

**CIA Director William J. Burns
Statement for the Record
House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
27 October 2021**

Good morning, and thank you Chairman Schiff and Ranking Member Nunes for the opportunity to discuss this important issue in an open setting.

As I emphasized in my confirmation hearing, strengthening diversity and inclusion at CIA is among my highest priorities as Director. It's not only the smart thing to do for an agency with a global mission. It's the right thing to do for an agency that represents and defends our diverse society. Simply put, we can't be effective and we are not being true to our nation's ideals if everyone looks like me, talks like me, or thinks like me.

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Today at CIA, 45% of our workforce are female, and 26% are minority. Last year's new hires were among our most diverse in recent years, with 46% female, 27% minority and 11% persons with disabilities.

Our challenge in the years ahead is not only to strengthen those numbers in our recruitment, but also to reinforce retention and ensure a clear professional pathway to the senior ranks for deserving officers, whatever their background. We're making progress; this past spring's Senior Intelligence Service promotion list was 43% female and 25% minority. Moreover, a majority of the senior leadership team appointments I've made in seven months as Director are female and nearly a third are minority.

But we still have a long way to go. Today, our overall Senior Intelligence Service numbers are 38% female and 16% minority. I am determined to continue to improve those figures over the next few years. We have four broad goals to strengthen diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility at the Agency.

First, we'll create greater diversity in our hiring pipeline and increase the onboarding rate for minority applicants.

We are intensifying our outreach to 130 schools across all 50 states. As part of this effort, we are going to expand our engagement with colleges and universities identified as Minority Serving Institutions. So far this year, we've engaged with 34 MSIs. We've also selected senior officers to serve as Champions for ten of these schools. And under our new Directorate of Analysis Fellowship Program, we plan to provide annual tuition assistance of up to \$37,000 to select students from Minority Serving Institutions who apply to the DA.

The Agency must also urgently reform our onboarding process, and remove barriers to recruiting a diverse workforce. For example, our Talent Center aims over the next two years to reduce the current median time from application to clearance from over 600 days to no more than 180 days. Longer waiting times have historically disadvantaged minority applicants, many of whom don't have the means to remain in lengthy pipelines.

Regarding accessibility, this year CIA was ranked number two in the list of government employers with the best record for accessibility in the workplace by Careers and the Disabled Magazine. We've also taken steps to help ensure that all qualified individuals can apply to CIA by addressing needs for reasonable accommodations. For example, we created the position of Ability Talent Broker to help people with disabilities navigate our hiring process.

Now, recruiting is essential, but it's only a starting point. There has to be a clear path upward, which is critical for retention. This is why our second overall objective is to increase diversity in senior roles.

We've assembled a team to strengthen our personnel evaluation systems to make improvements over the next 12-18 months, including reducing and eliminating any inherently-biased practices that have the potential to distort our decision-making process.

We're also piloting a new human resources dashboard that draws on workforce and hiring data to help us pinpoint specific diversity and inclusion challenges, throughout the pipeline from junior GS levels through more senior levels. This will allow us to make better, data-driven decisions on where to target our efforts and resources, and it will also keep us accountable for ensuring progress.

For example, we will use this tool over the course of 2022 to conduct annual reviews of demographic data on promotions and assignments. This will help us ensure equal access to opportunities for all officers. We'll also use the dashboard to better understand if potential leaders are resigning from the Agency before reaching the senior ranks due to diversity or accessibility challenges.

To broaden the candidate pool for senior positions, we are developing talent review processes that will prepare minority and female officers, as well as officers with disabilities to serve at the executive and senior levels. All too often, I've seen diversity efforts stumble when it comes to offering a pathway to the top. We're deeply committed to avoiding that mistake, and it will remain a top priority throughout my time as Director.

Our third objective is to make clear our expectations that all officers at every level of seniority incorporate diversity and inclusion practices into their job performance.

As a step towards this, we've added expectations on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility to the performance evaluations of all our officers. We've also created similar criteria for determining executive-level bonuses. Furthermore, the Agency has incorporated diversity and inclusion into training for first-line supervisors, mid-level managers, and newly promoted senior officers.

Finally, our fourth objective is to create a more inclusive culture at CIA.

This starts at the top. I have made clear that we will hold leaders accountable for promoting inclusive environments. Among other things, this means addressing results from our annual Employee Climate Survey regarding inclusion.

We've made our workplace more accessible and inclusive by offering desktop captioning services, adding ADA-accessible parking, providing service-animal relief areas, and upgrading our flexible work centers. We've also improved the process for reasonable accommodation requests, including cutting our timelines for delivery by half.

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I'll continue to work with my remarkable colleagues across CIA to emphasize the importance to our mission of strengthening a culture built on tolerance and respect. On my first day on the job last March, I met with Asian-American officers after the terrible murders in Atlanta to emphasize our shared concerns. I've stressed repeatedly that our strategic focus on the challenge posed by the People's Republic of China is about the Chinese leadership—not the Chinese people, and certainly not Americans of Chinese descent or Asian Americans.

I've met regularly with Agency Resource Groups to underscore my commitment to an inclusive workplace, and continue to participate actively in a variety of events, most recently celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month at CIA with this year's keynote speaker Congressman Castro.

I look forward to working with all of you to advance the goals of diversity, inclusion, equity and accessibility, and to continue to shape a CIA which embodies the best of America, and can best defend our interests and values in a very complicated world.