

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD OF STEPHEN W. PRESTON
SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Thank you, Madam Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, and members of the Committee. I am greatly honored to appear before you as the President's nominee to be General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency. With your indulgence, I would like to introduce the members of my family: my wife and children. These are the most important people in my life, and it is because of them that I am here today, prepared to undertake what I expect will be the most meaningful, and likely the most difficult, job in my professional life. I want to thank President Obama and Director Panetta for their trust and confidence in me. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you, the Director, and the fine men and women of the CIA to confront the ongoing threats to our national security and, ultimately, to protect families like mine all over this country.

This is a dangerous time for the United States and a challenging time for the Central Intelligence Agency. The threat of radical jihadist terrorists is real, immediate and unrelenting, and in the fight against them the Agency is at the very tip of the spear. America is counting on the Agency to help disrupt and dismantle *al Qaeda*, and to learn the intentions of our other adversaries. We will do this, through the quiet efforts and untold sacrifices of the talented and dedicated men and women who are the Agency. At the same time, the Agency must respond to continued scrutiny concerning past practices. We will do this, too, cooperating with this Committee in its review, supporting those who sought and followed authoritative legal guidance, and all the while remaining focused on our vital mission going forward.

The General Counsel has no role more important than ensuring the CIA's compliance with applicable laws of the United States. If I am confirmed, I will assume this responsibility with the utmost seriousness. I believe I have had a good deal of useful experience, having spent

most of my career in law and national security, both in government – as General Counsel of the Department of the Navy, and as Principal Deputy General Counsel and Acting General Counsel of the Department of Defense, as well as at the U.S. Department of Justice – and more recently in private practice. I also bring to the job strong commitments, to public service and the protection of U.S. national security, to the rule of law in our society and adherence to the law in what we do, and to the exercise of independent judgment and common sense in furtherance of all of these. I pledge my full support to the Director, and I am eager to join my future colleagues at the Agency and in the Intelligence Community.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with this Committee and the Congress to maintain effective communication, and in addressing the range of legal issues that may arise during my tenure. In the meantime, I appreciate this opportunity to appear before the Committee today and would be happy to answer any questions.