

Statement for the Record
Retired Vice Adm. Joseph Maguire
Nominee for Director, National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC)
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
July 25, 2018

Chairman Burr, Vice Chairman Warner, and members of the committee—thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would like to add my special thanks and appreciation for the efforts of the Committee staff, as well as many officers at ODNI and NCTC, as I have recently become aware there is a tremendous amount of preparation that goes into a confirmation hearing.

Mr. Chairman, I realize that all prior nominees to be Director of the National Counterterrorism Center were well known to this committee, having served as either acting directors of NCTC at the time of their nomination or in positions of great responsibility within the federal government. I am honored to appear before this committee today to introduce myself and discuss my credentials.

I spent over three decades serving our nation. I had to look no further than my own family to learn the value and honor of public service. My father was a combat infantryman in World War II and went on to serve in the Army Reserve following the war, retiring as a colonel after 30 years of service. He was also a career civil servant, employed as the chief budget examiner for New York City. Both my brothers served in the Navy, and my brother Ben was a career naval officer. When I took off my uniform in 2010, it was the first time in 70 years that a member of my immediate family was not wearing the cloth of our nation.

My grandfather, godfather, and cousins were New York City policemen. My mother graduated from Hunter College in the 1930s and dedicated her life to teaching in New York City public schools. My family is an example of public service and inspiration.

I would like to take a moment to introduce members of my family with me today. My son, Dan, and his wife Jackie from Chicago, and my daughter Catherine who lives in Tampa. Her husband, Sean could not be with us this morning but he is here in spirit. While I was in uniform, my children lived in Virginia, California, Massachusetts, Hawaii, and Florida. They too have served and have given much to support my career.

Lastly, my wife Kathy. A few weeks after our wedding, we drove across country to Coronado, California where I began SEAL Basic Training. She has guided, supported, and strengthened me for 42 years. Kathy raised our children during my many and long deployments, and dedicated her life to serving the men and women of our armed forces and their families. I lost many men when I was Commander of Naval Special Warfare, 11 in a single day. Kathy comforted and consoled the widows, children, mothers, and fathers of our fallen. She was a volunteer member of the United States Special Operations Care Coalition, an office established in USSOCOM dedicated to serving our severely wounded service members and their families.

For three years, while I was assigned to NCTC, Kathy met every wounded special operator as they arrived at Walter Reed or Bethesda Naval Hospital, sometimes in the middle of the night.

Then Secretary of Defense Robert Gates awarded Kathy the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service for her support to hundreds of wounded service members and their families. The Special Operations Community presented her with their Patriot Award for her service. My former SEAL teammates send her text messages on Mother's Day. I guess the best thing can say about my wife is that I have never met anyone like her.

My family's love and support means everything to me, and I am very glad they are with me today.

I come from a community where service above self is expected and that there is no greater honor than to lead. So, when offered the opportunity to return to public service as director of NCTC—there was no other answer than yes.

I am honored by the trust and confidence of the President and the Director of National Intelligence in my ability to serve our nation's counterterrorism (CT) enterprise. I am also equally honored to appear before this Committee. Few Americans have had the privilege I have this morning. I want to thank all of you for considering my nomination to be the next NCTC director and, if confirmed, pledge to be transparent and collaborative with this Committee and Congress.

It was my distinct privilege to serve as Deputy Director for Strategic Operational Planning when NCTC was led by Director Scott Redd and then by Director Mike Leiter. NCTC was still in its formative years when I arrived in 2007 and given the mission to integrate the national CT effort through effective planning and strategy development. It was a challenge at first to overcome bureaucratic turf battles, resolve disagreements, and effectively formulate strategic operational planning. Statutes give you authority, but trust and partnerships produce results. And leadership is all about results.

From my experience working in the interagency and the eventual successes we had while I was at NCTC, I am convinced that winning this counterterrorism fight can only be achieved through a coordinated and synchronized whole-of-government approach. I look to the example of my friend, Admiral Bill McRaven, the Joint Special Operations Command—or JSOC—Commander during the raid on Usama Bin Ladin's compound in Abbottabad. This highly-sensitive operation was not only an intelligence community and defense department campaign, but the result of a disciplined, inter-agency process.

THREAT OVERVIEW

Looking back over the last 17 years since September 11, 2001, the United States—working with our partners and allies—has made tremendous progress in our ability to detect and disrupt multi-actor, sophisticated terrorist attacks. We have built a robust counterterrorism apparatus that has significantly increased our ability to protect the Homeland as well as share

valuable information within our own government and with our global partners. However, significant challenges remain and the U.S. and its allies face an increasingly complex terrorist landscape that includes homegrown violent extremists, Sunni violent extremist groups such as ISIS and al-Qa'ida, and Shia violent extremists backed by Iran.

Having been out of government for a while, I don't have the insight that access to classified information would provide. I do, however, stay informed through open source reporting and my personal relationships within the special operations and intelligence communities. As this committee is well aware, the U.S.-led coalition's aggressive counterterrorism actions against ISIS have resulted in the group losing nearly all of the territory it once controlled in both Iraq and Syria. Despite these setbacks, ISIS's ability to launch an insurgency in Syria and Iraq and maintain a global network has not yet been sufficiently diminished, and the consistent tempo of ISIS-directed and ISIS-inspired terrorist activity is a reminder of the group's continued global reach.

Beyond ISIS, al-Qa'ida's global network retains the intent to carry out attacks against the U.S. and other allied interests, with varying degrees of capability due to sustained CT pressure. In addition to the threat emanating from Sunni terrorist groups, Iran remains the foremost state sponsor of terrorism, providing financial aid, advanced weapons and tactics, and direction to militant and terrorist groups across the Middle East, all while it cultivates its own network of operatives across the globe as part of its international attack infrastructure.

In the U.S., the most immediate threat is from homegrown violent extremists, especially as extremist propaganda encourages simple tactics with readily available weapons that do not require specialized training and present fewer opportunities for law enforcement detection. Homegrown violent extremists are also geographically dispersed across the U.S., with no distinctive hotspots of radicalization, underscoring the importance of NCTC and its partners sharing information and collaborating with stakeholders across the country at federal, state, local, territorial, and tribal levels, as well as the private sector.

Given this threat environment, I am committed to ensuring NCTC and the broader IC remain as vigilant, innovative, and adaptive as our adversaries are persistent. We have made great strides dismantling ISIS, al-Qa'ida, and other terrorist organizations—however, the past 17 years have shown us that bullets and drone strikes alone are not sufficient to counter violent extremist organizations in Iraq, Syria, and other safe havens. To ultimately win this fight, we must address the causes and conditions that inspire men and women to join terrorist organizations and radicalize to violence. To do this, we must increase our efforts to prevent violent extremist ideology from taking root.

I would bring to this position leadership experience in both government and industry; a reputation of speaking truth to power; trust, confidence, and personal relationships with many of our current national security leaders; and, the ability to build strong partnerships. If confirmed by the Senate, I would ensure that NCTC provides greater security for our nation, and does so while protecting fundamental American values.

PRIORITIES

I would like to briefly provide a few priorities if confirmed as NCTC director. First, I will work to develop and retain the dedicated men and women of NCTC, who continue to drive the Center's mission and organization. Their insights and actions contribute to the effective discovery and disruption of terrorists who aim to do us harm. I will concentrate on the training, well-being, and professional development of the current workforce and ensure that we attract the next generation of CT analysts to tackle our nation's future CT challenges.

Second, as a military commander, I relied heavily on intelligence analysis to support my operational decisions and strategic planning. I believe NCTC's threat analysis role is key to our government's ability to mitigate terrorist threats and protect Americans at home and abroad. I firmly resolve to uphold NCTC's analytic integrity and objectivity, and will ensure the Center's unique ability to fuse intelligence collected both inside and outside the U.S. continues to be a powerful capability against the terrorism threat.

Third, a shared understanding of the terrorism threat and maintaining situational awareness across the U.S. government are key to an effective, coordinated, and unified response to terrorism. I will ensure that NCTC continues to provide a vital one-stop shop for U.S. government policymakers and operators, staffed by experts from nearly 20 departments and agencies.

Fourth, figuring out who the bad guys are, who they are connected with, and tracking their movements—it's the most tactically important thing we do in the CT world. From my time at NCTC, I vividly recall the tireless efforts of my colleagues to maintain the U.S. government's central and shared knowledge bank of known and suspected terrorists. I am committed to continually reviewing and refining the Center's capabilities in this area, as the rapid evolution of technology and proliferation of information has made tracking terrorists even more difficult.

Fifth, NCTC's role in integrating all instruments of national power against terrorism is essential because, in my experience as a military officer, one instrument of national power alone is often not sufficient to overcome the toughest challenges we face as a country. I will ensure we refine strategic plans for the CT community and synchronize our efforts to defeat violent extremist organizations that threaten our homeland and our nation's interests.

Finally, in the face of competing national security priorities, it is vital that the CT community maintains a steady pulse on the terrorism threat. As the national intelligence manager for CT, I will lead an integrated and collaborative CT enterprise that values the important contributions of its partners—both foreign and domestic. I will ensure we are maximizing our resources to protect the American people and are positioned to collect and assess intelligence against the highest priority terrorism threats.

CLOSING

In conclusion, as a boy, I watched the twin towers go up and, as a special operator, saw them come down. I have lost friends in this fight, and need no reminder of the threat we face every day. If confirmed, I will bring all my energy and a sense of urgency to the position and carry out my duties as Director of the National Counterterrorism Center to the best of my ability.

Chairman Burr, Vice Chairman Warner, and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity. I look forward to answering your questions.