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SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

UNITED STATES SENATE



**Post-Hearing Questions for the Record for Walter Clayton
upon his nomination to be Director of National Intelligence**

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From the Chairman***Agricultural Security***

1. China's growing footprint in global agriculture is a deliberate, strategic effort to dominate food production and supply chains in ways that threatens American farmers and food security. Chinese state-backed money is remaking western hemisphere ports and reshaping grain routes to Asia. For states like Arkansas, where agriculture is the number one industry, the consequences are real. Chinese state-owned companies now have direct access to Brazilian farmers, purchasing their soybeans and overseeing the entire commercialization chain, including storage and transport to China, effectively locking in a supply chain that bypasses American producers entirely. Brazil's climate compounds the threat. A second annual corn crop, planted right after soybean harvest, lets Brazilian farmers spread land and equipment costs across two harvests instead of one. This allows Brazil to undercut U.S. prices, giving China an increasingly attractive alternative to American grain. Do you commit to working with the committee to monitoring and countering this growing threat?

Yes.

Artificial Intelligence Data Center Foreign Influence

2. Mr. Clayton, in recent weeks there have been more and more public reports documenting efforts by our adversaries in China, Russia, and Iran to inflame the domestic debate over data center construction. As you know, artificial intelligence will be a bedrock capability for 21st century militaries and the nations with ample access to compute will enjoy tangible advantages on the battlefield. Last month, I sent a letter to Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche to investigate the allegations in these reports and, if necessary, hold the foreign agents conducting this malign influence campaign accountable.
 - A. Do you agree that it is plausible, if not probable, that Chinese Communists and other adversaries are undertaking a campaign to discourage AI data center construction in the United States?

As I have not been confirmed, I am not aware whether there is any

Intelligence Community (IC) reporting on the topic.

- B. If confirmed, do you commit to directing our intelligence agencies to monitor agents of foreign propaganda and work with this committee on needed reforms to contain this threat?

Yes.

From Senator Wyden

Journalists

3. 28 CFR § 50.10(c)(1) generally requires that “members of the Department must obtain the authorization of the Attorney General to issue a subpoena to a member of the news media.” Did Acting Attorney General Blanche authorize the issuance of subpoenas to multiple *New York Times* journalists on July 10, 2026? If so, when did Acting Attorney General Blanche do so? If not, why did Acting Attorney General Blanche not do so?

As I mentioned during my confirmation hearing, the Southern District of New York (SDNY) followed all appropriate procedures to issue the subpoenas at issue. I defer to Main Justice to provide information about any actions taken by the Acting Attorney General.

4. 28 CFR § 50.10(c)(4)(iii)(A) states that “[t]he government should have pursued negotiations with the affected member of the news media, unless the Attorney General determines that such negotiations would pose a substantial threat to the integrity of the investigation, risk grave harm to national security, or present an imminent risk of death or serious bodily harm.” Did you pursue negotiations with the affected members of the news media prior to issuing subpoenas? If so, when did these negotiations occur? If not, why not?

As I mentioned during my confirmation hearing, SDNY followed all appropriate procedures to issue the subpoenas at issue. I defer to Main Justice to provide information about any actions taken by the Acting Attorney General.

5. Under what circumstances, if any, could the government conduct queries

of Section 702 collection for the communications of U.S. person journalists in a leak investigation?

Section 702 only authorizes collection of foreign intelligence information from non-U.S. Persons outside the United States.

My understanding is that, in rare circumstances where a U.S. person is in contact with a valid foreign intelligence target or such a target is talking about a U.S. Person, the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC) has reviewed and authorized procedures that the government must follow to retrieve, or query, information about U.S. persons. Those procedures ensure that those retrievals comport with the Constitution and are focused on foreign intelligence.

If confirmed, I will ensure that the IC adheres to all FISC-approved procedures.

Elections

6. Under what circumstances, if any, could the government conduct queries of Section 702 collection for the communications of U.S. person journalists in a leak investigation?

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If confirmed, I will ensure that the IC adheres to all FISC-approved procedures.

7. On the June 8, 2026, Squawk Box show on CNBC, you said: “Is mail-in voting being used by one group and not another, whether it’s being used honestly or dishonestly? It’s a question now everyone is asking.” Please

identify the “group” that is using mail-in voting “dishonestly.”

Based on the quote provided, I stated that individuals are *asking* whether groups are using mail-in voting honestly or dishonestly.

Domestic terrorism

8. In responses to written questions, you wrote that, while you agree that there is no statutory basis for the designation of domestic organizations as terrorist groups, “I understand the President’s designation of Antifa in that Executive Order of 22 September 2025, which directed all relevant executive departments and agencies to utilize all applicable authorities to investigate, disrupt, and dismantle any and all illegal operations by or on behalf of Antifa, was done pursuant to his authorities under Article II of the U.S. Constitution.”
 - A. Please cite sections of Article II that you believe grant the President the authority to designate domestic terrorist organizations.
 - B. Please cite any jurisprudence to support this view.
 - C. Please describe the practical implications of the designation. For example, does the designation make “membership” in or association with Antifa a predicate for an investigation? Should a determination that a defendant is acting “by or on behalf of Antifa” add to the severity of the punishment for the underlying crime?
 - D. What limitations, if any, do you believe exist with regard to the President’s Article II authorities to designate political, advocacy or protest organizations and movements as domestic terrorist organizations and what congressional or judicial guardrails should there be with regard to such designations?

If confirmed as DNI, my role would not be to provide legal counsel to the President. That role belongs to the White House Counsel’s Office and the Attorney General. Rather, my role would be to ensure that IC elements operate in a manner consistent with their solemn obligation to protect and defend the constitutional rights of all Americans, including their First Amendment rights. I commit to doing so.

The “Settlement Agreement”

9. On May 21, 2026, on CNBC, you defended the decision to immunize Donald Trump and his family from a tax audit and stated it was a “pretty good deal for the government.” On July 13, 2026, a district court found that the “matter was brought for an improper purpose – to gain the imprimatur of judicial legitimacy for a ‘settlement’ that had no viable basis in law or fact.” The court further found that the government had “abdicat[ed] its responsibility to zealously defend the interests of the United States...” Do you stand by your view that the “settlement” was a “pretty good deal for the government?”

The statement was made in reaction to news that a legal controversy had been settled. That matter is now the subject of litigation and I defer further comment to Main Justice.

Chatrie v. United States

10. On June 29, 2026, the Supreme Court held in *Chatrie v. United States* that an individual maintains a reasonable expectation of privacy in their cell-phone location information and that the government’s access of such information constitutes a Fourth Amendment search. Does this ruling from *Chatrie* apply to the Intelligence Community?

Yes.

11. The *Chatrie* Court sharply limited the third-party doctrine, stating that “a cell-phone user is not to be viewed as sharing private information with third parties—which then can be freely passed on to the government—just by doing the ordinary things cell-phone users do.” The Court specifically rejected the argument that individuals lose their Fourth Amendment rights in data by affirmatively choosing to use a cell-phone app and thereby disclosing personal information to an app provider. Does the decision in *Chatrie* affect or limit the Intelligence Community’s access of Commercially Available Information pertaining to United States persons and persons in the United States? If so, how so? If not, why not?

If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing how the IC collects or accesses

Commercially Available Information pertaining to United States persons and persons in the United States to fully answer this question.

Leon Black

12. Please describe your connections to Leon Black, through Sullivan & Cromwell and/or Apollo Global Management.

From March 1, 2021 to April 2025, I was lead director and independent chairman of Apollo Global Management. Mr. Black retired from the board of Apollo in March 2021. After leaving the board of Apollo, Mr. Black remained Apollo's largest shareholder. I was a partner at Sullivan & Cromwell from January 2001 to April 2015 and of counsel from March 2021 to April 2025. I did not represent Mr. Black.

From Senator King

Elections

13. Who won the 2024 presidential election?

Donald J. Trump was certified as President in January 2025 by the electors presenting before Congress.

14. In questions 183 and 184 of your Additional Prehearing Questions (APQ), and during your confirmation hearing, you were given opportunities to provide any evidence you have of election fraud, opportunities for fraud, and ballot audit trails that don't sufficiently protect election integrity. You did not provide evidence for these claims in your APQ responses or during your hearing.

- A. Given the foundational importance of election integrity in the United States, do you have evidence of significant fraud or opportunities for fraud that have impacted, or threaten to impact, election integrity or electoral outcomes in the United States?

As I explained during the hearing, I believe there are two fundamental components of election operations in the United States: (1) access to the ballot; and (2) integrity of ballot collection, tabulation and recording. I firmly believe that we can both expand access to the

ballot for our citizens—something that both this body and ordinary Americans have strived towards for generations—and increase the efficacy of the collection and tabulation of ballots, including addressing threats from foreign interests. This belief is informed by my experience with controls, cybersecurity, and audit systems for large-scale reporting systems in our public and private sectors.

I also believe efforts to improve these two fundamental components of election operations, including, without limitation, improving control systems, cybersecurity, and audit processes, will increase public confidence in our elections. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to ensure that the IC plays its role in election security by identifying and reporting foreign threats with the aim of enabling policymakers and those responsible for conducting our elections to take appropriate action to improve the security of U.S. elections.

From Senator Bennet

Ukraine

15. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine is in a new phase, with Kyiv less dependent on U.S. assistance and increasingly capable of taking the fight to Moscow. There is an overwhelming bipartisan consensus on this Committee and in Congress that U.S. intelligence support is vital to these Ukrainian successes. In May 2026, the Committee approved legislation to ensure this intelligence support is sustained and evolves to match the circumstances on the ground.

- A. Do you support this legislation, which every Republican Member of the Committee voted to advance?
- B. If confirmed, do you pledge to work with the Committee to help enact and implement this legislation?

If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing this proposed legislation and working with this Committee on how to appropriately implement its goals.

Asia Pacific

16. The Intelligence Authorization Act this committee passed on a bipartisan basis in May 2026 includes legislation requiring the DNI to bolster intelligence cooperation between the United States and our Indo-Pacific allies and partners, including by encouraging intelligence-sharing with Taiwan and improving multilateral collaboration.

A. What is your understanding of ongoing intelligence work in this area, and what more do you think the United States should do?

As I am not yet in the role of DNI, I do not have sufficient information to answer this question. If confirmed, I look forward to working with this Committee on appropriate measures.

B. How do you assess Japan's ongoing intelligence reforms?

As I am not yet in the role of DNI, I do not have sufficient information to answer this question.

C. If confirmed and if this legislation becomes law, can you commit to briefing me and my team on your work to implement it?

If confirmed, I look forward to working with this Committee on how to appropriately implement the goals of this proposed legislation.

Subpoenas to New York Times Reporters

17. Subsequent to your appearance before the Committee, and during his separate confirmation hearing on July 15, 2026, Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche testified that he personally authorized the subpoenas that the Southern District of New York (SDNY) issued to several *New York Times* reporters following the publication of an article regarding the defenses on an airplane gifted by Qatar that was retrofitted by the U.S. military to serve as Air Force One.

A. Did you or any other officials at SDNY propose to Acting AG Blanche that these subpoenas be issued – or were you and the career prosecutors at SDNY directed by Acting AG Blanche or another Department of Justice (DOJ) official to issue these subpoenas? If the latter, please specify which official(s) provided

SDNY with direction.

As I mentioned during my confirmation hearing, SDNY followed all appropriate procedures to issue the subpoenas at issue. I defer to Main Justice to provide information about any actions taken by the Acting Attorney General.

18. The Associated Press reported that the subpoenas that SDNY issued to several *New York Times* reporters “were issued after FBI Director Kash Patel and other Justice Department officials met at the White House on Friday [July 10] to talk about the matter, according to a person familiar with the discussions who was not authorized to discuss the issue publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity.”

A. Were you aware of this alleged meeting or alleged discussions at the White House regarding the *New York Times* article on the Qatari jet?

As I mentioned during my confirmation hearing, SDNY followed all appropriate procedures to issue the subpoenas at issue. I cannot comment on ongoing investigations.

B. Did you or anyone from SDNY call into or otherwise participate in these alleged discussions at The White House?

As I mentioned during my confirmation hearing, SDNY followed all appropriate procedures to issue the subpoenas at issue. I cannot comment on ongoing investigations.

19. You testified to the Committee that the appropriate DOJ procedures were followed in issuing these subpoenas.

A. Please elaborate as to the specific steps that you understand the DOJ took to obtain this information from *The New York Times* prior to resorting to subpoenas.

As I mentioned during my confirmation hearing, SDNY followed all appropriate procedures to issue the subpoenas at issue. I defer to Main Justice to provide information about any actions taken by the Acting Attorney General.

20. Acting AG Blanche testified on July 15 that the DOJ's investigation focuses on the release of classified information. On July 2, the Associated Press (AP) reported on the modifications done to the 747 gifted by Qatar. The AP cited the Air Force as acknowledging that "several highly complex engineering modifications required for the final aircraft were intentionally excluded from the Bridge aircraft." Therefore, it seems that *The New York Times* was not the first news organization to publish a news report describing the alleged shortcomings of the airplane gifted by Qatar. To the best of your knowledge, has the DOJ subpoenaed any Associated Press reporters as part of its ongoing investigation?

I cannot comment on ongoing investigations. I will defer to the Department of Justice for any further information.

Foreign Efforts to Interfere in U.S. Elections

21. If confirmed, do you pledge that that your public statements as DNI would be based on the intelligence community's (IC's) credible intelligence reporting regarding foreign threats to U.S. elections, as opposed to claims that the IC repeatedly assessed are not credible?

If confirmed, as the President's principal intelligence advisor, my public statements will always reflect current IC intelligence assessments.

22. If a senior Administration official made inaccurate claims about foreign efforts to influence or interfere in U.S. elections (i.e., claims that are not supported by any credible intelligence reporting and/or that contradict the IC's own assessments) would you seek to correct the record?

The DNI's role is to ensure that the President, policymakers, senior military commanders, and this body receive accurate intelligence that is timely, objective, and independent of political considerations. As such, if confirmed, I commit to ensuring that those individuals are presented with the IC's assessments.

23. The IC publicly said it found no indications that *any* foreign actor altered any technical aspect of our voting processes in 2020, including voter registration, casting ballots, vote tabulation, or reporting results. With this background in mind: if a senior Administration official made public

statements suggesting that Venezuela, China, or any other country rigged or otherwise affected the voting tabulations in the 2020 U.S. election, would you publicly clarify there is no credible intelligence reporting to support those false claims and reaffirm the IC's consensus analysis on this topic?

If confirmed as DNI, my role would be to provide the President, policymakers, senior military commanders, and this body with accurate intelligence that is timely, objective, and independent of political considerations, which I commit to doing.

24. Are you aware of any legal basis for the President to declare a "state of emergency" regarding a U.S. election, including based on U.S. intelligence information or assertions of a "national security threat" or "foreign threat"?

A. If you believe there is a legal basis for the President to declare a state of emergency, please explain your understanding of the role of the DNI and IC in such a scenario.

If confirmed as DNI, my role would not be to provide legal counsel to the President. That role belongs to White House Counsel's Office and the Attorney General. Rather, my role would be to ensure that IC elements operate in a manner consistent with their solemn obligation to protect and defend the constitutional rights of all Americans, including their First Amendment rights. I commit to doing so.

25. Have you ever discussed matters related to U.S. elections with Kurt Olsen, a known "election denier" who recently served as a White House official responsible for "elections security" issues?

No.

26. If confirmed, would you direct IC employees and officials to not interact with or engage with Mr. Olsen or members of his team, in view of his obvious political agenda and record of false statements about the 2020 election?

The DNI's role is to ensure that the President, policymakers, senior

military commanders, and this body receive accurate intelligence that is timely, objective, and independent of political considerations. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring that any intelligence produced by the IC conforms with proper analytical standards, including the requirements of Intelligence Community Directive 203.

27. Relatedly, do you believe it is an inappropriate use of IC resources and detrimental to U.S. national security for IC agencies to disclose sensitive national security information to individuals who are known “election deniers” seeking to advance disproven claims about the 2020 U.S. elections?

If confirmed as DNI, my role would be to ensure that the President, policymakers, senior military commanders, and this body receive accurate intelligence that is timely, objective, and independent of political considerations. Moreover, I would ensure that the IC’s provision of such intelligence properly protects sources and methods.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

28. You testified about the importance of ensuring that our adversaries not benefit from U.S. AI technologies. In that spirit, legislation that the Committee advanced on a bipartisan basis in May would ensure that the IC’s analysis of how U.S. adversaries seek to use advanced AI models and related technologies to undermine U.S. national security is shared with Congress and the relevant Executive Branch decisionmakers on a timely basis. Do you commit to work with the Committee to enact and implement this legislation?

If confirmed, I commit to working with this Committee to ensure the IC has the necessary authorities, and the Executive Branch and Congress have the best possible intelligence, to ensure our adversaries cannot use advanced AI models and other emerging technologies to undermine U.S. national security.

DNI Reforms

29. Should any further reductions in the DNI’s workforce be driven by a “bottom up” review of the ODNI’s missions and the resources that ODNI reasonably requires to accomplish those missions?

As I discussed during my hearing, it is my view that ODNI's mission and statutory requirements must drive any review of (and action with respect to) ODNI workforce levels, combined with a consideration of what organizational structures best serve those goals.

30. If confirmed, will you restore and renew the National Intelligence Council (NIC), including by appointing a qualified chairperson and recruiting capable and qualified National Intelligence Officers (NIOs) and Deputy National Intelligence Officers (DNIOs), including from across the IC?

A. If no, please explain why you believe the NIC can perform all its required functions – including responding to various Committee directions – at its present depleted staffing levels.

As I am not yet in the role as DNI, I am not privy to specific details about the current composition of the NIC. If confirmed, I commit to reviewing the NIC's composition and effectiveness and taking appropriate steps to ensure it meets its statutory mandates and furthers the mission of the ODNI.

31. At your confirmation hearing, you testified about the importance of economic and financial intelligence. With that in mind, do you pledge to reverse former DNI Gabbard's decision to abolish the NIC's Strategic Futures Group, which among other missions was responsible for assessing dynamics regarding technology, demographics, economics, issues that our adversaries such as the People's Republic of China are continuing to study and which have significant implications for U.S. national security?

As I am not yet in the role as DNI, I am not privy to specific details about DNI Gabbard's changes to ODNI. If confirmed, I commit to continuously reviewing ODNI's effectiveness and taking appropriate steps to ensure that it leads the IC's provision of timely and objective intelligence to policy makers, including on economic and financial matters.

From Senator Rounds

Israel

32. ODNI, through multiple U.S. intelligence agencies, provided significant assistance to Israeli intelligence agencies in mapping underground Hamas tunnels in Gaza.

A. To help further contain and neutralize Hamas, what is your view on potential IC support for Gaza stabilization efforts, to include support for Palestinian security forces trained by the United States in coordination with the Palestinian Authority and the International Stabilization Force?

As I am not yet in the role as DNI, I do not have insight into current or potential Intelligence Community efforts that may support Gaza stabilization. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing such efforts and discussing them with this Committee.

Unidentified Aerial Phenomena

33. On February 19, 2026, President Trump said in a Truth Social post, “I will be directing the Secretary of War, and other relevant Departments and Agencies, to begin the process of identifying and releasing Government files related to alien and extraterrestrial life, unidentified aerial phenomena (UAP), and unidentified flying objects (UFOs)...” This post has been referred to by the Secretary of War and other senior officials as a "directive," and the Department of War has since issued four batches of UAP-related videos and documents, with more to come. In addition, on June 8 a spokesperson for the ODNI released a statement to several journalists regarding establishment of an interagency "UAP Governance Board" by ODNI, the FBI and the DOW “to support the President's directive on UAP transparency.”

A. What is your thinking on the role that the Director of National Intelligence will play in the developing "UAP transparency" efforts, to include the UAP Governance Board?

As I have not yet been confirmed, I am not aware of what steps may have been taken to advance UAP transparency efforts.

B. With whom at the Executive Office of the President will the ODNI

coordinate on this matter?

As I have not yet been confirmed, I am not aware of what steps may have been taken to advance UAP transparency efforts or with whom ODNI is coordinating on this matter.

C. What is the role of the All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO) created by Congress to investigate UAP?

My understanding is that AARO is a DoW component charged with addressing UAPs using a scientific framework and a data-driven approach.

From Senator Kelly

34. Please share with the committee the sources you routinely use to stay informed of domestic and international affairs.

I consume a wide variety of news sources to stay informed of domestic and international affairs, including from the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *New York Post*, *Financial Times*, Fox News, CNN, Fox Business, and CNBC. I also speak regularly with various public officials and private sector leaders and consume issue-specific data and analysis on a regular basis.

35. During your confirmation hearing, you indicated you could make significant contributions to the ICs production of economic intelligence. What new questions would you seek to answer through increased economic intelligence? How will those answers help policymakers take action on US interests? Please be specific.

As I have not yet had the honor of confirmation, I am not privy to specific details about the IC's current production of economic intelligence. However, given my background, including participating in the provision of economic analysis to the Executive Branch and to Congress, I believe I am very well qualified to strengthen this area of intelligence in order to bolster U.S. economic security and national security more generally.