

House Floor Statement on
The Intelligence Authorization Act for FY16 (H.R. 2596)
As Prepared for Delivery by Chairman Devin Nunes

June 16, 2015

M_ Chair, the intelligence authorization act is the annual blueprint for the work of the intelligence community and America's military intelligence efforts. The bill sets the priorities for our critical intelligence efforts, and the legal framework of guidance and oversight for those efforts. As you may recall, the House has passed intelligence authorization bills with strong bipartisan support in the past several Congresses.

The Ranking Member, Mr. Schiff, and I worked in a bipartisan manner to draft the legislation in front of you today. Passing annual intelligence authorization legislation is the most effective way for Congress to exercise oversight over the executive branch and helps ensure that the country's intelligence agencies have the resources and authorities necessary to keep Americans safe. This legislation passed unanimously out of our Committee.

As most of the intelligence budget involves highly classified programs, the bulk of the Committee's recommendations each year are found in the classified annex to the bill, which has been available for Members to review since June 4th. Among other initiatives, the bill provides authorization for critical national security functions, including: fighting terrorism and countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, funding efforts to recover from unauthorized disclosures of intelligence capabilities, and investing in the resiliency of our national security space architecture.

At an unclassified level, I can report that the annex for Fiscal Year 2016 authorizes funding that is slightly below the President's budget request level. Its funding levels are in line with the House-passed Defense Appropriations bill for the National Intelligence Program and with the National Defense Authorization Act for the Military Intelligence Program. Overall, this bill

sustains today's intelligence capabilities and provides for future capabilities while staying within the funding constraints of the Budget Control Act and the Budget Resolution.

Mr. Chair, we are currently facing one of the most challenging global environments in our nation's history. Nearly 14 years after the 9/11 attacks, the US continues to hunt al-Qa'ida and its affiliates. We have taken the fight to the enemy and achieved tremendous success, but despite various strategies employed by two administrations to prevent the spread of radical Islam, the threat remains. The Arab Spring, civil war in Syria, and the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant in places such as Northern Africa highlight only a few of the many events in the past several years that now define US policy failures in the Middle East. In just over a year, ISIL has exploded from a largely localized force in Iraq to seriously challenge al-Qa'ida as the vanguard of the global jihad.

Moreover, nation states like Russia and China continue to expand their spheres of influence and diminish US clout worldwide. Russia has taken advantage of indecisiveness in Europe and exploited uneven leadership in the US to pressure Ukraine and its neighbors on core Russian interests. China bullies its neighbors in the South and East China Sea, and if left unchecked, will likely exercise de facto control over maritime trade in its perceived territorial waters in the next decade. Meanwhile, North Korea and Iran continue to pose significant proliferation risks and remain strategic threats to the US and its allies. State actors can bring a tremendous amount of resources to counter US policy, placing an immense burden on the Intelligence Community to collect information on, and assess, these activities carefully and accurately.

Perhaps more troubling, state and non-state actors alike are developing new ways to project power, particularly in cyberspace. Cyber attacks are becoming so pervasive that network defenders are overwhelmed; attackers seem to gain access to sensitive systems at will. The most recent attacks on the Office of Personnel Management servers—possibly one of the most significant national security incidents in the past decade—highlight the continued threat to our nation's infrastructure.

M__ Chair, in this year's intelligence authorization bill, this Committee has taken a great deal of care in addressing the wide range of issues described above. This bill is an essential tool in supporting our nation's efforts to tackle today's challenges, while also directing the Intelligence Community to make strategic investments in the future. In particular, I believe that this bill goes a long way toward encouraging the Intelligence Community to make much-needed investments, such as recovering from unauthorized disclosures of intelligence capabilities.

Additionally, this year's authorization bill comes on the heels of the Committee's recent bipartisan successes on key national security issues, including reauthorizing important provisions related to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, and overwhelmingly passing bipartisan legislation on cyber threat information sharing. I applaud Ranking Member Schiff for his help on these issues and look forward to working together in the future.

Finally, I want to thank all the Intelligence Committee staff on both sides of the aisle for their support drafting this bill. The Committee staff spent countless hours assisting Members and finalizing the legislation. In particular, I would like to recognize our Sandia National Labs fellow, Randy Smith. He has been with the Committee for almost two years and will be leaving us soon to return to Sandia. He has been a tremendous asset to this Committee and I thank him for all his hard work. I would also like to thank the men and women of the Intelligence Community for all their efforts protecting this nation. I look forward to passing this legislation.

M__ Chair, thank you and I reserve the balance of my time.