

Statement for the Record
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

CIA General Counsel Nominee Joshua Simmons

October 6, 2025

Thank you Chairman Cotton, Vice Chairman Warner, and distinguished Members of the Committee for the opportunity to appear before you today as the nominee to be General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency.

I am grateful to President Trump, Director Ratcliffe, and Deputy Director Ellis for their trust and confidence in me. I also appreciate the opportunity I have had to meet with several of you before this hearing to discuss a number of important issues.

I also want to thank my colleagues at the State Department. Secretary Rubio and the other leaders at the State Department have been advancing important U.S. interests in foreign policy and national security. It has been an honor and a pleasure to work with them.

I understand that, if confirmed, I would not be the first attorney to have served in the Office of the Legal Adviser at the State Department and then as General Counsel of the CIA. I think there are good reasons for this. The offices have similar sizes, similarly talented lawyers, and similar missions advising on national security matters. Both offices also confront legal issues of great complexity and, often, urgency. These issues require judgment and wisdom that cannot be learned from a textbook, and I am grateful to my colleagues in the Office of the Legal Adviser for sharing years of on-the-ground experience.

If confirmed as General Counsel, I would use this experience to help the CIA navigate the many challenges our country faces. Director Ratcliffe has spoken to you about these challenges. They include the Chinese Communist Party, transnational drug-trafficking cartels, and the Russia-

Ukraine war. At the same time, we are seeing rapidly emerging technologies, from artificial intelligence to quantum computing, that could define the future of national security.

The General Counsel of the CIA is responsible for supporting the CIA's mission in facing these challenges, with fidelity to the Constitution and the rule of law. This means protecting not only American national security, but also Americans' civil liberties. If confirmed, I would seek to advance these interests in three primary ways.

First, I would provide objective, clear, and timely legal advice to enable the CIA's mission. The CIA operates under statutory authority and under the President's direction. I would lead the Office of General Counsel in ensuring that the CIA operates in accordance with the law.

Second, I would work closely with lawyers across the Executive Branch. I strongly value such interagency collaboration, and I would build on relationships with attorneys at the National Security Council, the Department of Justice, the Department of War, and other agencies to ensure that policymakers receive the best legal advice in support of our national security.

Third, I would lead the Office of General Counsel to work closely with this Committee to enable your oversight work and to provide appropriate transparency about the basis for CIA actions.

As President Eisenhower said when laying the cornerstone of the CIA headquarters, "success cannot be advertised; failure cannot be explained." That remains true today. The CIA's activities are generally outside of public view, and it is a testament to the patriotic service of intelligence officers and also to the importance of this Committee's oversight.

At that same cornerstone ceremony, it was announced that the words from the Gospel of John would be inscribed at the entrance of the CIA headquarters. Those words, as anyone who visits the CIA knows, are "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." If confirmed, I would support that mission to know the truth and to protect and promote freedom.

Finally, I want to thank my family. I come from a long line of Americans, from farmers to coal miners, who have loved our country and worked faithfully to raise families and serve their communities. Sitting here today, I am honored with the opportunity to help protect our country and those communities.

I also thank my wife of 18 years. We met in law school, and she has had a distinguished career as a government lawyer. I would not be here without her steadfast support and wisdom. As the Proverb says, she is far more precious than jewels. Our children are also here today in hopes that they will be inspired seeing our great American Republic at work.

Thank you again. I look forward to answering your questions.