Opening Remarks
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Chairman Crawford, Ranking Member Himes, and members of the committee – thank you for the opportunity to appear today. I'm pleased to join NGA Director Bredenkamp and NRO Director Dr. Scolese to discuss oversight and accountability for the IC's acquisition and use of commercially available information (CAI).

The committee's attention comes at a pivotal time, as the value and volume of this information have never been greater.

We applaud the committee's focus on these issues, and I'm pleased to be joined today by two directors whose agencies have been at the forefront of leveraging commercial information in the form of geospatial information and analytics as part of the GEOINT mission.

Before I continue, I want to provide clarity around how the IC defines PAI, CAI, OSINT, and GEOINT because most people don't think much about these terms.

Publicly available information (PAI) refers to information that has been published or broadcasted for public consumption and is available upon request to the public, is accessible online or otherwise to the public, is available to the public by subscription or purchase, could be seen or heard by any casual observer or member of the public, is made available at a meeting open to the public, or is observed by visiting any place or attending any event that is open to the public. In other words, PAI refers to both traditionally media, like newspapers and broadcasts, and new media, such as social media feeds, to which everyone has access.

Commercially available information (CAI) is information that is customarily sold, leased, or licensed to the public or non-government entities for non-governmental purposes. CAI also includes knowingly and voluntarily given to the government for exclusive government use by corporate entities. CAI is generally available to anyone with the means to acquire it, including companies, adversaries, and criminals. Whether your office paid for newspaper subscription or powerful market analytics, it acquired CAI.

OSINT is intelligence derived exclusively from publicly PAI or commercially available information CAI that addresses specific intelligence priorities.

Today's OSINT ecosystem includes, but is not limited to, traditional media, social media, cybersecurity data, foreign records, maritime/aircraft tracking, supply chain data, hacked records that are publicly released, corporate registry information, etc. This information is

either free to access or available to purchase. Today, OSINT accounts for 20-25% of the sources in the President's Daily Brief but only a small amount of the total intelligence budget—no other discipline delivers such an ROI.

GEOINT, or geospatial intelligence, is the exploitation and analysis of imagery and geospatial information to describe, assess, and visually depict physical features and geographically referenced activities on or about the Earth. Notably, geospatial information includes any information that identifies geographic locations or the characteristics of natural or constructed featured and boundaries on or about the Earth. Thus, imagery acquired from a private company is both geospatial information, the "raw data" underlying GEOINT, as well as CAI. GEOINT also includes the includes the analytic capabilities, including software, that goes into interpreting and analyzing those images. NRO and NGA partner to deliver GEOINT.

When we compare OSINT and GEOINT, it is necessary that we are aware of a definitional overlap. As noted before, OSINT is only derived from publicly and commercially available information that is unclassified in nature. By contrasts, GEOINT could include products built upon geographically-referenced PAI or CAI, such as commercial imagery, as well as non-public and classified collections.

With that, I'd like to discuss some areas for improvement:

One significant IC challenge is the duplication of data purchases across agencies. We're working to address this issue, and are committed to a solution that eliminates unnecessary duplication and ensures we're making the most of taxpayer resources. One such effort is the IC Data Consortium, which will officially launch in 2026.

Another challenge is the fragmented nature of CAI efforts across the IC. We need to better coordinate and establish accountability measures to ensure we're getting the most out of our investments. This includes establishing standardized processes and trainings for CAI, to ensure consistency and quality across the IC.

It's important to note that NRO and NGA are the IC's largest consumers of CAI – particularly commercial geospatial information, and they, along with the rest of the IC, need better coordination to ensure we're maximizing value.

So how did we get to where we are today?

The PAI and CAI markets have dramatically expanded since 2010. As IC elements became for familiar with the power of CAI and PAI, they incorporated that information into their core missions and the existing governance frameworks for their core intelligence disciplines, such as GEOINT or SIGINT.

While the IC's adoption of CAI and PAI is generally positive, the challenge of this discipline-focused approach is that IC elements increasingly bought data independently, duplicating purchases with minimal standardization, cataloging, coordination, or governance.

Notwithstanding that challenge, NRO and NGA's collaboration in the commercial imagery space is an example of success. Thus, as ODNI addresses the continued challenges associated with the growing amount of data and platforms bought by other IC elements, NGA and NRO's success in the commercial imagery space serves as a model of the efficiencies that can be achieved by similar oversight of PAI and CAI acquisition by other intelligence disciplines and elements.

ODNI, with the partnership of many across the IC, is focused on tackling the challenges in PAI and CAI acquisition. The problems include outdated contracts, duplicative purchases, delayed acquisition, data replication, and the list goes on. Far more work needs to be done to enable mission to succeed without the bureaucracy suffocating it. We need improved automation, better use of flexible contracts, streamlined access to more commercial companies, and better data architecture for unclassified storage.

I'm pleased to report officers from NGA and NRO, along with officers from other IC elements, are working closely with ODNI's OSINT Executive to significantly improve the IC's access to this data, increase competition through more commercial partnerships, and establish accountability for what's being acquired through automated cataloging and deconfliction.

And finally, I should mention that, as we work to transform the commercial data space within the IC, we're committed to protecting the privacy and civil liberties of Americans. ODNI's OSINT Executive works closely with Civil Liberties, Privacy, and Transparency officers across the IC to ensure compliance with law and policy and to look at where additional protections may be needed.

Conclusion:

To sum up, we agree improvements are needed to transform to oversight and accountability for the IC's acquisition and use of commercially available information (CAI). These efforts will ensure all disciplines effectively integrate CAI into their mission, and reduce fragmentation, duplication, and inconsistent policies. The IC is working on all of these issues and I expect meaningful progress in the coming year.

Thank you again to the committee for your support of our efforts. I look forward to working with you and to your questions.