**Statement for the Record**
**Joseph Weirsky**
**Nominee for Director, National Counterterrorism Center**
**Senate Select Committee on Intelligence**
**November 18, 2026**

Chairman Cotton, Vice Chairman Warner, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you as the nominee to serve as Director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC).

I want to thank President Trump for the trust and confidence he has placed in me. I am honored by the opportunity to continue serving our country and, if confirmed, to lead NCTC in carrying out its vital mission in support of the President's national security priorities.

I am also grateful to Director Clayton for his support and leadership. He guides the Office of the Director of National Intelligence with clarity and conviction. It permits us to maintain our own clarity of purpose amid complex demands. I appreciate his focus on the mission and his belief that strong teams are essential to delivering results. I share those principles and would welcome the opportunity to ensure NCTC remains focused on what matters most: protecting the American people from terrorist threats.

I also want to acknowledge my family, whose love and support have sustained me throughout my years of military and public service. My fiancé Jen, daughter Bri, and son JC are in attendance. I am deeply thankful to each of them for standing with me through every demanding moment. As a father, I understand that the security of our nation is about protecting our families, our communities, and the future we leave for the next generation. That sense of responsibility has guided my service and would continue to guide me as Director of NCTC.

My understanding of that responsibility was shaped by 26 years of service in the United States Marine Corps. I enlisted just after high school, beginning a career that included learning Infantry tactics, deployments in a Force Reconnaissance Platoon, and specialized counterterrorism assignments within the Special Operations Command. Throughout that time, I conducted counterterrorism operations against a diverse array of adversaries, including hostile nations and non-state actors. Across multiple deployments, including combat deployments, I also learned how to gather intelligence, clearly report it to inform our operational decisions, and that the Homeland remains safest when those who defend it share a common operating picture and a common sense of urgency.

My experience taught me that effective counterterrorism is rarely about a single operation. It depends on sustained intelligence collection and analysis, sound judgment, and

partnerships built on mutual trust and respect. Working alongside military, intelligence, and law enforcement professionals reinforced that no organization could accomplish this mission alone. The most effective teams understand one another's responsibilities, share information, and work toward a common purpose.

After retiring from the Marine Corps in 2020 as a Master Gunnery Sergeant, I spent five years in the private sector, most recently as a chief operating officer supporting national security missions. Leading teams, managing personnel and budgets, and aligning resources with mission priorities reinforced the importance of disciplined execution and accountability. Now I have brought my military and private sector skills together serving in NCTC's senior leadership, including as Deputy Director and Acting Director. Over the past year, I have seen firsthand the demands of integrating intelligence across the government, supporting informed counterterrorism decisions, and leading the Center during a complex threat environment. Those experiences have strengthened my understanding of NCTC's responsibilities and the importance of carrying them out effectively.

NCTC was established on the understanding that protecting the country from terrorism requires a coordinated national effort. We still carry this founding principle with us today after more than two decades since the September 11th attacks. The Center integrates and analyzes terrorism intelligence, identifies emerging threats, and develops strategic operational plans to support coordinated counterterrorism efforts. Our responsibility is to provide objective assessments and a shared understanding of the threat, which continues to change. These partnerships are not about convenience. They are critical. They transform isolated information into actionable intelligence. They make certain that overseas tips and analytic leads reach law enforcement partners at home and inform military and intelligence operations abroad. And, they ensure that law enforcement and border security act on the full picture rather than fragments of it. In that same spirit, I commend President Trump's accomplishments in strengthening our border security. We must continue that important work to protect the American people from foreign terrorists.

As a part of that work, NCTC must remain focused on the full range of foreign terrorist threats to our nation and its interests. Iran and Iran-aligned terrorist groups pose serious challenges, particularly as events in the Middle East continue to shape the threat environment. Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and their affiliates continue to seek to do us harm. In the Western Hemisphere, Foreign Terrorist Organization cartels and transnational gangs perpetuate destabilizing violence and drug-trafficking that kills Americans.

We also have to ensure NCTC is prepared for the challenges ahead. If confirmed, I would focus on three priorities: people, mission, and innovation. We need talented people, clear mission priorities, and the tools and technology necessary to operate with speed and precision.

First, our people. NCTC's workforce is its greatest asset, and we have a responsibility to invest in it. That means recruiting and retaining talented officers, developing future leaders, recognizing strong performance, and holding ourselves accountable. Officers deserve clear expectations, honest leadership, and the resources needed to succeed. They also need to know that their judgment is valued and that objective analysis is expected, even when the conclusions are difficult. If confirmed, I would ensure NCTC is a place where people are proud to serve and where we are building an organization capable of meeting the mission beyond the next crisis.

Second, mission. NCTC's purpose is to help protect Americans from terrorist threats. It must integrate intelligence, produce rigorous and objective analysis, identify intelligence gaps, and use strategic planning to help its partners anticipate threats and coordinate their efforts, all while ensuring that the privacy and civil liberties of Americans are respected. NCTC is most effective when analysis, information sharing, and planning are closely connected.

Third, innovation. The information available is growing faster than it can be understood. Innovation must make that information more useful: connecting data, improving processes, and helping officers identify warning signs and deliver sound intelligence in time to matter. NCTC needs to invest in the systems and capabilities it will need in the years ahead.

In my experience, organizations must be willing to assess their performance, acknowledge where they can do better, and make the necessary changes. Progress is often measured not in headlines, but in better decisions, stronger partnerships, more capable officers, and threats identified early enough for our partners to act. If confirmed, I would engage with this Committee openly, provide timely and accurate information, and communicate directly about significant threats, challenges, and resource needs. Accountability to Congress and the American people is essential to maintaining trust in the Intelligence Community.

It would be an honor to continue serving alongside the men and women of NCTC as its Director. Their sacrifice and selfless service are the foundation of everything the Center accomplishes. The work is often unseen, but it is critical to protecting the American people.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your questions.