

Statement for the Record
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

Deputy Director of Central Intelligence Agency Gina Haspel
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Chairman Burr, Vice Chairman Warner, members of the committee: Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am here because I have been nominated to lead the extraordinary men and women at the Central Intelligence Agency – men and women who are our country’s silent warriors. These dedicated professionals spend much of their careers in difficult, far-flung outposts of the globe, striving to make our fellow Americans more secure at home. It has been the privilege of my professional life to be one of those CIA officers.

Now, I have been asked by President Trump to lead this workforce and to continue the work that Mike Pompeo and I began a little more than a year ago: ensuring that CIA is postured to meet the complex challenges our nation faces. Those challenges include a changing but still lethal threat from terrorist groups; a nuclear threat against the continental United States from a rogue state; destabilizing Iranian adventurism; an aggressive and sometimes brutal Russia; and the long-term implications of China’s ambitions on the global stage.

While these challenges are daunting and offer few easy answers, I am confident the United States and the American people have the resolve to meet them head on. If I am confirmed as Director, you have my solemn commitment that I will position this Agency to provide the intelligence support our country needs to meet the challenges of today, and those of the future.

I welcome the opportunity to introduce myself to the American people for the first time – it is a new experience for me as I spent over 30 years under cover and in the shadows. I don’t have any social media accounts, but otherwise I think you will find me to be a typical middle class American – one with a strong sense of right and wrong and one who loves this country.

I was born in Kentucky, and while my family has deep roots there, I was an Air Force “brat” and followed my father to postings all over the world. My childhood overseas instilled in me an appreciation for foreign languages and cultures, but also a deep understanding of the vital role of American leadership in confronting aggression abroad.

I joined the CIA in 1985 as an operations officer in the Clandestine Service. From my first days in training, I had a knack for the nuts and bolts of my profession. I excelled in finding and acquiring secret information that I obtained in brush passes, dead drops, or in meetings in dusty back allies of third world capitals. I recall my first foreign agent meeting was on a dark, moonless night with an agent I’d never met before. When I picked him up, he passed me the intelligence and I passed him extra money for the men he led. It was the beginning of an adventure I had only dreamed of.

The men who ran CIA in those days leaned forward in giving me the right opportunities to succeed or fail. When a very tough, old school leader announced that I was his pick to be Chief

of Station in a small but important frontier post, a few competitors complained to me directly “*why would they send you?*” I owe that leader much for believing in me at a time when few women were given these opportunities. While I could have done without the long nights, sleeping on the floor of my station, I was proud of the work we did there including the successful capture of two major terrorists, a counterproliferation operation that went our way, and the dismantlement of a local terrorist cell.

Altogether, I have served seven tours in the field—four as Chief of Station—including hardship assignments in distant posts and, more recently, in the capital of a major US ally.

By any standard, my life at the Agency – and it has been my life – has exceeded all of my expectations, from that January day when I took my oath to today. There were few senior women leading at CIA in those days, and we are stronger now because that picture is changing. I did my part – quietly and through hard work – to break down those barriers. And I was proud to be the first woman to serve as the number-two in the Clandestine Service. It is not my way to trumpet the fact that I am a woman up for the top job, but I would be remiss in not remarking on it – not least because of the outpouring of support from young women at CIA who consider it a good sign for their own prospects.

My experience and success as an operations officer led to three leadership positions in the Clandestine Service, and one year ago, I was asked to serve as Deputy Director of CIA. The reaction of the workforce to a rare nomination of one of their own to be Director – someone who has been in the trenches with them – has been overwhelming. I am humbled by their confidence that I can successfully lead this Agency and inspired to work harder than ever to maintain that mutual trust.

They know that I don’t need time to learn the business of what CIA does. I know CIA like the back of my hand. I know them, I know the threats we face, and I know what we need to be successful in our mission.

I have played a leading role this past year in setting us on the right path and I intend on continuing on that path if I am confirmed as Director.

Our strategy starts with strengthening our core business: collecting intelligence to help policymakers protect our country and advance American interests around the globe. It includes raising our investment against the most difficult intelligence gaps, putting more officers in the foreign field where our adversaries are, and emphasizing foreign language excellence. And, finally, it involves investing in our partnerships – both within the US Government and around the globe.

We must do everything we can to follow through on these investments and to make CIA as effective as it can possibly be, because the American people deserve no less than CIA’s best effort.

This is especially true when it comes to confronting threats from North Korea, Iran, Russia, and China. Today, CIA officers are deployed across the globe, sometimes at significant personal

risk, collecting critical human and technical intelligence. I have spent my entire career driving operations and, if confirmed, I will be able to leverage that experience against these hard targets beginning on day one.

I knew that accepting the president's nomination would raise questions about CIA classified activities and my career at the Agency. I also understand that it is important for the American people to get to know me so they are able to judge my fitness for this position. So over the last few weeks, we have leaned forward to make more information about my professional record public. We have also shared details on every aspect of my career through classified channels with this Committee, as well as with the rest of the Senate.

I think it is important to recall the context of those challenging times immediately following 9/11. For me, I had just returned to Washington from an overseas posting and I reported for duty the morning of 9/11. I knew in my gut when I saw the video of the first plane hitting the Tower in Manhattan that it was Bin Ladin. I got up from my desk and, like many others, walked over to the Counterterrorism Center and volunteered to help. I didn't leave for three years. We worked seven days a week, and I even had friends who postponed weddings and having babies. The men and women of CIA were driven to prevent another attack. The first boots on the ground in Afghanistan were my colleagues. The first U.S. casualty in Afghanistan was a CIA officer and it was CIA who identified and captured the mastermind of 9/11 in a brilliant operation. I am proud of our work during that time. The hard lessons we learned from that experience inform my leadership of CIA today.

In light of my counterterrorism experience, I understand that what many people around the country want to know about are my views on CIA's former detention and interrogation program. I have views on this issue, and I want to be clear. Having served in that tumultuous time, I can offer you my personal commitment, clearly and without reservation, that under my leadership CIA will not restart such a detention and interrogation program.

CIA has learned some tough lessons, especially when asked to tackle missions that fall outside our expertise. For me, there is no better example of implementing lessons learned than what the Agency took away from the detention and interrogation program. In retrospect it is clear, as the SSCI Majority Report concludes, that CIA was not prepared to conduct a detention and interrogation program.

Today, the US Government has a clear legal and policy framework that governs detentions and interrogations. Specifically, the law provides that no individual in US custody may be subjected to any interrogation technique or approach that is not authorized by and listed in the Army Field Manual. I fully support the standards for detainee treatment required by law, and just as importantly, I will keep CIA focused on our collection and analysis missions that can best leverage the expertise found at the Agency.

Like I said, we learned important lessons following 9/11. As both a career intelligence officer and an American citizen, I am a strong believer in the importance of oversight. Simply put, experience has taught us that CIA cannot be effective without the people's trust. And we cannot hope to earn that trust without the accountability that comes with Congressional oversight.

If we can't share aspects of our secret work with the public, we should do so with their elected representatives. For CIA, oversight is a vital link to the open society we defend. It's a defining feature of the US Intelligence Community, and one of the many things that distinguishes us from the hostile services we face in the field.

If confirmed as Director, I will uphold the Agency's obligations to Congress and ensure that oversight works on behalf of the American people.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you and the Committee for the hard work that is put into the oversight process, and for the vital support that you provide to my fellow officers.

CIA has given a lot to me over the past three decades—a calling in service to my country, some real-life adventures, and the profound satisfaction of serving with some of the most talented and honorable men and women anyone could ever meet.

If confirmed, I hope to repay the debt I owe to this remarkable Agency by drawing on my experience. I know what my fellow officers need from me and, I know what our nation needs from CIA—truth, integrity, and courage.

Again, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to sit before you today, and I look forward to your questions.

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