Questions for the Record for
David C. Gompert
Nominee to be Principal Deputy DNI (PDDNI)

QUESTIONS FROM CHAIRMAN FEINSTEIN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN BOND:

Current Position at ODNI Studying Mission Management

Since August of this year you have been working on a short-term assignment at the ODNI to evaluate how the "mission manager" concept is working in practice.

- **Have you learned anything that surprised you?**

  ANSWER: I did not expect to find as much cross-agency teaming other than formal mission management as I found. Increasingly, Office of Director National Intelligence (ODNI)-led integrated collection strategies are being targeted on important and difficult subjects. Likewise, for certain countries, the National Intelligence Council (NIC) has organized more robust cross-agency analytic collaboration than the norm for National Intelligence Officers (NIOs). In the course of my short-term assignment, I have identified opportunities to combine integrated collection efforts with integrated analytic efforts and have discovered considerable receptivity to this within ODNI and the Intelligence Community (IC).

  This informal cross-agency teaming is not altogether surprising. In my experience in both public and private sectors, professionals working in separate structures can be highly motivated to collaborate across the boundaries of those structures in the interest of tackling important problems. In the case of the IC, the DNI has made clear in the latest National Intelligence Strategy (NIS) and in recent public remarks that mission management and other forms of cross-agency collaboration are keys to integrating U.S. intelligence and to being more responsive and agile. Such encouragement, coupled with practical ODNI efforts to clear away obstacles to teaming, is resonating well with our intelligence professionals.

I have also learned that practices and procedures vary from one mission manager to the next, e.g., the relationship to the relevant NIO, the skill-set of the mission manager, and criteria for measuring effectiveness. This is not necessarily a problem; indeed, I have concluded that some flexibility is important.

- **Have you identified any improvements that might be made?**

  ANSWER: I have identified a number of practical measures that could be taken to facilitate mission management and other forms of horizontal teaming. These include the removal of obstacles to collaboration that are characteristic of vertical structures, e.g., differences in work routines, intelligence accesses, and work location. (Removing such barriers in connection with cross-agency teaming would have the added benefit of fostering collaboration and integration generally.) In addition, I have identified means of providing more consistent yet flexible oversight to provide general guidance, assistance, and quality assurance without imposing excessive control, which can inhibit performance and innovation. Such governance would be linked to existing IC management mechanisms, in particular the Executive Committees and the Deputy Executive Committee, as well as to the NIC.

  Given that this assignment was done while awaiting my confirmation hearing as Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence (PDDNI), I have not proposed any such improvements to IC agency leaders, whose support and involvement will be important. Therefore, I ask that the Committee regard these only as my ideas, which I would pursue if I am confirmed.

- **Under what circumstances might you recommend creating new mission managers?**

  ANSWER: As part of my short-term study, I have identified four basic criteria that should be considered when determining whether and when mission management should be established:

  a. Importance to national security, near- and long-term
  b. Difficulty of performing satisfactory intelligence collection and analysis in the absence of formal cross-agency collaboration

    c. Requirement to mobilize human and technical resources of multiple agencies

    d. Demands of intelligence consumers, e.g., policymakers and military commanders.

These same criteria could be used to determine whether and how long any mission manager position should remain. Among my conclusions is that mission management organized to deal with temporary problems should not become permanent, and that ODNI and IC leadership must be sure that the application of the mission management concept is adapted in response to shifting security conditions and intelligence needs.

- **When you have finished your review of the Mission Management function, will you provide your findings to the Committee?**

   ANSWER: I would be glad to do so. If confirmed, I will seek an early opportunity to provide my thoughts to the Committee.

National Intelligence Estimates

Since the National Intelligence Estimate of 2002 overstated Iraq's WMD capabilities, the Intelligence Community, with the support of this committee, has worked to reform the process of writing these NIEs. The Committee is currently evaluating the outcomes of these reforms, including the new focus in the drafting process on sourcing, dissent, confidence levels and assumptions. We also want to make sure NIEs are timely in terms of relevance and that they are completed in a timely fashion once they are in the pipeline.

- **What do you believe is the purpose of the National Intelligence Estimates?**

   ANSWER: National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs) are the most authoritative written means by which the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) conveys to the President and other leaders the judgments of the entire IC regarding national security issues. NIEs make assessments about the future, well beyond interpretation of current developments and often about trends that are not yet at the top of policymakers' agendas. They explain and, if appropriate, sharpen conflicting views within the Community on critical issues and lay out the reasons for the differences. The Chairman of the NIC, who is responsible for production of the NIE's ensures that rigor in

vetting sources, attention to changes in key analytic and estimative judgments, and encouragement of alternative and contrarian views are built into the NIE process.

- **How do they differ from other NIC and Intelligence Community products?**

  ANSWER: They differ from other products in the degree of attention formally given by the entire IC leadership. All NIEs are reviewed and approved by the DNI-chaired National Intelligence Board. In addition to the DNI and PDDNI, the board is composed of the principals of the 16 intelligence elements. Besides reviewing NIE findings, this body discusses the strengths, weaknesses, and credibility of the sources used in developing critical judgments. NIEs are also measured against the new IC analytic quality standards promulgated by the DNI.

- **If confirmed, how will you work with the NIC to ensure that NIEs are written in a timely manner?**

  ANSWER: In preparation for my confirmation hearing, I have had substantial discussions with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the NIC regarding our respective expectations about the relationship of the PDDNI and the work of the NIC. As background, I have worked with the NIC and many NIOs over the years while at the NSC and the State Department, have had close ties with numerous NIC leaders, have acquired a high regard for this institution, and had a hand in commissioning NIEs. Current NIC leaders and I agree that I should, if confirmed, support the preparation of NIEs in several ways, e.g., in lining up agency support when needed, in shaping questions to be answered, in addressing critical analytic issues (where I have the knowledge to do so), in assuring quality, in meeting schedules, and in disseminating results. This does not mean that I would routinely involve myself in coordinating and producing NIEs, which are the responsibility of the NIC leadership and the NIOs. I will work to strengthen the NIC products, not micro-manage the NIC. I should also stress that Director Blair is also active in the NIE process. The DNI and PDDNI are ultimately responsible for the timeliness, quality and integrity of NIEs.

- **How can the DNI leadership ensure that the NIE judgments reflect good analytic tradecraft, particularly the range of view-points within the Intelligence Community and current discussions analysts are having about a given topic?**

ANSWER: As I indicated in response to the pre-hearing questionnaire, I have been impressed by the analytic quality standards and tradecraft best practices recently developed and issued by the ODNI. Based on my experience in quality assurance of research and analysis, I know that such standards result in high quality only if they are widely understood and embraced by the analytic community and accompanied by processes to assure independent critical review. It will take actual experience, if I am confirmed as PDDNI, before I can assess how well the new standards are applied in practice.

The use of sound analytic tradecraft in NIEs, including the incorporation of a range of views, should be based on this general quality assurance system. Indeed, NIEs should set the "gold standard" of quality assurance, given their usual importance and impact. Having read scores of NIEs over the years, and in preparation for my confirmation hearing, my impression is that alternative points of view are commonly but not always given adequate attention. It is crucial that they figure importantly in every NIE. Even if the consensus judgment in the IC supports certain conclusions, policy makers, intelligence executives, and other readers need to know that matters addressed by NIEs are normally complex and surrounded by uncertainty. I have found that this is better understood in the NIC and elsewhere in the IC than it once was, but I am prepared to encourage and if necessary insist on inclusion of improbable, dissenting, or other "outlying" analyses. In keeping with formal DNI quality assurance standards, an NIE must give due attention to ranges of uncertainty and to alternative views.

- **Do you believe that National Intelligence Estimates should be declassified?**

ANSWER: The policy of the DNI is that NIEs should not, as a rule, be declassified and should not be prepared in the expectation that they will be. The basic reason for this policy is that the intent to declassify could affect the way an NIE is written, which could reduce its value to national decision makers. I have not studied the question of when exceptions to this policy

might be made. But I will do so if confirmed and would be glad to discuss this matter with the Committee. In any case, any declassification must protect sources and methods and must not jeopardize U.S. diplomatic activities or military operations.

The Department of Defense

Any troop increase in Afghanistan will necessarily require additional intelligence support. Since 9/11, we have seen DoD requests for forces pull traditionally strategic assets – such as those of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) – from foreign intelligence programs to support the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. While no one argues the necessity to provide our soldiers with the best possible intelligence support, it comes at a cost – opportunity cost as well as real manpower and funding costs that impact other efforts.

- **What is the DNI's role in these resource decisions for Afghanistan and Iraq?**

    ANSWER: The DNI has a central role in finding the right balance between meeting the needs of forces and of policymakers. The National Intelligence Priorities Framework distinguishes between these priorities and is informed by input from both policymakers and combatant commanders. This provides a discipline, a tool, and a venue for assessing trade-offs and deciding how best to meet competing priorities. The framework is managed by the ODNI.

    In my view, the integration of the IC, in such forms as information sharing, cross-agency analytic collaboration, and integrated collection strategies, is crucial to meeting competing demands, including those that the question highlights. With integration, collection assets are more optimally used, results are not compartmented but shared, human and technical resources can be shifted flexibly and strategically, and opportunity costs can be reduced. The more progress the DNI makes in integrating the IC, the better U.S. intelligence will be at balancing and meeting the needs of military commanders and policy makers. I have not been party to the specific resource decisions mentioned in the question, but my general impression is that the IC and its clients are already seeing the benefits of this, though considerable upside potential remains. If confirmed, I will work with the Director, DoD leaders, and other IC elements to realize the benefits of integration in meeting competing demands. I will also assist the Director in

organizing and making required trade offs in ways that consider all the needs and costs at stake.

- **What can be done to ensure that broader strategic collection is not sacrificed to support tactical collection in Afghanistan and Iraq?**

  ANSWER: Again, I am not under the impression that strategic collection is being seriously sacrificed to support tactical collection in Afghanistan and Iraq. Nevertheless, in light of significant current needs for the strategic intelligence, it is crucial to ensure that these are not neglected, as this question suggests.

  In regard to collection in particular, a definitive answer to the question would require more details about assets and methods that cannot be discussed in an unclassified document. Broadly stated, some means are primarily of tactical value, some are primarily of strategic value, and some are of dual value. Moreover, opportunities may exist to adjust priorities among strategic needs, some of which might be of lower priority than tactical requirements in Afghanistan and Iraq. This means that the most important tactical needs (e.g., those where U.S. forces are operating) can be met without sacrificing the most important strategic needs. Finally, a share of collection for Afghanistan and Iraq has strategic as well as tactical benefit.

  While these factors do not mean that there is no need to make tradeoffs, they limit to some extent that field in which tactical and strategic requirements compete. In the final analysis, there is no substitute for disciplined and frank interagency discussion among intelligence and policy officials, supported by the National Intelligence Priorities Framework, to resolve such competition in a way that ensures that the most important strategic needs are met regardless of tactical needs.

Financial Auditability and Accountability

The Intelligence Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2002 required all IC elements to receive an audit of their financial statements by March 1, 2005. This deadline was extended several times, but today the IC remains unable to acquire the software systems or perfect the processes needed to produce auditable financial statements. The Committee remains concerned that the intelligence agencies continue to

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operate without the internal controls necessary to ensure the effective use of their resources.

I was heartened by the emphasis you placed on both the need for auditable financial statements and personal accountability. The previous DNI pledged to make senior managers accountable for achieving real progress in achieving "clean opinions" on the IC's financial statements. But to date, the Committee has seen no evidence of such accountability.

- **What value do you see in the ability of the intelligence agencies to produce auditable financial statements?**

  ANSWER: Broadly stated, the value of auditable financial statements lies in the independent scrutiny they permit of those entrusted to manage public resources. For the IC, financial statements are tangible indicators of whether every agency's finances are ably managed, its use of resources economical, and its operations efficient. Auditable financial statements, based on accepted and objective standards, permit disinterested review and evaluation of these indicators. Thus, such statements are among the most important instruments to ensure and verify that taxpayer dollars are being spent purposefully, effectively, and accountably.

  The DNI, supported by the rest of the IC leadership team, has set as a strategic goal the achievement of "financial management transparency, accountability, and auditability, compliant with applicable laws and OMB guidelines." This reflects both an appreciation of its importance and recognition that the IC has a considerable distance to go. When intelligence agencies have the ability to produce auditable financial statements, the DNI, the Executive Branch as a whole, Congress, and the American people should be able to have a clear view of how all the resources provided the IC are managed.

- **If you agree it is a worthy goal to produce auditable financial statements, what steps will you take to ensure each agency takes the actions necessary to become auditable as soon as practicable?**

  ANSWER: If confirmed, I will assist the DNI and support the CFO in several ways. I would, if confirmed, ensure that every agency does what

is necessary to achieve the goal, for example, by maintaining focus on financial management as a priority for the IC leadership team (e.g., in the Deputies Executive Committee); by insisting on regular progress reports; by advocating financial management and controls that leverage public and private sector best practices; by expecting the CIO to assist the CFO by streamlining information systems to deliver timely, detailed and reliable financial results; and by including progress in achieving the goal in our assessment of leadership performance.

- **Are you personally willing to make good on past promises in this area?**

    ANSWER: I am willing to commit to do whatever I can to achieve this strategic objective and to keep the Committee informed of progress.

- **And if so, what approach would you take in incentivizing senior managers for financial results?**

    ANSWER: If confirmed, I will expect that programs, budgets and other financial targets are formal commitments, just as they are in any strong enterprise. I will work with the DNI, the CFO, and the program managers to make the fulfillment of these commitments an explicit and significant aspect of performance review, including for the leaders of IC elements. Meeting these financial commitments requires making adequate resources available and I will do my part to live up to this side of the compact.

Acquisitions, Budgets, and Accountability

The Committee has been concerned about the IC's acquisition management practices for some time. Several recent acquisition failures have involved massive cost and schedule overruns. The ODNI recently estimates that for Fiscal Year 2009 over 72 percent of the NIP was executed through the contracting workforce, indicating the acquisition function is critical to successful missions and operations. Despite this importance, the primary finding of a recent Committee staff review of

the Community's acquisition capability found that agency senior managers continually failed to dedicate adequate attention and resources to the function.

In your written responses you described a budget as a contract by which a unit can count on an agreed amount of resources and the corporation can count on agreed results. That is the way the IC should be run, too, but it has been largely lacking.

- **What concrete management and accountability practices are you prepared to take to end the IC's chronic overruns on big, expensive programs?**

    ANSWER: Without detailed knowledge of specific programs, my starting point if confirmed would be the IC acquisition policy promulgated by the DNI, which is specifically aimed at controlling and eliminating over-runs. In particular, I would reinforce the following tenets of that policy: do not start acquisitions you cannot afford; fully fund what you expect to acquire; use proven technology or else fully fund efforts to prove new technology; provide transparent execution; and rely on tough, independent reviews and oversight. I would also ensure that acquisition program managers and their senior management understand that they will be measured against their cost, schedule and performance commitments. While I do not believe that centralized top-down management of acquisition is necessary or desirable, I would be prepared to advise the DNI to withdraw delegation of decision authority from IC element heads if necessary to achieve better performance.

    Taken together, and applied vigorously and consistently, these practices should address the issues that have beset large IC acquisition efforts. I am satisfied that the new Deputy DNI for Acquisition and Technology is seized with this challenge and capable of orchestrating the effort to meet it. As a result, I expect a significant and sustainable improvement in the IC's ability to deliver major acquisitions on schedule, for the identified cost, and with the expected performance.

- **Please provide your thoughts on the use of tenure agreements and succession planning to ensure program managers of major programs develop a sense of ownership and accountability.**

    ANSWER: I am impressed by what I have learned about the direction of IC acquisition policy in this regard. To improve continuity, personal

commitment, and accountability, the DNI has taken an initiative that supports appropriate personnel tenure and active work force management for major IC acquisitions. The DNI is considering policy guidance requiring signed tenure agreements between program managers and their respective decision authorities, which would set forth the expectations and commitments of both parties in respect to funding, schedule, and requirements.

In addition, the ODNI is monitoring the tenure of program managers for major systems and adding this information to the next Annual Report to Congress on Major Acquisitions. Also, for major programs in DoD's IC elements, the USD(I) is currently reviewing a proposed statement to ensure compliance with policy requiring tenure agreements.

These measures point in the right direction, which is to base acquisition performance on clear and reciprocal commitments, on accountability of key managers and their leaders, and on revising personnel and performance policies to promote better management and results. If I find that there are other steps that could reinforce these, I would be glad to discuss them with the Committee, if I am confirmed.

QUESTION FROM VICE-CHAIRMAN BOND:

Value of Long-term, Strategic Intelligence Projections

Your written answers were candid about the huge geopolitical events that U.S. intelligence has failed to predict – e.g., *"the fall of the Shah, the collapse of Communism, the rise of jihadism, the rapid global spread of the Internet, and the relentless economic growth of China."* More recently you note that the IC's recent "Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World", *"considered neither the possibility nor the effects of a global financial crisis and sharp economic contraction, which in fact occurred as the report was being issued."*

- **In light of these low probability, but extremely high impact events that U.S. intelligence consistently fails to project, do you believe that policy-makers should ever expect the IC to anticipate transformative events?**

ANSWER: The problem as I see it is that the needs of policymakers can, understandably, skew intelligence efforts to focus on informing immediate national security matters. From my own experience (e.g., at the end of the Cold War), I know that transformative developments often begin precisely when, or because, current conditions are in turmoil, when policymakers can be preoccupied. Thus, the risk is not so much that policymakers cannot count on the IC to anticipate major change but that the demands of policymakers will tend to pull the IC in the opposite direction. It follows that IC leaders have to take responsibility and initiative to anticipate major discontinuities even in the absence of strong current demands to do so. This may include investigating low-probability but high-consequence developments that are neither part of the "assumption set" of current policy nor obvious from current conditions.

The exchange I have had with the Committee on this problem prompts me to think that it will be important, if confirmed, to explore explicitly with colleagues on the policy side the need for analysis of seemingly unlikely but high-impact developments. The existing National Intelligence Priorities Framework, which is based on policy-intelligence dialogue, would lend itself to establishing priorities for such analysis.

In sum, policymakers should expect the IC to anticipate transformative events; IC leaders must be ready to take the initiative; and improving U.S. intelligence in this regard may require more explicit discussions between the intelligence and policy communities, which would of course include this Committee.

QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR MIKULSKI:

Mr. Gompert, it is absolutely critical to have a Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence (P/DDNI) who is honest, candid, and objective. As you stated in your confirmation hearing, when the Director of National Intelligence is absent or unavailable, you will be the principal intelligence advisor to the

President. This may require you to tell the President something he doesn't want to hear.

We can't have a person in your position who only says "yes" to the President. The DNI and PDDNI must speak with truth and candor to the President because this will help create more informed policies and will help prevent our government from making reckless mistakes. I, like many other Americans, have great respect for your lengthy national security experience – and it is admirable that you are willing to return to government service.

- **Given your lengthy intelligence and national security career, how can we count on you to speak truth to power?**

  ANSWER: The ability and determination to speak truth to power is fundamental to the responsibilities I will shoulder if confirmed. Failure to do so would be a disservice to the American people, to the President himself, and to my own duty and values. Having never hesitated to be "honest, candid, and objective," I made a point in my first conversation with Director Blair that I could only accept the nomination to be PDDNI if this is what was expected of me. He said that these values were among the reasons he wanted to recommend me, and that the President expected no less.

  In both government and the private sector, I have observed how the reluctance of advisors and analysts to bear bad news can result in bad decisions with bad results. In intelligence, this is intolerable. The key to the discipline your question suggests, in my experience, is to make up one's mind in advance that such considerations as job security, career prospects, and the desire to please superiors must and will have no bearing on one's objectivity. If I am confirmed, I have every expectation that those who look to me for intelligence information and judgment will count on strict objectivity, which is what they will receive.

- **What specific examples can you point to where you told a leader something that he or she didn't want to hear?**

  ANSWER: While I do not want to imply that any leader would have preferred me to be other than objective, I can give examples of delivering information or advice that challenged established assumptions and preferences.

In the early 1980s, I warned that U.S. NATO allies would be unable to support the deployment of nuclear missiles in Europe without an earnest parallel arms control effort. This was not received well in all quarters (until huge demonstrations in Europe validated my views). As a result of speaking truth to power in this case, I found it necessary to interrupt my government career.

Prior to and during the violent break up of Yugoslavia, I warned that there could be large-scale human suffering – what turned out to be "ethnic cleansing" and mass killing – unless the U.S. organized a NATO initiative. I did not hesitate to apprise others in government that atrocities in Bosnia were likely to become so severe that our reputation and leadership would suffer.

As Senior Advisor for National Security and Defense in the Iraq Coalition Provisional Authority in 2003-04, I advised more than one senior visitor from Washington that a full-blown Sunni insurgency was in the making, fueled by jihadist messages and support. The accepted wisdom at the time was that Sunni resistance came primarily from former elements of Saddam Hussein's security apparatus and therefore would die out. I also made clear that the insurgency was growing in size and sophistication faster than Iraqi security forces were, which would lead either to defeat or to a need to increase U.S. forces. These assessments varied sharply with the more upbeat view at that juncture and called into question the continuation of policies based on that view.

In business, on many occasions I insisted on making – or demanding – realistic assessments that implied financial targets would be missed. The sooner decision makers hear what they need to hear, rather than what they would like to hear, the more likely it is that they will be able to adjust and avert or mitigate damage.

QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR HATCH:

On-going versus Future Threats

In your prepared responses to the Committee questionnaire, you say that one of our most critical national security priorities should be to "find and cripple" Al-Qa'ida.

- **What do you mean by *"cripple"*? "Crippling" does not necessarily equal eliminating their lethal intent.**

  ANSWER: The leaders and loyal followers of Al-Qa'ida and other jihadist groups embrace distortions of history, religion, and international politics that stoke strong hatred of the West, of regimes throughout the Arab and Muslim worlds, and especially of the United States. While it is important to pursue policies that encourage popular antipathy toward and thus isolate the likes of Al-Qa'ida, hardened terrorists and eager recruits are essentially immune to such efforts. Consequently, we cannot count on affecting the intent of hard-core jihadists and instead must eliminate the threat they pose to the U.S. and its interests and friends, whether by preventive action or defense.

  My use of the term "cripple" in responding to the Committee's questionnaire was short-hand for disrupting, hampering, degrading the material condition, damaging the organization, discrediting, and capturing or killing those who lead or kill on behalf of Al-Qa'ida – measures that are required against those whose intent we cannot expect to influence.

  While it is not my place as a nominee for a leadership position in the IC to prescribe counterterrorist strategy, this is my analysis of what it takes to counter Al-Qa'ida.

- **And why do you focus only on Al-Qa'ida? Do you not believe that the global violent *takfiri* movement could create other Al-Qa'ida imitators, what terrorist expert Marc Sageman calls "Leaderless Jihad"?**

  ANSWER: We cannot exclude that violent salafist extremists, including takfiri, will organize and conduct terrorism with global ambitions and reach. Still, the principal danger to the U.S. and its interests remains Al-Qa'ida, even as its form changes. There have been splinter groups and spontaneous cells with jihadist agendas, though these have so far been limited in scale, structure, and means, and sometimes appear more concerned with local issues than global ones. Often such groups are inspired by, reach out to, or otherwise are touched by Al-Qa'ida's tentacles. Even as Al-Qa'ida elements in Pakistan's frontier regions have been damaged by U.S. and allied action, regional affiliates – Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI), Al-Qa'ida in the

Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), and Al-Qa'ida East Africa– have demonstrated an ability and will to attack U.S. interests and friends, if not necessarily the U.S. homeland. While Bin Laden, Zawahiri, and other top Al-Qa'ida leaders may not be directing or enabling operations among these far-flung groups, they still appear to provide at least some inspiration. In any case, the strength of Al-Qa'ida's extended network does not depend on a strong Al-Qa'ida center. In sum, while we should remain vigilant for salafist or takfiri movements and threats independent of Al-Qa'ida, we are finding that Al-Qa'ida is showing an ability to survive, adapt, mutate, and motivate.

Having said this, I agree that our intelligence collection and analysis, as well as counterterrorism operations and defense, should not be so preoccupied with Al-Qa'ida's network to the exclusion of other potent transnational movements with extremist agendas and strategic reach. While not jihadist as such, Hezbollah operates in several countries and regions and is virulently anti-U.S. We should certainly not assume that only Al-Qa'ida would be a threat to the U.S.

The On-going Threat of Armed Groups

I believe that, for the foreseeable future, our nation will be facing the threat of armed groups, which is how I refer to violent sub-state actors that include terrorist organizations, insurgencies and criminal organizations. Many of these groups have much in common with the others, and to approach the phenomenon as armed groups should allow us to begin to adapt lessons we are learning in countering some in order to apply against the others. The southern perimeter of the United States will be subject to all kinds of pressure from armed groups operating against us and the governments of Mexico, Central and South America.

- **Where, in your priority of threats, do you place the threat of armed groups?**

  ANSWER: Classifying terrorist organizations, insurgencies, criminal organizations, and other violent actors as "armed groups" is useful for conceptualizing a general, growing pattern of non-state dangers, as well as for fashioning effective ways to counter them. This is not inconsistent with maintaining important distinctions, e.g., between terrorists with global ambitions, insurgents with local grievances, and criminal organizations with economic motivations.

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Armed groups south of the U.S., highlighted in the question, appear to be driven by economic and local political considerations than by religious or ideological extremism, though there is no guarantee against the latter (and some signs of potential). Nevertheless, these armed groups are not only non-state but transnational and even multinational. Some gangs that specialize in drugs, extortion, and other crimes extend from Central or even South America through Mexico to the U.S. – some with ties to U.S. gangs. At present, the Mexican government is taking strong action, with U.S. support. Consequently, while violence is on the rise, the IC's current assessment is not pessimistic. However, Mexico is a significantly higher priority than it was a few years ago, and I would favor great vigilance in case the armed-group threat worsens. If it does worsen, the threat of armed groups to the south of the U.S. would assume very high priority.

If confirmed, I would assess how well the IC is performing and preparing for the threat of armed groups, apart from Islamist terrorists, and I would be glad to discuss with the Committee both current IC efforts and any additional efforts that might be indicated.

- **And how do you assess their real and potential threats to our national security?**

   ANSWER: While I have answered this to some extent in the preceding response, I would say there is a serious and potentially severe threat to U.S. security in several forms:

   a. Drug trafficking
   b. Drug-related violence against Americans along the border, along drug-trade routes, and visiting Latin America
   c. Interference with economic commerce and U.S. investments
   d. Cyber attacks.

   In general, it is important to appreciate that such groups can be sophisticated, complex, dynamic, elusive, distributed, resourceful, and uninhibited when it comes to advancing and protecting their interests, which are inimical to ours.

Where in the IC Are Lessons Learned?

In your prepared responses to Committee questions, you state, "IC leaders must lead the battle against accepted ways of thinking."

- **Can you give me any examples of where and when this occurred?**

  ANSWER: My sense is that the IC is making real progress in encouraging and presenting unconventional analyses, which I would build upon if confirmed. The CIA's "Red Cells" regularly publish papers that question assumptions and highlight alternative outcomes on most key national security issues, including the Middle East, terrorism, proliferation, the recent economic downturn, and religious extremism. Several recent NIC publications also have challenged accepted thinking. The NIC's Long-Range Analysis Unit examined the implications of high energy prices for U.S. interests a year before prices peaked, and its Global Trends work identified shifts in power from developed to developing states as well as possible resource scarcities that challenged common assumptions. I have also found alternative views well presented in many of the classified studies I read in preparation for confirmation. In sum, the direction is right, and the next PDDNI should join the DNI and other IC leaders in lending their hand and ideas to strengthening the trend.

- **Can you please indicate how you would routinize analytic procedures to include, for example, Alternative Competitive Hypothesis Testing?**

  ANSWER: Alternative competitive hypothesis testing is one method of satisfying the IRTPA requirement to conduct alternative analysis. Many IC products already involve structured exercises that challenge underlying assumptions and develop alternative interpretations of events, trends, and underlying forces. Production of several NIC products on Iran and Egypt included, for example, exercises with outside experts that tested competing scenarios for those countries. The DNI-chaired National Intelligence Board, on which the PDDNI sits along with the heads of the 16 intelligence agencies, would seem to be the best vehicle to promote and institutionalize further the practice of the questioning key assumptions and examining alternative scenarios. Most NIEs already feature alternative scenarios and critiques by outside experts and, as such, can serve as models for the rest of the IC to follow.

I was also pleased to learn that the DNI's latest "Standards of Analytic Tradecraft" calls for the incorporation of "Alternative Analysis" where appropriate. This is important because it helps assure that adequate treatment of unconventional views will be part of the IC's new quality-assurance process.

- **Have you read the 2004 Report this Committee published on the intelligence failures related to the Iraq's weapons of mass destruction? If you have read the report, what lessons do you draw from its conclusions? If you have not read the report, would you please do so before you next testify to this Committee?**

  ANSWER: I have read the report from cover to cover. The lessons I draw are essentially those spotlighted by the report: poor HUMINT, inadequate skepticism about questionable sources, "group-think," insufficient attention to alternative explanations and dissenting voices, poor quality assurance, failure to piece together an integrated view, haste. I was struck by the finding that IC performance concerning WMD was broadly unsatisfactory whereas IC performance on the question of alleged links between Saddam Hussein and Al-Qa'ida was generally satisfactory. This contrast suggests that the inadequacies of the Iraq WMD effort were not indicative of an IC incapable of correct judgments.

  Among the measures taken to address the lessons captured in the Committee's 2004 Report, based on the IRTPA and Executive Order 12333, I would note the sharpening of analytic quality standards, the strengthening of quality assurance processes, the upgrading of the Deputy Director of National Intelligence for Analysis, the instituting of greater sharing and collaboration for both collection and analysis, investment in better HUMINT, and clear evaluation of the reliability of sources.

- **Finally, the IC is engaged in this Nation's conflicts in essential ways, and it is learning how to do business in the new 21st century threat environment. But, unlike the military, which cultivates a "lessons learned" culture, the IC has done this in a very paltry way. How do you intend to redress this, and what measurements of success are you will to commit to?**

  ANSWER: From what I know, the IC's effort in learning lessons is uneven. Among the mechanisms used by the IC are investigations by

inspectors general, oversight committees, quality assurance officers, historians, and of course, management. The ODNI has created a lessons-learned program and is endeavoring to coordinate this function with the agencies. I understand that some of the products have been recognized as quite good and valuable. Examples of useful lessons-learned in parts of the IC underscore the potential value of institutionalizing this IC-wide.

Based on limited exposure, my impression is that more could be done to regularize and create throughout the IC a culture of lessons learned, of the sort practiced so diligently by the U.S. military. I have seen successful lessons-learned work done for the military by the Joint Forces Command and by Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (e.g., RAND and IDA). I have observed that military organizations and leaders are not merely willing to learn from experience – including failure – but determined to so in order to improve plans, capabilities, and doctrine. I would like to hold off identifying specific measures that I might take, if confirmed. But I agree that the question is important and would be glad to take up the question with the Committee when I have formed a clearer idea of what should be done.

Implementing COIN in Afghanistan

You wrote an interesting monograph for RAND entitled *Heads We Win: The Cognitive Side of Counterinsurgency.* It focused on the global jihadist threat, in specific, and counterinsurgency, or COIN ("coin") theory in general.

- **What are the major gaps in analysis that the IC faces in trying to support our military in Afghanistan?**

  ANSWER: As a nominee for confirmation, I have not been involved in or privy to sensitive intelligence specific to Afghanistan. My general observation is that our forces have substantially better, faster, and more complete intelligence information and analysis available to them in a more rapid manner than they did only a few years ago. I attribute this in large part to a strengthening of IC-DoD cooperation, which has intensified under Secretary Gates and Director Blair. Nonetheless, I have the impression that our forces would benefit from having a more sophisticated understanding of various tribes and tribal leaders, especially in the "Pashtun belt." If confirmed, I would be glad to report back to the Committee on any gaps and efforts to fill them.

The IC Role in Understanding Certain Global Threats

In identifying the major national security threats, you have indicated that one of them is "understanding the implications of change." You specifically identify certain aspects of change, including "environmental security."

Some still believe that intelligence is essentially about stealing secrets – gaining access to protected foreign information that has an impact on our security. And intelligence analysis is largely about analyzing information our enemies and competitors would deny us.

Regarding "environmental security," this very serious subject is in the purview of scientists and policy makers, but some believe the IC, which appears not to have a lot of excess capacity, should be focusing on its core missions, which, by definition, it will always meet incompletely.

- **Please explain as specifically as possible your understanding of the IC's unique contribution to understanding the issue of "environmental security."**

    ANSWER: It is important, in my view, for the IC not to try to do too much in regard to gathering intelligence regarding environmental security, given the abundance of open source information and scientific data. Rather, the IC's mission with respect to environmental security should be to analyze this open environmental information vis-à-vis U.S. national security and produce intelligence products that provide policymakers and military commanders a clearer picture of environmental security threats and their potential to impact on U.S. persons and interests. IC analysis should concentrate on what the U.S. Government can do to avoid, mitigate, or prepare for dangers to environmental security. Examples of useful intelligence analysis which otherwise might not be available include: economic, political, humanitarian, security implications that affect U.S. interests and responsibilities; consequential behavior of other governments; and useful input to inform negotiations and diplomacy.