these detainees, especially those within AQAP, I was pleased that the Senate Intelligence Committee's authorization bill included several provisions to improve detainee oversight, one of which requires documents relating to the transfer of Guantanamo detainees. I believe this provision must be part of any final authorization bill, unless the Administration moves quickly to work with the Committee on a reasonable alternative accommodation.

Congress has work to do as well. We must also put an end to the repeated sunsets in the USA PATRIOT Act and Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Our intelligence collectors need certainty, not short-term extensions that do little for oversight. Each public debate about

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

sensitive authorities raises the risk that our enemies will change their methods to defeat our surveillance. That is a gamble we should no longer take.

Gentleman, I look forward to hearing your views and thank you both for your continued willingness to serve your country.

UNCLASSIFIED