

Opening Statement of Chairman Mac Thornberry
Hearing: "The Role of Intelligence in the Department of Defense."
February 27, 2013
3:30PM

I want to welcome our members, witnesses, and guests to this hearing on "The Role of Intelligence in the Department of Defense."

I suspect our witnesses will agree that the central role of intelligence is growing rapidly for our warfighters and for the nation as a whole in an increasingly complex, fast-changing world. And as one of our witnesses testified in our last hearing, "Today there is no part of the world we can ignore."

Clause 1 (c) of Rule X of the House Rules places responsibility on the House Armed Services Committee for "tactical intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the Department of Defense." While the overall committee has always followed these issues closely, Chairman McKeon decided this year that we should focus more closely on the array of military intelligence issues. The Committee rules now assign this subcommittee with responsibility for "intelligence policy (including coordination of military intelligence programs), national intelligence programs (excluding national intelligence space programs), and DoD elements that are part of the Intelligence Community."

The fact that Mr. Langevin, Chairman Miller, Dr. Heck, and I also serve on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence helps ensure that Congress fulfills its responsibilities to the American people in conducting independent oversight and in making budgetary decisions on these crucial programs and agencies.

Having responsibility for military intelligence, science and technology, Special Operations, cyber and counter-WMD helps give this subcommittee a broad and more integrated picture of many of the most challenging national security issues facing our nation.

Of course, these capabilities are some of those that we will undoubtedly rely upon in meeting some of the threats that arise. But they are also some of the capabilities that can help identify and prevent threats before they arise.

Having both intelligence oversight and operational oversight enables us to have a more complete view of all that faces our warfighters.

Today, we want to look at the role intelligence plays in the Department of Defense. A primary focus for us will always be whether and how DoD intelligence is meeting the needs of the warfighters, wherever they are and whatever they may be asked to do.

We also want to examine DoD's current intelligence requirements, including gaps in our knowledge and capabilities, integration of intelligence with military planning, organization and personnel issues, as well as DoD support to and from the broader Intelligence Community.

We all – on both sides of the river -- have our hands full. As the witnesses note in their written statement, intelligence budgets are declining, even before the across-the-board cuts that begin Friday. But the world is not getting safer or any less complex. We have limited resources but unlimited problems. That is part of what makes intelligence so crucial. More than ever, it is

essential that the Administration and those in uniform work together with Congress to use our resources as efficiently and as effectively as possible. I look forward to working with our two distinguished witnesses toward that goal.