

Opening Statement of Chairman Dianne Feinstein
Joint SSCI/HPSCI Hearing: 10th Anniversary of 9/11
September 13, 2011

Thank you very much, Chairman Rogers.

It's a very special thing for us to be in the House and to see these most palatial quarters. In the Senate we work in a much humbler way. I just want you to know that.

I am very pleased to join you, and have our Committees meet together for the first time since the 2002 HPSCI-SSCI "Joint Inquiry" into the attacks of September 11.

I also congratulate you on the House passage of the FY-12 Intelligence Authorization bill, and thank you for the cooperation that has enabled us to pre-conference the legislation. I look forward to Senate action and enactment of the third straight intelligence bill after a six year hiatus.

I'd also welcome our witnesses, Director Clapper and Director Petraeus. I thank you for being here.

I believe important and substantial progress has been made in U.S. intelligence collection and analysis in the past 10 years.

We are often asked the question, "Are we safer today?" The answer, I believe, is an unqualified "Yes." That is not to say that terrorist attacks can always be stopped, but it is to say that the intelligence world has learned and adapted to the challenge.

Stovepipes are down; intelligence is shared and streamlined in ways that it never was before 9/11. Last week, the Intelligence Community learned of a new threat to the Homeland around the 10th anniversary of 9/11. That information was shared throughout the Intelligence Community, with the Congress, with the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security to take protective measures, and with state and local governments all within about one day. That is real progress.

Both SIGINT and HUMINT have improved: I can't detail the efforts here, but intractable problems have been overcome to produce key information to policymakers.

We have had some real counterterrorism successes. Witness the take down of Bin Laden and the high number of al-Qaeda leaders killed or captured recently. In fact, more than one half of al-Qaeda's top leadership has been eliminated according a speech in June by John Brennan, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism. Consider the following top AQ leaders killed or captured since last summer:

- Usama Bin Laden;
- Al Qaeda's new #2 Atiyah Abd al-Rahman;
- Top AQ operative Yunis al-Mauritani;
- Ilyas Kashmiri, one of al-Qaeda's most dangerous commanders reportedly killed;
- The #3 al-Qaeda leader, Sheik Saeed al-Masri killed;

- Operatives of AQAP in Yemen, including Ammar al-Wa'ili and Ali Saleh Farhan killed;
- Harun Fazul, the leader of AQ in East Africa and the mastermind of the '98 bombings of our embassies in Africa killed by Somali security forces.

All told, over the past two and half years, virtually every major al-Qaeda affiliate has lost a key leader or operational commander, and more key al-Qaeda leaders have been eliminated in rapid succession than any time since 9/11.

Other post-9/11 reforms include a new counterterrorism focus at the FBI, where the number of Joint Terrorism Task Forces - we call them JTTFs - has grown from 35 to 104 around the country and the number of JTTF personnel has increased from approximately 1,000 before 9/11 to nearly 4,500 today.

The Department of Homeland Security was established after 9/11 and it has developed its own intelligence component. There are now 72 fusion centers around the country to serve as the focal points for the receipt, analysis, and sharing of threat-related information with state and local authorities.

Here in the Congress, both the House and Senate Intelligence Committees are working together and are now completing work on our 3rd authorization bill in a row after a 6 year hiatus during which no intelligence authorization bills were enacted. Vice-Chairman Chambliss and I work closely together, as do our staffs. I trust him, he's straightforward, we discuss virtually everything, and I know the same goes for the HPSCI. And that's the way I believe it should be.

Unfortunately, as our Intelligence Community has made improvements, the terrorist threat has also changed. Instead of fighting one enemy, al Qaeda has dispersed and its affiliates have emerged in Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, and North Africa.

There is a metastasizing set of groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan intent on terror attacks and violence against United States forces, including the Pakistani Taliban, the Haqqani Network, and Lashkar-e-Tayyiba.

These groups have also adapted as we have improved. They have learned ways to evade surveillance and they have developed ways to attack that are difficult to defend against. This includes small-arms "commando-style" raids like in Mumbai and explosives using PETN that can be concealed within a body or in a package that are difficult to detect.

We know terrorist groups are interested in attacks using weapons of mass destruction, which we cannot allow to happen.

So we must continue to improve, and adapt, and do so at the same speed as small, nimble terrorist cells.

We welcome today the first public appearance of the new CIA Director, retired general David Petraeus - who is one of America's very best. I read his biography last night and I didn't know

anyone really could accomplish as much as he has. He's noted for this outstanding service and most recently his service in Afghanistan, Iraq, and at Central Command overseeing both wars.

I would expect that Director Petraeus will, in the coming weeks, be reviewing the CIA's mission in collaboration with DNI Clapper. And it is very encouraging that the two of you are approaching this relationship as positively and productively as you are. I would hope that your review would include the following:

- Continuing to increase HUMINT collection on hard targets and continue improvements that we have made to analysis;
- Decreasing the number of contractors
- Continuing to improve language ability in those key areas – including Dari, Urdu, Pashto, Arabic, and Farsi – needed to understand what is going on in key parts of the world today.

In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the IC hired thousands of contractors as a matter of convenience, and for their expertise. Contractors were tasked to conduct intelligence operations, collection, exploitation, and analysis and all are critical tasks for the Intelligence Community and include – I would argue – inherently governmental functions that should be done by government employees at one-third less cost per employee.

The Office of the DNI recently reported that for Fiscal Year 2010 “core contractors” accounted for 23% of the total IC Human Capital Workforce, down only one percent from the year before. The overall number of contractors is in the tens of thousands; the numbers across intelligence, defense, and homeland security is in the hundreds of thousands.

We had an agreement in 2009 to reduce IC contractor numbers by 5 percent a year, but it is clear that progress has not been maintained and sufficient cuts are not being made.

We have seen moderate progress in improving overall language capability in the past two years, but of the several thousand military and IC positions that require foreign language skill only about half of the IC's self-assessed requirements are being met by an individual with sufficient language proficiency. We must do better.

Through both of our Committees' oversight work, we review sensitive programs across the IC to make sure we understand what is going on, that operations are carefully carried out and are legal and effective.

I'm pleased to say that in almost all cases, we are fully satisfied.

Of note, for the past two years, the Intelligence Committee has conducted extensive oversight of certain critical aspects of the country's counterterrorism efforts, especially along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. These efforts are notable for their precision, their effectiveness, and the care taken to ensure that non-combatant casualties are kept to an absolute minimum.

In sum, there are a number of areas where we have made progress since 9/11 to make the nation safer, but there are also issues that we need to continue to work on and hopefully we can do that cooperatively with the Intelligence Community and the entire Executive Branch.

So gentlemen, Director Clapper, Director Petraeus, my own view is a great deal of substantial, positive progress has been made, and I thank you and all who work for your communities for that.

I look forward to your testimony, and now let me turn to Ranking Member Ruppertsberger for his comments.