

SELECT COMMITTEE ON  
INTELLIGENCE

UNITED STATES SENATE



**Post-Hearing Questions for the Record for**

**George Wesley Street**

**Upon his nomination to be**

**Director of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center**

### **Questions from Senator Wyden**

**QUESTION 1:** A pillar of the National Counterintelligence Strategy for 2024 was: “Detect, attribute, expose, and disrupt [foreign intelligence entity] malign influence efforts and engage partners and policymakers to counter these operations and safeguard the integrity of and public trust in U.S. democratic institutions and processes, rule of law, and other democratic norms.”

- A.** Which countries do you believe present the most serious malign influence threats, and how do those countries conduct their malign influence operations?

While numerous countries pose a malign influence threat for various purposes, China, Russia, Iran and North Korea present the most significant threats. These nations are innovative in their efforts to exploit cyber-based mediums, including social media, to stir social dissent in the United States and minimize information critical of their respective regimes. China also uses educational and partnership organizations to push pro-Chinese Communist Party messaging to U.S. citizens in academia, state, local, territorial and tribal governments and U.S.-based populations.

- B.** The Strategy states that: “in 2020 and again in 2022 the IC tracked a broader array of foreign actors taking steps to influence U.S. elections than in past election cycles.” Which countries do you believe engaged in the most serious influence operations in these and previous U.S. elections and what were their goals?

Numerous countries frequently take actions to influence not only U.S. elections, but elections in partner nations as well. China and Russia remain the most prolific actors in this area, but have the ability to use proxies, third country nationals and co-optees (witting and unwitting) to expand their messaging. The intention of these efforts is to cause discord and social division in the United States.

**QUESTION 2:** Please describe which elements of the federal government should be engaged in countering foreign malign influence operations and what should their respective roles be?

Foreign malign influence is often portrayed as being focused primarily on elections, but the challenge is broader than a single topic. For example, the use of social media to stir civil unrest in the U.S., and trafficking of illicit drugs into the U.S. to damage our nation (and profit from victimizing our citizens) are two additional aspects of foreign malign influence. Countering this influence requires a whole of government approach, including the Intelligence Community (IC). The IC should identify foreign influence vectors, warn the

public sector, and work with other government agencies such as the U.S. Department of State and Department of Homeland Security to identify and counter these malign influences appropriately.

**QUESTION 3:** What do you believe is the impact on U.S. counterintelligence efforts of disbanding the FBI's Foreign Influence Task Force?

I have not personally seen any impact on the U.S. counterintelligence effort from this action. However, I cannot speak for the FBI and the FBI would be better positioned to answer this query.

**QUESTION 4:** The Department of Justice has announced that prosecutions under the Foreign Agents Registration Act "shall be limited to instances of alleged conduct similar to more traditional espionage by foreign government actors." What is the value of FARA investigations in revealing foreign malign influence operations, and what would be the impact of curtailing those investigations?

I am unaware of any curtailment of FARA-related investigations. In my experience, counterintelligence investigations have revealed both foreign malign influence and more traditional espionage activities – at times concurrently. I am not currently aware of the status of FARA-related investigations being conducted by the DOJ/FBI and DOJ would be best suited to answer this query.

**QUESTION 5:** What is the counterintelligence threat posed by the acquisition by adversaries of information on Americans through hacking or by purchasing on the data broker market? How would you propose to address these threats, through policy or support for legislation?

Foreign adversary exploitation of Americans' data presents significant risk from numerous perspectives. The amalgamation of data can enhance foreign adversary targeting and exploitation of Americans for insidious foreign espionage activities; it can enable socially engineered malign influence campaigns on social media to promote divisive themes in U.S. society or minimize themes contrary to adversarial narratives; and it can be used to fraudulently victimize Americans economically. Enhanced cyber security efforts can help (in both the private sector and government sector) in regards to illicitly hacked data, but legislation may be required to ensure that data brokers are not providing information regarding Americans to adversarial foreign nations. If confirmed by the Senate, I would welcome the opportunity to work with the DNI and Congress on this evolving issue.

**QUESTION 6:** Do you agree that a security clearance holder's LGBTQ status does not pose a counterintelligence risk?

As described in Executive Order 12968, the U.S. government does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability or sexual orientation when adjudicating access to classified information.

**QUESTION 7:** Please review the article "Here Are the Attack Plans That Trump's Advisors Shared on Signal" (The Atlantic, March 26, 2025) and the "Houthi PC small group" Signal chat messages included in the article.

**A.** Do you believe that any of the messages were or should have been classified? If yes, which messages?

The Secretary of Defense, who is the original classification authority of the information, has publicly confirmed the messages were not classified.

**B.** Do you believe that any of the messages included any national defense information, as codified pursuant to 18 U.S.C. §§ 793 - 798? If yes, which ones?

No.

**C.** Regardless of classification, do you believe that the information included in the messages was appropriate for an unclassified channel, particularly given the timing?

The original classification authority of the information confirmed the messages were not classified.

**D.** Do you agree that unclassified phones used by national security officials are likely targets of foreign adversaries and that, as such, should not be used to convey classified information?

Yes. Unclassified phones should not be used to convey classified information.