Remarks and Q&A by the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency Michael V. Hayden

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MR. DOUG NAQUIN (Director, Open Source Center): Good morning, again.

To recall yesterday afternoon's community panel session, I noted that as we developed our capabilities over the past few years, both in the Open Source Center and in the community writ large, we needed to secure a voice at the proverbial table or tables so we could begin to have those conversations that would institutionalize open source as a recognized program as well as, as a discipline.

One person who has been instrumental in getting open source a voice at those tables is our next speaker: first, as Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence under our first DNI, John Negroponte; and now as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Michael V. Hayden has insured the Intelligence Community does not lose sight of an environment that we've seen over these two days is growing and morphing continuously in terms of its potential to improve our knowledge of and insight into the world in which we operate. As much as anyone, Director Hayden has taken the community from acknowledging open source is good to actionable footing.

As a former military attaché in J-2, he is deeply familiar with the value of open source on the ground, and as a former Director of the National Security Agency, he is certainly no stranger to the challenge of volume.

So without further ado, it is my distinct pleasure to introduce Mr. Michael V. Hayden, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

(Applause.)

DIRECTOR MICHAEL V. HAYDEN (Director, CIA): Well, thanks, Doug. Good morning, everyone. It's a pleasure to be here. You get 39 years of being only to wear a blue tie, and you see what happens, huh? (Laughter.)

As Doug suggested, I'm no stranger to the open source discipline and actually quite a fan of it. As you mentioned, I'm a career intelligence officer, so I'd like to start today with maybe an observation that could surprise some of you. Secret information isn't always the brass ring in our profession. In fact, there's real satisfaction in solving a problem or answering a tough question with information that someone was dumb enough to leave out in the open. (Chuckles.) Doug mentioned I was an attaché in Bulgaria – a long time ago, about 20 years now. Part of that job is immersing yourself in that society. Someone once gave me – the description of a good attaché is someone who has become so immersed in the society that when he wakes up in the morning, he can sense that something is different today. So in order to be able to do that, in order to immerse yourself, you read the press even if it's the state-run press, you watch television even if it's state-run news shows. You make all kinds of official contacts that you can possibly make. Most of that stuff is a little dry, but in essence it gave me a sense for norm; you know, it gave you a sense as to what the center line was.

Now there was a lot of information there, always freely available, and I collected it in open and sometimes not-so-open ways. But the key was to actually know what to look for and then be in a position to absorb it.

One of the things I did as an attaché – and I realize this is a little bit different than maybe the narrowly defined definition of open source, but I think it has powerful echoes, so I want to share it with you. As an attaché, you are an overt collector. And this was a communist country, a closed state in which attaches were fairly closely watched. But again, you wanted to immerse yourself in that society to learn as much about it as you possibly could.

So one of the things I took to doing is, rather than driving on collection trips in the U.S. government Volvo that we had, I took to taking trains. And so I would get up early in the morning, try to slip out of the house without being observed. I'd take the streetcar down to the train station, buy the ticket that day, get on the train, and then travel across Bulgaria from Sofia to the Black Sea, and then turn around and come back.

Now, that was an attractive route for me because one of the more important things I had to observe was Bulgaria's armored brigades, of which there were five. And many of you probably know tanks are heavy, and they like to move them by rail. So guess where all five tank brigades were. They were all along the main east-west rail lines.

So I would go into the car and immediately go to the dining car and figure out some way that I could stay there beyond the 45-minute limit that was posted at both ends of the car; not because the Bulgarian breakfast food was particularly attractive – (laughter) – but because the dining car had windows on both sides, and that I could observe both sides as we traveled out.

So we get to Varna or Burgas – okay – and my goal there was to be – if I could possibly be invisible, I would have been, but I can't, so I just try to keep my mouth shut, speak as little Bulgarian as I could – ordering things and so on – and, again, trying to be as inconspicuous as possible.

But on the return trip, I change the M.O. On the return trip, I'd done all my observation. On the return trip, I wanted to – back to that verb I used earlier – absorb, but this time I was going to absorb not visually, but socially, and so I would walk the length of the car – multiple cars – looking for that couchette that had the empty seat with seemingly interesting people in all of the other seats.

I can recall one instance where I was walking by a couchette with six seats – five full, one empty. The five individuals in the seats were Bulgarian air force academy cadets – (laughter) – and I just looked at the seat and said – (in Bulgarian) – is it free? Da. Got away with that without too much of an accent, sat down, pulled my hat down over my eyes, closed my eyes and just sat there.

They were practicing their aviation English. Now the international language of aviation is English, and so if you want to be an aviator, you've got to – you know, you've got to have some working knowledge of English. And so they would be saying some things in Bulgarian and coming back in English or saying some things in English and coming back in Bulgarian. And one of the phrases – one of the phrases they put out was "runway." And there was a long pause because whoever they were asking this of didn't know the answer. So from the – beneath the brim of my hat, this voice – mine – simply said, pista (ph) – (chuckles) – which is the Bulgarian word for runway or racetrack and so on.

And it was one of those Rod Serling kind of moments for those poor cadets. (Laughter.) I identified who I was, so as not to make them vulnerable or at least not to do something they weren't prepared to – well, only volunteered to do, talk to an American. One of them vaporized in an instant. He was gone from the car and I never saw him again. (Laughter.) But the other four stayed there and we spent the rest of the time going into Sofia just talking about life and death and military service and how's the academy and what's your curriculum and what do you intend to fly and how long – how many flight hours do you get? (Laughter.) What's the saddle depth of an SS-21? (Laughter.)

I was doing, back in the mid 1980s, socially, absorbing information that wasn't, in any real sense, protected, information that was available, would we but get ourselves up against it and be able to, again, use that verb, absorb it. In today's world, that information that would have been available 20, 22 years ago, only by this social discourse, is now available in what we call open source, out there in the electronic media in which our species has decided to put almost all known knowledge. And so that experience as an attaché has given me an appreciation of that which we can learn, information readily available, unguarded, not classified, if we would but get ourselves in a position to access it.

I should also add too that those five armor brigades that I wanted to look at from Kniajevo and Sliven and Yambol and Kazalak, okay, they were actually pretty big. They were actually pretty easy to see. Today, the job we have in the Intelligence Community is a lot harder and bit different. The things we want to discover are not out there as the size of an armor brigade. Collection, analysis, dissemination of information is as important as it has ever been. And so your conference here, covering such a broad array of topics including – and I'm happy to see virtually every stakeholder in the open source enterprise here – makes abundantly clear that the rich potential, far reach, and real impact of open source intelligence has finally been embraced.

Now, it's something I appreciated even before that tour in Bulgaria and I've tried to carry it forth ever since. A little over three years ago, as Doug suggested, a small group of us sat down to figure out what the new Intelligence Community might look at under the newly created Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte. John was at the DNI and I was his deputy. We set up

a shop just a few blocks from here in the Old Executive Office Building and literally taped blank sheets of butcher paper all along the wall of the temporary office we had been given. And I mean – you know, we used the pages, blank as a metaphor. This was not a metaphor – (chuckles) – okay? The pages were blank. And how did we want to structure this community?

There's a lot to think through. But it didn't take us long to identify the way ahead for open source. In fact, we saw the establishment of this center, the Open Source Center, as one of the three most important objectives for the ODNI in its first year. The other two? The National Clandestine Service at CIA, second, the National Security Branch at FBI, and, third, a more autonomous Open Source Center for the Intelligence Community. We considered a couple of options for creating this center. But at the end of the day, we decided that voting on the expertise and the capacities of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service and placing the center in CIA made the most sense. FBIS represented the strongest foundation on which we could build, with capabilities that were already out there, ranging from media and Internet collection to research and analysis to advanced I.T., database acquisition and training. And keeping it in CIA allowed the Open Source Center to focus on mission while CIA handled most of the housekeeping chores that would come about from any such organization.

So the aim from the start has been to build and strengthen those capabilities that already existed and then extend their reach. And as I said, we made the Director of CIA the executive agent for open source. I'd be responsible for the center's success, not just in such traditional roles as collector and analyzer and disseminator, but in a new, broader role of community leader working to expand the open source discipline. Let me make sure we understand that distinction. The Open Source Center was designed to be a production line in terms of the creation of knowledge of use to American policy-makers. But it was also designed to be an advocate, a spokesman, a facilitator for the open source enterprise for the open source discipline beyond the fence line, beyond the confines of the Open Source Center itself.

I don't offer this bit of history as some sort of a lesson in the IC wiring diagram. I want you simply to recognize that open source intelligence is widely seen as both an essential capability and a formal asset in our national security infrastructure. As the DNI's strategic plan puts it, and I'm quoting here now, "No aspect of collection requires greater consideration or holds more promise than open source." Here's why. Those working in this discipline are at the nexus, right now, of two intensely powerful dynamic forces: the media and information technology.

And while the Internet has revolutionized human interaction, there is still an awful lot for us to learn about it and the opportunity that it now represents. Finally, the questions our customers ask, whether it's a policy-maker or military commander or law-enforcement official demand answers, many of which are only available through open source research.

So when I became Director of CIA, one of the first things I did was to make Doug a direct report to me. So Doug, in the org chart, is up there with the DI and the head of the National Clandestine Service, the Director of Support, and the Director of Science and Technology. And early in my tenure I think Steve Kappes and I – Steve is the Deputy – had gone a bit public with the number of installations, the number of partners we visited. Steve and I have been to more than 50 liaison partners in about a two-year time period.

In addition to that, we made a special effort to visit the outposts in the open source enterprise as well, and I think I've got four of those already in terms of notches on my belt. One stop that meant a great deal to me was designed to be a courtesy call. I was in Key West, not on business. (Chuckles.) And there is an open source facility there that looks at that island about 90 miles just off the southern marker buoy there.

It was going to be a 20-minute courtesy call. I was there for three hours because, talk about time on target, the people in this little cinderblock shack on the extreme southern reaches of Key West knew so much about what was happening in Cuba. And for me as the Director of CIA to sit with them and watch Cuban soap operas and have them tell me what they were extracting from watching these soap operas was quite remarkable.

They gave me a videotape, DVD, of a program that they had captured from the Internet. And it had a Cuban soap-opera star starring in it, and there are only two other players. And his name is Nicanor (sp) and he's making a fine brew of coffee and there's a knock at his door. And it's two individuals from the security service to install the microphones. (Laughter.)

We're here to install the microphones. He says, what do you mean, microphones? And it goes for about 17 minutes of some of the most subtle satiric commentary on a totalitarian state I have ever seen. He mentions that – they have to decide where to put the microphones and they can't put them in the kitchen because it's too noisy and the bedroom air conditioner interferes with it. So, finally, they say, we have to put the microphones in the bathroom. (Laughter.)

So he says, when I criticize the government, I must go into the bathroom? (Laughter.) And he said, why don't we put another microphone over here? And then they begin to criticize him. What kind of person are you? There are only a limited number of microphones in Cuba! (Laughter.) There's a family down the street that criticizes the government day and night. They have 11 kids and they're only allotted one microphone.

It gave me a new appreciation for life and thought and the situation on the island. And, again, back to riding trains to Kazanlak, it's out there; it's available, but you have to access. And you access that truth in a way that's different from running agents against a foreign government. Now, given that importance to this discipline, Doug sits at my staff meetings each time they occur, and that's three days a week. Open source has a seat at the table, a seat at the table with every other core discipline that comprises the Central Intelligence Agency. We think it's a key component of our own strategic blueprint, which we call our strategic intent; that's how important we think this is.

Now, as I indicated a few minutes ago, my job as executive agent for the Open Source Center is to help it achieve those two primary goals: one, a highly effective collector and producer in its own right, the production line; and, second, to be a catalyst for the larger community, for the open source enterprise about which you heard Doug talk about yesterday.

So how are we doing? Well, one irony of working the open source side of the intelligence business, not unlike every other part of the intelligence business, is that the better we do, the less

we can talk about it. We are often addressing requirements or questions that are sensitive by nature. The information is unclassified, our interest in it is not.

Open source, by the way, is now routinely packaged with the other ints in making our products out of our DI. And I can assure you that on a recurring basis, you see open source material – cited as open source – in items in the President's Daily Brief. It's also true that, from time to time, there are items in the President's Daily Brief that are exclusively derived from open source and carry the logo not of DIA or NSA or CIA, but carry the logo to the President of the Open Source Center.

It contributes open source intelligence to national security in unique and valuable ways. Take recent events – take this jump-ball, Russia-Georgia and now think about how open source could contribute to that. How about what's going on in Pakistan? Think how open source can contribute to that and I think you have a pretty good idea of the kinds of things that open source can offer all of us. It's invaluable. We couldn't claim to do all-source analysis.

How can you be all-source, which is what we claim to be, if Doug and his folks are not part of our team? And that's a baseline that helps us to find, by the way, what's truly secret, what is not accessible in these ways, and allows us better to focus our espionage energy on those things.

Open source also helps us understand how others view the world. Without that understanding, we'd fail in our obligation to provide insight, not just information, but insight. Last spring, I was out at the Kansas State University as part of their Landon Lecture Series. And one of the points I wanted the students to take away from my time with them was how crucial it was for us as a nation to understand others, to understand others' viewpoints, friends and adversaries. We can't be myopic, see things only through an American lens. It's arrogant, but it's worse than arrogant; it's dangerous. The lecture out at Kansas State focused on the growing complexity of the world and the fact that international relations in this century will be shaped by a greater number and more diverse set of actors than they were in the last century. And the overriding challenges presented to those of us responsible for national security is that we now must do a far better job understanding cultures, histories, religions, and traditions that are not our own, or at least are not as represented even in our immigrant nation as much as our traditional cultures have been.

Open source officers have an important role in giving us that window. They expose us to perspectives we might not otherwise see. They broaden our understanding of the world. That's fundamental to our mission. Now, let me talk for a minute about goal number two, you know, the advocate, the sponsor, the facilitator, the responsibility to lead the community in unleashing the full potential of open source.

We can be proud. We've made progress here as well. Some examples – Open Source Center now provides the White House Situation Room with 340 real-time feeds from televisions broadcasts around the world. It provides data that highlights to our commands like EUCOM through a customized Internet portal. It's formed new collaborative relationships with foreign partners.

Remember the comment I mentioned where Hayden and Kappes went out there and visited 50 liaison partners? In several of those instances, the takeaway, the thing we brought home, was a new relationship between their open source enterprise and our open source enterprise as well. We're taking advantage of expertise across the spectrum from NGA headquarters in Bethesda to the Foreign Military Studies office at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to the Asian studies detachment at Camp Zama, Japan.

Open Source Center is expanding its training from officers across the community. Half of the Open Source Academy students this year work for organizations other than the Central Intelligence Agency. Perhaps most importantly, the center is making more intelligence-related content available to more people in government than ever before.

Fifteen thousand people, state and local, Congress, policy-makers regularly use opensource.gov. Now, we want to build on that momentum, and that's what drove the action plan that I know Doug's already talked to you about. It's strategic in nature, but he and I have talked. This isn't about moon-shots or dreams; it's about practical, near-term, incremental objectives. I think we've set the path and now it's simply time to execute.

Now, one of the things we're going to do to help Doug execute is to change governance a bit for the open source enterprise, not the center, but the open source enterprise. So today I'd like to tell you a bit about the creation of a new community-wide governance board that will guide us as we move forward. The Open Source Board of Governors will consist primarily of open source producers and stakeholders throughout the Intelligence Community. And what we want to be able to do is to lead an integrated approach to exploiting openly available information. The board of governors will set strategies and priorities for the open source enterprise based on the input from all who want to ensure its success.

We see this board of governors as a forum where consensus can be reached on how best to use our collective resources today and in the future. It will consider things like IT strategy and IT policy. How do we wire up together? The centralization of services, services of common concern like training or content-acquisition, things like standardization, standardization of tradecraft. The idea is to set direction and priorities in a way that allow each of the players, each of the elements of the open source enterprise to develop and make the most of their capabilities.

We've had this for the past year for one of the other functions at CIA. In addition to being the executive agent for the Open Source Center, I am the national HUMINT manager. In that hat, we have a national HUMINT board of governors in which anyone who's collecting information from our species has a seat at the table. And we have been able, through consensus, to develop a set of priorities and standards that we will be able to use across the board in human intelligence collection and reporting.

Well, why can't we do that in open source as well? The open source board will meet quarterly. The first session will take place before the end of the year and at that meeting, we'll set a work plan for the coming calendar year with key milestones and decision points.

Now, yesterday, as I know all of you know, we marked a solemn anniversary, seven years since the attack on our homeland. That one terrible day prompted action across our community on many levels. And I think the IC, the Intelligence Community, can be proud of the work that it's done in the last seven years. Together with partners across our country and across the world, we have kept the United States safe.

But we owe it to our people, the American people, never to be fully satisfied with the job we're doing. We owe it to them to constantly ask the question, how can we better do this? How can we better achieve our mission? There is abundant evidence that we're asking that question and challenging ourselves now more than ever in the open source arena.

So I'm delighted to be here today. I'm even more delighted to see you here today representing the organizations of which you are a part, but maybe more fundamentally representing the enthusiasm that is now out there for this incredibly important discipline.

Thank you then for your energy and your dedication. It inspires us as we continue to serve our fellow citizens to the best of our ability. And with that, I'd be happy to take any comments or questions you might have in the time remaining to us. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. SABRA HORNE (ODNI Senior Advisor for Open Source/Outreach): Thank you so much, General Hayden. We have four questions for you that we've taken from the audience. I'll start with the first one. "This conference sponsored an open source analytic contest, an unclassified mini National Intelligence Estimate, if you will. Why doesn't the IC publish unclassified NIEs that could be subject to the peer review of the open source community?"

DIRECTOR HAYDEN: Okay, what do the other three look like? (Laughter.) I don't know if all of you know this, but even the classified NIEs are subject to peer review. There are outside readers for even the most highly classified National Intelligence Estimates. So that's very important. So in terms of the discipline, even at the highest levels of classification, we do get outsiders to come in and give us a view. So I think that's very important.

I guess the second observation I'd make is that the NIEs are kind of the capstone documents. In fact, in some cases, they're criticize them, looking at Mark here, too capstone, too ethereal. But when they hit the sweet spot, when they bring in all of the threads of information in a digestible body for a policy-maker to actually think and decide on something that's quite important. So I guess what I'd underscore to you there – it's all source. It brings them all in so that the policy-maker can have all of the data that we have available to him in one place.

Now, that is not to undersell the independent analysis that's done in the unclassified world in which we, frankly, shamelessly, try to leverage and exploit in our own classified work.

MS. HORNE: "With respect to the phrase 'Open source is good,' do you believe open source is a double-edged sword? We need to always understand how adversaries can use our open source information against us. And what is being done about this problem?"

DIRECTOR HAYDEN: Yeah. Every intelligence discipline has the challenge you just described. Vince Fragamini (sp) was my deputy when I became a brigadier and I was the EUCOM J-2. And Vince was a career Navy Intelligence Officer. He had run their intel school down at Dam Neck before he came out to Stuttgart to be the J-2. Vince had a great phrase: live by SIGINT, die by SIGINT. (Laughter.) And it wasn't designed to be critical of SIGINT, it's just that SIGINT has the tendency to be out there on your breaking-edge news so you get the SIGINT report and Vince had another phrase: when in doubt, put it out, okay? (Laughter.) But then he would always remind me: live by SIGINT, die by SIGINT.

And I guess what I'm trying to describe for you is the problem of deception is present in every intelligence discipline, whether you're listening to someone, whether you're observing someone or something, or whether you're meeting with someone personally. And it doesn't have to be deception in terms of being intentional. This guy may be giving his impression of a meeting. How many of you had that guy talk to you, okay? The guy gave you an impression of the meeting which is at total variance with everyone else who was in the room?

Well, when we intercept that conversation, that becomes intelligence and we report on it in the same way in which we would be looking at that individual's remarks were he giving them at a press conference following the aforementioned meeting. So this problem of sorting through is present in all of our disciplines so I think what I'd suggest to you is, open source, just like every other stream of intelligence available to us, has to be vetted and has to be bumped up one against the other in order to find out the best version of truth.

MS. HORNE: "We've spoken of the importance and key role of open source. Within the CIA, the unclassified resources, infrastructure, and support has lagged behind the classified. How will the CIA put the unclassified and open source infrastructure on equal footing?"

DIRECTOR HAYDEN: It's challenge, you know, truth in lending among friends, these are not easy budget decisions, but we have made the commitment to strengthen this discipline. And I should add, too, this discipline's budget is set off for special scrutiny, set off from the rest of CIA's budget so that it is visible and observed not just by me, but by people north of me in the organization chart.

Now, we recognize that this does require investment. Somewhat like the SIGINT enterprise, which I was familiar with in my time at NSA, you really need an awful lot of computational power and IT and storage to handle the kinds of volume we now get in American SIGINT and which Doug now has to deal with in American open source reporting. So it requires investment. We're committed to that, but it's a balancing act; a little more over here means a little less over there. We just have to do the best we can.

I should add, too, we do recognize we're digging out of a deficit here. This is probably one discipline in which we have underinvested and we have to play some catch-up.

MS. HORNE: And, finally, "How do we encourage more experiences like your Bulgarian open source experience?"

DIRECTOR HAYDEN: One of the things we're doing – and we're very serious about this – we're trying to shove our analysts out the door, off of Langley, and push them forward. So a significant fraction of our analytic workforce now does its work – I mean, it does what it would be doing at CIA Headquarters, but it's not doing it at CIA Headquarters; it's doing it at forward locations.

Now, a lot of those would be in Iraq or Afghanistan in direct support of what's going on there. But there's also an awful lot who are not there, that are in other locations and the idea there is, well, to step back and put this into a second context. Half of our analysts have been hired in the last six years. So I go to Michael Morell or John Kringen and before him and say, we need more experience in our analytic workforce.

And I'm accustomed, as a former GI, you know, I know how long it takes America's Army to build a battalion commander; it takes 18 to 19 years, then someone is a lieutenant colonel and he's ready to command a battalion. So I go to Michael or to John and say, how long would it take to build us an analyst with 20 years experience? (Laughter.)

And the answer they come back with is frankly unacceptable. (Laughter.) We have found, pushing analysts forward into the area in which they report, the things they think about, accelerates this experiential curve. And why does it accelerate the experiential curve? Because the first newspaper they read in the morning is a local newspaper in the local language; the last thing they look at, at night before they go to bed is the local news in the local language. They know whether things are comfortable or uncomfortable, the population is tight or relaxed because they're on the metro with them, I mean, all of those things that an attaché can absorb, we're trying to do that for our analysts as well.

So I think, in its own way, perhaps indirectly, it's doing that kind of acculturation that I underwent when I was serving in Sofia back in the 1980s.

Thanks very much.

(Applause.)

MS. HORNE: Thank you, General Hayden, for your comments. And we especially appreciate your appreciation and advocacy for open source.

Thank you.

(END)