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Chairman Schiff Opening Statement at Hearing on Diversity and Inclusion in the Intelligence Community

Washington, DC – Today, Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA), the Chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI), delivered an opening statement during the Committee’s hearing about diversity and inclusion in the Intelligence Community, the first such hearing the Committee has held on the subject in more than a decade.

The remarks, as prepared, are below:

“I am grateful you have joined us today to discuss a mission imperative in the Intelligence Community (IC), significant improvement of diversity and inclusion at all levels, from entry level to senior leadership and within all disciplines. While there has been some improvement in recent years, the demographic profile of the IC workforce still does not mirror that of the wider population and is lagging in attracting the best and the brightest from all walks of life.

“Fully taking advantage of the diverse intellect, innovation, and experiences here at home better prepares the IC, and our nation, to address tomorrow’s most pressing challenges and analyze an increasingly complicated and integrated world.

“In holding this hearing, the Committee hopes to learn how the IC is pursuing increased hiring and retention of people that represent varied economic, religious, cultural, ethnic, gender identity, and regional backgrounds. Outreach to these groups must occur early and often, so I applaud your initial plan to provide insight into IC disciplines and career paths to young minds at middle and high schools across the nation. Rest assured, the Committee is committed to partnering with the Community to foster heightened awareness about IC employment opportunities through initiatives, education sessions, and recruiting programs outside of the traditional applicant pools on the East Coast.

“To retain its high-quality talent, the Community must also ensure that accomplished and consummate tenured professionals of all backgrounds know that they are valued and integrated members of the team. Too many employees of diverse backgrounds feel marginalized, even invisible, in the middle to later years of their careers.

“All ideas should be earnestly considered when determining solutions for mission requirements. Studies have shown that in teams with similar ability levels, heterogeneous teams are more creative than their homogeneous counterparts. Inclusion of heterogeneous endeavors will serve to strengthen finished products, technical capabilities, services, and relationships domestically and with allies worldwide.

“It is recognized that significant improvement in diversity and inclusion in the IC is not a small task. It will take considerable forethought, attention to layered cultural nuances, remaining cognizant of the delicate balance between emphasizing the important tangible and intangible advantages of a diverse workforce vice the impression that the solution is merely creating new quota systems. We look forward to hearing about your best practices, highlights of accomplishments, and strategic plans to address these challenges.”

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