

**HEARING OF THE SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
THE NOMINATION OF MIKE McCONNELL TO BE
DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

WITNESS:

Mr. Mike McConnell

CHAIRER BY: SENATOR JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER IV (D-WV)

LOCATION: 106 DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D.C.

TIME: 2:30 P.M. EST

DATE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2007

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: This hearing will come to order.

There's one formality that we need to dispose of before we can proceed. The committee received Admiral McConnell's financial disclosure forms and background material last Friday. The rules require that we wait seven days after receipt of the material to hold the hearing unless the committee votes to waive the rule. So, Admiral, we're just going to wait seven days, or, unless there's objection -- there is no objection -- that we will just waive that. I don't think I hear any objection, and therefore the rule --

SEN. CHRISTOPHER BOND (R-MO): I was going to make the motion. So it is agreed.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: It's agreed.

Welcome to all. And we begin today with a very serious confirmation, and that is for Mike McConnell to be the next director of National Intelligence.

Before we get into the substance of the statements and the questions, I want to recognize Admiral McConnell's wife Mary, who is accompanying him, and ask Admiral McConnell if he would like to introduce the rest of his family here with him today.

MR. McCONNELL: Well, thank you, sir, very much.

You just mentioned my wife, who's sitting just here in the white coat. And next to her is Christine, our daughter. And next to Christine is Mark, our son, his wife, Ann Marie, and two of our seven grandchildren. This is Alana (sp) and Taylor.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Good. I welcome them too.

And, of course, we welcome our valued colleague, the distinguished senator from West Virginia -- I mean, senior senator from Virginia -- who is obviously a valued -- you see, it always goes the other way. Usually people call West Virginia Virginia.

SEN. JOHN WARNER (R-VA): We in Virginia will take you back. You ran away, but we'll take you back. (Laughter.)

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Senator, we seceded for a good and just cause. And Senator Warner is going to be introducing Admiral McConnell in just a moment.

Admiral McConnell appears before us after a long absence from government service. He has not, however, been absent from the field of intelligence. He served in the United States Navy for 29 years, rising to the rank of vice admiral, which is, I am told, a very rare accomplishment for an intelligence officer.

During the period of public service, he served as director of intelligence on the joint staff during the Persian Gulf procedure and as director of the National Security Agency, our nation's largest intelligence agency.

Upon retiring from the Navy, Admiral McConnell went to work for Booz Allen & Hamilton, where he has been a senior vice president for intelligence and national security. He is also currently chairman and chief executive officer of the Intelligence and National Security Alliance, an industry group that works with the government looking for ways to solve some of our complex intelligence problems.

Admiral McConnell, I was particularly interested in reading in your responses to our questions that we sent you prior to this hearing on how you came to be an intelligence officer. As you described it, after serving a tour in combat in Vietnam, you wanted to know how to provide better intelligence to those who are, in fact, in combat.

This tells me some very important things about you. First, you know what combat is really like and how important it is to try to keep the young men and women serving in our military out of harm's way whenever possible.

Secondly, you know how important intelligence is to our military commanders and to those who make the decisions affecting our national security.

And finally, it tells me that you are an intelligence professional by choice, not by accident. And that means you have a huge dedication to the field.

If you are confirmed, you'll be taking over an experiment still in its early stages, an experiment intended to make sure that U.S. intelligence provides policymakers, our military commanders and other decision-makers with the best information available.

While the Congress passed the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 in the wake of the 9/11 commission report and this committee's report on problems with pre-war intelligence related to Iraq, those were only the most recent in a long line of studies and reports describing the structural problems in the intelligence community.

The question we will have for you today, and the challenge you will face if confirmed, will be to figure out if we got it right. I'm convinced that separating the DNI from the day-to-day operation of the Central Intelligence Agency was the right step. For the first time ever, we now have somebody whose primary responsibility is organizing the different pieces of the intelligence

community. I also think this arrangement benefits the CIA, since it now has the undivided attention of its director.

But beyond the act of separating the two jobs, it is less clear whether the structure of the DNI office is ideal to accomplish its mission; hence, a work in progress. We did not pull the technological collection agencies out of the Defense Department and we did not give the DNI direct authority over the main collection or analytical components of the community.

We gave the DNI the authority to build the national intelligence budget, but we left the execution of the budget with the agencies. We gave the DNI tremendous responsibilities. The question is, did we give the position enough authority for him to exercise those responsibilities?

I will also want to hear from you today about how you envision your relationship with us, and this will be an important line of questioning for me. The committee is charged with overseeing the operation of the intelligence community. It's a job that Vice Chairman Bond and I, and all the members of our committee, take very, very seriously. We care very much about the intelligence -- that intelligence work for our nation and for our fighting forces. And therefore, it's important that our relationship be a comfortable and frank one.

Congressional oversight is sometimes viewed only as criticism. And at times, we do criticize, but it is our goal to make the intelligence community the best that it can be. And oversight should be cooperative, not confrontational. In order to accomplish this goal, we will have to work together to ensure that this committee has the access to the materials it needs to conduct oversight.

It is no secret that neither Chairman Bond nor I have been happy in the past with decisions by some to restrict access to required information by our members and staff. Depriving our committee the information it needs, or over-restricting access to the information we need, not only weakens congressional oversight of secretive intelligence programs, it generates unnecessary suspicion, and worst of all, undercuts the effectiveness of activities generally.

Vice Chairman Bond and I are committed to working together to overcome this problem. And the vice chairman, I have to say, has been extremely effective on that so far. But we will need your help, sir.

In our discussion today I'm not interested in rehashing what has or has not transpired in the past. I want to establish a positive and collaborative relationship for the future. I look forward to getting your views on these and other issues that you are going to be facing.

I now recognize Vice Chairman Bond.

SEN. CHRISTOPHER BOND (R-MO): Thank you very much, Chairman Rockefeller. I join with him in welcoming you, Admiral McConnell, and your fine family. I had an opportunity to meet briefly with your lovely granddaughters. I know that's a source of great pride. I associate myself with all the things the chairman has said. And we are -- we are working together. We do need access and we look forward to a constructive relation.

But I have a few comments on which I wish to elaborate. And that is the fact that, as has already been said, the intelligence community has come a

long way since 9/11. Significant intelligence and government reforms have been enacted, including creation of the Director of National Intelligence.

The DNI is and should be central to transforming the community. In the face of unknown and known enemies who are determined to cause us harm, we need strong, decisive leadership to make sure we pull together the IC's considerable resources, talents and capabilities.

It's certainly no secret to anybody I've talked to, or who has watched the record, that I specifically voted against the intelligence reform legislation two years ago because I believe it gave the DNI a whole lot of responsibility without the requisite authority. I had hoped for more robust legislation.

If you're confirmed, Admiral McConnell, as I am sure you will be, I expect and hope you will give this committee your full unvarnished opinion about your authority so that we can ensure that the one we hold responsible for intelligence matters has the requisite authority.

Mr. Chairman, I believe the president's made an excellent choice in nominating Admiral McConnell. With the long and distinguished career that you mentioned, he certainly has the background. He and I have had time to spend together in my office after the nomination. We discussed the progress and areas where further reform is needed. He testified that he shared my concern with the fact that within the IC -- the intelligence community -- there are no fully auditable statements -- financial statements, and he plans to change that and we want to work with you.

I believe Mike McConnell has the right background for this important job and is the right choice. As an intelligence officer in the U.S. Navy and numerous leadership positions, including director of the NSA, his private sector work, I think he brings not only subject matter expertise to this important job, but leadership. And Admiral, I look forward to hearing about your ideas on continuing the transformation of the community.

Human intelligence -- absolutely essential. Our enemies are agile and diverse. We need to stay ahead of them and prevent them from realizing their evil intentions, but we need better human intelligence, which does not necessarily mean more human intelligence. And ideology -- I believe that the global war on terrorism must be regarded largely as an ideological war. Twenty percent of the war is kinetic and I fully support that in many ways, but also the 80 percent is ideological and we're going to have to win on both fronts. I'm concerned we haven't been doing enough to focus the ideological front raised by the radical Islamist fundamentalist terrorists.

Next, information sharing and analogous -- analysis -- they're -- our officers are doing good work. But I think they can do better, particularly when sharing intelligence across the IC. You've written about these ideas, and I look forward to hearing more about them.

And financial management, again, right now the IC cannot tell us exactly how the National Intelligence Program funds are being spent, and I believe you and I regard that as unacceptable. And on -- in reference to the committee issues that the chairman raised, we're well aware that the intelligence community has learned important lessons about the Iraq WMD failure and made important changes. But we've also learned important lessons from that failure, and as a result, we're changing our approach to oversight.

When the 2002 NIE-Iraq WD -- WMD programs was provided, there was no evident problems with the document. However, at that time, the committee did not examine the underlying intelligence that supported it. After the start of the war, we did examine the underlying intelligence, and we quickly realized that the NIE's characterization and interpretation of this intelligence was overstated, and in many cases just plain wrong. I have said before that we wanted -- that Congress demanded that immediately in the worst way, and that's unfortunately how we got it.

We are not going to accept national security issue judgment without examining the intelligence underlying the judgments, and I believe this committee has an obligation to perform due diligence on important -- on such important documents. When we ask for documents, however, we've run into resistance, and the ICE claims we should not be looking over its shoulder and checking its work. To me, that's basically what oversight is all about. And I think the committee must look at -- look into the materials on which you base the judgment. Unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, when we're seeking documents supporting the 2005 Iran NIEs, we're experiencing significant resistance. This baffles me. If you're confirmed, I hope you will work with us, support our efforts to get these documents and perform our duty for the Senate and the American people.

In conclusion, I thank you so much for taking on this job. I congratulate you on your nomination. You are our best hope of being able to develop the intelligence we need to confront the untold enemies who are united in their hatred of America and the freedoms, hopes and opportunities for our country. Best wishes, thank you, Admiral, and thank you, Mr, Chairman.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Thank you, Mr. Vice-Chairman.

I now recognize the distinguished junior senator from Virginia, Senator John Warner.

SEN. JOHN WARNER (R-VA): Thank you, Mr., Chairman, Mr. Vice- Chairman and colleagues on the committee. I'd like to have my entire statement placed in the record.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Without objection.

SEN. WARNER: So in the brevity of time, we can proceed to the hearing. I would simply say the president chose the right man for the right job at the right time, because never before in my long lifetime have I seen a more complex set of challenges facing this nation than today.

My earlier remarks were covered by the distinguished chair and vice-chair, so I'd like to pick up. This is not the first time we met. We go back, I calculate, Admiral, almost 40 years, when I was privileged to be undersecretary -- secretary of the Navy, and you were a young Ensign JG, happily far away from the Pentagon on a beloved ship with your beloved Navy and sailors --

MR. McCONNELL: Yes, sir.

SEN. WARNER: -- which you served with great distinction. But then in later life, we did have the opportunity to work together. The admiral served as a senior intelligence officer from '90 to '92 for the chairman of the Joint

Chiefs of Staff, then-General Colin Powell, and the secretary of Defense during Operations Desert Shield-Desert Storm, and it's at that time I met him. He was a one-star admiral on the Joint Staff when the first Gulf War started. He would come to the hill circa 1990 to brief the Senate Armed Services Committee, and indeed the members in S-407. I roughly calculated from my diaries you made more than 15 different appearances during that period, where you gave us a clear picture of intelligence relating to Iraq, Afghanistan and indeed the Kuwait -- particularly at that time -- and the whole region. You won the respect and admiration of the Senate at that time.

Later you, as we say in the Navy, flected up to serve as director of the National Security Agency -- that's NSA -- from '92 to '96, where we again continued our association. During that period, I was a member of this committee and -- as well as the Armed Services Committee. I worked closely with you to ensure that our intelligence forces would not be cut so deeply during that period when there were substantial cuts to our armed forces. Clearly both of us saw that our intelligence forces were our first line of defense. They were, as we say in the military, a force multiplier at a badly needed time when the ranks were being substantially thinned. Under your leadership, Admiral, the NSA routinely provided global intelligence and information security services to the White House, Cabinet officials and the Congress in addition to the broad array of military and civil intelligence customers.

Admiral is also one of the first senior officials in the United States government to identify information insurance and cybersecurity as major strategic issues in our increasingly networked society and then the emerging Internet.

You were right on the pioneer status of those critical problems. You took that knowledge that you gained from 29 years in the Navy and then put it back into the private sector but once again, serving the United States and our security interests in those positions.

In 2002, the Consulting Magazine selected the admiral as one of the top 25 most influential consultants in the nation for his work in cyber security and risk management. Later, the admiral served three years on the board of director of Booz Allen Hamilton, and is currently the senior vice president with that firm, based in McLean, Virginia. He holds many awards and recognitions, high academic credentials, all of which I will put forth.

And I would say simply, Admiral, may fair winds and following seas get you through the confirmation process. Thank you, sir.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Thank you, Senator Warner.

Admiral McConnell, you are now recognized to make your opening statement, sir.

MR. McCONNELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It's indeed an honor and a privilege to come before this committee today. I am also deeply honored and grateful to President Bush for his trust and confidence in nominating me to become the second director of National Intelligence, or DNI, as we slip into acronyms, as we are wont to do.

I want to express my sincere appreciation to you, Chairman Rockefeller, and to you, Vice Chairman Bond, for your consideration of this nomination. Both

you and the other members of the Committee have been most helpful and gracious during my courtesy calls. We have some very important issues to address and, if confirmed, I look forward to working the issues with each of you.

Today, in an age in which the threats faced by the nation are so very different from those in the past, the DNI must call on the wisdom and experience of this committee to be effective in helping to protect the nation. If confirmed, I will consult with you often. I will seek your counsel. And I will take it seriously.

I want to thank Senator Warner for his very kind remarks in introducing me this afternoon. In addition to being a great American of long and distinguished service to the nation, he is the senior Senator from my adopted home state. I also had the honor of working for Senator Warner when he was the secretary of the Navy, as he mentioned, and as a member of this committee during my time at NSA in the '90s. Thank you, sir.

I also want to thank my wife, Terry, our four children, and our wonderful grandchildren for their support and patience as I contemplate a return to public service. I must admit, we had some long and serious talks about my returning after 30 years of my first tour, but in the final analysis, they were all very supportive.

After spending most of my adult life in the intelligence community, focused on getting the right information to decision makers in time and format to be useful, I am excited about the possibility of returning. Fortunately, my work for the past 10 years after leaving government service has allowed me to stay focused on the National Security and Intelligence communities. I have followed the issues and initiatives and, if confirmed, I hope to be quickly and directly relevant to build on the accomplishments of Ambassador Negroponte and his team.

While preparing for the confirmation hearing, I have focused primarily on the new intelligence reform legislation and the process issues in the community. I have not yet engaged in all of the substantive and policy issues that I know are of strong interest to the committee. If confirmed, I will come up to speed quickly and engage promptly to answer your questions. As I noted in my written response to your questions, I understand, and I am fully supportive of the role of the Congress in your oversight responsibilities.

Unlike a decade ago, the threats of today and the future take advantage of globalization, and they take advantage of globalization to move at increasing speeds. The tools that make globalization possible, such as rapid transportation, instant global communications, global finance, computerization, data mining -- all make our productivity increase and our standard of living improve. At the same, those who wish us harm use these same tools to attack the nation to further extremist views and causes.

Today's threats, as we witnessed during 9/11, cross geographic boundaries, and that now includes inside the United States. We know that terrorist organizations today are making plans for attacks on our citizens inside our borders.

It will require coordinated responses from the entire community of intelligence professionals, working with other security professionals, to identify and prevent terrorist groups from carrying out these attacks.

The current DNI website lists terrorist events that have been carried out and terrorist events that have been prevented over the past few years. I would recommend that our citizens review this information since it is so easy to get involved in our day-to-day lives and forget the seriousness of these threats.

The first responsibility of intelligence is to achieve understanding and to provide warning to the decision-makers. As you know, there is a large community of intelligence professionals who dedicate their lives to carrying out this mission and the other missions of the community.

If confirmed, I will continue strong emphasis on integration of the intelligence community so we may better serve the nation to meet these new threats. That will mean accomplishing the full intent of the December 2004 legislation on Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention. To be effective, I believe we must have: a more integrated and collaborative community; better information sharing and communications processes to share; increased focus on the needs of our customers; more efficient acquisition, research and development, and financial accounting; rapid and improved security processes; and deeper penetration of intelligence targets to produce the needed information for tactical, operational and strategic decision-makers.

I believe the intelligence community needs to move beyond "need to know" -- the approach of the Cold War -- to a new approach that embraces the idea of responsibility to provide, provide to our users, from the president, to the battlefield, to state and local security officials.

Many of these threats and challenges were identified in the questions the committee asked me to answer. If I am confirmed by the Senate, I will do my very best to make meaningful progress addressing these challenges.

I also understand that the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and the role of the intelligence community in these conflicts, and in combating terrorism overseas, are some of the most pressing priorities of this committee. If confirmed, I will work with you in addressing these issues as my highest priorities. If confirmed, I also will consult with this committee, the House Intelligence Committee and other congressional leaders. I will be open to your questions, ideas and proposals. I will use my interaction with this committee as important inputs in shaping my recommendations and my actions. I, of course, understand it is the president who will ultimately decide on what changes are made in the executive branch's approach to many of these high priority areas.

I want to return to the serious new threats of today, that is the current planning by al Qaeda to attack inside the United States, to attack U.S. interests and the interests of our allies outside the United States. Not many years ago, the intelligence community focused almost exclusively on foreign threats outside our borders. What is new is the need to focus on these threats inside our borders. We must be effective in collecting and processing information to protect Americans from terrorism and to do so consistent with our Constitution, our laws and our values to respect the rights and privacy of our citizens. We will need to work together to develop processes and procedures that are effective in meeting these goals.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I did not seek to return to government to become the DNI. I agreed to this nomination because I love our nation and because the president asked me to come help because he thought I could help. I hope your deliberations will reach a similar conclusion.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That concludes my opening remarks.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Thank you very much, Admiral McConnell.

I'll just start off with a question or two.

There's been a lot written, and more said, about the Defense Department's encroaching on various aspects of intelligence collection normally done by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

To what extent are you concerned about competition between the DNI and the secretary of Defense for control of the intelligence community? Have you discussed any of these issues with Secretary of Defense Bob Gates? How are you, if at all, concerned that the Defense Department may be encroaching on CIA's activities, particularly its covert action missions, and thereby undermining the coordination and effectiveness of our counterterrorism efforts?

MR. McCONNELL: Senator, when I was asked to consider this nomination, I asked for some time to --

(Brief audio interruption) --

VOICE: Hello?

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Please proceed.

MR. McCONNELL: All right, sir.

SEN. : (Off mike) -- security. (Laughter.)

MR. McCONNELL: (Laughs.) When I was asked to consider this nomination, I asked for some time to think about accepting, and during that time frame, one of the things I wanted to do was to have a conversation with Secretary Gates. As you know, he was public in his remarks before he became secretary of Defense about what he thought about the DNI's authorities.

I had that conversation before I accepted the nomination, and I have had a conversation with Secretary Gates since. And we are of a common mind that we need to clean up the authorities for the DNI with regard to how this community is managed.

Now, embedded in your question were lots of parts -- covert action and concern about competition and so on. I have views about those things. This community has to stand on its own two feet. It has to engage in the appropriate way. There inevitably will be bureaucratic friction. Any time missions are close or overlap, there are frictions. I think it's the responsibility of DNI to address those frictions in a forceful way to get us to the right place, as collaborative as possible, but to get on to meeting the interests of the nation.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Thank you, sir. I'll just ask one more for this round. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, I want our relationship to be open and cooperative with the understanding that we're all working towards the same goal. In order for that to work, we need to have access, as Vice Chairman Bond indicated, to the information that we need to do thorough and fair oversight, which is what we are all about. We don't make policy, we do oversight.

Intelligence activity should be notified to all members of the committee. The National Security Act of 1947 has something to say about that. The only exception I think that is valid and the one envisioned in the National Security Act of 1947 is in those rare occasions when an intelligence activity, such as a covert action, is imminent and is of such operational sensitivity that its exposure could endanger lives and severely damage our national security.

Now, this excludes large, ongoing intelligence collection programs like the CIA's detention and interrogation program and the NSA Surveillance Program. It is my view that overly restrictive Gang of Eight notifications given to the Congress on these programs ultimately undermine their effectiveness and the Congress's confidence in their effectiveness. And they've caused legal problems and I think some damage to the reputation of the United States.

So my question, very briefly, is, do you believe that there are categories of information -- and you may wish to think about that, which -- simply tell me that -- categories of information that should be withheld from Congress, for reasons such as I've stated, or notified only to the chairman and vice chairman of the Intelligence Committees in the House and the Senate? And if so, what kinds of information?

And secondly, will you do everything in your power to ensure that all members and staff of this committee have access to the information they need to do their jobs?

MR. McCONNELL: Well, sir, as I tried to capture in my written responses to your questions and my opening remarks today, as a general philosophy now and when I served on active duty before, I understand the responsibilities of Congress, and my philosophy is to provide the information you need for your oversight responsibilities.

Now, there are some exceptions that have been captured in law written by the Congress and approved by the president that will make some exceptions. I would hope that those are very rare and few exceptions. And as you outlined, it would be mostly in an operational context when life and limb are at risk.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: My time is up, and I thank you, sir.

Chairman Bond -- Vice Chairman Bond.

SEN. CHRISTOPHER S. BOND (R-MO): Thanks for the temporary promotion.

Admiral McConnell, we've talked about cooperation and collaboration. Everybody knows that's important. But you also noted that can be a delay. I think I know the answer, but just for the record, are you willing to shake up the community, break some rice bowls, make unpopular decisions erring on the side of decisive leadership in the community when consensus cannot be achieved and sharing is not occurring?

MR. McCONNELL: The short answer, Senator, is, yes, I am prepared to do that. I am a consensus builder. I do listen. But at some time, you have someone in charge for a reason, and that means if you have to make a decision to break through an impasse, you have to decide and move on, and I'm prepared to do that.

SEN. BOND: Oh. Well, I look forward to supporting you in those efforts.

Turning now to the intelligence community financial management, there are a number of things that need to be done. Do you have -- let me ask a couple of questions. They may come together, but do you think there are milestones that should be set for achieving timely and unqualified audits? And would you give the DNI, as head of the IC, direct appropriations of all NIP funds, rather than the current situation in which Department of Defense NIP funds are approved through the DOD?

MR. McCONNELL: Well, sir, as I think it was made reference in the chairman's opening remarks, there's a difference between building a budget and executing the funds. And the way it was described is DNI has a responsibility for overseeing the budget bill; its execution is decentralized. Based on my findings so far, I'm concerned about how you describe the financial statement, or an audit. As you know, we haven't been successful in doing that. That's an area that I have started to look into, I am concerned about.

And the way I would frame it is somehow recapturing the timely excellence that we enjoyed years ago, '60s, '70s, to move with speed to capture significant capabilities, as compared to today, when it takes us so long to build something. So can we move better and be better in the acquisition cycle? Can we do the budget bill so there's some stability? And to go to your question, can we audit it with the competence of how it's audited in industry today? That's the thing we need to focus on.

SEN. BOND: OMB has put out the financial management line of business guidance. Do you think it would be helpful and could you achieve creating a cost-effective single software system that would aid in achieving a clean audit opinion?

MR. McCONNELL: Sir, in my professional life in the private sector, I've had a chance to observe that. That is not an easy thing to do but it is necessary. To get to what you're describing in terms of clean audits that will pass and meet generally accepted accounting practices, my belief is we are going to have to look at something like a software package today that would help the community account for -- it really should be described as what are the auditing procedures, what are the control mechanisms, and are they adequate for us to meet financial requirements.

SEN. BOND: Let me just finish up with a question on the item I referred to earlier, the ideological battle, understanding radical Islam, what's driving them. Are there steps that you can tell us about that the IC should take to win this battle, to understand it better or to counter it? And can you take steps to see that this entire operation is adequately funded?

MR. McCONNELL: Senator, that would be one of my highest priorities to address. I would note it's a complex answer to your question. We live today with security rules that literally were established in World War II and served us well -- World War II and the Cold War. Many of those rules prevent us from (for) example, using first-generation Americans who might have native language capabilities from serving in some of these very sensitive positions in the intelligence community. My view is we're going to have to look at that very hard to reform it to do what you're talking about, to get inside, understand, and perhaps influence the ideological battle. I agree with the way you captured it; it's the ideological battle that's the bigger problem.

SEN. BOND: I really hope you will start using more first- generation Americans who speak the language and understand the people. That is really important. Thank you, sir.

MR. McCONNELL: Sir.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Thank you, Vice Chairman Bond.

Senator Warner.

SEN. JOHN WARNER (R-VA): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First I listened intently at the rice bowl admonition. But I do wish at this time to acknowledge that I felt John Negroponte did a very credible and outstanding job in his tenure, beginning in April 2005, with the head of this organization that you're about to be confirmed for. And I think there are many of us here that would like to join in acknowledging that public service that he gave in breaking ground and establishing this very important office. And I hope you weren't referring to his rice bowls --

SEN. BOND: No, he had to break some with the CIA -- I'll talk to you offline some of battles that he did win.

SEN. WARNER: Well, and just a suggestion that you carry on in the traditions that he did. I thought he did a good job.

I also listened carefully to you acknowledge that you had met with Secretary Gates. I think that's a very important thing, first step. But having served for 29 years -- or most of it -- in naval intelligence, you recognize the value of intelligence to the on-scene commanders, whether he or she has four stars, or they're a ship commander of a small LST, it's an island of America in some far part of the world. They need a certain amount of infrastructure permanently to keep them advised and to assess the massive amount of material that's growing in the intelligence community in order to keep their crews safe and to perform their job.

So as you look over what DOD's doing today, I have followed it very closely, given that I once wore a hat as chairman of the Armed Services Committee. I'm still a member of that committee. But during that period of time, I must say I was somewhat protective of the infrastructure that I feel is essential for that department.

And they're full partners in the overall organization with which you'll have the -- soon have the responsibility. But they do need that help, given the importance of their jobs.

Can you sort of assure me that that's your vantage point from whence you will start on this?

MR. McCONNELL: Yes, sir, Senator Warner. You're describing my roots. That's where I came from. I understand it. And I very much would focus on protecting our troops or our sailors, airmen around the world in any capacity.

The interesting observation I had in a previous life, when I was on active duty, is there always seemed to be some divide between national and tactical. And those of us on the tactical side struggled regularly to be -- to have the benefit of national sensors. So I understand how that works, and I

think the right answer is to make it serve the interests of not only the forces forward but national interests. And they can be balanced. It's a matter of being informed and understanding your customer, whether it's the White House or the foxhole.

And I want to put a great deal of my time and energy making sure that we're optimized for both of those and never, ever lose sight of the fact that we owe it to our forces forward to give them the very best support.

SEN. WARNER: Wall, we had an interesting chapter in legislative history when we put together the legislation which created your office and other revisions in the intel community. By and large, they were constructive. They're -- they were well done.

But I hope that from your vantage point, if you see the need to refine that legislation, that you will so advise our distinguished chairman and ranking, the balance of us on that committee, and we'll turn too on that subject.

But once again, I'm pleased that you recognize the importance of what the Department of Defense has and its need to preserve those tactical resources and infrastructure.

My last question relates to the expertise that you've had in cybersecurity. Some years ago I and other members of the Armed Services Committee recognized the criticality of that problem. And we constructed, with a few funds we stole from here and there, a scholarship program for the Department of Defense, whereby young persons today can select a university or college of their own choosing, provided that learning institution has an expertise, spend four years, and get a degree in cybersecurity, in return for commitments of several years of service in the federal government or the United States military, as the case may be, to apply the skills that they learn in that very important subject.

I'm hopeful that that program will continue, but I urge you to augment other means by which to encourage young people to come into that somewhat narrow but absolute critical profession in our intelligence community. Do you have a comment on that, given your many years of experience?

MR. McCONNELL: Sir, I agree with that program and support it very strongly. When I was at NSA, years ago, we had a similar approach. And I'm familiar with several programs that provide scholarships for youngsters to focus in not only cyber security but national security issues. Even as a member of the private sector, a number of us came together to create a similar scholarship for NSA.

So a very worthy cause should enjoy a high priority. And since I've focused so much on cyber security, that's a personal interest. And I understand how important it is to the nation, so I'd be very supportive.

SEN. WARNER: Thank you very much, Admiral. I appreciate your once again stepping up to accept public service, together with your family.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Thank you, Senator Warner.

Senator Wyden?

SEN. RON WYDEN (D-OR): Admiral, I very much enjoyed our private meeting and thought you were refreshingly candid. I'm going to ask you some questions in a minute about private contractor practices, but I want to ask you first about the use of intelligence. And my question is, if you were the director of National Intelligence, and you became aware that the Bush administration was cherry-picking or exaggerating intelligence to justify going to war, what would be your response?

MR. McCONNELL: If I was aware that anyone was using information inappropriately, then I would make that known to whoever was using the information inappropriately.

SEN. WYDEN: You would tell the president and this committee?

MR. McCONNELL: I would tell all those responsible for this process what the situation was. And in the role of this committee for oversight, you would be a part of that process to be informed.

SEN. WYDEN: Admirable, I think that's a patriotic and commendable answer, and I thank you for it. And that was along the lines of what I was hoping for.

Admiral, it's troubling how little information is available about the private contractors who are doing an increasing amount of work that's being done by the intelligence agencies. And right now, this committee doesn't even know how many contractors are employed by the intelligence community because so far, the director of National Intelligence hasn't been able to inform us. Do you have even an approximate number of how many of these private contractors there are?

MR. McCONNELL: Senator, I don't know that figure now. I had some general ideas years and years ago, but let me capture it in a way that may be helpful. When I think of government, military, or intelligence community -- whatever -- the government doesn't make things. It's people doing work. And so if you need to buy something like a tank or a satellite or airplane or whatever, that's done by the private sector. So when you say contractors, I would describe it as private sector.

With regard to your question about too many contractors, I would describe it a little bit differently. The private sector maintains a significant capability. Post-9/11, the government found itself in need of special skills and special talent, and they were not available inside the government. So the government turned to the private sector to get some special skills and capabilities.

So I think -- from the way I think about it, that's the goodness of the American system that you have that sort of talent ready and available.

SEN. WYDEN: What jobs, Admiral, do you believe are too important or too sensitive to be performed by contractors? In your prepared statement, you say, "Well, we ought to use them, but sometimes we shouldn't be using them," and I'm trying to figure out what the line is. What jobs are too important or too sensitive to be performed --

MR. McCONNELL: Actually, Senator, in anticipation of your question, I looked to see if there were some regulations inside government that would define that, and as a matter of fact, there are. It's an OMB circular. I don't recall

the number, but I could get it for you. But it talks about things like commands or major decision-making or awarding contracts, but things that it describes as inherently governmental. But how I would think about it is -- decisions that are uniquely reserved for the government or any kind of command decision where you would involve using forces to do something like military activity or law enforcement, that sort of thing.

SEN. WYDEN: So you wouldn't be likely to want them to be interrogators, for example?

MR. McCONNELL: I can't imagine using contractors for something like that, but --

SEN. WYDEN: When we met in my office, I had asked you about your role as a contractor for the John Poindexter program, Operation Total Information Awareness. We derailed it when we found out about the betting parlor idea.

And I'd like your views regarding intelligence collection and how we balance the need to fight terrorism ferociously, while still protecting the rights of our citizens.

MR. McCONNELL: And therein is the challenge, Senator, and I enjoyed our conversation in your office also. Let me just repeat how I tried to frame it at that time.

SEN. WYDEN: Starting with the involvement with the Poindexter program.

MR. McCONNELL: Indeed. The United States invented, created most of the technology that we refer to today as the Internet. I tend to think of it as instantaneous global communications. I could take a credit card -- and I have done this -- whether I was in the Middle East or Hong Kong or Australia or San Francisco and used that credit card for my personal benefit to make a purchase, to buy a meal or something.

On occasion, that credit card would stop, and I would be required to speak with someone that administered the credit card to answer some questions. And why was that? The credit card systems have what's embedded -- included called data mining. It's a process to prevent fraud or waste or so on. And so some trigger had been made with regard to the profile, and so it was flagged for an operator to intervene.

When I describe our financial system, global communications, what's happening to us today is the terrorists are using those very systems for their own benefit. Think of it as command and control for remote terrorists, who have a particular ideology they're attempting to spread, so they can communicate around the globe, instantly around the globe, I said in my office a couple of months ago. And in the course of six minutes, I had three exchanges with one of my partners in Tokyo. That's just how quickly it moved.

When DARPA, Defense Advanced Research Project's Agency, wanted to engage in a program to move the state of the art of data mining from where it was to where it could be, they chose Admiral Poindexter to run that program.

There was a competition, when a number of contractors competed for that work. I was one of those competitors. And so another firm and my firm won the work.

Now, interestingly -- although I'm not a technical expert. We had lots of technical experts. I was more of an operational adviser. My advice during that evolution was to talk about how information could be used and to be very clear about how it could be applied under today's laws, rules, values, Constitution, regulation. Unfortunately, my argument did not persuade and convince those who were making the decisions inside government for how they might describe it.

So if your question to me is asking me should we be doing advanced R&D, yes, sir, I think we should be. Should that R&D, should it produce something, be used in the way you described it, I don't think so.

SEN. WYDEN: Mr. Chairman, I'm over my time.

Admiral, I appreciate your thoughtful answers. I would just say, as we tackle this issue and strike the balance, there's a difference between information that's voluntarily supplied, which is the credit card information, and that secretly collected by the government. I look forward to working with you in the days ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Thank you, Senator Wyden.

Senator Mikulski.

SEN. BARBARA MIKULSKI (D-MD): Mr. Chairman, Admiral McConnell, once again I'm very glad to see you. I was glad to work with you when you were the head of the National Security Agency, which is located in Maryland, from the time period of 1992 to 1996, a time of great transition, and also our robust talk in my office.

We want to welcome you. And I personally feel that it's just great that you're willing to come back in government service. I believe you're a man of great personal integrity. I believe you come with great technical competence. And you certainly are committed to the core mission of the agency. And the fact that your family is willing at this point in your life to forego some of the things of -- from having you at home and the benefits of being in the private sector. But let me get to my question, and it's what I said in my office and it's what I want to say here. You are a man of the military. And my question is, what does that mean to being the head of the DNI? Having great respect for the military, at the same time it is a culture of saying yes. The military by its very culture says yes to the commander-in-chief. At the same time, the job of intelligence is to prevent terrible things from happening and also to prevent the United States from making terrible, reckless mistakes. In other words, speaking truth to power.

Given your background and where you come from, and done it with great diligence, dedication and achievement, my question to you is, tell me how we can count on you to speak truth to power.

We have just gone through a terrible time of what I call the "gaga" factor, where those, before the DNI were created, the minute they walked into the Oval Office we heard, "We can slam-dunk this, Mr. President." Colin Powell was sent up by the intel agencies to testify at the U.N., the most esteemed man in America, and again with flawed intelligence. The information on Iraq was dangerously incompetent.

My question to you is that as you do the work of the DNI, how can we count on you to speak truth to power so these terrible and reckless mistakes won't happen again?

MR. McCONNELL: Senator, I believe that first calling of an intelligence officer is to do just that -- speak truth to power. In my career, I hope I have a reputation for having done just that.

There have been many occasions intelligence officers -- I'll just use the Navy as an example -- we're not combat arms, we don't command ships, we don't command airplanes, we don't have lots of resources. So if you're going to be relevant, you have to have something to say and you have to be able to stand on your own two feet. So there have been a number of occasions in my career where I had to not be popular, but speak truth to power. What I found is when I did that, and I did it forcefully and I did it well, my reputation grew.

So I've lived it, I learned it, I believe it. And so I can only tell you that that's what I'll do.

SEN. MIKULSKI: Will you -- first of all, I take you at your word. I mean there's no doubt about taking you at your word. Will you have at the DNI's office a channel for dissent?

I asked the same question of Ambassador Negroponte during his confirmation. At the State Department such a channel exists, and he also began to establish this at DNI, so that where there is legitimate dissent -- and I'm not talking about personnel issues or EEO issues, but really on analysis or on issues related to collection, or on other things where something would get to the top so that the boss would know that there are flashing yellow lights and even someone calling out, perhaps, a red light or a fire.

Could you talk about how you've either established such a channel in previous positions, or would you continue the Negroponte development of such a channel? MR. McCONNELL: Senator, I believe --

SEN. MIKULSKI: Again, always so that you would have the best benefit of what was going on.

MR. McCONNELL: Senator, I couldn't agree with you more that a manager, a leader has to know what's going on in the organization, and there has to be a channel or multiple channels for dissent.

The way I would think about it -- there has to be a formal channel and there has to be informal channels. The way I have personally handled that sort of thing is I like to do what I call management by walking around. I know many members of this community. I've already started to re-establish contact. It wasn't uncommon for me when I was in the previous tour, NSA or Joint Staff, to call up the junior analysts on the desk and say, "What do you think? How's it going?" So I found that has been effective, because people know I do that, and it provides a channel of information to flow to me. So it sort of keeps the system on its toes.

Now, that said, I've talked to those who are overseeing the analytical improvements, and they've brought in some people from the academic community with regard to how to do this in a more structured and formalized way -- challenge assumptions, challenge the fact-based alternative analysis red teams.

And one of the things I'm very pleased with is any time a series of conclusions were being drawn, there is now a red team that's assigned to attack that NIE or whatever it is. It's something that I did previously. It's something that we do in industry all the time. Any time we think we've got a good idea, we run a red team against the idea to test it. So formal and informal; and I agree with you, it has to be a part of the process.

SEN. MIKULSKI: Well, thank you very much, Admiral. And you have my -- I intend to support your nomination, and I think we're blessed to have you back.

MR. McCONNELL: Thank you, ma'am.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Thank you, Senator Mikulski.

Senator Snowe.

SEN. OLYMPIA J. SNOWE (R-ME): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome, Admiral McConnell. And appreciate the fact that we had an opportunity to meet and also the fact that you're willing to return to public service.

One of the questions I wanted to ask you this afternoon was an article that appeared in The New York Times this last week, and it talked about a story our -- you know, our soldiers in central Baghdad on Haifa Street. One of our soldiers was shot in an apartment, and they weren't sure where the shot came from, and tragically, he died shortly thereafter. They were trying to figure out where the gunfire came from. And then they thought perhaps that it was shot by an Iraqi army soldier operating directly beneath them -- obviously, that hasn't been ascertained -- and that the Iraqi army unit wasn't even supposed to be there at that point in time, but they didn't have even communication links with their Iraqi counterparts because it was an Iraqi operation, as senior officers repeatedly emphasized, and the Americans could not order the Iraqis to get back in line. There was nothing they could do.

Further on in the article, there was a description of the young man telling our -- you know, our troops that -- about a terrorist hiding in the fronts behind the apartment buildings on Haifa Street's eastern side.

And the soldiers felt that it was impossible to know whether the boy had legitimate information or would lead them to an ambush.

That summed up intelligence in Iraq, they said. There's always the threat of being set up for an attack or an Iraqi's own agenda.

Now, I mean, I think that's obviously disturbing, and given the fact that our troops -- going to be embedded with Iraqi army units and engaged in going from street to street, neighborhood to neighborhood, apartment to apartment, I do see these repeated incidents. And how would you characterize these types of incidents as the principal adviser to the president?

MR. McCONNELL: I would say they're unacceptable the way you've described it.

SEN. SNOWE: Yeah, I'm reading it from The New York Times story this week.

MR. McCONNELL: I don't know the details. I served in Vietnam years ago, and there were some similar circumstances. And so I think the way you

address it is, you have to provide the -- a level of security to control an area.

So I see it more as a military question. I listened to General Petraeus's comments to the Senate when they were doing his confirmation, and that is an approach. So when I think about it, one of the biggest challenges to this problem is providing a level of security that would prevent the sort of thing that you're describing.

SEN. SNOWE: Well, what about the intelligence? I mean, I think that's -- I mean, would there be anything you would do differently? I mean, if you thought that there was a level of infiltration or penetration in these units that subject our troops to great risk --

MR. McCONNELL: The --

SEN. SNOWE: I mean, obviously the quality of the intelligence is important, and that's obviously what our soldiers were saying at that moment in time.

MR. McCONNELL: The --

SEN. SNOWE: I mean, that's a tremendous threat because we're, you know, weighing in the midst of sectarian violence and conducting, frankly, urban warfare.

MR. McCONNELL: That -- you're describing one of the areas of intelligence that needs probably the greatest deal of attention and improvement. As I mentioned earlier about using people who speak the native language, understand the culture and the tribal conditions and so on, my sense of it is, that's the area that we have not gone as far as we need to go in making the kind of improvements you're describing.

SEN. SNOWE: Well, it's certainly -- I mean, it's certainly disturbing. And you know, this morning Brent Scowcroft told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that, you know, the Iraqi army's not sure who it's fighting for, whether it's a sect or an ethnic group or a state. So it just -- obviously it elevates and accentuates the risk.

So what would you be prepared to do in this new capacity to make sure that our troops have the right kind of intelligence?

MR. McCONNELL: Well, one of the things I have to do is to understand it better. And it -- as was questioned and asked about earlier, the intelligence support for the troops forward, those on the ground, engaged in combat -- that's one of the most important things we do. And so what I would do is look at the problem, see what kind of improvements could be made. I think some -- there are some structural things that can be done. I think there's some rule changes that can be done.

I -- however, Senator, I would say this is not something that you would improve literally overnight. This is an approach to a combat and a situation that's very different from what we faced in the past.

SEN. SNOWE: Well, I know, and that's the very reason why I'm asking the question. And I would hope that you would give this your highest priority in assuming this new position, given the fact you are the principal adviser on

intelligence to the president. I hope you would not hesitate to raise, you know, this risk, and also that you would do everything you can within your capacity to make sure that they have the kind of intelligence and are massing the intelligence necessary to protect our troops.

MR. McCONNELL: And the emphasis on improving human intelligence, which is not only just the CIA, but also includes the military services, is intended to do that.

But I would assure you that if I'm confirmed, that's one of the areas that I will focus on to ensure that we achieve improvement.

SEN. SNOWE: Would it be something very different from what you're doing -- from what the department is doing now?

MR. McCONNELL: I believe it would be. But let me get into that and I can tell you -- I'll come back to you with what I find out.

SEN. SNOWE: I appreciate it. Thank you, Admiral.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Thank you, Senator Snowe.

Senator Chambliss.

SEN. SAXBY CHAMBLISS (R-GA): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral, I thank you for your willingness to come back and return to public service. It is a sacrifice for you and your family, and we appreciate you very much, more than you'll know. And you've certainly got a challenge ahead of you.

Just following on with what Senator Snowe was commenting on there, as you and I discussed privately, I have a real major concern about the level of intelligence and the capabilities that is ongoing in Baghdad station, and for exactly the reasons that Senator Snowe alluded to.

I know you're going to have an awful lot on your plate early, but we've got a new strategy in Iraq, we've got a new sheriff in town over there who is a great soldier and I'm very confident is going to do an excellent job of carrying out the president's new strategy. However, unless he's got the proper tools to work with, it's not going to be possible to achieve success. And in my opinion, the number one issue is the lack of good, succinct intelligence getting to the warfighter within real time. And that's not only got to come from personnel who will be directly under you, but it's got to come from the citizens of Iraq.

So it's going to be a twofold operation that you're going to have to carry out: getting your people to do the job -- and Mike Hayden and I have talked about this, and we'll continue to dialogue about it -- but you've also got to make sure that we do a better job than what we've done of winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people within the intelligence structure.

We have had a serious deficiency in our HUMINT capability that was pointed out particularly following the incident of September 11 and our investigation into the intelligence community. Again, you and I have discussed this.

And I wonder if there are any glaring deficiencies that you have noticed just from your cursory review of the intel community in preparation for this that you see that can be improved significantly from an initial standpoint regarding our human capability.

MR. McCONNELL: Sir, my impression so far is perhaps we can put more emphasis on diversity in our approach; meaning, as I mentioned earlier, native speakers, people who would blend in, those who could understand the cultural tribal sectarian kinds of issues at the level of the people that are engaged in activity. And then I think our human capability, once we're there, would start to be significantly improved. So that's an area that I'm concerned about. In fairness to those who are pursuing these areas, I have not yet engaged in a fine level of understanding of just how much progress we've made, but that's something that I certainly intend to pursue, if I'm confirmed.

SEN. CHAMBLISS: I want to second what Senator Bond said too about the applicants for these jobs, and I would just note that there is a current employment announcement for one IC organization that requires that all applicants and their immediate family members must be U.S. citizens, which includes their spouse, children, parents, siblings, foster parents, half, step and foster siblings, adopted step and foster children and cohabitants, which is by definition, obviously, include any first generation American. And all that's spelled out in the advertisement for employment.

We've got some serious issues there that really do need to be addressed. You're not going to be able to find folks who are going to be able to speak that language unless you go to them, recruit those folks who grew up speaking that language.

So thanks again for your willingness to come back. We look forward to working with you, and we certainly wish you the best in this significant challenge you have.

MR. McCONNELL: Thank you, sir.

SEN. CHAMBLISS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Thank you, Senator Chambliss.

Senator Burr.

SEN. RICHARD BURR (R-NC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Admiral, welcome. It is good to have a Carolinian at the table. (Laughter.) We're outnumbered in Washington.

I've had an opportunity to sit and -- as my turn came up, to reflect over some of the articles that have been written since the president made your nomination, and they've dealt with you being a professional spy. They've dealt with the Pentagon relationship. They've dealt with your level of independence, and they've even dealt with your business post-military.

I want to say and be on the record, that I think it's important to have a professional in this role.

I think that one that understands the department of Defense gives us a unique ability to understand the degree of separation and leadership that we need at the DNI.

I think the article about your independence was a surprise to some, that so many had shown examples -- real examples, historical examples -- of where you had shown independence from even the administration and those who might have been above you. And as somebody that came to Washington out of business, I see absolutely nothing wrong with the fact that after your career to the military, you went out and made some money. I think it would probably serve us well if everybody had an opportunity to do that up here before they came.

So I find absolutely nothing in your business background that would disqualify you. If anything, these articles told me that we had a nominee that was not only a professional, he was successful. And with success comes a degree of judgment that I think is absolutely essential in the role you're going to play. So I overwhelmingly support your nomination, and I hope we will move very quickly.

I want to take a different tack from the standpoint of questions. We've all got questions that will deal with the threats du jour, regardless of where they are. Let me ask you about two specific areas if I can. You referred, in your questions and answers, to energy as a national security issue. Can you expand on that slightly?

MR. McCONNELL: Sir, what I mean by that is our dependence on foreign oil sources. And what I worry about is something like Venezuela now, where energy can be used as a weapon. So understanding it and how it might be controlled is something, I think, that not only the others in the federal government but also the intelligence community, needs to understand and get ahead of, think about it.

So much of intelligence is forecasting what might happen. "Alternative futures" is how we like to describe it. So when I look at problems facing the nation in the future, I think our demand -- almost insatiable appetite for energy, particularly with the growth of India and China, it's going to put increasing pressure on the nation to compete for energy resources. So that's what I mean by that.

SEN. BURR: Do you see our role at trying to predict what the energy future looks like, and how that may or may not affect our national security, the role of the intelligence community, or is there another area of government that should have that charge to be the one in charge?

MR. McCONNELL: What I see the role of the intelligence community to be is to look at hard problems and talk about them. I go back to Senator Mikulski's question about speaking truth to power. Many of these problems are not very pleasant to deal with, to think about. So for me, it is to spend some time and energy looking at the problem and attempting to come up with a forecast of at least options on what we might have to deal with, and then serving that information up to the policymakers that have to deal with it.

SEN. BURR: On another subject, have we lost sight of Russia as a strategic threat to the United States?

MR. McCONNELL: Senator, you probably have heard about mission managers in the community (now to be ?) focused on problems of concern. And I've talked

to some of the mission managers and I'm very impressed. They look at the problem from the analytical standpoint, collection, and they integrate across the community. They challenge assumptions and conclusions, do a little red-teaming, that sort of thing.

And where I am in my thinking at the moment is to take a look at Russia, because there isn't a mission manager for Russia. I think we need to understand it. We need to know where it's going. And having someone focused on it as a mission manager at the national level would serve us well to stay focused and continue to review it.

SEN. BURR: The last question, Mr. Chairman.

Does the fact that oil is now \$57 a barrel, I think, today, \$56 and some change, increase the likelihood that we should look at Russia as a strategic threat?

MR. McCONNELL: Sir, as you know, Russia because of that increase in oil prices is significantly advantaged in terms of resources right now, in terms of what they get for their oil. I've been troubled by some of the trends in Russia over the last year or so. So that's a scenario that needs attention and focus and, again, producing those forecasts on where it might be taking us.

SEN BURR. Thank you, Admiral.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Thank you, Senator Burr.

Senator Whitehouse.

SEN. SHELDON WHITEHOUSE (R-RI): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral McConnell, thank you for your willingness to return to the service of your country. I will be enthusiastically supporting your confirmation. I don't want to hide the ball about that. But I do want to let you know that we are really counting on you. The environment that you arrive is one in which there is considerable belief and reporting that the intelligence evaluations process developed over many years was subverted to allow favored, if flawed, intelligence to rise to the top. We have witnessed colossal intelligence failures. There is significant concern that political signals emanating from the White House have in the past clouded the intelligence function, and that puts the intelligence function in this country under a particularly high scrutiny right now. And I know you're well aware of that.

I'm also keenly aware of the personal sacrifice that you are undertaking to assume this position in many ways. As the son of a Foreign Service officer, I'm somewhat sensitive to what wives and children and, I guess, even grandchildren have the opportunity to experience as a result of these things, and it's not always entirely positive. And I know that the complexity of your personal affairs creates hazards that you are well aware of and that I'm confident you will be rigorous in avoiding and being cautious about.

As I said, it's been a rough patch for the American public, first having been told about weapons of mass destruction, then having been told that the mission was accomplished, then having been told that the small army that won the victory would be adequate to maintain the occupation, then having been told

that we'd be welcomed with open arms and flowers, then having been told that de-Ba'athification was a necessary and good idea, then having been told that there was no civil war, and now being told that this surge or escalation was the idea of the Maliki government.

We thirst for candor, and we look forward to that being a virtue that you pursue assiduously. And I just echo what Senator Mikulski said about the need of speaking truth to power.

So, with those premonitory words, sir, welcome back to government, and Godspeed you in your efforts.

MR. McCONNELL: Thank you, Senator.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Thank you, Senator Whitehouse.

Senator Feinstein.

SEN. DIANNE FEINSTEIN (D-CA): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral, welcome. I want to thank you for the time we had together. I very much appreciated it. I happened to walk in when you were saying "management by walking around" --

MR. McCONNELL: (Chuckles.)

SEN. FEINSTEIN: -- which, as you know, I very much believe in. So I think that's all to the good.

Senator Wyden, I understand, asked you a question to which you answered very forthrightly, and that was, you know, what would you do if an administration were cherry-picking intelligence, would you bring that to this committee. And I believe your answer was yes, you would. Is that correct?

MR. McCONNELL: Yes, ma'am.

SEN. FEINSTEIN: Well, one of the sort of deeply-held rumors around here is that the intelligence community gives an administration or a president what he wants by way of intelligence. What do you think of that?

MR. McCONNELL: Well, if that were the case, it's inappropriate. I would be very sensitive to any influence and concluding assessment or whatever.

I have found out, however, I would note, as I've studied and prepared for this hearing and moved around the community, there's very intense focus on independence. I was particularly pleased to find the lessons learned of the 9/11 commission review, the review done by this committee and the WMD commission are deeply held and have been meaningful to this community to improve going forward. These lessons learned are believed. And so there's intense focus on getting it right. Thank you.

SEN. FEINSTEIN: Thank you.

Now, tomorrow I understand a National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq, both a classified and unclassified version, is coming out. Have you reviewed those documents?

MR. McCONNELL: No, ma'am, I have not.

SEN. FEINSTEIN: You haven't?

MR. McCONNELL: No, ma'am.

SEN. FEINSTEIN: Well that -- I must say I'm rather surprised by that, because it really was the national intelligence -- natural -- the NIE on Iran which was the basis on which many of us voted to approve the authorization for use of military force, and of course many things were wrong, both bad intelligence and wrong intelligence.

And we are faced with seeing a Navy man appointed to CENTCOM, carriers moving into the area, and an NIE coming out on Iraq. I'd like to ask that you take a look at that NIE, if possible, before we see it, and be able to provide some assurance that the judgments in the NIE have been red-teamed and are sound judgments. Will you try and do that, please?

MR. McCONNELL: Ma'am, as I understand it, it's scheduled to come out tomorrow, probably pretty early. I have been in the room when people have talked about the NIE. I know the process has been coordinated widely throughout the government. I know that it has been subjected to review and challenges and red teaming, but I don't know very much about the substance. That's what I meant by actually sitting and digesting the document. But I will take a look at it at first opportunity.

One of the things that I didn't do in preparing for this hearing is, as I mentioned in my opening statement, is to assume that I would be confirmed and then actually engage in all the substantive matters. So if I'm confirmed, you can rest assured that that would be my primary focus. Anything that's going to -- of this importance that we apply the lessons learned that we just discussed, it has to be challenged and considered with alternative futures, competitive analysis, red teaming to make sure we get it to the right place.

SEN. FEINSTEIN: Well, will you be able to find out if that has been done, the red teaming, the competitive analysis on the NIE we are about to receive?

MR. McCONNELL: I am told it has happened. I will verify that as soon as I'm eligible to do that if I'm confirmed by this committee.

SEN. FEINSTEIN: Appreciate that. Thank you very much.

MR. McCONNELL: Yes, ma'am.

SEN. FEINSTEIN: Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Thank you, Senator Feinstein.

Senator Feingold.

SEN. RUSSELL D. FEINGOLD (D-WI): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I also enjoyed very much, Admiral, our meeting, and appreciate the opportunity to ask you some questions here.

I reviewed some of your writings and public statements, and, frankly, the ones I saw encouraged me.

In 2000, you wrote that we need a public debate about how we conduct Signals Intelligence while protecting the rights and freedoms and privacy of our citizens, particularly as Congress writes the laws governing the use of SIGINT capabilities.

And last summer, you stated that, quote, "We have to be more open. I understand we accept risk. My profession was to try to mitigate risk, but it is something we must do as a nation," unquote. And I couldn't agree more with those sentiments. The intelligence community has many secrets, but the law cannot be secret.

Admiral McConnell, I've been deeply troubled by this administration's illegal warrantless wiretapping program. There is no higher priority than the fight against terrorism, but I still think that we can fight terrorism while remaining true to American values and the rule of law.

If confirmed, will you commit to inform the full committee of any past, ongoing or future instances in which the president has asserted constitutional authority to circumvent a statute?

MR. McCONNELL: Senator, before you came in, I responded to a similar question, and how I'd like to respond to that is, both my nature and what I believe deeply and what I've done in the past, in a general philosophy, is to work with these committees and ensure that they have everything that they need for the role that the Constitution gives this body for oversight.

So I would pledge to you that I would do everything in my power to get you the information that you need.

Now, that said, there is an executive branch has interpreted information in a way that wasn't fully agreed on this committee. So I would have to work in that environment, acknowledging that in some cases I would not control the documents or make the decision. But I can make the recommendations, and my recommendations would be to share with this committee everything needed for you to do your job.

SEN. FEINGOLD: And I want to be clear. I'm talking here about a situation where the president has asserted constitutional authority. I'm not talking about the guts of this stuff. I'm talking about the legal arguments. It seems hard for me to believe that there would be a need to withhold from the committee instances in which that has been asserted -- in other words, the fact of the assertion and the materials that related to it.

So I guess what I'd ask, in a different way, is, will you advocate in all cases that the DNI follow the letter and the spirit of all applicable law?

MR. McCONNELL: Absolutely, Senator. I would always follow the law.

SEN. FEINGOLD: Our involvement in the war in Iraq is both unsustainable and counterproductive and, I think, needs to come to an end. But as we redeploy -- and inevitably, at some point, we will redeploy -- the situation in Iraq and the region will evolve, and we will need intelligence strategies applicable to a post-occupation environment.

Last week the deputy DNI for Collection testified that there has been some development of these strategies. Will you encourage and pursue those efforts?

MR. McCONNELL: Yes, Senator, I would. This is a vital region of the world, and important to the United States, for many, many reasons. So I would revisit that issue if I'm confirmed, to be one -- to focus on it as one of the areas that we need to make sure we're looking at it in all dimensions.

SEN. FEINGOLD: The law requires that the National Counterterrorism Center conduct strategic operational planning for counterterrorism activities, including military activities, and assign roles and responsibilities to various departments and agencies. How can the NCTC and the DNI ensure that the roles and responsibilities assigned to the Department of Defense are adhered to?

MR. McCONNELL: The role of the leader of the NCTC is that he reports directly to the president for those matters, as -- the way you described them.

I would work with Admiral Redd, who is the head of the NCTC, and with Secretary Gates, to make sure that we are doing what it is we need to do to coordinate and to provide the appropriate leadership to get those things done.

SEN. FEINGOLD: Do we need to take another look at the DNI's so-called advisory tasking authority with regard to the Department of Defense?

MR. McCONNELL: I'm not prepared to say that we need to revise it just yet. I am prepared to say that I am concerned about several of the issues, and I won't be shy about coming back to this committee to ask for help if I think that I need that help and I can't get it some other way. So far, my dialogue inside the executive branch has been very favorable to recognizing the issues, and we have agreement that we're going to work them. If we can solve them, then I won't bring the problem to you. But if I need help, I won't be shy.

SEN. FEINGOLD: Thank you, Admiral.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Thank you, Senator Feingold.

Admiral, when you -- you were asked about Russia, and said that you felt that we need to know more about that and have a group of people working on it. Actually, that comports exactly with what Vice Chairman Bond and I jointly view as part of what we should be doing on our committee -- that we've spent so much time looking back, and we still have some more of that to do, but that the thrust should be looking forward and figuring out a way to make things come together, for the security of our country, through intelligence.

So last year, the committee launched a review of intelligence in Iran, among a number of other countries. We're looking at a lot of different trouble spots, Admiral, and a lot of potential trouble spots, trying to get out 10 years ahead and figure out what's coming up. So Vice Chairman Bond and I agreed on this effort, and the effort's under way.

Unfortunately, our staff has been denied access to the intelligence documents underlying key analytical judgments of the intelligence community on Iran. Now we're making a good-faith effort -- no product in sight, necessarily. We're just doing the work. This has gone on for almost five months. Our

committee has now been told that nothing will happen until you personally can make a decision. Were you aware of that?

MR. McCONNELL: No, sir, I wasn't.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Okay.

MR. McCONNELL: I read a press article -- I think it was this morning -- about asking for some information, but I wasn't aware of the specifics the way you just outlined them.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: The type of intelligence documents that I'm referring to were given to the committee and reviewed as a central part of its 9/11 investigation and its Iraq intelligence review. These are also documents we will want to review for future studies, obviously. Now I don't want to review the rationale or the history for the continued withholding of these documents. I want a commitment from you that you'll provide these documents to us expeditiously, if confirmed.

MR. McCONNELL: Yes, sir. As you and I discussed privately, and as I testified earlier, that my philosophy is to provide you with what you need to do your oversight responsibilities.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Thank you, sir. And I -- let me just say generally, if you are not in a position to give that kind of commitment today, if you'd answered the question differently, I want you to feel free to come discuss with Vice Chairman Bond and myself the reasons for that, because we want to hear that -- not necessarily a hostile meeting, but just an informative type of meeting.

A question on the deputy DNI position. That position has been vacant since last May, and that's understandable in many ways. Mike Hayden left that position. Can we expect a nomination or a suggestion by you for that position fairly shortly?

MR. McCONNELL: Senator, that will be one of my highest priorities. When I looked at this job, being the principal intelligence adviser to the president and his senior staff, that's a pretty full-time job. And paying attention to this community the way I think it needs to have some attention and to solve some of these issues is a full-time job. So I will push as hard as I can to find the right person to fill that spot, and I hope to do it as quickly as possible.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: You have a military background -- actually, you have many backgrounds, and that's all good. John Negroponte basically had a foreign relations background and he had experience with intelligence and experience with the military by definition of the nature of the places where he served. But in your case, you definitely have a military background. And do you think that there's importance in having a deputy who, therefore, is not associated with the military?

MR. McCONNELL: My preference would be to have someone that was in the community from the civilian side, not necessarily military. I wouldn't rule it out. But the preference would be someone with long experience, particularly working the current issues, that has standing and stature that could help me, if I'm confirmed, administer this community.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: I regret to say that my time has run out. And I think somebody's manipulating this clock because that much time hasn't gone by. Senator -- oh my heavens.

Admiral, we have indeed been graced -- (laughter) -- by the presence of close to a supreme person, who used to be chairman of the Government Operations Committee and is now ranking member. And I think will be joined by her chairman here shortly.

But this is a signal moment in the history of the intelligence community, and we welcome you, Senator Collins, in every respect.

SEN. SUSAN COLLINS (R-ME): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: I may have overstated that a little bit.

SEN. COLLINS: Mr. Chairman, I know that you have members of your own committee here and I just want to make sure that they've had the opportunity to question before this interloper begins. You and your vice chairman very kindly invited Senator Lieberman and me to come today, and I very much appreciate the opportunity. But if you have your other members who are eagerly waiting to question, I'd be glad to --

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: They have questioned.

SEN. : Mr. Chairman, I think since the Government Affairs Committee has been so deeply involved in our affairs, we on the committee will be interested to hear the views expressed in the questions of the distinguished ranking member.

SEN. COLLINS: Thank you very much. And again, my thanks to both the chairman and the vice-chairman for allowing me to come today. Senator Lieberman and I worked very hard with the members of this committee to write the legislation, the Intelligence Reform Act, that created the DNI, and I have continued to have a great interest in how this position has operated.

Admiral, I very much appreciated your call to me when you were nominated and the opportunity to discuss with you several issues of concern, and I want to pick up on those conversations today. Efforts to change the culture of the intelligence community were an important consideration in the drafting of the Intelligence Reform Act. What we wanted to do and what all of us share an interest in is creating the same sense of jointness that now, many years after the Goldwater- Nichols Act, has become a reality at the Department of Defense. And clearly we're making some progress.

I remember visiting the Terrorist Threat Integration Center prior to the creation of the DNI and talking to John Brennan and his expressing great frustration that he couldn't get the analysts that he needed from the CIA and from other intelligence agencies to staff the Terrorist Threat Integration Center. I recently visited the National Counterterrorism Center, and it looks like we're making significant progress in ensuring that talented analysts from all the intelligence agencies spend some time working at the center. But I don't think that we've created within the intelligence community the kinds of career paths that reward joint service. And I'd like to hear your comments on that issue.

MR. McCONNELL: Senator, I couldn't agree with you more. I've had the opportunity to live through two major transformations, once in the public sector, in the DOD, and once in the private sector, in the firm in which I currently serve.

Both of those transformations were significant and they were achieved because of the incentives that were created for those who would risk getting out of their team or their service or their tribe or their association to cross over for jointness.

And one of the things that I will be taking a very hard look at is what is it we need to do, if anything, in the current legislative package with regard to creating for this community what Goldwater- Nichols created for the Department of Defense.

SEN. COLLINS: I think that would help so much if we can have it be a boost to your career to serve in a joint capacity, to serve at the National Counterterrorism Center, than, obviously, the best and the brightest will seek to do that, and that's something that I look forward to working with the members of this committee. Our committee has some jurisdiction over civil service laws, if you need any assistance in that area.

The second issue that I want to bring up with you is information sharing. A major goal of the legislation was to remedy the failure to share information both across the 16 intelligence agencies and the federal government, but also with their state and local counterparts. And we all know that over and over again the 9/11 commission, the Senate Intelligence Committee's report and the WMD commission pointed to flaws and deficiencies in information sharing as being a major problem that we need to address.

And certainly, the intelligence community has made some progress on information sharing, but I'm concerned that we still haven't built the information networks, the IT security enhancements, the analyst training programs that will lead to effective information access, both horizontally across the federal government and vertically. And indeed, I'm in the midst of a bit of a bit of a battle with the Department of Homeland Security right now about the need to share information on chemical security, the security of chemical sites, with state and local emergency first responders and emergency managers.

How can we overcome those barriers to sharing information that could allow us to connect the dots to make sure that we're piecing together all the vital elements of information regardless of where they're housed in the federal government and then appropriately sharing them, where appropriate, with state and local officials?

MR. McCONNELL: Senator, my view of how you address your second concern goes back to your first concern. If we do that and we do it well, we'll set up the culture and the framework around it.

But with that said, before you came in I had commented that many of our rules and regulations today were literally created for World War II, and they rolled over to the Cold War, and they served us well. But this is a different age and a different time.

The way I think about it is an analyst today should be the center of the community. The analyst must know their customer, and that might be the

chief of police in Seattle. You got to know all your customers down to the state and local level. You have to know your sources, meaning what are those sources out there? How can you task them? How can you rely on them? What confidence can you put in them? And then you have to be able to do the analysis. And the way I frame it, it's not a need to share; it's a responsibility to provide. So if we can get that enculturated in this community, I think we would do a great service to the nation.

SEN. COLLINS: Thank you very much. And again, my thanks to the chairman and the vice chairman. You were very kind to allow me to come today with such an important nominee, and I thank you both very much for your leadership.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Thank you, Senator Collins.

Senator Bond, it would be your turn now.

SEN. BOND: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And I thank the distinguished ranking member from Government Affairs asking good questions that I hope that we will, with your help, will be able to deal with in future measures.

I've just -- for the record, I want to comment on a couple of things that have been said in response on interrogation to using contractors. Because of the cuts in the '90s in the intelligence community budget, it's my understanding that a number of subspecialties were not available. And I would see in those instances where if you have somebody from a very unique culture that needs to be interrogated, and you do not have in the IC someone who could fit that mold, speak that language, that a properly supervised use of a contract employee might be the only way to get badly needed information. And the second point, just for the record, there has been a suggestion that the president was improperly asserting constitutional authority and violating the law on the Terrorist Surveillance Program. As one who has studied constitutional law, I would note for the record my disagreement with that. I have reviewed the program, and I do not think that's an accurate characterization.

But moving on to questions -- and if you have any comments on those, I'd welcome them -- but secondly, on human intelligence, I think the current obstacles to obtaining better human include a lack of collection, a lack of universally accepted tradecraft, an unwillingness to challenge assumptions, overreliance on intelligence from other countries or a liaison service and a lack of sharing among IC agencies.

The creation of the National Clandestine Service has not solved the sharing problem. There appears to be some resistance for sharing outside the CIA. How do you assess the current state of human collection, including the effectiveness of the National Clandestine Service, and what steps could you as the DNI take to improve the IC's human intelligence collection?

MR. McCONNELL: Senator, some years ago, I think '50s, '60s, there was a battle in the community with regard to authorities for signals intelligence. And decisions were taken finally to cause the director of the National Security Agency to have responsibility for signals intelligence, or SIGINT, as we refer to it, with regard to establishing priorities overseeing the technology, ensuring it's conducted in an appropriate way, the training standards are right, and investments are correct, and so on.

In my mind, when I think about HUMINT, I think we would be advantaged if we had a similar framework. The National Clandestine Service, while they would not conduct all SIGINT, should establish the tradecraft and the training and the processes so that we at least have common standards, and we speak the same language, and we can collaborate and coordinate. So it's a model that's worked for us for 40-plus years, and I think we probably need to emulate that model in the HUMINT community.

SEN. BOND: Good.

I have joined with several of my colleagues from time to time in saying there's an over-classification of certain information. And I've raised objections when I've seen that. On the other hand, I think that unauthorized disclosure of classified information from any source not only has compromised sensitive information and operations, can endanger human sources, undercover or covert operations. And there have been a deluge of them which I believe has significantly compromised our ability to collect necessary information. And one of the things that worries me is because there has been no prosecution, nobody who was in the IC or a contractor under contract obligations has been willing to leak that, nothing has happened to them, that there appears to be developing a culture that it may not be so bad to leak sensitive national security information; you may get some good speeches and some good book contracts.

What can you do to change that culture?

MR. McCONNELL: Senator, I think this is one of the big challenges for the community today. On the one hand, we have to be more open, we have to share information, so on. But I share your view that if it is truly sources and methods that risks our ability to conduct the nation's business in this area, that we need to be very aggressive in pursuing that. I have been, in the past, very vocal and aggressive with regard to going after someone who had leaked information that was inappropriate. And I must say -- this is going back to my previous active duty time -- there wasn't a commitment to follow up on that.

So -- now, if I'm confirmed by this committee, and I'm on the inside, I'm going to be pretty aggressive and try to bring some of this to closure, because what -- I worry about exactly what you just described, a culture of tolerance. So on the one hand, if I'm confirmed, I want them to share, I want them to collaborate. On the other hand, we have to protect these sources and methods, or we will give away our ability to conduct our -- to do our business.

SEN. BOND: Thank you very much, sir.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Thank you, Vice Chairman Bond.

Senator Wyden.

SEN. RON WYDEN (D-OR): Thank yo very much, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral, let me pick up where Senator Bond has left off, because clearly it's essential to protect sources and methods and all that is necessary to protect our national security. But my view is that the classification system is absolutely out of control, totally out of hand. And you had situation where Governor Kean, the co-chair in the 9/11 commission, said well over half of the documents that he saw that were marked "classified" didn't warrant being classified. So that is one of our most recent experiences.

And while my good friend Senator Bond is here, I want to ask you about a matter that he has been very helpful to me on, along with Chairman Rockefeller, and that is getting declassified the last major report that is available about the 9/11 murders of our citizens. And that was a report done by the CIA inspector general. We have been trying on this committee, on a bipartisan basis, to get this report declassified for several years now. And I have not been given any answer by people in the Bush administration as to how keeping this report secret is essential to national security.

So my question to you is, if confirmed, will you work with this committee to have this report declassified?

MR. McCONNELL: Senator, I certainly would work with the committee. I don't want to commit to declassifying until I know what the content or the substance of the report is. But I saw a press article yesterday that gave me a little feel for it, didn't know much about it before that. But I would commit to work with this committee to get to the right place.

SEN. BOND: Mr. Chairman, if I might just chime in here. I have read much of that, and I think it has some very important lessons not necessarily much different from what our Senate Intelligence Committee report in '04 laid out or the joint intel committee of 9/11. But it seems to me that this once again points out the problem when you have a DCI who doesn't really have power over the community, and he said we're at war. And yet, you know, what was done about it?

I think the IG's report would be very helpful. I know that there would be some identities, people who may have been lax would be included, but that's what these reports that we have put out of our committee have done. We've talked about them. And I personally think that a properly redacted report, getting this information, should be made available. I also believe that there's efforts going on -- under way in the House to find out what was actually on the PDBs that were stuffed in BVDs. And I think that information could be very helpful in getting a full picture on why we were where we were when 9/11 occurred.

And I apologize to my colleague from Oregon for taking up his time.

SEN. WYDEN: I thank my colleague for his help on this.

One last question, if I might, Admiral. What can be done to get professionally written National Intelligence Estimates to this committee and to the Congress in a timely way?

We've now seen most recently in the debate now, with respect to the new Iraq resolutions, the debate we're going to have, that the Congress didn't have that information so that you could consider it when you were writing these resolutions. I guess we're going to get this, you know, momentarily. We need to make sure that we get this information professionally done in a timely way.

What can be done to address that and to speed up the delivery of that information?

MR. McCONNELL: Senator, all I can tell you is I would look at the process. I'm being sensitive to your question, understanding your question, agreeing with your need to have the information to make the decisions you have to make.

So I would take a look at it, and see what -- if I could improve the timeliness in any way.

SEN. WYDEN: Mr. Chairman, thank you for the additional time.

Admiral, I intend to support your nomination.

MR. McCONNELL: Thank you, sir.

SEN. WYDEN: Thank you.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Admiral, let me just -- I have couple of pro forma wrap-up questions to ask. The vice chairman may have more questions to ask. I have one more I do want to ask.

The -- it's baffling to me the way -- and understandable in many respects, because it makes for fast-breaking news, and all the rest of it, and excitement -- but fundamentally, the Constitution says, we're meant to protect our people. And that's called homeland security and American individual responsibility. The homeland security part is a department. It is -- you know, it's doing some very good work in some areas. It also, to me, has the sense of it's sort of wandering around on its own, without any real friends in high places, without many real friends, particularly, in OMB, and is woefully underfunded.

I often think of my own state, which is not among the nation's largest, but we have a port in Huntington, West Virginia, which is actually the seventh-largest port in the United States of America. Now one of the reasons for that is that from the Ohio River all the way from Pittsburgh to Cincinnati, there are scores and scores of chemical plants and electric power plants which obviously back up onto the Ohio, as all of them must for water supply. There was a total of two fast, armed speedboats which were available to protect that vast amount of territory. And my senior colleague -- Senator Byrd, who chairs Appropriation -- went to work and got one additional boat. That's extraordinary to me.

I read in The New York Times this morning that it was decided that atomic power plants -- and I think that's also a part of our future with respect to global warming, and also just the need -- that atomic power plants didn't have to put up a particular kind of metal shield, because there would be a sufficient buffer against a plane that tried to crash into them and so forth. I have no idea whether that was right or whether it was wrong. But what occurs to me is that the intensity of focus on Iraq resolutions and what's going to happen in Iran and what's going on in Indonesia -- all of that is profoundly a part of our work. But also a part of your work is homeland security.

And I don't know the secret to that.

Part of it is that we now are in a pay-as-you-go basis. The Democrats, quite amazingly, had decided to do that. Had not been our history, but is evidently our future, because the nation's finances -- public finances are in shambles. So the people that are going to pay the price for that are at the local level.

Now, I want to extend my remarks for a moment. I have had each year, for the last number of years, what I call homeland security summits in West Virginia. I have been amazed and moved by how sheriffs and psychologists and,

you know, all the people that you can think of involved -- superintendents of schools, flooded from all over the state at their own expense to -- in fact, in most cases, come to a rather distant part of West Virginia, not far from Washington. And we divided them up into classes, and we have people from the FBI and other places come in to talk to them. And their hunger is palpable. Their frustration is palpable. It was true -- necessarily not today, but at least three years ago -- that of the 67 state police outposts in West Virginia, only seven of them were connected to the Internet. The use of the telephone or, you know, simply getting to 911 was commonplace, is commonplace throughout the state. Now, we have a state apparatus, a very aggressive person in charge of homeland security on behalf of our governor, who testified recently before us. We also had the D.C. acting police commissioner, an extraordinary young woman, and her frustration here right in the middle of everything, at her inability to be able to contact proper authorities to be able to respond, in her case with a rather strong sense that this city is an obvious target, that -- we're just not paying attention, and the papers and the television don't pay attention because it's called "local" business. Well, that's where all Americans live, in local places.

And I am just interested in your thoughts about that, sort of the way it's degraded in its priority, when it in fact is the essence of what our Constitution requires of us as representatives.

And secondly, it seems to me that if the DNI -- and I sorely hope that's going to be you -- were to make visits to select places to meet with sheriffs or to go to border areas or to -- you know, all the problems of -- to meet with power plant executives.

Chemical -- chemical people really don't really -- they don't want government regulations about what their security should be. And I can remember going, after giving an impassioned speech to all the chemical plant directors of my state, went back in about a year and they had put sidearms on people opposite from the river, where the workers entered the plant, and that was about it. Now, that's not fair to them at this point, but it was a fact, and that was clearly after 9/11.

So I'm just interested in your thoughts on that and what -- your sense as being, hopefully, DNI, how that would bear upon the way you spent your time.

MR. McCONNELL: Well, Senator, as I commented in my opening remarks, and I think I included in some of my written responses, this ability to think domestically is, I believe, one of the biggest challenges for the DNI and for the community. We are trained for years to think external, foreign. That's our whole mindset. And as you know, the legislation and the follow-on process created the National Security Branch of the FBI and, as you're well aware, the Department of Homeland Security.

I think with the terrorists that are plotting today to carry out terrorist acts, they're going to try to do it internal to the United States.

Now, from a resource point of view, unfortunately that's going to be beyond my reach to be able to do very much about it, but with regard to agreeing with the way you outlined it and agreeing to visit with these people, championing their cause, talk to them, that's something I'm very much interested in.

One of the things that was mentioned earlier about my role in the private sector, I chair a group called the Intelligence National Security Alliance. In that group -- which is a nonprofit, it just looks at problems and has a dialogue -- we have law enforcement officials. And what we are attempting to sponsor is something similar to what you sponsored in the homeland security summit. It's to bring the right players together and have a dialogue and have some discussion so that they could contact their representatives, either in the executive branch or on the Hill, to make the point because I think these things are areas that we need to address in a very serious way.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Thank you, Admiral. I have -- oh, the vice chairman has additional questions.

SEN. BOND: Mr. Chairman, you raised the question with the admiral earlier about working with the Department of Defense, and we all know the tensions between the DOD and the DNI.

We understand that you have a long background and history with Secretary Gates, General Clapper and others. Do you anticipate that Congress will need to establish clear lines of authority or responsibility? Or can you -- do you believe you can resolve all those among yourselves?

MR. McCONNELL: Senator, that's a question in my mind. I'm not prepared yet to tell you that --

SEN. BOND: Well, we would just request that -- obviously you have the background for a very close collaborative relation. If there's questions that cannot be resolved, we would like to know about it, and we'll try to help resolve them.

MR. McCONNELL: I won't be shy about taking a firm position. I'll engage, and if we make progress, that's a preferred way. But I would engage, and if I had to take a position, I would take the position, and if I need help, I will come ask for help.

SEN. BOND: Thank you.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Admiral, do you agree to appear before the committee here or in other venues, when invited?

MR. McCONNELL: Yes, Senator, I do. And I hope to visit with you when I'm not invited! (Chuckles.) I'd like to make it a regular event to come see you every few weeks or so just to have a dialogue about what's happening, and what I see, and what's on your mind.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Do you agree to send the intelligence community officials to appear before the Senate -- before our committee, and designated staff, when invited?

MR. McCONNELL: Yes, sir.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Do you agree to provide documents or any material requested by the committee in order to carry out its oversight and its legislative responsibilities?

MR. McCONNELL: I do, sir, with the caveats that we mentioned earlier, that sometimes it would be something beyond my control. But certainly provide

you what you need to do your oversight responsibilities. SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Will you ensure that all intelligence community elements provide such material to the committee, when requested?

MR. McCONNELL: Yes, sir.

SEN. ROCKEFELLER: Admiral, that wraps it up. I have to say that I think your testimony has given me an enormous sense of hope and confidence. The tougher the question, the more calmly you answer it. And there's -- as Vice Chairman Bond indicated when he was making his opening remarks, there's just never been a more important time for us to have you in place. The responsibilities are overwhelming. There is -- it's not an easy climate here in Washington right now. It strikes me that you have precisely the kind of personality, experience, strength, determination to accomplish the task. I thank you for appearing.

And this hearing is adjourned.

MR. McCONNELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

END OF HEARING.