

Statement for the Record
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
Confirmation Hearing for General David H. Petraeus
23 June 2011

Thank you, Madame Chairman, Mr Vice Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you this afternoon.

And I'd like to thank Senator Lieberman for his very kind introduction. I have, of course, had considerable contact over the past 10 years with Senator Lieberman in his capacity as a senior member of the Senate Armed Services Committee – and, I might add, as one of the so-called “Three Amigos.” Throughout that time, his support of and abiding concern for our troopers and their families have been extraordinary. Senator Lieberman is, indeed, a true patriot and statesman who has served our country magnificently. And I know that he will be sorely missed by his colleagues and his constituents when he hangs up his Senate cleats in January 2013 after 24 years of service on Capitol Hill.

Well, it is, needless to say, a tremendous honor to have been nominated by the President to serve as the next Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. I have worked very closely with members of the Agency over the last decade, in particular, and I have the highest regard for them and for the Agency as an institution. If confirmed, it will be a true privilege to serve with them and to continue to contribute to the important endeavors to which so many Americans and our coalition partners have given so much in recent years.

Thanks for your kind words about my wife, Holly, who is here with me today. As you have noted, Holly is no stranger to public service; indeed she is an Army daughter, an Army wife, an Army mother, and an advocate for military families. Earlier this year, she left the office she established some 6 years ago at the Better Business Bureau to become an Assistant Director of the new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, responsible for the office of service member affairs. Holly was recently described as being bright, nice, small, and a pit bull – someone you want in your corner. I have been blessed to have had her in my corner for some 37 years and 23 moves, and I appreciate the opportunity this morning to recognize her publicly.

Up front, this afternoon, I thought it might be useful to address a few of the concerns that various pundits have offered about an individual with my background becoming CIA Director.

Some observers have, for example, questioned whether I will be able to “grade my own work,” that is, to ensure that my involvement in Afghanistan, Iraq, or other endeavors will not color the

Agency's analysis of those efforts. Let me reassure you on this issue. Clearly, I have views on the efforts in which I have been engaged; I have shared them in the past with the Agency's analysts and I will do so in the future. However, if confirmed, when I am in the Situation Room with the President, I will strive to represent the Agency position. I will also remain keenly aware that I am the leader of an intelligence agency, not a policy maker.

In truth, my goal in uniform has always been to convey the most forthright and accurate picture possible. I have, to be sure, offered more positive assessments than the intelligence community did on two important occasions – in September 2007 on Iraq and in December 2010 on Afghanistan. In each case, my team and I felt that the situation had changed significantly following the intelligence community assessment cutoff date, typically some 6-8 weeks prior to the date of the assessment being reviewed by the President. In view of that, we sought to provide our assessment and more up-to-date analysis. In two other cases, however, those of the assessments on Iraq in April 2008 and March 2009, I provided less positive assessments than those put forward by the intelligence community which, again, stopped the clock for analysis purposes a good bit prior to the date that we provided our assessment. My view in those two cases was that the assessments should have been more cautious and more qualified, and that is what I offered. In short, I have sought to provide the most accurate view possible. My goal has always been to “speak truth to power,” and I will strive to do that as Director of the CIA, if confirmed.

There have also been concerns voiced over “militarization” of the intelligence community in general and the CIA in particular. One reason I will retire before assuming the directorship, if confirmed, is to allay such concerns. Beyond that, I have no plans to bring my military braintrust with me to the Agency. There is no shortage of impressive individuals at the Agency, and I look forward to interacting with them and populating my office with them. If confirmed, I will, in short, get out of my vehicle alone on the day that I report to Langley.

Finally, some observers have suggested that someone who has had 6 commands in a row as a general officer might find the relative flatness of the Agency's organization unsettling. I would remind such individuals that I was privileged to have an academic period in my background and that I have long enjoyed vigorous debate and discussion. Moreover, I have repeatedly used Red Teams, outside advisors, directed telescopes, and backchannel contacts with individuals well down in the organizations I've been privileged to command. A practice I used in Iraq and Afghanistan, for example, was meeting with groups of company commanders while on battlefield circulations, and I have also corresponded by email with innumerable young commissioned and noncommissioned officers, and so on. In short, I will not only be comfortable with the lack of rigid hierarchy at the Agency, I will promote appropriate “flatness” of the Agency's organization – while recognizing that there does have to be some hierarchy and that at a certain point, decisions have to be made, analyses have to be finalized, and judgments have to be rendered.

I would also like to offer a few observations about how I see the Agency, observations that benefit from discussions with the Agency's current leadership team, former members of the Agency, including a number of former directors and senior leaders, and, of course, with Director Panetta. And, here, if I could, I would like to salute Director Panetta's principled, forthright leadership of the Agency over the past 2-1/2 years. Leon Panetta did an absolutely magnificent job at the helm of the Agency, and it was a pleasure to work with him as Commander of US Central Command and as the commander in Afghanistan.

In assessing the organization, it is important that I recognize that the Agency is its people. Indeed, it is blessed with thousands of individuals who truly are national assets – quiet professionals and unsung heroes who go about their work silently and without public recognition. They are the ultimate selfless servants of our Nation, individuals with extraordinary expertise, initiative, integrity, and courage in the face of adversity and physical danger. Needless to say, if confirmed, I will work tirelessly to help attract the very best people to the Agency, to ensure that those hired provide the diversity needed for the areas in which we need to perform missions, to ensure that we strive to develop them and invest in them to the maximum extent possible, and to work to retain them for as long as is possible.

The Agency is, of course, but one of 16 elements that comprise the intelligence community. And while it may be the most prominent and well known, it is nonetheless part of a team and collectively has to be a team player. Moreover, it is critical not only that the leaders of Agency elements work well with their partners in the other organizations, it is also critical that the Director work closely and effectively with the DNI.

I have known DNI Jim Clapper for a number of years and worked with him in his current capacity and when he was the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence, as well. We have worked well together in the past, and we have discussed the imperative of continuing to do likewise if I am confirmed as the next Director of the CIA. I believe I understand his role as the leader of the intelligence community and I understand the relationship the D/CIA should have with the DNI.

If confirmed, I also look forward to working closely with the leaders of the other agencies of the intelligence community. I have, in fact, soldiered with many of them over the past decade, in particular, while deployed for a year in the Balkans, during some four years in Iraq, as the commander of US Central Command, and, of course, in my present position in Afghanistan.

I am also keenly aware of the need to maintain close ties with Congress. By all reports, the Agency has done an admirable job under Director Panetta in this regard, and I know that keeping the Committee fully and currently informed is imperative. If confirmed, I will keep the Agency on the trajectory it has been following in this regard under Director Panetta; indeed, I look

forward to furthering the relationship -- indeed the partnership -- that was built with Congress on his watch.

With respect to additional organizational issues, many I've consulted since my nomination have emphasized the need to continue to improve the development of Agency information systems that enable efficient sharing of information internally and also of continuing the development of tools and applications that help with analysis. I will focus on such areas, if confirmed, and seek Congressional assistance for such initiatives, if required.

Related to that, I also understand that the effort to reduce internal Agency "stovepipes" needs to continue. There reportedly has been considerable improvement in this area in recent years; however, additional attention is reportedly warranted to work the tensions between the need to protect information and the need to share it.

On a related note, I will also strongly support efforts to integrate analysts, all disciplines of intelligence, and operators. In fact, the various centers at the Agency, such as the ones devoted to counterterrorism, counterproliferation, and crime and narcotics, among others, are good examples of such integration. If confirmed, I will support and reinforce such approaches.

Other issues in the organizational arena deserving attention are the need to maintain sensitivity to the counterintelligence threat, improve cyber security, upgrade leadership training for supervisors, continue the expansion of language skills, and strengthen the lessons learned process, among others. I will examine each of these areas closely, if confirmed, and support appropriate initiatives in them.

The Committee knows well the regional and functional issues on which the Agency needs to focus. Obviously, the Agency is heavily engaged on the front lines in the global fight against violent extremists. There has, needless to say, been important progress against Al Qaeda in recent months, in particular, and I will ensure that we maintain the relentless pressure that has enabled such progress. Indeed, I have worked closely with various Agency elements in recent years in this campaign, and if confirmed, I will support continuation of the superb cooperation between Agency assets and other intelligence community elements, with the Joint Special Operations Command and other military commands, and with relevant elements of the interagency. Needless to say, support for the ongoing efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as for missions in other locations such as Yemen, Iraq, and parts of Africa will remain critical.

The Agency is, of course, specifically charged with the conduct of covert operations. These operations are of enormous importance to our country, and if confirmed, I will devote considerable attention to ensuring that such activities are properly conducted, resourced, and coordinated.

It is also important that the Agency, while staying fully focused on supporting our ongoing wars, not be totally captured by those efforts. While contributing to such efforts to the utmost, the Agency nonetheless also has to maintain a broad, global perspective, one that is constantly searching for new threats and opportunities, the next developments in the Arab Spring, the evolution in capabilities of various state and non-state actors, the development of China and other emerging global powers, and the possible proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Of particular note, as well, are cyber threats that have emerged in recent years. I share the concerns that many hold about cybersecurity and, if confirmed, I will ensure that the Agency continues to work closely with intelligence community partners to identify and counter risks, threats, and adversaries from issues within our networks to threats from outside attackers.

Related to this, and in view of the Agency's responsibility for conducting and coordinating human intelligence collection, I will also, if confirmed, examine progress in collection on the so-called "hard targets" and inventory the status of initiatives against them, aligning our efforts as required.

Finally, I also recognize that it will be critical to ensure adequate resources for appropriate investment in Agency infrastructure, science and technology, and other assets, while also striving to be good stewards of our Nation's tax dollars and doing our share to help our country deal with challenging fiscal realities. If confirmed, I will focus intently on those imperatives, as well, noting that I will also not hesitate to seek additional resources that may be needed, as emerging missions and tasks require.

The Central Intelligence Agency is at the forefront of the efforts to identify and counter the threats to our Nation's security and interests. It plays a central role in many of our country's most important endeavors. If confirmed as the Agency's next director, I will do all that is humanly possible to ensure that the Agency is relentless in pursuit of the intelligence needed by our country's leaders, our military, our diplomats, and, indeed, our own covert operators.

It would, in short, be an enormous privilege to be the Agency's Director and to serve with, represent, lead, and be an advocate for individuals with world-class knowledge of other countries and cultures, with cutting-edge technical expertise, with extraordinary courage, initiative, and commitment, and with no quest for acclaim or public recognition. The professionals of the Agency are our country's best and brightest, men and women who voluntarily undertake some of the most difficult tasks for our Nation, men and women for whom integrity in analysis is the watchword. I have served closely with many of them since 9/11, and I cannot say enough about them and the sacrifices they and their families make for our country. Serving as their Director would be a tremendous honor and, again, a tremendous privilege. Thank you very much.