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Senate Select Intelligence Committee Holds Hearing on Worldwide Threats

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MARK WARNER:

Good morning. I call this hearing to order. And I want to welcome our witnesses, our director of National Intelligence, Avril Haines; the CIA director, Bill Burns; the FBI Director, Chris Wray; director of National Security Agency and the commander of US Cyber Command General Paul Nakasone; DIA Director, Lieutenant General Scott Berrier.

Thank you all for being here today, and thank you also to the literally thousands of dedicated IC professionals who help do the good work to allow you to perform before this committee. The annual worldwide threats hearing is critically important. It is not only an opportunity for the intelligence agencies to inform our members of the many threats and opportunities facing the United States, it's also really one of the only times when the combined leadership of the IC comes together to actually inform the American public.

It's why last year, after there was not a worldwide threats hearing in 2020, Congress codified this briefing requirement in law. This dialog and transparency is a fundamental pillar of democracy. It allows the American people to appreciate the IC's usually secret mission and also to hold our nation's security agencies accountable.

In that light, I want to first express, though, my enormous, enormous gratitude for the accuracy in which the IC predicted Putin's plans to invade Ukraine. Those warnings made plain for all to see that the lies of the Kremlin, which were attempting to put together false flag operations to somehow legitimize Putin's actions, were totally false. And your forward leaningness and, candidly, I know for some of you probably outside your traditional comfort zone, I think was critically, critically important in throwing Putin off guard, but also showing to our allies, and not just our traditional allies but people across the world, the nefarious intent of Vladimir Putin.

Right now, Putin is waging an illegal and disastrous war in Ukraine. And as we saw yesterday, with the bombing of the Children's and Maternal Hospital, with an -- horrific humanitarian consequences. We all know that Putin had this aspiration to restore Russia's greatness, but what he got is now that Russia is even further viewed as a pariah state and his invasion has been virtually unanimously condemned. Truth is, right now NATO is more unified than ever.

Russia's economy suffers under crippling sanctions from a global coalition, not only Five Eyes or NATO, but EU, Japan, Sweden, Finland. And as we've all indicated a number of times, it's a pretty remarkable action when even Switzerland gets out of its traditional neutral position. Truth is, businesses are fleeing Russia.

We've seen international energy companies and others, the pictures in the last couple of days of -- of McDonald's. And I still remember the very first McDonald's going into Moscow, what an event that was. But the fact that, at least on a short term basis, McDonald's is closing down all its stores.

All the while, the people of Ukraine demonstrate a bravery and a commitment to defend their country against the madness of Putin's attempt at authoritarian

subjugation. We've also been, I think, all inspired by President Zelensky's courage and his willingness to stand up against Putin's efforts. I also want to take a moment, and I've shared this with my colleagues, you know, democracy is sometimes messy.

The way we sometimes go about our passing of our laws is messy. In the last few years in our country, whether it was grappling with the January 6th intervention, whether it was COVID, whether it was the -- you know, the ability of social media to pit us on a tribal basis. I think it sometimes made us question whether, you know, traditional liberal democracy and its values can be successful against an authoritarian regime.

And I believe with all my heart that the people of Ukraine are literally voting with their lives, embracing the values that we take for granted every day. And maybe we all want to take a deep breath at some point and recognize, with all our flaws, our system is still the best in the world, and people are willing to die to try to touch some of the freedoms that we take on a daily basis. And as we focus on this enormous crisis and as Russia axed up in the relative stability of post-World War Two order in Europe, I don't think we can take our eyes off one of the other great challenges that I think our country and the world face, and that is the strategic competitor that the Chinese Communist Party of President Xi presents. And I think it is always important -- I know I say this always, but I think it is constantly important to always make the point that our beef, particularly when it comes to China, is not with the Chinese people or the Chinese diaspora, but is with the Communist Party, because the failure to do so simply plays into Xi's efforts that are broadcast on all of the Chinese social media platforms that somehow this is an anti-Asian, anti-China effort. We see this not only here. And I had a conversation with our Australian counterpart just recently on this -- on this same topic. And the truth is, China is unlike any adversary that we've faced, I believe, since the Second World War. It's demonstrated not only its ability to try to compete with us on a military basis, but compete with us on an economic basis. Russia, the Soviet Union, military threat, ideological threat, but was never truly a economic threat. And in one area that -- that it is of enormous concern to me is China's competition with us in the technology realm. I got my start in telecom about 40 years ago, and I could never have imagined all the innovations that have come about from technology. Social media, satellites, high performance computing, semiconductors, the list goes on and on. Technology has become so incredibly integral to our lives and our national security, and I truly believe that whoever wins the technology race in the 21st century will lead to economic and other levels of dominance. And I think that ability to compete against China, and it will require, frankly, not only the United States, but it will require great working with our allies around the world, is critically important in a clear intelligence and national security

threat. And one of the things I think that the administration has done quite well in terms of rallying forces against -- against Russia, and we see China on a daily basis continue to compete in those domains. Truth is, China relying on strategic investments, cyber and traditional espionage, I think the FBI director has indicated close to \$500 billion a year of intellectual property theft. The truth is, China is not trying to have a dual win circumstance. They intend to win and dominate in technology domain after technology domain. And unlike the United States, I believe China will use that power to spread its authoritarian ideas, whether through economic coercion like the Belt and Road Initiative, or in an area that, again, we've talked with many of you about, in terms of infiltrating those critically important technology setting bodies that sometimes have been not viewed with appropriate -- appropriate focus. And that's again why I want to thank the ODNI and -- and the CIA and all of you for refocusing your agencies on this critical competition in the technology domain. A -- a rising China and a ruthless Russia, both headed by authoritarian regimes, seeking to undermine the cause of democratic governments worldwide again are a stark reminder that what we take for granted here in this country, freedom of the press, freedom to vote, democracy as messy as is, that -- that order is not guaranteed. It requires conviction, leadership, and sometimes sacrifice, again, as we see that sacrifice play out on a daily basis with the people of Ukraine. Now, while I focus today on China and Russia, I know there are a multitude of other threats that I haven't addressed, from rogue states like Iran and North Korea, the persistent threat of terrorism, the ongoing global pandemic and future emerging global health threats, and the obviously continued and pressing threat of global warming, which looms closer and closer. We see the floods playing out right now in Australia. Suffice it to say that I can't think of a time when the worldwide threats are more voluminous, complex, and I can't think of a better group of people, though, to come -- come forward in terms of presenting the intelligence community's view on these issues. I look forward to the day's very important discussion, appreciate you being here. And I'll turn now to my friend, the vice chairman.

MARK RUBIO:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all for being here. This is probably the most important, I imagine watched, worldwide threats hearing in my time in the -- in the US Senate. You now, I was raised in the final decade of a -- of a long Cold War, in which the struggle between the two global superpowers and two ideologies, really, threatened to end life on the Earth. I came into adulthood and I witnessed the collapse of an evil empire, a vision and a image unimaginable to anyone just a few short years before it happened. And it seemed at that time that the world had reached the end of history, that liberal democracy had won and was destined to spread to every corner of the globe, and the connections of a globalized economy would, from here on out, prevent war between great powers forever. The truth is that, in every era, leaders, nations, civilizations have struggled with the same feature of our fallen nature, and that is the desire of the powerful to conquer, to enslave, to rule over those that are weaker than themselves. Western civilization in general, our nation, the United States of America in particular, embraced moral principles that stigmatized this part of our nature. And we created rules and institutions both at home and around the world to control it. But it's now clear that the last 30 years were but a brief respite from the rhythms of human history because, while much has changed about humanity and our species, there is one

thing that will never change, human nature. Putin's invasion of Ukraine has especially horrified the Western world because we had grown accustomed to war and brutality being what happens in other regions, troubled regions far away, or the stuff of grainy black and white videos. But now the victims are people who are familiar to us. They're people who just -- just a month ago, that had jobs. They had lives. They had trips planned. They had weddings on the books. They lived much like we do on this very day. And then overnight, they have no home to return to, no job to resume. And we see the images of wives and children board busses and trains and unsure that they will ever see their husband or father alive again. This man's barbarism is a shocking opening chapter in the return of history, and now we must prepare ourselves for this new era, for frankly greater dangers lie ahead. Vladimir Putin's claim is both meritless but familiar, that his is a powerful country and therefore he has the right to make vassals of his neighbors. But it is not his claim alone. In the Middle East, Iran considers its ayatollah to be the leader of the entire Muslim world, Shia and Sunni alike, and it seeks an arc of power extending to Lebanon, to Syria, Iraq, and eventually Bahrain, and it seeks the weapons to gain them immunity from the world to do anything about it. And in the Far East, we find the most audacious and consequential claim of all, an assertive China which believes that all roads must once -- one day lead to Beijing, and that their smaller neighbors must accept their place in the world as tributary states. Standing in the way of this axis of totalitarianism is an imperfect yet very powerful living rejection of their claims, the United States of America. We face no shortages of challenges here at home. We're divided over issues that range from the consequential to frankly the trivial, but we cannot avoid the fork before us now. We will either awaken from complacency, build our national strength, and confront this century's version of authoritarianism, or it will one day come for us and the world will enter a new Dark Age.

In this new conflict, the agencies each of you have been entrusted to lead will play a role more pivotal than ever. Conflict now between competing powers and worldviews is no longer just a domain of soldiers and sailors. In this new era our adversaries engage us daily on the battlefield of information and cyberspace and technology and in the heavens.

They infiltrate our schools to steal our research and our laboratories to steal our science. They enter our computers to take our data and our companies to take our industries, and they embed themselves in our social media to divide us against one another and to confuse us. And in our critical infrastructure to one day hold us hostage.

There is not a single American soldier on the ground in Ukraine, not a single American airman patrols the skies. We may not be at war with Russia, but we are most certainly in conflict with Putin. When Putin was denying any intention of invading Ukraine, it was your work, the work of our intelligence community, that prepared a skeptical world to get ready and immunized it from the virus of disinformation. When it came time to inflict damage on his economy, it was our intelligence that identified the ones that would have the greatest impact.

And all of us, as I -- as the Chairman has pointed out have been inspired by the bravery of President Zelensky. But every American deserves and needs to know that neither his people nor the world would have been able to witness this bravery on a daily real time basis had it not been for the hard work of the men and women of our intelligence community.

Often days and weeks before the storm. And so today, even as we hear about the conflict before us now, and I hope we will hear about how our intelligence agencies are evolving to meet the new challenges of a new era and specifically how 21st century intelligence was applied to the crisis in Ukraine. Today we discussed the various threats confronting our nation.

But in all of this, let's not lose sight of the central threat before us now. Because the spirit of the all terrorism has never left us. But it now possesses and lives inside great powers. And it's no -- not looking for an off ramp. It's not looking for a face saving exit. It's not looking for its security interest to be respected or their rightful place in the world to be recognized.

It is looking to fulfill the darkest impulse of our fallen nature: to conquer, to dominate, and to enslave. This is no time to forget the lessons of history, for this is a monster you cannot make a deal with. This is a monster that has to be defeated. Thank you.

MARK WARNER:

Thank you, Senator Rubio. And before I go to the Director, I just want to remind members that we will have a classified briefing after this. So I would ask everyone to please respect that in terms of the form of your questions.

And unlike the traditional way we approach this where order of -- at the -- at the gavel today we're going to go on a strict seniority basis down the dais, and I am going to ask members to respect the five minute rule. With that, Director Haines the floor is yours.

AVRIL HAINES:

Thank you very much, Chairman Warner, Vice Chairman Rubio for your kind words. And members of the committee thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today and provide testimony alongside my wonderful colleagues and on behalf of the intelligence community on the IC's 2022 Annual Assessment of Wal -- Worldwide Threats to US National Security.

Before I start I just want to take a moment to express to you how much I've appreciated your thoughtful support and partnership this last year and to publicly thank the men and women of the intelligence community for their extraordinary work to keep us safe. I know -- I know how privileged I am to be part of this community truly of talented people and to be given a chance to do something useful in service to my country.

And I thank you for the opportunity. Broadly speaking, this year's assessment focuses on adversaries and competitors, critical transnational threats, and conflicts and instability. And these categories often overlap, and one of the key challenges of this era is assessing how various threats and trends are likely to intersect so as to identify where their interactions may result in fundamentally greater risk to our interests than one might otherwise expect or where they introduce new opportunities.

And the 2022 Annual Threat Assessment highlights some of these connections as it provides the IC's baseline of the most pressing threats to US national interests. And I'll try to do so today as I provide a summary of our work. And the assessment starts with threats from key state actors beginning with the People's Republic of China, which remains an unparalleled priority for the intelligence community and then turns to Russia, Iran and North Korea.

And all four governments have demonstrated the capability and intent to promote their interests in ways that cut against US and allied interests. The PRC is coming ever closer to being a pure competitor in areas of relevance to national security, is pushing to revise global norms and institutions to its advantage, and is challenging the United States in multiple arenas.

But particularly economically, militarily, and technologically. China is especially effective at bringing together a coordinated whole of government approach to demonstrate its strength and to compel neighbors to acquiesce in its preferences, including its territorial and maritime claims and assertions of sovereignty over Taiwan.

President Xi Jinping is determined to force unification with Taiwan on Beijing's terms and China would prefer coerced unification that avoids armed conflict. And it has been stepping up diplomatic, economic, and military pressure on the island for years to isolate it and weaken confidence in its leaders.

At the same time, Beijing is preparing to use military force if it decides that that is necessary. PRC is also engaged in the largest ever nuclear force expansion and arsenal diversification in its history, is working to match or exceed US capabilities in space, present the broadest, most active and persistent cyber espionage threat to US government and private sector networks.

Russia, of course, also remains a critical priority and is a significant focus right now. In light of President Putin's recent and tragic invasion of Ukraine, which has produced a shock to the geopolitical order, with implications for the future that we are only beginning to understand it and are sure to be consequential.

And the IC, as, you know, provided warning of President Putin's plans, but this is a case where I think all of us wish we had been wrong. Nevertheless, the invasion has proceeded consistent with the plan we assessed the Russian military would follow. Only they are facing significantly more resistance from heroic Ukrainians than they expected and encountering serious military shortcomings.

Russia's failure to rapidly seize Kyiv and overwhelm Ukrainian forces has deprived Moscow of the quick military victory that it probably had originally expected would prevent the United States and NATO from being able to provide meaningful military aid to Ukraine. Moreover, we assess Moscow underestimated the strength of Ukraine's resistance and the degree of internal military challenges we are observing in the Russian military, which include an ill constructed plan, morale issues, and considerable logistical challenges.

And what is unclear at this stage is whether Russia will continue to pursue a maximalist plan to capture all or most of Ukraine, which we assess would require more resources even as the Russian military has begun to loosen its rules of engagement to achieve their military objectives.

If they pursue the maximalist approach, we judge it will be especially challenging for the Russians to hold and control Ukrainian territory and install a sustainable pro-Russian regime to Kyiv in the face of what we assess is likely to be a persistent and significant insurgency. And of course, the human toll of the conflict is already considerable and only increasing.

Thus far the Russian and Ukrainian militaries have probably suffered thousands of casualties along with numerous civilian deaths, and of course well -- well more than a million people have fled Ukraine since Russia invaded. Moreover, Russian forces are at the very least operating with reckless disregard for the safety of civilians as Russian units launch artillery and airstrikes into urban areas as they have done in cities across Ukraine, including the Chairman's mention of the hospital, and near critical infrastructure such as the Enerhodar nuclear plant. The IC is engaged across the interagency to document and hold Russia and Russian account -- actors accountable for their actions. And the reaction to the invasion from countries around the world has been extraordinarily severe.

Western unity in imposing far reaching sanctions and export controls as well as foreign commercial decisions are having cascading effects on the Russian economy. The economic crisis that Russia is experiencing is also exacerbating the domestic political opposition to Putin's decision to invade. And NATO's unified response, the significant resistance that the Ukrainians have demonstrated on the battlefield, Europe's rapid response to Russia's invasion not just in terms of economic measures but also actions long thought to be off the table such as the provision of lethal aid to Ukraine and shutting down EU airspace to Russian planes all almost certainly surprised Moscow.

In particular, while Putin probably anticipated many of the current sanctions to be imposed when he weighed the cost of the invasion, we judge that he did not anticipate either the degree to which the United States and its allies and partners would take steps to underman -- undermine the capacity -- his capacity to mitigate western sanctions or the pull back from Russia initiated by the private sector.

And nevertheless, our analysts assessed that Russia -- that Putin is unlikely to be deterred by such setbacks and instead may escalate the conflict, essentially doubling down to achieve Ukrainian disarmament and neutrality to prevent it from further integrate --

With the United States and NATO. And we assess Putin feels aggrieved the West does not give him proper deference and perceives this is a war he cannot afford to lose, but what he might be willing to accept as a victory may change over time, given the significant costs he is incurring. Putin's nuclear saber rattling is very much in line with this assessment. Putin's public announcement that he ordered Russia's strategic nuclear forces to go on special alert in response to aggressive statements from NATO leaders was extremely unusual. We have not seen a public announcement from the Russians regarding a heightened nuclear alert status since the 1960s, but we have also not observed force-wide nuclear posture changes that go beyond what we have seen in prior moments of heightened tensions during the last few decades. Our analysts assess that Putin's current posturing in this arena is probably intended to deter the West from providing additional support to Ukraine as he weighs an escalation of the conflict. And Putin probably still remains confident that Russia can militarily defeat Ukraine and wants

to prevent Western support from tipping the balance and forcing a conflict with NATO. Regardless, our number one intelligence priority is defense of the homeland, and we will remain vigilant in monitoring every aspect of Russia's strategic nuclear forces. With tensions this high, there is always an enhanced potential for miscalculation, unintended escalation, and we hope that our intelligence can help to mitigate those concerns. Beyond its invasion of Ukraine, Moscow presents a serious cyber threat, a key space competitor, and one of the most serious foreign influence threats to the United States. Using its intelligence services, proxies, and wide ranging influence tools, the Russian government seeks to not only pursue its own interests, but also to divide -- to divide Western alliances, undermine US global standing, amplify discord inside the United States, and influence US voters and decision making. And to finish with our state actors, Iran continues to threaten US interests. It tries to erode US influence in the Middle East, entrench its influence and project power in neighboring states, minimize threats to regime stability. Meanwhile, Kim Jong-un continues to steadily expand and enhance Pyongyang's nuclear conventional capabilities targeting the United States and its allies, periodically using aggressive and potentially destabilizing actions to reshape the regional security environment in his favor, and to reinforce his status as a de facto nuclear power. The assessment focuses next on a number of key global and transnational threats, including global health security, transnational organized crime, the rapid development of destabilizing technologies, climate migration, terrorism. I raise these because they pose challenges of a fundamentally different nature to our national security than those posed by the actions of nation states, even powerful ones like China. We look at the Russia-Ukraine war and can imagine outcomes to resolve the crisis and the steps needed to get there, even though unpalatable and difficult. And similarly, we view the array of challenges China actions pose and can discuss what is required, how to think about tradeoffs involved. And transnational issues are more complex, requiring significant and sustained multilateral effort, and that we can discuss ways of managing them. All of them pose a set of choices that will be more difficult to untangle and perhaps require more sacrifice to bring about meaningful change. This reflects not just the interconnected nature of the problems, but also the significant impact increasingly empowered non-state actors have on the outcomes and the reality that some of the countries who are key to mitigating threats posed by nation states are also the ones we will be asking to do more in the transnational space. For example, the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic is putting a strain on governments and societies, fueling humanitarian and economic crises, political unrest and geopolitical competition, as countries such as China and Russia seek to exploit the crisis to their own advantage. And no country has been completely spared. Even when a vaccine is widely distributed globally, the economic and political aftershocks will be felt for years. Low income countries with high debts face particularly challenging recoveries, and the potential for cascading crises that lead to regional instability whereas others turn inward or will be distracted by other challenges. These shifts will spur migration around the world, including on our southern border. The economic impact has set many poor and middle income countries back years in terms of economic development, and is encouraging some in Latin America, Africa, and Asia to look to China and Russia for quick economic and security assistance to manage their new reality. We see the same complex mix of interlocking challenges stemming from climate change, which is

exacerbating risk to US national security interests across the board, but particularly as it intersects with environmental degradation and global health challenges. And terrorism of course remains a persistent threat to US persons and interests at home and abroad, but the implications of the problem are evolving. In Africa, for example, where terrorist groups are clearly gaining strength, the growing overlap between terrorism, criminal activity, smuggling networks has undermined stability, contributed to coups, and an erosion of democracy, and resulted in countries turning to Russian entities to help manage these problems. And global transnational criminal organizations continue to pose a direct threat to the United States through the production and trafficking of lethal illicit drugs, massive theft including cybercrime, human trafficking, and financial crimes and money laundering schemes. In particular, the threat from illicit drugs is at historic levels, with more than 100,000 American drug overdose deaths for the first time annually, driven mainly by a robust supply of synthetic opioids from Mexican transnational criminal organizations. And in short, the interconnected global security environment is marked by the growing specter of great power competition and conflict, while transnational threats to all nations and actors compete for our attention and also our finite resources. And finally, the assessment turns to conflicts and instability, highlighting a series of regional challenges of importance to the United States; iterative violence between Israel and Iran, conflicts in other areas including Africa, Asia, and the Middle East have the potential to escalate or spread, fueling humanitarian crises and threatening US persons. Africa, for example, has seen six irregular transfers of power since 2020 and probably will see new bouts of conflict in the coming year as the region becomes increasingly strained by a volatile mixture of democratic backsliding, inter-communal violence, and the continued threat of cross-border terrorism. And of course, we are also focused on our workforce and their families. The IC continues to contribute to the governmentwide effort to better understand potential causal mechanisms of anomalous health incidents, and remains committed to ensuring afflicted individuals receive the quality care they need. The safety and well-being of our workforce is our highest priority, and we are grateful to members of your committee for your continued support on these efforts. In closing, I just want to note how much effort has gone into improving our capability to share intelligence and analysis with our partners and allies across the intelligence community. As we have seen in our approach to the threat to Ukraine, as you've noted, the sharing of intelligence and analysis has paid real dividends in helping facilitate collective action against the renewed threat of nation-state aggression. And what -- while such efforts must be done with care to ensure we are able to protect our sources and methods, we are laying the groundwork to broaden our work were doing so creates the conditions for a more united focus on other emerging challenges, and we appreciate your support in these efforts. Thank you and look forward to your questions.

MARK WARNER:

Thank you, Director Haines, and thank you on behalf of the other members of the panel on deferring to only you do the opening statement. My -- my first question is on the cyber domain and I want to talk to -- or ask Director Haines and General

Nakasone. And I want to just again compliment the members of this committee. When we saw the Russians launch the SolarWinds attack, it was this committee that -- that first focused on that issue. And in a broadly bipartisan way, we recognized that only about 30 percent of our cyber attacks are actually being reported to the government. And I'm proud to say that in the budget bill, that hopefully we'll take up the next day or two, it's already passed the House, we finally have put in place a cyber notification process, something that I would recognize that Senator Collins has been working on literally for years and years and years. We are this close to the finish line. Since only about 30 percent of our -- our cyber incidents are reported, we need to make sure that information gets to the FBI, gets to CISA, gets to, you know, our private sector partners in a -- a real time way. One of the things I've been surprised at is that -- that the Russian cyber capabilities, while we've not seen a very efficient military so far, I don't think any of us think that Russia does not have extraordinarily critical and -- and first rate cyber tools. The fact that they have not launched much beyond traditional malware, they've not launched the kind of worm driven NotPetya attacks that we saw in 2017, my concern has been that one of those -- that type of attack could literally go beyond the geographic boundaries of -- of Ukraine, bleed into Poland where it could affect American troops or shut down Polish hospitals and result in the death of -- of Polish citizens, which could potentially move us into Article 5 territory. Director Haines and General Nakasone, maybe General Nakasone, like to start with you. You're the best expert on this topic. You know, have you been a bit surprised that they haven't launched their full array of attacks? And how concerned are you, as -- as Russia gets more and more stymied on the military front, that they may unleash some of their additional cyber tools?

PAUL NAKASONE:

Chairman, thank you very much for the question. I begin by saying that we remain vigilant. We're 15 days into this conflict. By no means are we sitting -- sitting back and taking this casually. We are watching every single day for any type of unusual activity. And I would just build on the scenario that you talked about, this idea of malware spreading is one scenario that we look at. But there are three other scenarios that also come into our thinking.

One might be the use of ransomware, broad use of ransomware that -- that our adversaries might use. The next would be scenario proxies, those that necessarily may not be part of the Russian government but are functioning as -- as a proxy or as a non-nation state actor due to this type of activity to perhaps launch malware. And the final one is this idea of a disruptive or destructive attack on a country in Eastern Europe that -- that could take place.

As I said, we're 15 days into this. We've seen three to four attacks. The reasons in terms of why there haven't been more, I think, obviously, this is part of Russia's own strategic calculus. But secondly, a tremendous amount of work was done prior to the actual invasion, work that was done by my agency, work that was done by Cyber Command, by the interagency, by a series of private sector partners that harden the infrastructure of the Ukraine.

I think that that was part of it. And the final thing is there have been actions since then that I think that have contributed to the Russians in terms of the way that they approach the future. I would just conclude by saying not only are we vigilant, we're prepared, and most importantly, we're sharing information and sharing our expertise with our partners.

MARK WARNER:

Let me get to my second question. I mean, because I want to honor my own commitment to try to keep within five minutes. One of the things that my friend, Senator Burr, often mentioned is we don't have a technology committee in -- in the

Senate. In many ways, the Intelligence Committee has become the Technology Committee.

I think a lot of the competition going forward, particularly vis-a-vis China, will be around technology. I think we were all surprised at their enormous success in the 5G domain. Again, many of us are working on making sure we make the kind of investments that China's making on semiconductors. Candidly, shutting off semiconductors to Russia will be as effective as any tool on shutting down their military industrial complex.

Dr. Burns, you have made this a priority. And how do we make sure maybe that across the IC we both monitor and incent policymakers and the balance of -- of the government to make the necessary investments in technology?

WILLIAM BURNS:

Well, thanks, Mr. Chairman. Nothing is going to matter more to the future of CIA and, I think, the US intelligence community more broadly than our ability to compete technologically. It's the main arena, as you said before, Mr. Chairman, for competition with China. So just in the last couple of months, we've established a new mission center at the CIA alongside a new mission center on China, and equally important, a mission center focused on technology issues to make sure that we're anticipating, keeping pace, getting out ahead of the pace of innovation to deepen partnerships with the private sector, because that's absolutely essential, I think, to our future as we look at competition and technology.

We've just created the position of the Chief Technology Officer for the first time at CIA. So all of that, I think, reflects the enormously high priority that we will continue to attest to that set of issues.

MARK WARNER:

Thank you. Senator Rubio.

MARCO RUBIO:

Thank you all for being here. I'll direct this to you, Director Haines. But anybody who wants to answer it can do so. I think we've learned from -- from all this, the best way to combat disinformation is through transparency. So I want to walk through some component pieces of a particular topic involving labs and Ukraine and then allow you to expand or anyone to expand that could provide greater insight.

As you're all well aware, Russia has been laying out this argument for -- for a number of months now about how there are these labs in Ukraine that are developing chemical and biological weapons, that the US is involved, that they've discovered it. And they've been making that argument for a period of time.

And it's the argument they usually make before they use that kind of stuff themselves against someone. So let me just start with a question, the component pieces, and then sort of allow you to expand more on the important parts of it. There is a difference between a biological research facility and a biological weapons research facility, correct?

AVRIL HAINES:

Correct.

MARCO RUBIO:

Okay. Does Ukraine have any biological weapons research facilities?

AVRIL HAINES:

No, but let me be clear, we do not assess that Ukraine is pursuing either biological weapons or nuclear weapons, which have been some of the -- basically the -- the propaganda that Russia is putting out.

MARCO RUBIO:

Okay. So they do have the biological research facilities. What is our government's role in their biological research programs?

AVRIL HAINES:

So as I understand it, Ukraine operates about a little over a dozen essentially bio labs. And what they are involved in is Ukraine's biodefense and their public health response. And that's essentially what they're intended to do. And I think that the US government provides assistance and -- or at least has in the past provided assistance really in the context of biosafety, which is something that we've done globally with a variety of different countries.

So I would defer, obviously, to the details of that assistance to the agency service [Inaudible] --

MARCO RUBIO:

Well, I guess that's the important component. How do we define biosafety or biodefense? Is it the ability to have antidotes or responses if someone were to use an agent against you if you were having an outbreak? What exactly is that?

AVRIL HAINES:

Yeah, I mean, I will quickly get out of my area of expertise. But I'll give you sort of a generic answer that I understand. So it is essentially, for biodefense, you can think about things like medical countermeasures, for example, things that -- that will help you to address a pandemic that is an outbreak in your country, things along those lines, things that prevent spreading of pandemics and other health issues, things along

those lines. And the kinds of biosafety pieces that you would be providing assistance for are things like making sure that, as you're producing medical countermeasures, that you're taking appropriate precautions, that you're letting the medical community internationally know, notifying when appropriate.

So that's the kind of assistance. But again, just want to be absolutely clear that we do not believe that Ukraine is pursuing biological or nuclear weapons, that we've seen no evidence of that. And frankly, this influence campaign is completely consistent with longstanding, Russian efforts to accuse the United States of sponsoring bio weapons work in former Soviet Union.

So this is a classic move by the Russians.

MARCO RUBIO:

So -- and I think the one thing that's piqued a lot of people's interest and I hope we can address is the Secretary -- Assistant Secretary Nuland said a couple of days ago in response to my question in another hearing. This is a quote. "The US government is concerned about preventing any of these research materials from falling into the hands of Russian forces should they approach."

So people will hear that and say, well, that means that there must be something in these labs that's very dangerous. They possess pathogens or something that must be very dangerous. Look, we're all coming off the trauma of COVID 19, the possibility that there might have been an accident or a leak out of a lab there that we still don't know the answer to. And so it's in that context that people read that statement or hear it and say, okay, it sounds to me like they have labs.

These labs are working on dangerous things, and if the Russian were worried that it's going to get out of the laboratory. How should people assess that statement? Why are

we so concerned? And again, I mean, I know maybe I'm asking you some questions that regard medicine and biology and research and so forth.

But it's really important for this effort to understand what exactly is in these labs that we're so worried about them getting their hands on.

AVRIL HAINES:

Sure. I mean, I think, medical facilities that I've certainly been in and even as a child, done research in high school type of thing, in college all have equipment or sort of pathogens or other things that you have to have restrictions around, because you want to make sure that they're being treated and handled appropriately.

And I think that's the kind of thing that probably Victoria Nuland was describing and thinking about in the context of that. We have to be concerned in the same way that we have to be concerned about in [Inaudible] the nuclear power plant or other facilities that, when they're seized and if they're seized, that there may be damage done or theft, and they may, in fact, misuse some of the material that's there that's not intended for weapons purposes, but nevertheless can be used in dangerous ways or that can create challenges for the local populations.

MARCO RUBIO:

All right. Thanks.

MARK WARNER:

Senator Rubio, thank you for raising this. I think we've seen some of these reports that this may be another area where Russia is trying to offer a false flag signal, and really appreciate your --your line of questioning. I want to turn to Senator Feinstein. But I do want to acknowledge, I think Dianne served the longest on this committee. And we appreciate very much the challenges, the personal places you've been going through, and your -- your attendance here always.

I -- so many times -- I remember one time you literally had come, I think, from a senior medical procedure. You were still here showing up at -- at a -- at a -- one of these hearings. And we're grateful for your leadership. And I call on you now for five minutes.

DIANNE FEINSTEIN:

Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

In an unclassified annual threat assessment you state that in -- quote, "Individuals and small cells inspired by a variety of ideologies -- id -- ideologue and personal motivation include Sunni violent extremism, racially or ethnically motivated violent extremism, and militia violent extremism probably represent the greatest terrorist threat to the United States.

Now, while we have no interest in giving Al-Qaeda or ISIS an opportunity to recover. You're making the clear point that individuals and small cells represent the greatest threat to the United States. So here's the question. How are you allocating your resources for counterterrorism? It appears that most of the funding for counterterrorism goes into efforts focused against specific groups instead of attempting to locate individuals.

How do you justify that allocation compared against the assessed threat?

AVRIL HAINES:

I'm happy to start, but I suspect Director Wray and others may have some thoughts on this. I think from at least the intelligence community perspective, it's true that we focus in on groups that are critical to our national security, groups such as al-Shabab and ISIS and Al-Qaeda core in these contexts, you know, as examples. It -- but it is also true that we are looking at consistently across the board how it is that the ideologies that they propagate and that others propagate that are of concern and

reflected in our assessment are creating violent extremism in a variety of places including in small groups and even for individuals.

And -- and our -- our system is set up in such a way as to identify not simply the networking that we see with respect to such groups, but also to essentially create the opportunity for us to try to provide as much warning as we can with respect to individuals and others that --

DIANNE FEINSTEIN:

Could the military respond as well?

AVRIL HAINES:

Absolutely. Yeah. And I think, I mean, it's challenging obviously when you have somebody that's disconnected from a system. Yeah.

CHRISTOPHER WRAY:

I would just add that from the FBI's end of course the -- the types of terrorist threats that you referenced, Senator, are at the top of our priority list. And through our joint terrorism task forces in every field office we're prioritizing those. And the reason why the jihadist inspired homegrown violent extremists and then the domestic violent extremists are such a high priority is because unlike sort of the more classic post-9/11 sleeper cells where you have a large group of people plotting, planning, preparing, fundraising, training.

There are a lot of dots to connect in a plot like that. With the kind of terrorist threat we're talking about here, you're talking about an individual going after a easily accessible target with a very crude weapon which means there's a lot less dots to connect. And so the key is to getting the eyes and ears out in the community.

And that's why the growth in the Joint Terrorism Task Forces with task force officers from state and local police departments all over the country has been such an important development.

DIANNE FEINSTEIN:

Any -- please, I'd like other comments.

WILLIAM BURNS:

No, all I -- all I would add, Senator, is, you know, even at CIA even as we focus more and more attention and resources on major power adversaries like China and Russia for all the obvious reasons. We remain sharply focused on the counterterrorism challenge as well. I mean, I think it's notable that in the same month -- last month in February when all of us had to deal with renewed Russian aggression in Ukraine, you know, we played a central role along with our partners in the US military in finding the former Emir of ISIS, Haji Abdullah, locating him and then cooperating with our military partners in a successful operation against him. So we'll remain very sharply focused --

DIANNE FEINSTEIN:

So if I understand what you're saying, you're changing the allocation of resources to individuals from groups. Is that correct or not?

WILLIAM BURNS:

No. What I was suggesting, Senator, is that even as we focus more attention and resources on major power adversaries like China and Russia at CIA where we're

focused on external terrorist threats, we remain sharply focused on the threats posed to the homeland by everyone from ISIS -- and I mentioned the successful operation against the former ISIS Emir as well as Al-Qaeda and its affiliates like al-Shabab like Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

That was my only point.

UNIDENTIFIED:

Thank -- thank you.

DIANNE FEINSTEIN:

I will hear from the military just for -- please.

SCOTT BERRIER:

Senator, DIA's Defense Counterterrorism Center, DCTC, is focused on foreign terrorist threats. They continue to operate as they have for the last 20 years focused on organizations' foreign transnational terrorist threats. Thank you.

DIANNE FEINSTEIN:

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman --

MARK WARNER:

Thank you, Senator. Senator Burr.

RICHARD BURR:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to take this opportunity to highlight what's already been pointed out. The success of our intelligence and the analysis of that intelligence product. Your thousands of employees deserve the thanks of this committee, of this Congress, and of the American people. Likewise, President Zelensky and the Ukrainian people have reminded us that democracy does not come without a cost.

It has to be protected. This democracy, the independence of Ukraine demands that democracies around the world respond with everything needed to preserve Ukraine's independence and democracies that are threatened. Likewise, leaders like Putin don't want their people to have the freedoms that we cherish and that we strive to protect.

This would not be possible without the men and women who work for you on behalf of not just this country but democracies around the world. We are eternally grateful for all the work that they do, But more importantly, the response that they've had to this current challenge. Mr. Chairman, I have no questions in open session.

MARK WARNER:

Thank you, Senator Burr, for once again acknowledging the great work of this community. I appreciate it. Senator Wyden.

RON WYDEN:

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I share Senator Burr's view. And let me thank you particularly, Director, for your professionalism and dedication. We've talked on a number of subjects and I have appreciated it. Now let me turn to cybersecurity. In a recent unclassified briefing from my office, government cyber security experts reconfirmed that a technology known as SS7, which allows phones to roam from one network to another, could also allow foreign actors to get into our networks and

intercept American's calls and texts. These experts also identified Russia as one of the top threats for this kind of surveillance.

Now fortunately, there's a way to prevent this that doesn't get in the way of communications between our country and Russia. US carriers could simply block roaming requests from Russians' phone networks. The only inconvenience would be that anyone with the US phone in Russia would need to buy a local phone card.

Director Haines my question would be would this policy make it harder for the Russian government to sp -- to spy on Americans?

AVRIL HAINES:

Thank you so much, Senator Wyden. And I think it's an excellent question obviously, and I -- I asked my folks what they thought about this. And basically I think we want to explore it. If you're willing to give us a little bit of time I gather it really would require a little bit of research to understand what the consequences would be of doing that exact kind of blocking.

So I'd like to be able to come back to you, but I think it's a really worthy question and appreciate the --

RON WYDEN:

Good.

AVRIL HAINES:

Interest.

RON WYDEN:

And you -- you inherited this problem, because I've been asking you about it for some time. But you're new on the beat and you've been responsive and I appreciate it.

Director Burns, the public knows far less about intelligence activities conducted under executive order twelve triple three than under the FISA law.

So I want to express my appreciation to you and to the Director for being more forthcoming and transparent about this subject than your predecessors. Here's my question. The CIA released a portion of a report from the Privacy Board that raised the concern that when CIA analysts searched their records for information on Americans there was no requirement to justify it. No requirement, for example, to write down the justification for a search.

My question -- and we've been talking with your folks -- will you commit this morning to requiring CIA analysts to write down their requests for conducting searches on Americans so those searches can be reviewed?

WILLIAM BURNS:

The short answer, Senator, is yes. I can assure you that CIA will comply with our attorney general guidelines documentation requirements for conducting queries. In fact, I met last Friday with the new Chair of the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board to talk about this issue. And I stressed my personal commitment to working with her and the rest of the board very effectively in the years ahead.

RON WYDEN:

So when -- when could we expect that this reform would actually be implemented?

WILLIAM BURNS:

Well, as I said, you have my commitment that we'll review our current procedures and ensure that all our systems are compliant, and I'd be glad to report back to you in six months on that.

RON WYDEN:

Okay, let's see if we can speed it up, because we've been waiting a long time for this one as well. We'll talk further about it. You've been responsive as well. Let me go to you, Director Wray, if I might. You testified on Tuesday that the FBI bought a license for the NSO hacking tools to evaluate them and determine what security concerns they raise.

Did the FBI inform anybody else in the government about what it learned from that evaluation?

CHRISTOPHER WRAY:

I think I'd have to defer to closed session about anything on the -- I think what you're getting at is the so-called VEP, the vulnerabilities process that's interagency. And while we participate in that, whether or not it applied here is a different question, but we could maybe talk a little bit more about that in closed session.

RON WYDEN:

I'm glad to do that. Here's what I'm interested in. I'm just asking whether the government believes that the FBI's operational use of these tools would be legal and whether that's still on the table. The public deserves to know that. Even if the FBI decided against using NSO's hacking tools, the Department of Justice Inspector General has confirmed that the FBI does use hacking in investigations.

My question is really, I do think the public deserves some information on this. Let's continue the discussion. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MARK WARNER:

Thank you, Senator Wyden. And just want to again acknowledge if -- if Congress had just followed Senator Collins 10 or 11 years ago, we might be further along on -- on the cyber issue. Senator Collins.

SUSAN COLLINS:

Thank you. Director Haines, following up on the Chairman's leadership here. Before I begin my questioning, I just want to personally thank you for working with the Chairman and me and other members of this committee on the Cyber Security Bill. We very much valued and appreciated your support, which was critical.

Director Burns, you have always shown extraordinary insight into Putin's thinking. We all read about the Russian Defense Ministry publicly accusing Ukraine of possibly planning a false flag chemical weapon attack. What do you make of that? Does that signal that Putin intends to launch a chemical or biological weapon attack on the Ukrainians?

WILLIAM BURNS:

Well, thanks very much, Senator. I mean, I think it underscores the concern that all of us need to focus on those kind of issues, whether it's the potential for a use of chemical weapons, either as a false flag operation, or against Ukrainians. This is something, as all of you know very well, is very much a part of Russia's playbook.

They've used those weapons against their own citizens. They've at least encouraged the use in Syria and elsewhere. So it's something we take very seriously. And it's one of the reasons as -- as Director Haines said earlier that I am convinced that our efforts at selective declassification to preempt those kind of false flag efforts and the creation of false narratives have been so important. In all the years I spent as a career diplomat, I

saw too many instances in which we lost information wars with the Russians.

In this case, I think we have had a great deal of effect in disrupting their tactics and their calculations, and demonstrating to the entire world that this is a premeditated and unprovoked aggression built on a body of lies and false narratives. So this is one information war that I think Putin is losing.

SUSAN COLLINS:

General Berrier, I feel very strongly that the Ukrainians should be able to defend their own airspace. But obviously, they need planes, they need manned drones. What is the current status of the battle for control of the Ukrainian airspace? And what is your assessment of what additional aircraft or manned drones would mean for Ukraine?

SCOTT BERRIER:

Senator, thank you for that question. My assessment is that the Ukrainians have been somewhat effective with the assets and resources that they have. The Russians have not achieved what I would call air dominance or air superiority over the country of Ukraine right now. That said, they are -- they are taking some losses and they do need additional assets.

Weapons like Stingers have -- have moved in and they have been used with effect, and I think the Ukrainians will continue to be able to use those in small unit tactics with -- with great effect. Certainly -- certainly, additional assets and resources with UAVs and aircraft, I'm sure they could make very good use of that.

SUSAN COLLINS:

Thank you. Director Berrier, I want to switch to a different issue. I believe that we have a very strong moral obligation to welcome those Afghans who have risked their

lives, their families' lives, their livelihoods, to help our troops, our diplomats and our intelligence professionals. Nevertheless, fulfilling that application does not require compromising a thorough comprehensive vetting process for those Afghans who managed to get on to airplanes before the last US aircraft left the runway.

Unfortunately, a report from the Department of Defense IG found that Afghan evacuees -- evacuees have not been screened appropriately, using all available DOD databases. And as a result, at least 50 individuals with security concerns already are in the United States, and most of those cannot be located right now.

Do you know whether the NJIK [Ph] has completed a biometric analysis as part of this vetting process?

SCOTT BERRIER:

Senator, I don't know the answer to that question right now, but I will take it for the record and get back to you.

SUSAN COLLINS:

Thank you.

MARK WARNER:

Thank you, Senator Collins. You know, we mentioned the fact that this committee has really taken on -- a major focus on technology. And I want to acknowledge the fact that on some of the very sophisticated areas of technology, Senator Heinrich may be the only one that actually brings real expertise to those issues.

So I appreciate that. Senator Heinrich.

MARTIN HEINRICH:

Thank you, Chairman. And Director Burns, I actually want to reiterate my colleagues' statement of thanks to you for working with us on increasing some of the transparency around CIA's activities under 12333. I think this is all about ensuring we just understand how Americans' privacy and civil liberties are protected under those authorities, and I know that's something you care about as well.

I want to ask about the current situation in Chernobyl and how concerned we should be about that. I know there's been a lot of reporting about that coming -- that Ukraine's grid operator was concerned about the reserve diesel generators potentially running out of fuel once that was disconnected from the -- the larger power grid.

How concerned should we be, and what -- what do we know about the situation there that can be discussed in this setting?

AVRIL HAINES:

I'm happy to start. I mean, from my perspective, my understanding of it is that we should be concerned and -- but that we haven't yet seen anything that kind of brings us from concern to, you know, it's a complete crisis. And I think if you want further details, what I should do is come back to you in writing on it and give you our best sense of it. But I don't know if others have anything to add.

MARTIN HEINRICH:

No, I look forward to that. Director, you talked a little bit about Russia's strategic nuclear posture. And I want to pivot from that for just a moment and ask about tactical, or some people have even referred to them as small nuclear weapons, almost as if they're something we don't need to be overly concerned about.

But folks who work with nuclear weapons today know that even tactical nuclear warheads have yields many times larger than what we saw -- what we used at the end of World War II. How concerned should we be about Russia's potential use of a tactical nuclear weapon in Ukraine? What would that look like and what can we do to prevent that from -- from happening, especially given how Putin seems to be in a posture where he needs some sort of a reset and is has proven himself to be very unpredictable.

AVRIL HAINES:

So I'll just say, I think probably we can have a further conversation about this in the closed session. But, you know, as a general matter as I indicated, we're obviously, you know, very concerned, want to make sure that we're monitoring everything that may be going on with respect to Russia's strategic nuclear forces and -- but as I indicated, we have not yet seen posture changes that are beyond what we've seen previously during moments of tension such as in, you know, relation to Crimea or in 2016 vis a vis Syria and so on. They have made certain posture changes and they're consistent with what we are seeing now. It's nothing unprecedented in a sense, but I --

MARTIN HEINRICH:

The -- the international community's sanctions and economic work with respect to Russia have resulted in quite impressive outcomes. Obviously, Putin is trying to find workarounds for these sanctions to include relying on energy sales on the country's reserves and gold and Chinese currency as well as cryptocurrency.

I've read that while there are mitigating actions the Russian government can take to try to get around the worst of the sanctions, they -- they can't really recreate their financial system. Director Wray, do you agree with that asset -- assessment. And also what -- what avenues do we have to combat Russia's misuse of cryptocurrency to evade the current sanctions regime?

CHRISTOPHER WRAY:

Well, I think Director Haines may want to weigh in a little bit on this as well, but -- but I think the top line takeaway is that the Russian's ability to circumvent the sanctions with cryptocurrency is probably highly overestimated on the part of maybe them and others. We are as a -- a community and with our partners overseas far more effective on that than -- than I think sometimes they appreciate.

And there's a lot of expertise in terms of tools and strategies to help block that kind of effort. Ultimately, what they really need to do is get access to some form of fiat currency which becomes more challenging. I don't know, Director Haines, if you want to --

MARTIN HEINRICH:

And you are utilizing those tools?

CHRISTOPHER WRAY:

Absolutely. We have built up significant expertise both at the FBI and with some of our partners. And there have been some very significant seizures and other efforts that I think have exposed the vulnerability of cryptocurrency as a way to get around sanctions.

AVRIL HAINES:

The only thing I'd add to what Director Wray said, is just with respect to the first part of your question, which is the enormous economic impact that's been had as a consequence of the sanctions, in that part of what we've seen is, you know, as I indicated in my opening statement, we expected President Putin anticipated to some extent what the sanctions would be and how we would approach this given our past practice in these areas.

He built up a reserve fund that was really intended to help him defend his currency in

the context of sanctions. But through the actions of, you know, our Treasury Department and -- and others in Europe and the West, what they've done is actually make it very hard for him to access that money in order to defend his currency.

And we've seen it in freefall. I mean I believe it's lost about 40% of its value, it is extraordinary to watch the stock markets, the fact that they've had to close down so much of their economic, you know, industry and -- and also the private sector impact has been extraordinary and I think really exacerbates the challenge for them in a pretty extraordinary way. I don't --

WILLIAM BURNS:

The only thing I would add very briefly, Senator, is that I think among the many profoundly flawed assumptions that President Putin made in launching this invasion was his assumption that he had built sanctions proof economy. That by building, as Director Haines said, a very large war chest of foreign currency reserves and gold reserves, and by not anticipating there'd be sanctions against the Russian Central Bank, by not anticipating that the German leadership would show such resolve, in particular, I think he deeply underestimated the economic consequences. And I think they're just now being felt in Russia and that's going to intensify.

MARK WARNER:

Senator Heinrich, I think some of your crypto issues are really important. I've got some questions on that in -- in the closed session. Senator Blunt this is this is going to be your -- your I think last worldwide threat briefing and we really thank your service on this committee.

ROY BLUNT:

Well, there are things I'll miss about the Senate next year, but one of them will probably not be the worldwide threat discussions that we have publicly and every week, and this fine committee chairman and thanks for your leadership. I just want to say what I'm working on NGS issues and we'll address some of that in the classified briefing.

MARK WARNER:

Thank you, Senator Blunt.

ROY BLUNT:

Thank you. Let's follow up, Director Burns, on your another idea about the economy. Do you think Putin overestimated what the Chinese might be able to do to offset the sanctions and other economic activities? Or, do you think the Chinese will step in in a way that he might have anticipated?

WILLIAM BURNS:

Thanks very much for the question, Senator. I think he may be overestimating the extent to which the Chinese leadership will be able or willing to help him deal with quite severe economic consequences of his invasion of Ukraine. It remains to be seen how this will play out. But you know, I recall after the sanctions that were levied against Russia after his prior aggression in Crimea, you know the Chinese drove, you know, a very hard bargain over pipelines that the Russians were trying to negotiate.

So they weren't, you know, particularly flexible or sympathetic in a way during that period as well. So I suspect there's not going to be any easy out for President Putin as he looks at trying to deal with those economic consequences, not from the Chinese, not from anyone else.

ROY BLUNT:

Do we have any sense of how the Chinese have reacted to their -- their recent locking arms with the Russians right before all of these -- these events happened?

WILLIAM BURNS:

I -- I think Senator, that the Chinese leadership first, has invested a lot in partnership with Russia and I don't expect that to change anytime soon. I do, however, believe that the Chinese leadership, President Xi in particular, is unsettled by what he's seen, partly, because his own intelligence doesn't appear to have told him what was going to happen.

Second, because of the reputational damage that China suffers by association with the ugliness of Russia's aggression in Ukraine. Third, by the economic consequences at a time when, you know, growth rates in China as you look over the rest of this year are lower than they've been in 30 years. And fourth, I think because President Xi is probably a little bit unsettled as he watches the way in which President Putin has driven, you know, Americans and Europeans more closely together and strengthened the transatlantic alliance in ways that would have been a little bit hard to imagine before the invasion began.

I think the Chinese leadership looks at Europe, not just as a market, but as a -- as a kind of player with whom they can have an independent relationship and try to look for ways in which they can drive wedges between us and our European allies. And what President Putin has so successfully done is to make that much less likely.

ROY BLUNT:

Well, let me -- I didn't intend to dwell on this public session on China as much as I'm going to wind up doing it my five minutes, but you know the Chinese have also

announced a -- their plans, their intention, their capability devoted to biotech, and underlying those activities, I think is something Director Wray and Director, we should be really focused on is how much that may impact Americans as Chinese try to get more information about Americans in various ways as they develop their own biotech potential to impact populations.

Let you start, and then Director Haines, I'll come to you.

CHRISTOPHER WRAY:

So certainly the Chinese have shown that they are willing to pursue our personal data at a scale unlike anything anywhere else in the world. They have stolen more of our personal and corporate data than every other nation combined. And one of the other lessons we saw from the COVID period is their aggressive targeting of COVID research, whether it was vaccines or other forms of medical treatment. And you could almost clock any company's announcement that they were making progress on something, almost within days, you could then see Chinese targeting of trying to steal that research.

ROY BLUNT:

Right. We certainly know they've done that with personal data, financial data. I'm wondering what their biotech focus, Director Haines, are they going to be -- do we need to be now concerned about genetic data in ways that we might not have been at an earlier time?

AVRIL HAINES:

Yeah, we do have concerns with bio data across the board and I think not just genetic data as you point out, but that's a critical aspect of it and the collection of that by -- China in particular, but other countries as well and how that can be used in the future, particularly as the technology develops. So, absolutely.

ROY BLUNT:

[Inaudible] I've noticed some of the -- some of the reporting here and the studies here, or you could take this -- this biotechnology look at populations here or Africa or other places and decide to do things that specifically have impact on just a segment of the population that has the genetic code that may be susceptible to that, where their -- their surrounding neighbors and others in the country don't have. I think it's an area we'll be talking more about, and I look to discussing -- look forward to discussing that further. Thank you, Chairman.

MARK WARNER:

Thank you, Senator Blunt. Senator Bennett, again, just want to publicly thank you for what we did -- were able to do last week in looking at some of our overhead assets. You're up.

MICHAEL BENNET:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you very much for coming to Colorado. I want to start by lending my thanks to all of you and to the people that work for you. While Putin was lying to us and to the Ukrainians and his own people, your people were -- were ascertaining the truth, and we were warning the world.

And that could not have happened without the work that you've done. So I deeply,

deeply appreciate it. We were on the phone on Saturday, most of us, I guess, with President Zelenskyy. He started the call by saying, we're just fighting to be able to live our lives like you. And he ended the call by saying, the world should live in peace.

The world should live in a pluralistic way, by which he meant with freedom of speech, freedom of religion, self-determination, and that's what's at stake here. And I think we've got a -- we've got a chance to win this fight, in part, because of the people that work for all of you. So I want to say thank you.

Director Haines, Putin's aggression against Ukraine and against international rules and norms demonstrates the urgency of maintaining American superiority in emerging domains, including space and cyber, two domains that really I think the American people have not heard enough about. Last week, as the Chairman mentioned, he joined me in Colorado for a series of briefings with Space Command, the National Space Defense Center, and NRO leadership.

Our conversation reinforced for me that our military and intelligence community missions are inextricably linked. And we are concerned that the decision to relocate Space Command does not fully account for the intelligence community missions that are in Colorado, the depth of the private sector which is so critical to building resilience in space.

It's my view that we should be spending money on the mission in space, not on moving Space Command and starting from scratch. Could you explain how strengthening the integration of our military and intelligence missions is critical to maintaining our superiority in space?

AVRIL HAINES:

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I couldn't agree more with the overall sentiment, which is that we have to integrate these areas. I do think that, you know, it is -- it's a domain in which obviously the Defense Department but also other parts of the government such

as NASA and so on, you know, are occupying; and it's increasingly crowded with commercial satellites as well.

And all of us have to be able to integrate together in order to effectively manage things. But no -- no two entities more, I suppose, than the Department of Defense and the IC, in order for us to do our jobs. And as we've been doing, we have a number of mechanisms that we use for that kind of coordination.

There's, you know, obviously the Joint Space Warfighter Forum which, you know, has the USSPACECOM commander and the NRO director as sort of co-chairs and leading of that. And that's a kind of an example of DOD and the IC coming together on these issues. And we have a number of other things: SpaceX Com [Ph], the National Space Defense Center, an integrated protection strategy, that are intended to do this.

I would just say that as I know you already know, but just to acknowledge it, like we have work to do in this area to make sure that, frankly, as compartmented as some aspects of our work is that we integrate that as well, effectively. So that we can actually work across this domain in a sensible and sort of strategic way, and really appreciate your support and others for this area because I think it's obviously critically important to our future.

MICHAEL BENNET:

I think -- I mean without -- we heard some unbelievable things while we were there, but -- which obviously we can't talk about in open session. But it is very clear -- I think the Chairman would agree with this assessment -- that we have -- we do not have a moment to lose here in space. I just have a minute left.

Director Burns, could I just ask you to talk a little bit while we're in public session; just give the American people a sense of how Russia is using disinformation across the world? How it's using it in its own country, but also how it's using it across the democracies to try to pit us against one another and divide us from one another?

These are things that appear to the American people sometimes to look like just another person's Twitter feed when, in fact, the Russians can be behind it. So could you spend a minute on that?

Sure. Thanks, Senator, and I'll focus on, you know, the ways in which I think President Putin has worked methodically over the last two decades to turn Russian society into a kind of propaganda bubble. I mean, he's used financial pressures, he's used lethal actions. I remember vividly when I was ambassador in Russia, you know, some years ago going to the funeral of a very courageous independent Russian journalist named Politkovskaya in the fall of 2006. And that's just one part of the pressure that he's brought against, you know, open information in Russia. He's intensified his domination of the state-run media and in his strangulation of independent media, especially in recent years, and particularly since the invasion of Ukraine began.

But I guess the last thing I'd say is I don't believe that he's going to be able to seal Russians off entirely from the truth. There are lots of Russians who have VPN accounts, who have access to YouTube to this day, who have access to information. And I don't believe he can wall off indefinitely Russians from the truth, especially as realities began to puncture that bubble. The realities of killed and wounded coming home, an increasing number; the realities of the economic consequences for ordinary Russians, as I was discussing before. The realities of, you know, the horrific scenes of hospitals and schools being bombed next door in Ukraine and of civilian casualties there as well.

I don't think he can bottle up the truth indefinitely. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MARK WARNER:

Senator Cotton, thank you as well, also, for your constant willingness to press this committee and frankly the IC leadership to make sure both on the unclassified and classified sections of collaboration between the DOD projects and the IC projects. Senator Cotton.

TOM COTTON:

Thank you. Director Haines, I want to address the administration's fiasco of failing to help Poland transfer its aircraft to Ukraine. The Pentagon spokesman yesterday cited your Intelligence Community, quote, the Intelligence Community has assessed the transfer of MiG 29s to Ukraine may be mistaken as escalatory and could result in significant Russian reaction that might increase the prospects of a military escalation with NATO.

The State Department spokesman said essentially the same thing earlier today. Since administration policymakers are justifying their hesitancy to help Poland transfer these aircraft by pointing to your Intelligence Community, could you tell us what is the basis for this alleged assessment that the transfer of these aircrafts would be viewed as escalatory?

AVRIL HAINES:

Thank you, Senator Cotton. So it is our analysts' assessment that the transfer of these airplanes could be perceived as a significant escalation by the Russians. It is -- they are obviously an advanced and considerable weapon.

TOM COTTON:

I'm sorry -- Director, I'm sorry. So I appreciate your analysts and their deep expertise and knowledge about this. I'm asking what specific evidence, information, intelligence do they have that the transfer of these aircrafts, as opposed to anti-aircraft missiles that shoot Russian jets out of the sky, is going to be viewed as escalatory?

AVRIL HAINES:

Why don't I provide to you a written product that will give you the basis for that?

TOM COTTON:

So the Pentagon spokesman also said that this is the same intelligence that they had last year that delayed the transfer of many of those missiles as well; that there's no new intelligence. He said it was the same intelligence he's had last year. Was that the case?

AVRIL HAINES:

No, Senator, I'm not aware of what it is that he was referencing, but this is a recent assessment that was done by the Intelligence Community. I'm very happy to provide that --

TOM COTTON:

I understand -- I understand you didn't do assessments. I'm saying, do you have new intelligence?

AVRIL HAINES:

So when analysts -- I mean, I know you know this, but obviously, they're looking at a body of intelligence and then they're also providing their own knowledge and experience. And I don't know whether or not there is --

TOM COTTON:

So we can address this in a closed setting. But here's -- here's my opinion. You don't have new intelligence. This is opinion. And in many cases, this is policymakers who are looking to the Intelligence Community to provide them cover for their hesitancy. General Berrier, could you explain, as an intelligence officer, how Vladimir Putin might be A-OK with us transferring missiles that turned their tanks into burning piles

of rubbish or shoot their jets out of the sky, yet transferring tactical aircraft is going to be unacceptable? Why is the latter escalatory and the former not escalatory?

SCOTT BERRIER:

Senator Cotton, thank you. I will take a stab at that in open session here. I think when you -- when you look at anti-tank weapons and air defense, sir -- shoulder fired kinds of weapons, there is a range of escalation. And I think in our view that escalation ladder doesn't get checked higher with those weapons versus something like combat aircraft.

TOM COTTON:

I got to say, I don't think there's a lot of common sense between this distinction, and a lot of farmers in Arkansas wouldn't understand it either. I mean your own written assessment Ms. Haines says that Russia quote, doesn't want a direct conflict with the United States, end quote. That was from January 21st, that that assessment said Russia doesn't want a conflict with the United States.

You think they're more likely to want a conflict now after Vladimir Putin has seen the performance of his army? Not against -- not just against the Ukrainian army, but with moms, with Molotov cocktails and grandmas with AK 47s. You think they're more likely to want a piece of us now than they were two months ago?

AVRIL HAINES:

I don't think it's an issue of whether or not they're more likely to want to conflict, it's whether or not they perceive us as being in that conflict with them. I think we're in a very challenging position, right, where we are obviously providing enormous amounts of support to the Ukrainians, as we should and need to do, but at the same time trying not to escalate the conflict into a full on NATO or US war with Russia.

And that's a challenging space to -- to manage. And the analysts I think are just trying to provide their best assessment of what is likely to be perceived as that kind of escalation in this circumstance.

TOM COTTON:

I mean, I've got to say, it seems to me that Vladimir Putin simply deterred the US government from providing these aircraft by saying they would view this as escalatory. And if that's going to be our position, I mean we might as well call the commanding general at Fort Lewis, outside Seattle, and tell him to take the flag down and surrender our position because he's not going to stop in Ukraine, he's not going to stop in Europe is going to go all the way to the West Coast. And every time he raises a threat, we immediately back off. One other question I want to ask in this area as well about intelligence sharing. Last Thursday, the House Armed Services Committee Chairman Adam Smith said, quote, we are providing some intelligence.

We're not providing the kind of real-time targeting because that you know steps over the line that makes us participate in the war, end quote. Just a few hours later, the White House press secretary contradicted him saying, we have consistently been sharing intelligence that includes information the Ukrainians can use to inform and develop their military response to Russia's invasion. That has been ongoing and reports that suggest otherwise are inaccurate.

So who is correct? The Democratic chairman of the House Armed Service Committee or the White House press secretary? Are we -- are we not providing that kind of Real-Time targeting intelligence to Ukraine?

AVRIL HAINES:

We are providing an enormous amount of intelligence to Ukraine. I'd be happy to get into in closed sessions the details of what we're providing and -- and I think maybe if there's anything else that people would like to add.

TOM COTTON:

Can you at least tell me who is correct between the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee and the White House press secretary?

AVRIL HAINES:

Honestly, Senator, I think getting into this in closed session would be easier so that we can actually explain to you what it is that we're providing. But I'm happy to defer to my colleagues who may have additional --

TOM COTTON:

I'm sure will address it in closed session.

MARK WARNER:

Thank you, Senator Cotton. Senator Blunt, last worldwide threat. Senator Casey, your first worldwide hearing. Senator Casey.

BOB CASEY:

Mr. Chairman, thanks very much. I think I join a chorus of gratitude and commendation for the work of the intelligence community, not only with respect to what's happening in Ukraine, but I think more generally. And so I want to thank both Director Haines and Director Burns for the work they and their teams have done, not

just most recently, but in many cases for years and even decades, so many dedicated professionals.

I think that gratitude though is extended to every member of this panel Director Wray, and General Nakasone, General Berrier. Maybe -- it might be that you're the collective public service of the people that work in each of your -- in each of your areas of responsibility that that public service might be more consequential today than it's ever been.

So I want to -- to -- to extend that thank you more broadly. I want to try to get maybe to two issues. One is on food security, or I should say food insecurity, across the world at this time and how it's exacerbated by what's playing out in Ukraine. But also to get to a question on China. We're told that in -- in 2019 the number of people across the world who were on the edge of famine was about 27 million.

BOB CASEY:

That was in 2019, a hell of a lot worse right now. 45 million people across the world on the edge of famine. So in just two or three years, two years really, from '19 to '21, up from 27 million to 45 million. We know that Ukraine itself, its farmlands provide food for the whole world, especially to places like the Middle East and South Asia and North Africa.

Here's -- here's the data on wheat, corn, and barley. 12% of the wheat of the world provided by Ukraine, 16% of corn, 18% of barley. So you have both a exacerbated -- an exacerbating problem on food insecurity and Ukraine providing all that support. So with this state of food insecurity in mind, how does the IC incorporate food insecurity into its various analyzes of threats to the -- in the United States and beyond?

Dr. Haines, if you could start or anyone else?

AVRIL HAINES:

Of course, Senator thank you very much for the question and I agree with you. This is a really -- incredibly important issue and one that we are following. So we assess that Russia's invasion, which as you point out, it's caused energy prices to rise, which is also -- has a dynamic relationship to the food security issue and has put upward pressure on global food prices.

And -- and this is what poses essentially the additional risk to food security globally. It could disrupt food supplies, particularly wheat for the reasons that you identified, because Ukraine, I mean, having been known as the breadbasket of Europe in many respects, is critical to that. And both frankly, Russia and Ukraine are important food suppliers to the global market and this is part of what I think we're going to be seeing as a challenge moving forward.

And as a consequence, we perceive that there is an increasing challenge through 2022, particularly with developing countries that rely on many of the food supplies at particular prices for them to manage those. So we are doing work on this. If you're interested in additional material, I definitely get that to you from the real experts, as opposed to me, but others may have more to add on this.

BOB CASEY:

Thanks very much. I wanted to get to a question on China. The China section of the threat assessment says and I'm quoting in pertinent part, quote, Beijing's willingness to use espionage subsidies, trade policy to give its firms a competitive advantage represents not just an ongoing challenge for the US economy and its workers, but also advances Beijing's available -- ability to assume leadership of the world's technological advancement and standards, unquote.

As many of you know, Senator Cornyn and I have worked for a good while now on a piece of legislation which would institute ache [ph] as a matter of law, a committee to review outbound investment, especially the offshoring of critical US supply chains. How's the IC working to better understand both the Chinese government's surreptitious efforts to gain an unfair competitive advantage over US firms and workers?

AVRIL HAINES:

I'll start and others should weigh in. I mean, I think we are obviously following this very closely and -- and we recognize that frankly Beijing targets US private sector companies in a variety of ways. Cyber is one aspect of it, but it's not the only way in which they do it. And we've observed China targeting company insiders, you know, not just for their access to computer networks, but also because of the opportunity for essentially economic and other espionage, these spaces. And -- and really other individuals that have access to critical technologies to your point.

We've also observed China engage in theft of trade secrets, US export control violations, hacking ransomware, cyber pieces. All of this leads to grave concerns obviously with respect to their capacity to steal from American companies and, you know, an innovation and to ultimately use that to bolster their capabilities to promote their own technological advancement in areas that are of critical national security interest to us. And -- and we've also seen how they've created an essential legal framework that provides them with access to companies that invest or that move to Beijing in order to allow for that information to be used by the Chinese government and to be -- to advance their technological innovation. So let me leave it to others who probably have more [Off mic].

UNIDENTIFIED:

Director Wray.

CHRISTOPHER WRAY:

I would just add that some of the reforms that have taken place thanks to this committee's leadership on the CFIUS process, for example, have been extremely important. And we've dedicated now, collectively, significantly more resources to trying to be more proactive, which is what some of the new authorities enable us to do that. Certainly, the FBI, we now have about a 1,300 percent increase in economic espionage investigations tying back to the Chinese government from, say, a decade ago.

And we are finding that more and more, much as Director Haines referenced more broadly in her opening statement, that sharing information through a variety of ways with private sector partners often enables them to make responsible decisions that maybe in the past, in a shortsighted way, they would not have made.

And I think that's ultimately going to have to be a key part of this as we go forward. We can't just investigate or disrupt our way out of it. We need the private sector engaged too.

MARK WARNER:

Senator Casey, thank you for your Senator Cornyn's leadership on this. And I also want to acknowledge Senator Cornyn leadership on the CFIUS Reform a few years back that really has given Director Wray and others the tools they need. Senator Cornyn.

JOHN CORNYN:

Thank you. I want to join my colleagues in thanking you and the people you represent for your service to our country. I want to talk about Russian propaganda. We all know that in 2016 there have been extensive work of this committee and the Director of National Intelligence, the intelligence community writ large, on Russian propaganda.

But I want to talk not about their role in our elections, but now, when it comes to energy. John McCain, our former colleague, used to say that Russia was a gas station masquerading as a country, which is a humorous way of talking about how Russia is economically dependent on energy exports and is doing everything it can to keep Europe and the rest of the world dependent on Russian energy exports.

Many of us have pointed out that the high price of oil that Putin is reaping today is being used to fund this horrific invasion in Ukraine. And I just want to point out, I

think it's the Energy Information Administration predicts that by 2050 that the world will still continue to need fossil fuels and its role in providing energy will, to the world, will be four times what renewables can provide.

And this is not meant to denigrate the role of renewables. It plays an important part in our portfolio. But I do worry that Russia's ability to provide a monopoly and to weaponize energy when it comes to Europe could well undermine the sanctions that we are trying to impose. It would certainly seem to make the other countries in Europe who are reliant on Russia for their oil and gas more pliable or compliant with the Russia's wishes.

Back in 2017, Director Haines, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the office You now hold, reported on page 8 in annex A to a document called Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in recent elections. But there's a piece about how Russia today, which I believe now is a registered foreign agent of the Russian Federation, was -- was conducting anti-fracking messages with the intended impact of weakening political support for US production of our natural resources and diminishing any challenge to Russia's preeminent role when it comes to providing oil and gas and energy to Europe and the rest of the world.

So it seems to me that Russia has been, for some time, trying to discredit any energy initiatives which threaten its preeminent position, whether it's attacking American or European fossil fuels or funding green groups to spread disinformation. Can you elaborate, Director Haines, on how extensive Russia's propaganda campaign has been in this -- in this area?

AVRIL HAINES:

Not with precision, but I -- and I'm not familiar with the specific report that you're referencing. But I -- it certainly is consistent with what we've seen, and -- and therefore, don't doubt it. And we could definitely provide you sort of a further

assessment that gives you a sense of what scale we've seen and whether there are any particular trends in that area.

But I think your overall conclusions are ones that we share, which is to say that they would use their information campaign and influence in order to promote their own energy industry and in order to divide us on these issues as well.

PAUL NAKASONE:

The only thing I would add, Director, would be is that, you know, this is the methodology we've seen with the Russians, right, find the divisive issue, find the two groups that you can both feed this, use social media as an influence, and then be able to continually -- to continually pursue that message.

JOHN CORNYN:

Direct Burns, isn't Putin's monopoly on providing energy to Europe a boot on the neck of the Europeans? And doesn't this threaten their willingness to cooperate when it comes to these economic sanctions because he can just turn the gas off, right?

WILLIAM BURNS:

I think, one of the -- Senator, one of the most striking unintended consequences from Putin's point of view is the extent to which a number of leading European governments seem to be belatedly realizing what you just described, the threat that they face by overdependence on Russian energy resources.

You have not just the demise of Nord Stream 2, but also the fact the Germans just announced the construction of an LNG facility clearly aimed at diversifying beyond Russia, their sources of energy. And so, I think that's something that President Putin certainly did not anticipate when he began this invasion. But it could have a quite significant, long-term, strategic effect as well.

MARK WARNER:

Senator King, I just want to also acknowledge the great work that you and Senator Sasse have done on the cyber symposium. A number of us have raised some of those questions, but thank you for your good work.

ANGUS KING:

Thank you very much. I apologize for being late. If we could apply AI to the Senate schedule, we might not have three hearings scheduled at exactly the same time. Thank you very much for your testimony here today. I think one of my first questions in a large strategic sense for you Director Haines is China-Russia cooperation.

To what extent -- it seems to me in the last couple of years, really in the last year, we've seen a closer cooperation and communication between those two countries. How do we assess that? It seems to me if you're talking worldwide threats, that's one of them.

AVRIL HAINES:

Yeah, absolutely, Senator King. I mean, I think your assessment is our assessment, which is to say that we are seeing them cooperate more. And we anticipate that it will strengthen over the coming years. And it's across a variety of sectors, economic, political, military and -- and, in fact, the announcements that were made during the Olympics are an indication of how close they're becoming.

At the same time, we do see it as not yet at the point where we are, for example, with allies. They have not achieved that kind of level of cooperation. And we anticipate it is unlikely in the next five years that they will, in fact, become sort of the way we are an ally with our other NATO members in that context but others may have things to add to this.

ANGUS KING:

Director Burns.

WILLIAM BURNS:

The only thing to add, Senator, is as Director Haines said. I mean, the joint statement that President Xi and President Putin issued on the 4th of February at the beginning of the Winter Olympics was the most sweeping expression of their Commitment to partnership we've seen.

But I would only add that I think what's unfolded in Ukraine, the ugliness of it, the flawed assumptions that underpinned it on the -- on the -- from the point of view of President Putin have unsettled the Chinese leadership a little bit. They're unsettled by the reputational damage that could come from that.

ANGUS KING:

And the Chinese seem more -- more concerned about reputational damage than Russia just generally.

WILLIAM BURNS:

Well, Russia, you know, President Putin has a low bar in terms of concern about reputational damage, I think. But I do think they're concerned about that. I think they're concerned about economic consequences at a time when their own projected growth rates are lower than they've been in quite some time.

And I think as I mentioned earlier, they're concerned about the way in which President Putin is driving Europeans and Americans closer together at a moment when I think the Chinese have always valued their independent relationships with the Germans and other leading Europeans as a -- offering opportunities to drive wedges between them and the United States, which I think, President Putin's actions have helped to deprive them. So I think they're concerned by all that.

ANGUS KING:

One more unintended consequence of what Mr. Putin has done. General Nakasone, one thing that has surprised me in Ukraine is the lack of a strong, consistent Russian cyberattack on Ukraine. I expected to see the grid go down and communications, and that hasn't happened. Do you have any assessment of why?

I thought that would be in the first couple of days.

PAUL NAKASONE:

So, Senator, I think that, you know, as we look at this -- and we're only 15 days in, and so much can still occur, and we're very vigilant to make sure nothing does occur. But with that said, I think that there are several things that -- that are important to note. We've worked very, very hard with Ukraine over the past several years, really since the -- the shutdown of energy in 2015. We had Hunt Forward teams from US Cyber Command in Kiev. We worked very, very closely with a series of partners at NSA and -- and the private sector to be able to -- to provide that information; the interagency. These are all impacts that I think have played out positively early on. And I think to a degree, there's still obviously a Russian calculus that will play out here, and we'll will be very, very vigilant to see what occurs there.

ANGUS KING:

Finally, Director Haines, one of the learnings from the -- from the Ukraine experience from our point of view is the value of sharing intelligence. I don't mean sharing necessarily between allies, but I mean with the American people, with the people of the world. I've always thought that we classify too much and that we really blunt the -- the impact that we could have on international relations by not sharing, as long as we don't compromise sources and methods.

It appears that a conscious decision was made to share more. Is that the case?

AVRIL HAINES:

Yes, we have all of us, I think, engaged in this, and it has been an extraordinary team effort, to be honest, in trying to promote sort of more mechanisms for sharing, finding ways to make sure that we're integrating our -- our work across the Intelligence Community and providing that Information to partners and allies in this context, and also disclosing certain things publicly, as you've indicated.

And I think it really has been, at least from my perspective, critical to the diplomatic effort. I think it has helped to galvanize the response and -- and also, I hope, helped to prepare the Ukrainians to some extent, even though I think, honestly, it's obviously tragic that despite all of the information we put out that we still see the Russians invade Ukraine.

WILLIAM BURNS:

And so it's a bit bittersweet in this moment, but I think we've learned a lot of lessons from it, and I think it will allow us to continue to do that in places where we see the need.

PAUL NAKASONE:

Senator, if I might, just on -- on top of what the director said. We share a lot of intelligence, but here's the difference. The intelligence that we're sharing is accurate, it's relevant, and it's actionable. I think when we look back at this, that's the key piece of -- of what we've been able to do as an Intelligence Community.

ANGUS KING:

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MARK WARNER:

Senator Sasse, even though you claim to be the longest serving rookie on this committee, I want to personally thank you for your relentless focus on China and holding the IC's feet to the fire that it's not just language but dollars that flow that. Senator Sasse.

BEN SASSE:

Thanks, Chairman, and thanks to all five of you for being here. I have a bunch of questions about self-deterrence around the MiG U-turn, around real-time sharing of lethal targeting information, but I think I'm not going to do that here. I'm going to save it for the classified setting, because I think Senator Cotton, his exchange is the most important part of this hearing so far today.

Vladimir Putin will embrace the idea that we might self-deter every time he issues a press release, and lawyerly hairsplitting about providing this kind of weaponry is not escalatory, but providing that kind of weaponry is escalatory, I don't think we really believe that. I think the administration is pushing the Intelligence Community to give them cover for lean-forward decisions they don't want to be making.

So I applaud Senator Cotton on his line of questioning, and I suspect it'll be the heart of a lot of what we do in the classified setting. I want to stay on the China point that the Chairman just mentioned. And Director Burns, first of all, kudos. Kudos to all of you. It's been said many times today, but believe me associate myself with the praise for the pretextual rebuttal of Putin's lies about why he was going to invade. The whole IC did great work. Director Burns, since you arrived, standing up the China Mission Center as you pledged to do is a really important development.

So thank you. Could you explain to us how Chairman Xi views Putin and this invasion; a

month ago, today, and a month from now?

WILLIAM BURNS:

I mean, I think as I said, I think the Chinese leadership -- President Xi has invested a lot in partnership with President Putin and Russia. I don't think that's going to change any time soon. It's for a lot of very cold-blooded reasons. I do, however, think that President Xi is unsettled by what he's seen transpire in the last 15 days in Ukraine.

I don't think they anticipated that the Russian military was going to prove largely ineffective so far. I don't think they anticipated that the West would react with such resolve, in terms of not only military support for the Ukrainians, but also in terms of economic consequences as well. I think they are worried about reputational damage, and I think they're worried about the wider economic consequences.

At a time when especially in 2022, with the Chinese leadership preoccupied by the party congress in November, they're looking for relative stability and predictability in the global economy. This unsettles that as well. So I think that's raised, you know, some question marks, you know, in the minds of the Chinese leadership as they look at what is going to be an enduring partnership, but maybe with a few more concerns than they had 16 days ago.

BEN SASSE:

That's helpful. I have heard from multiple foreign ministers and defense ministers and other NATO leaders over the course of the last month that one of the -- you can't say there are any silver linings to the evil of what Putin is doing in targeting women and children and civilians. There is no moral limit to what the guy will do. But if you made a list a year from now of developments that happened in the world because of this invasion, the horror list is a mile long.

But one of the only things on the good side of the ledger is that I think many European leaders are going to get more steely-eyed realist about who Chairman Xi is, because the guy greenlit this invasion. Russia has 11 time zones and they were able to move almost all their troops back from the Far East, because Xi wants to see the West destabilized.

He wants to see Europe and the US humiliated and embarrassed, and there are a whole bunch of European corporate executives that lust for the 550 million middle-class consumers of the 1.4 billion Chinese. And a lot of European political leaders who are willing to provide cover for that and pretend that Xi is a sort of benign figure, and he is not.

And the fact that he greenlit this by Putin, I think, is a pretty important development for our allies to get more serious about. General Berrier, I wonder if you could help us understand what are the most important needs the Ukrainian military has to extend this fight? And how can the US do more and faster?

SCOTT BERRIER:

So, Senator, thanks for the question. We'll go into much more detail in the closed session, Right now, they do -- they do need support in the -- in the cities where the -- where the combat operations are going on right now, in the major cities. They need humanitarian support as well as small arms, ammunition, artillery rockets. The entire panoply, if you will, of ground forces kind of support.

The anti-tank weapons are very important. The air defense weapons as we've talked about it are very important. I would like to go back to the -- to the escalation ladder, though, with -- with these types of weapons. I do believe that there is an escalation ladder, and there is a difference between an anti-tank weapon, a shoulder-fired air defense weapon, and a combat aircraft and a jet that could cross a border and actually conduct operations on Russian soil.

So in terms of analytical thinking, that's sort of -- that's sort of where that's at.

BEN SASSE:

I know we're at time, but I just want to underscore one historical point. In World War II, there were planes dragged across the US-Canadian border. So this conversation has been had before, and it's not impossible to figure out a way to solve the problem if we wanted to solve the problem.

And women and children are being bombed. Nobody on this committee is calling for US boots on the ground in the Ukraine -- in Ukraine. But there's more we can do, and we should be going faster. The answer the American public hears, particularly from State Department and White House press briefings, is often process about process about a meeting.

There's -- there's a war going on, and Zelenskyy is a hero on behalf of 44 million Ukrainians. He's asking for more help, and the administration should be doing more faster.

MARK WARNER:

I know we're going to closed session, but I think a couple of members want to at least ask one more question. I want to, on my one point, is simply reemphasize what Senator Rubio's line of questioning would be about things that are already floating in the internet around the possibilities of bio tools being used. And I think Director Haines did most of this effort, but I do think in the public session, you know, Director Burns, if you could address this. And clearly, there is a difference between, you know, bioresearch centers and bioweapons centers.

Anything you can do to help clarify some of the things that are already floating, because I'm fear -- I'm fearful that this could be the new direction of a Russian false flag operation.

WILLIAM BURNS:

Well, the first thing I'd say, Senator, is that, you know, unlike Russia which does have chemical weapons and has used them and does do biological -- weapons research and has for years. Ukraine has neither. And second, as Director Haines said, you know, in any public health system around the world, there's going to be, you know, work done in the interests of wider public health to, you know, ensure that we have a grip on issues like that. But that's in no way threatening.

You know that's not something that can be weaponized in the way that the Russians have clearly demonstrated by their own actions against, you know, their citizens and people outside their country. Their willingness to use. And when you couple that with their, you know, demonstrated willingness to create false flag operations and try to create the impression that somehow Ukrainians are responsible for this, that should give us all, you know, pretty serious reason for concern about their propaganda.

MARK WARNER:

Thank you. Senator Rubio.

MARCO RUBIO:

Just to follow up on that, I mean kind of trying to put it in perspective. So people are saying, you know, Secretary Nuland -- Assistant Secretary Nuland said, there's these facilities there and there's something in those facilities. It's dangerous because we're afraid the Russians will get a hold of it. Now I understand that there's a difference between a bioweapons facility and one that's doing research.

A bio research facility is a totally different thing than a bioweapon facility because you could have samples of a deadly or you know serious pathogen. But that doesn't mean you could weaponize it or that you're working on weaponizing it. But people ask themselves if there is these facilities there and there's a lot at play here, I mean there is a lot we should have and this is none of you, but a long time ago this should have been acknowledged like there are -- yes there are these labs. This is what they do because a

lot of these fact checkers just said, don't even mention labs, because it's -- they don't even exist. They do -- They exist all over the world.

There's city -- there's labs like that right here. So the -- what I think got some people fired up is when she said, we're worried that the Russians will get a hold of these facilities because that implies that there's something in those facilities that's very dangerous. So I don't know if you could shed some light on how it -- how there can be things in the lab that are dangerous, but they not be weapons labs.

WILLIAM BURNS:

Yeah. All I would -- all I would say Senator is that you know the danger here it seems to me is the capacity the Russians have developed and that they've used in the past and their, you know, interest in crying -- trying to create false narratives here as well. To the best of my knowledge, well you have to be careful about, you know, any of those substances you've -- you've talked about, what you see in public health or research systems around the world for civilian purposes, why you have to be careful about that.

That is in no way akin to the kind of threats that would be posed by, you know, weapons research and development or weapons facilities.

MARCO RUBIO:

Yeah. I just think that the answer's what piqued a lot of people's -- and look the latching onto it as my point. This is what the -- I think there's been such a good job done at defeating them in the information space, but this is one where they seem to have latched on. I don't -- I don't think anyone believes per se, that if there's some very serious attack or even a fake one that -- that -- that we're going to -- they're going to convince the American public that the Ukrainians are behind it. But it's the confusion around it that I worry about debilitating the debate and allowing them to deflect it. I do want to ask you and in particular, Director Burns, cause you have been involved with Russia issues for a very long time.

So I think as much as anyone involved today in this issue, you've had an opportunity to watch Vladimir Putin through the years. I suppose, does it -- this whole thing about where -- they're having negotiations or parent [ph] negotiations today in Turkey with the foreign ministers. It's my view that he uses negotiations as just another tool on his toolbox.

What is your view of why he continues to agree to these talks and put these talks forward if we know they're not resulting in anything and in fact he's violating whatever they even nominally agree to?

WILLIAM BURNS:

Well, I mean, I think Senator, yours is a fair assumption that this -- these sometimes are just used tactically as well. You know, I think the core issue here is that President Putin does not have a sustainable endgame in Ukraine right now. So the question is, is he simply going to continue to double down and grind down the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian population, or at some point, does he recognize that reality that he doesn't have a sustainable endgame and look for ways to end the bloodshed to cut his losses and to, you know, reaffirm the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Now, given Putin's track record, given the fact that he's someone who hates to act out of what he believes to be weakness that he hates to concede or admit mistakes, that's probably a long shot.

WILLIAM BURNS:

But, you know, that's -- that's our hope at least that at some point he recognizes that because absent that, you know, off-ramps become just rhetoric.

MARK WARNER:

Thank you for raising the bio issue, Senator Rubio. Senator King

ANGUS KING:

General Berrier, we see these horrendous pictures of apartment blocks being hit, hospitals being hit in Ukraine. My question is what's hitting them? With -- the use of the term bombing is very common, but my impression is it's mostly missiles and artillery.

Is it bombing from -- from aircraft or missiles and artillery?

SCOTT BERRIER:

It is -- it is a combination of mostly missiles, artillery, multiple rocket launchers. There are some -- there are some precision guided munitions that are being dropped from aircraft, but that number is small.

ANGUS KING:

So the talk about a no fly zone wouldn't really impact what's causing the damage currently, is that correct?

SCOTT BERRIER:

Well, the -- the -- the Air Force is having a tough time flying in Ukraine right now. They're conducting surveillance and reconnaissance. They're using their assets to do a bunch of different things. And quite honestly, a no fly zone is a combat operation that requires manned and unmanned aircraft, ISR assets, resources, and on the escalation ladder that is escalatory.

ANGUS KING:

I understand that, but my point is, a no fly zone, wouldn't inhibit missiles, rockets, and artillery.

SCOTT BERRIER:

That --that is correct.

ANGUS KING:

Thank you.

MARK WARNER:

Thank you, Senator Burr.

RICHARD BURR:

Mr. Chairman, thank you. And I'm going to direct it to Director Haines, and this is really precipitated by Senator Cotton's question on the transfer of aircraft. We gave a green light to Poland to transfer migs [ph] the United States publicly. When Poland came back and said we'd like to transfer these over to a US facility and have Ukrainian pilots fly from there, all of a sudden the American line was -- we think that would be a escalatory. We're all part of the same thing called NATO, and under that agreement, when one of NATO's member's geography is challenged, the rest respond. Now, we can get into whatever we want to in closed session. I as much as anybody really respect the analytic product that comes out of the intelligence community.

It should be question, that's why we have analysts in every area and outside of the Intel

community. But when the US publicly gives Poland a green light to transfer aircraft, and then changes their mind when the aircrafts are transferred off of our space, our geography, as a member of NATO as well, and we say that that would make it escalatory.

But if Poland transferred it, we didn't consider it to be escalatory. Then I draw this conclusion. This is a policy decision. It's a policy decision made by the administration. And I remind all of you at the table, Intelligence is never supposed to influence policy. It's the reason that we tried desperately, we don't always succeed, but we try desperately not to present you with a policy question, as part of the intelligence community. By the same token, we expect that if intelligence is inappropriately being used to reach a policy decision that it's the intelligence community that pushes back on that. So I look forward to your explanation, but I remind you that there is a bright line that the intelligence community has always maintained between policy and the advice you gave about what the intelligence says.

My hope is it we haven't as an intelligence community put our scale -- our finger on the scale of a policy decision that's been made because clearly this is confusing to the American people, how America could say, Poland, It's okay for you to transfer, but you can't transfer it off of our geography.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MARK WARNER:

Senator Colin.

AVRIL HAINES:

Can I respond -- oh sorry, just -- just to say Senator Burr, I mean obviously you know this, but analytic objectivity and for all of us here is an absolutely core ethic for the intelligence community. And I -- I do not believe that there is any issue here with

respect to political or policy pressure being put on the analysts. They were asked the question of whether or not providing these airplanes would be perceived by the Russians in an escalatory way.

AVRIL HAINES:

And they answered the question and I don't know when the timing was with respect to the policy -- things that were made --

RICHARD BURR:

Director, I'm not -- I'm not questioning what the analysts came to a conclusion on. But if the analyst came to a conclusion --

RICHARD BURR:

That the transfer of aircraft was escalatory, then it would apply to Poland's transfer, not just a transfer off of United States geography. And that was not used as a reason when Poland was given the green light, but it was used when it was thrown into our laps, which leads me to believe that there is a policy decision that we're not going to be involved in. I only throw it out there to you for the thought process of going through it. We can get into it in closed session.

AVRIL HAINES:

Okay.

RICHARD BURR:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MARK WARNER:

Senator Collins?

SUSAN COLLINS:

Director Haines, I want to switch to Iran. Your predecessors at every single worldwide threat hearing since 2016 have labeled Iran as the foremost state sponsor of terrorism. Is that your assessment as well?

AVRIL HAINES:

Yeah. Senator Collins, there's no question that Iran continues to support terrorism.

SUSAN COLLINS:

There's widespread speculation that, in exchange for a new nuclear agreement with Iran, that the administration is considering lifting sanctions on Iranian organizations or individuals, including those that are tied directly to Iran's terrorist activity. And there's one speculation that the administration may go so far as to rescind the Foreign Terrorist Organization designation of Iran's primary arm to foment terror in the region, the IRGC. Now, I'm not going to ask you whether sanctions should be lifted or not, recognizing that is a policy decision. But I do believe that it's fair to ask you which Iranian entities are actively supporting the regime's malign activity today, so let me pull on that thread a bit. Tony Blair's Institute for Global Change said in a report last year that the IRGC acts as an institutionalized militia and uses its vast resources to spread a mission of jihad through an ideological army of recruits and proxies. So, with respect to the IRGC, do you agree that it continues to conduct, support, and facilitate terrorism throughout the Middle East?

AVRIL HAINES:

Thank you, Senator. I -- they're -- the regime as a whole has supported destabilizing activities throughout the Middle East and -- and is -- continues to be a concern, and IRGC is among entities that do -- that are part of the regime's overall strategy. But I think if you want detail on particular entities, we should provide that to you separately and in writing. But I don't know if others have anything.

SUSAN COLLINS:

Is there any evidence that the central bank of Iran has stopped financing terrorist activity?

AVRIL HAINES:

I think if you mean money that goes through the central bank of Iran may be ultimately used by Iran --

SUSAN COLLINS:

Yes.

AVRIL HAINES:

In the context of the things, I don't have details. But we can certainly look at whether or not it's increasing or decreasing based on our assessments.

SUSAN COLLINS:

Is it fair to say that the assessment of the IC is that advances made by Iran related to launching missiles into space have an inherent dual use technology as a delivery vehicle for a nuclear or a conventional ballistic missile?

AVRIL HAINES:

Absolutely. Senator, we obviously have had concerns about their ballistic missile technology and their advancements in this areas. And obviously, over the course of many bipartisan administrations sanctions have been enacted as a consequence of that.

SUSAN COLLINS:

And finally, I would just note, and I commend you for this, that in your confirmation hearing, we discussed the prospect of a renegotiation of the JCPOA. And one of your points was that there should be more opportunity to consult with Congress on issues related to any new agreement. And I've appreciated the IC's attentiveness to keeping a focus on Iranian activity, but I've been disappointed in the lack of transparency and outreach from the policy community regarding the status of the negotiations. And I would just ask that you take that back to the White House. Thank you.

MARK WARNER:

So, we're going to -- we're going to move through, and everybody obviously gets this last round. If you can -- as maybe incentive to limit to one or two questions, in an unprecedented move the committee is providing lunch directly after this. And unfortunately, for our -- our -- our panel, there will be no breaks or we will go over. And if you guys answer briefly, you will also get lunch. Senator Cotton? [Laughter]

TOM COTTON:

Senator Burr raised an excellent point. It's a second arbitrary distinction about these Polish MiGs. Apparently, the US government position was they go from Poland, okey-dokey. That's A-okay. They go from the United States, nope, Vladimir Putin use -- views that as escalatory. I -- I still don't think there's any intelligence to justify that distinction. I want to return, General Berrier, to what you said to Senator Sasse. You said that you believe, you believe that there is a difference in escalation between anti-tank missiles and anti-aircraft missiles on the one hand and aircraft on the other hand. I understand you believe that. I understand that Dr. -- Director Haynes believes that, and she claims that the analysts believe that. I don't believe it. I don't believe it, and I don't believe there's intelligence to support it. I bet the Russian pilot that gets shot out of the air by an anti-aircraft missile as opposed to the aircraft doesn't believe it either. But it's not really a matter of what you believe or I believe. It's a matter of what we can prove and what we can prove that Vladimir Putin believes. And I just don't think the proof is there. We'll know in a few minutes, I guess, if there is. I want to address a bigger point, and I want to join with a lot of my colleagues to commend the intelligence community and especially the DIA for the outstanding work it did leading up to the invasion. It's the best I've seen the intelligence community perform in my seven years on the committee from September until February 24th. Director Haines, you testified that you think Vladimir Putin underestimated the Ukrainians' skill and their will to fight and he overestimated his own military's ability. Is it fair to say our intelligence community made the same mistakes based on the testimony we've heard here?

AVRIL HAINES:

So, we assessed, prior to the invasion, that he was overestimate -- or underestimating, rather, the Ukrainians' essentially resistance, likely resistance too. So, I think we -- we

did well there. I -- we did not do as well in terms of predicting the military challenges that he has encountered with his own military.

TOM COTTON:

Gen. -- General Berrier, could you -- could you address this?

SCOTT BERRIER:

Senator, I will address that. My -- my view was that, based on a variety of factors, that the Ukrainians were not as ready as I thought they -- as I thought they should be. Therefore, I -- I questioned their will to fight. That was a bad -- that was a bad assessment on my part, because they have fought bravely and honorably and are -- are doing the right thing. So, that -- that was an issue for -- for me as the director of DI.

TOM COTTON:

And I understand that. But assessing a people's will to fight is -- is one of the hardest things an intelligence agency could do. It's -- in some ways, it's a moral or a psychological question, not a intelligence question. But in other things, like how long Kiev would hold out or these other major cities, or how long Ukraine would still have an Air Force or air defense systems, did we make mistakes about those assessments as well?

SCOTT BERRIER:

Well, we -- we made some assumptions about his assumptions, which proved to be very, very flawed. And so, his -- his actual activity as he got into this fight turned his operation kind of on its head. And what we've seen is a devolvement, if you will, of --

of the operations that he has going on now. And I'd like to save the rest of this for a closed session.

TOM COTTON:

To the extent we can address it here, could you -- could you say why you think we made those mistakes?

SCOTT BERRIER:

I think -- I think assessing will, morale, and a will to fight is a -- is a very difficult analytical task. We had different inputs from different -- different organizations, and we -- we, at least from my perspective as the director, I -- I did not do as well as I could have.

TOM COTTON:

Director Haines, could you give your opinion on why the IC made those mistakes?

AVRIL HAINES:

I don't think I have anything to add in open session. I'm trying to -- we can discuss further.

TOM COTTON:

Okay. I -- I just want to say because -- and I'm not -- I just don't -- don't want to be critical, but these mistakes had potentially real world policy implications about the willingness of the president or other NATO leaders to provide -- weapons that they

thought might have fallen into the hands of Russians in a matter of hours, or to impose sanctions for something that might have been a fait accompli.

And we need to ask ourselves if we made mistakes about the first two weeks of this war, are we making mistakes about the next two weeks or the next two months, and the policy implications those might have? And furthermore, to Richard Burr's point about the use of policy to influence intelligence, I have to say I have concerns that part of the reason the administration went relatively soft on Russia and was hesitant in Ukraine in 2021, is they were relying on Russia to get the bad nuclear deal that Susan Collins was talking about?

I have the unavoidable conclusion that influenced part of it.

MARK WARNER:

Senator Cornyn.

JOHN CORNYN:

I wanted to just ask the question, recognizing intelligence is not science, it's an art, what do we think that Putin would do if the United States or the Poles provided these MiGs to the Ukrainians?

SCOTT BERRIE:

Senator, we have run through a number of scenarios as -- as the escalation ladder continues to unfold. I'd like to answer that question in closed session.

JOHN CORNYN:

Thank you.

MARK WARNER:

Senator Sasse.

BEN SASSE:

Thank you, Chairman. I'll save most of my questions for classified, too. I want to make one comment and then ask General Nakasone one small question about the pretextual work that you all did. The comment is, at many White House briefings and a number of State Department briefings over the course of the last week and a half, the phrase has been used that the US did or NATO did, or the US hypothetically did or NATO hypothetically did escalatory things or aggressive things. I think we should get the language right, which is there are claims by Putin that we did escalatory or aggressive things, or are hypothesizing about aggressive things.

There's only one aggressor here, and that's the jackass who's killing women and children. There's one aggressor. There's one person targeting civilians. And us trying to figure out what our obligations are to our allies and our obligations are to the world and to humanity when civilians are being targeted, is a really important debate that we should be having more aggressively, leaning farther forward.

And we shouldn't accept the idea that because Putin calls us aggressive when we figure out how we try to stop the guy, we are not the aggressor. General Nakasone, you all have done some really great work on sharing intelligence to expose what Putin was up to. What do you think the implications will be, one or two or three years from now, from what we've learned from this more aggressive, promiscuous, healthily promiscuous sharing of intel in advance?

PAUL NAKASONE:

I think we'll redefine sharing, Senator. You talk about sharing with our partners, what that had an impact, about being able to bring our coalition together. We talk about

sharing with the Ukrainians, you know, actionable intelligence that allows them to -- to be able to take, you know, combat operations to a new level.

And then I think the -- the other piece is being able to shine a light on disinformation. We've seen this in the elections 2018, 2020. When we take on an adversary, when we work with a series of partners being able to shine a light on these mis-stories and these false flag operations, it suddenly isn't as big a deal. And I think that's what we'll learn from sharing.

MARK WARNER:

Let me just make one comment -- or two quick comments. One, you know, I remember when many of us were in Munich a few weeks back and some of the, I think, very legitimate questions that Senator Cotton's asking about what we got right or wrong post-conflict starting. I just recall all of the interactions I had, and some of us who were with us there had with all of our European partners who candidly had the same assessments, particularly around, you know, control of the skies.

I think the more global comment I'd make, and it's one of the reasons why I think it's so important that we do this in public. You've heard from both sides of the aisle that members are pressing the leaders of the IC on their analysts' assessment, the quality of their intelligence, decision making. This is a committee that robustly asks hard questions.

I want to assure the public at least that this same level of questions, if not higher, are raised in closed settings. So for any -- any notion and, frankly, the fact that Senator Wyden didn't ask for those returns in his normal 30-day period as opposed to -- or a week period, you know, I don't think you have a committee here that is captured by the community.

We -- we have great respect for the community. I think virtually everyone here has commended their, I believe, excellent work; I would argue both leading up to the invasion and continuing to keep us informed. The people should know that this committee operates in the same way behind closed doors as it does in open session.

And I hope people will take some solace from that. And recognizing because we're moving on and I know there's a host of questions for the closed setting, we will move directly next door. And again, lunch will be served. We're done here. List of Panel Members

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