

**Ranking Member Schiff Opening Statement
FY-16 IAA Mark Up
June 4, 2015 at 9:00am**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you for working so closely with us on this year's Intelligence Authorization Act and in the sincere bipartisan spirit that this Committee has grown accustomed to.

It is a tribute to you, and to all the Members of the Committee, that in the opening months of this new Congress, we have successfully tackled cyber legislation, FISA reform, and now the IAA. We have our differences of opinion, but we have also remained committed to solving problems together. This commitment has led to this remarkable run of legislative successes.

Through these efforts, and the IAA in particular, the Committee is doing precisely what it is supposed to be doing: thoroughly and tenaciously overseeing the Intelligence Community to make sure its activities are lawful and in keeping with our nation's highest standards, as well as to make sure the Intelligence Community has the resources it needs to keep us and our allies safe.

The bill today even holds, or “fences,” significant amounts of money to make sure the Committee's direction is followed to a “t.”

It is a very strong bill. It provides detailed guidance, precise authorizations and tight restrictions for the entire U.S. intelligence community and its programs.

In particular:

- The bill continues to support our overhead architecture by funding our most critical programs, investing in space protection and resiliency, preserving investments in cutting-edge technologies, and by enhancing oversight of contracting and procurement practices.
- It promotes foreign partner capabilities, critical to multiplying the reach and impact of our own intelligence efforts.
- It enhances Human Intelligence (or HUMINT) capabilities, which is often the key to understanding and predicting global events.
- It continues the Committee's emphasis on counterintelligence and security reforms.

- It provides resources to safeguard against losing valuable signals intelligence (or SIGINT) collection, while enhancing oversight of these and other sources of intelligence;
- It emphasizes collection to monitor and ensure compliance with treaties and potential international agreements; and
- It greatly enhances oversight of Defense Special Operations Forces activities worldwide.

The bill also incorporates some excellent provisions championed by our Democratic Members.

In particular:

- a. Mr. Carson's provisions to better understand FBI resource allocation against domestic and foreign threats, and the role of FBI and DNI in countering violent extremism, particularly in minors;
- b. Ms. Speier's provision to provide greater oversight of the IC's relationships with certain foreign partners;
- c. Mr. Quigley's provision regarding intelligence support to Ukraine; and
- d. Mr. Himes' provision to enhance the metrics involved in a critically important IC program.

We also have some important amendments from Ms. Sewell and Mr. Swalwell, which we will discuss as part of the Manager's Amendment.

From a big picture perspective, the bill provides funding significantly above the Fiscal Year ‘15 enacted levels, but about 1% below the President’s budget request.

While I believe we have largely made sound choices to cut growth in certain areas and bolster others, I am concerned that we used Overseas Contingency Operations (or OCO) funding as a pressure-release valve to stay below the sequestration levels mandated by the ill-conceived Budget Control Act.

Again, I largely support what we’ve done in this bill, but I don’t always support how we did them. We can’t have defense-related items enjoying OCO-relief when domestic programs—even those that contribute to our national and homeland security, let alone our children’s education and our social services—suffer arbitrary and harmful cuts.

I am also opposed to the provisions designed to keep the detention center at Guantanamo Bay open. The continued operation of the prison at Guantanamo Bay serves as a recruitment tool for militants, undercuts our relationships with our allies and our reputation for adherence to the rule of law. I continue to support an orderly closure of Guantanamo Bay and the continued incarceration of those who pose a danger to the United States and our allies in appropriate and secure facilities elsewhere.

I believe we shouldn't.

I have some other issues with the bill, particularly in our inability get hard numbers—even at a classified level—on the total number of combatants and noncombatant civilians killed and injured as a result of targeted lethal strikes from remotely piloted aircraft. This was a subject of an unclassified amendment I sponsored last year.

But these OCO and GTMO issues in particular are red-lines for me, and my vote on the Floor turns on resolving them.

With that said, the bill as a whole is solid and I intend to vote to advance the bill to the Floor.

I look forward to a productive mark up, as well as to working on making critical improvements as the bill moves forward—if not on the Floor, then in Conference.

Before I close, let me say thank you again, Mr. Chairman, to you and the Staff, in particular to our two Budget Directors, Shannon Stuart and Carly Blake. This markup would not be possible without the entire staff's extensive dedication, effort, and close partnership.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.