



Statement of Ranking Member Adam B. Schiff
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

Before the Committee on House Administration
Committee Budget Request for the 115th Congress

February 15, 2017

Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify with Chairman Nunes about the Intelligence Committee's budget request for the 115th Congress.

I agree fully with the Chairman's testimony. Thanks in large part to his leadership, we have remained a bipartisan Committee, and together we have accomplished a lot. But, we can do more, and need to do more, which is why we are asking for additional resources.

Our funding is at pre-9/11 levels. Since that time, the threats have only multiplied and increased in severity—from Al Qaeda, to ISIL, to China, North Korea and, of course, to Russia. The size and complexity of the Intelligence Community has also kept apace. There are now 17 different IC agencies, and the budget tops 70 billion dollars.

In coping with these challenges and increased responsibilities, the Committee's size and budget has fallen behind. We have a staff of 31 and a spending average of 3.9 million dollars per year, ranking in the lowest tier of House Committees, and at the very bottom of our fellow national security committees. The Foreign Affairs and Homeland Security Committees, for example, have in excess of 2.5 times as many staff as we have.

Additionally, because of the classified nature of the IC, we cannot rely on outside interest groups to raise issues to our attention as other Committees can. We have to find them ourselves—often from agencies very good at keeping secrets.

It's also worth reiterating that the Intelligence Committee passes an Intelligence Authorization Act every year, which is essential to our detailed oversight mission, but which is also incredibly time and labor intensive. It involves countless budget meetings, many site visits to Executive Branch agencies, vast international travel, and negotiations with multiple committees in the House and Senate, as well as with the interagency.

We also assist in providing classified services and education for the wider House. For instance, this year Committee Staff has briefed 100 non-Committee Members on a classified intelligence report related to Russia, and the Committee will be reaching out to work with all Members on surveillance reform and other critical national security issues.

And, as national security is not the exclusive province of the Intelligence Community, we are increasingly called upon to review and comment on important bills of shared jurisdiction. That too requires resources from Members and Staff already stretched thin. The Committee currently employs five lawyers, three of whom are dual-hatted and perform other policy-related work, compared to 31 lawyers at the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform alone.



Now, size isn't everything. We have the benefit of being able to attract the best talent among staff, and we have found every way to maximize our impact. For example, we recently undertook a review of allegations at U.S. Central Command of intelligence manipulation. We came to essentially the same conclusions as did the DoD Inspector General with their vastly superior resources.

But we can do much more. That's why we are here today asking for this increase.

Finally, it's worth re-emphasizing the threat the Committee itself faces, which justifies our request for additional IT funds. The Committee has many sensitive documents, so we need the necessary funds to modernize our security against a rapidly evolving cyber threat, as well as to be an example of sound, risk-based cybersecurity practices. We have also partnered with staff on your Committee, and with the House Sergeant at Arms, to share best practices about improving cybersecurity for the entire House.

Thank you for allowing us to present our request for the 115th Congress. We welcome any questions the Committee may have.