

The Honorable Alcee L. Hastings
"The View From the Intelligence Committee"
TRINITY UNIVERSITY IC CENTER OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
"Public Policy and National Intelligence in a Changing Landscape"
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Good morning. And thank you for having me here this morning. I am so pleased to return to Trinity for this important colloquium.

Thank you, President McGuire for hosting today's event in conjunction with the Intelligence Community Centers of Academic Excellence, a program that I am honored to have played a role in creating. This program has had a positive impact on students and faculty here at Trinity and at other fine colleges and universities across the nation.

As a Member of Congress who first joined the Intelligence Committee in 1999, and one that has visited more intelligence officers overseas than almost any other member, I can attest to the dedication and hard work of the men and women of the Intelligence Community. They are our nation's first line of

defense against the increasing dangers and threats around the world.

From the scourge of terrorism, to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, to hostile governments, their work is often unseen, often thankless, and filled with formidable challenges.

I believe that we, as Members of Congress, have the responsibility to ensure that they are provided with the tools, resources and sound policy guidance they need to do their jobs effectively.

The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence has been busy since the start of the 110th Congress. For example, here are just a few things we are doing:

- Conducting oversight to better ensure that the right investments in intelligence are made.

- Monitoring and reviewing Iraq and Afghanistan related intelligence to ensure the best intelligence is provided to policymakers and those fighting on the ground.
- Working to ensure that we have is the best intelligence on, and increased understanding of, the hardest intelligence targets, including Iran and North Korea, as well as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

But, at the same time, not forgetting that we must not lose sight of places like Latin and South America in our own hemisphere, Africa, Russia and other places around the globe.

- Monitoring the progress of the Intelligence Community in its implementation of the reforms ordered by the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Act of 2004.

While I am proud of the work done by both the men and women of Intelligence Community and our Committee, I believe we all must do better!

There are four areas that need our special attention:

- Increasing diversity;
- Increasing knowledge and understanding of the enemy;
- Making sound resource investments; and
- Engaging in effective Congressional oversight.

First, let's talk about diversity, a topic near and dear to me. The good news: the Intelligence Community has made some progress in hiring people with diverse backgrounds, education and experience,

including more women and minorities. Now, the sobering news: this progress has been at a glacial speed.

The Intelligence Community has been historically slow to recognize the wealth and abundance of talents and skills that reside in first, second and sometimes even third generation Americans. We still do not have a workforce that looks like our country. We aren't even close!

I think most of us agree that the average male, non-minority analyst or intelligence collector is going to be extremely smart and well-versed in their specific subject area – let's say, Islamic culture and teaching.

But, I dare say, he won't get it at the same level as an Arab-Muslim-American who lives it, breathes it, who knows it. Yet, how many Arab-Muslim-Americans do we have in the Intelligence Community?

The same goes for linguists. We all lament the fact that we don't have enough Arabic, Farsi, Urdu or Dari speakers in the Intelligence Community and military. But, how can we expect to completely correct that course without carefully and thoughtfully modernizing the recruitment, selection and security clearance processes to quickly bring on board people with these critical skills?

Too often applicants languish in the clearance process for months – on occasion even more than a year. We have to do a better job at clearing potential intelligence agents and analysts in an efficient way while not compromising our security.

This is not impossible, and we can accomplish both without placing unfair, unrealistic, and extreme barriers in the way of qualified applicants.

How can we effectively modernize the clearance process? The DNI can start by taking

steps to institutionalize a multi-level security clearance process to ensure all intelligence agencies are able to leverage the skills of those who may not be able to be cleared to the highest levels in a timely manner.

I, along with some of my intelligence colleagues, have advocated this for years. I hope that the new DNI waste no time taking the steps to implement it.

Moreover, the annual intelligence diversity statistics, provided to Congress pursuant to law, show that the Intelligence Community is improving, albeit only slightly, in the hiring of women and minorities. Nevertheless, disturbingly, women and minorities continue to be disproportionately underrepresented in the senior ranks and the core-mission areas like analysis, human intelligence collection, and science and technology.

For example, I can count on one hand the number of women in senior leadership positions

at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. Similarly, we see far too few African-Americans, Hispanics and Asians, Native Americans, or even Muslim-Americans in the senior management ranks across the Intelligence Community, and who are engaged at any level in core-mission activities.

Again, I say, look at the face of America. What does it look like? Shouldn't the Intelligence Community look at least as diverse as the rest of the federal government and corporate America?

We will not be in the best position to win the fight against terrorism, which we will likely fight for generations to come, until we leverage the diversity, skills and talents of every segment of our society.

Next, let me move on to the second area of concern: the lack of understanding of exactly who we are fighting.

Throughout my career in Congress, I have had the opportunity to travel to every region of the world and interact with world leaders from all walks of life. For two years, I served as President of the Organization for Security in Cooperation in Europe's Parliamentary Assembly, and I currently serve as Chairman of the U.S. Helsinki Commission. Both have given me a unique perspective on the worlds, as I interact on a near daily basis with officials from 55 countries across Europe, North America, and the former Soviet Bloc.

What I have learned from them is that we must do better at being specific when defining the enemy. In the terrorist context, the enemy equals radical extremists. And, by that, I mean those who have literally hijacked the religion of Islam, and used it as a weak justification for political gains.

Our failure to be more specific places us at risk for losing many of our key partners in this

global fight against international terrorism. We have to work to convince our allies in the Muslim world that we are not against Islam. Yes, I said convince them because many around the world are skeptical of our motives right now, and frankly, I don't blame them.

We must also make more of an effort to understand the difference between Islam and the teachings and doctrine espoused by terrorists under the cloak of Islam.

We must differentiate between moderate Muslims who are supporters of the United States and its efforts to fight terrorism, and those who some call 'extremists' but who I think should really be called what they are – criminals – who manipulate the teachings of the Quran to brainwash their followers into committing horrific acts of terror, oftentimes using their own bodies as the ultimate weapons.

How do we do this? If we strive to hire individuals from diverse backgrounds, then we will by default increase the Intelligence Community's understanding and knowledge of the issues facing us, including the radical politicization of Islam. These new hires will also, by default, make their colleagues smart.

We must also endeavor to improve training and education across the Community. We are pouring vast amounts of money into training, education, and skills – enhancement of our analyst and collector corps. But too little, if any, goes into formalized training or education regarding cultural, religious, or regional matters.

We need to make this a priority, so that we know what we are up against, and to ensure the Americans and the rest of the world knows we are being smart about the fight.

Engaging in a smart fight also means that our actions show our global allies know that we respect international law and human rights.

Turning to my third point: Ensuring that sound resource investments are made.

I can't tell you exactly how much the Intelligence Community is spending because the figure is classified. But, I can assure you that it is spending vast amounts of money and resources to address the current threats. This may be necessary, but it has an inherent downside

I fear at times we are so caught up in what is happening today that we are likely to be surprised by the next threat to our homeland or our allies. For this reason, I believe we must make greater investments in understanding emerging threats, and ensuring that there is robust global intelligence coverage.

Fourth and finally, with Democrats in power, Congress is finally engaging intelligence oversight.

Recently, I have witnessed some disturbing things that have undermined Congress' role as an overseer of intelligence.

First, the Administration has been hesitant – and in some cases, has even refused – to follow the law, and keep Congress “fully and currently” informed. One example of this is NSA's Terrorist Surveillance Program, better known as the Warrantless Domestic Wiretapping program that came to light in Decmeber 2005. There are other more recent examples too, but I cannot go into those in this forum due to their classified nature.

Second, we saw that Congress, as an institution, was not pressing the Administration on the hard questions that needed to be asked. Instead, we before the change in power,

Congress was rubber stamping whatever the Administration wanted.

But, I assure you that I have always been committed to aggressive oversight of the Executive Branch, no matter what party is in power. This is critical to ensure that, first, we are not caught by surprise, like we were on September 11th. And second, we avoid situations like being led into another war based on 'faulty' intelligence like we were with the Iraq war.

I also have to underscore this with respect to Iraq: We wouldn't be where we are now if the Administration had been more forthcoming to Congress with the true facts related to Iraq WMD instead of providing justifications based on manipulated intelligence. Our nation cannot afford to let this happen again.

I assure you that I will do my part as Vice Chairman of the Intelligence Committee to ensure proper oversight finally occurs.

I close by noting that I consider myself fortunate to be a part of the evolving landscape and environment of the U.S. Intelligence Community. I have been honored to meet and work with the patriotic men and women of the intelligence community who serve all around the world. They deserve the best, and I firmly believe more can be done to overcome the challenges that I have described. Our efforts to do so will make the Intelligence Community stronger.

Some here in the audience today are thinking about careers in the Intelligence Community. I encourage you to explore and take full advantage of all the career opportunities the Intelligence Community has to offer.

I am personally committed to ensuring programs such as the IC Centers of Academic Excellence, and other training, scholarship,

fellowship and grant programs have adequate funding so that young people can embark on successful and rewarding intelligence careers.

I also challenge you to think out of the box. Think of ways that the Intelligence Community, in conjunction with Congress and its educational partners, can strengthen and enhance the diversity of the workforce, global collection, and intelligence analysis.

Thinking "outside the box" was the motivation behind the amendment I offered to the 2003 Intelligence Authorization Act which directly resulted in the creation of the IC Centers for Academic Excellence.

And, I think that somewhere – perhaps in the bright young minds in the audience today, or in the minds of some of you who have been around the block and earned your stripes – other creative ideas can be found to help strengthen the Intelligence Community.

My sincere thanks to all of you, and I
welcome your questions.