



House Floor Statement on
The Intelligence Authorization Act for FY16 (H.R. 4127)
As Prepared for Delivery by Chairman Devin Nunes

December 1, 2015

Mr. Speaker, when Ranking Member Schiff and I assumed the helm of the Intelligence Committee, we committed to carrying on the practice of passing annual intelligence authorization bills, which is the most important tool Congress can use to control the intelligence activities of the U.S. government. Today, building on the legacy of Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Ruppertsberger, we are bringing the sixth consecutive intelligence authorization bill to the floor.

Earlier this year, the House passed its version of the bill with a strong vote. Since then, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence reported out its version of the bill by a unanimous vote. I commend Chairman Burr and Vice Chairman Feinstein for their leadership on the bill, and I look forward to working with them in future years.

The current bill contains text agreed to by both the House and Senate committees. It preserves key House initiatives while adding several important provisions from the Senate. None of these provisions are considered controversial.

As most of the intelligence budget involves highly classified programs, the bulk of the direction is found in the bill's classified annex, which has been available in HVC-304 for all Members to review since yesterday.

At an unclassified level, I can report that the classified annex is consistent with the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015. It reduces the President's request by less than one percent while still providing an increase above last year's level. The agreed text preserves key Committee and House funding initiatives that are vital to national security. These initiatives are offset by reductions to unnecessary programs and increased efficiencies. The Agreement also provides substantial intelligence resources to help defeat ISIL and other terrorist groups.

Mr. Speaker, today the threat facing America is higher than at any time since 9/11. ISIL has established a safe haven across Iraq and Syria, and the group hopes to create a state stretching from Lebanon to Iraq, including Syria, Jordan, and Israel. The goal of our counterterrorism strategy should be to deny safe havens from which terrorists can plot attacks against the United States and our allies. Regrettably, we have not prevented ISIL from establishing a safe haven, and the group has become skilled at hiding from Western intelligence services. ISIL members have used that breathing room to plan attacks in Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, and they are undoubtedly planning attacks against the homeland.

We rightly demand that our intelligence agencies provide policy makers with the best and most timely information possible on the threats we face. We ask them to track terrorists wherever they train, plan, and fundraise. We ask them to stop devastating cyberattacks that steal American jobs. We ask them to track nuclear and missile threats. And we demand they get it right – every time.

This bill will ensure that the dedicated men and women of our Intelligence Community have the funding, authorities, and support they need to carry out their mission and to keep us safe.

Before closing, I want to take a moment to thank the men and women of this country who serve in our Intelligence Community. I am honored to get to know so many of them in the course of our oversight work.

I would also like to thank all of the staff of the Committee, both majority and minority, for their hard work on the bill and for their daily oversight of the Intelligence Community. I'd especially like to thank Jeff Shockey, Shannon Stuart, Andy Peterson, Jake Crisp, and Michael Ellis for the long hours they put in to get this bill across the finish line.

From the minority staff, I'd like to thank Michael Bahar, Tim Bergreen, Carly Blake, and Wells Bennett for their work on the bill. Finally, thank you to the gentleman from California, Mr. Schiff. It has been a pleasure to work with him on this bill, and I look forward to continuing the Committee's oversight work with him over the next year.

I'd also like to recognize one member of the Committee staff, Bill Flanigan. Bill is undergoing surgery today, and we wish him all the best in his recovery.

I thank the Speaker, urge passage of H.R. 4127, and reserve the balance of my time.