Building a 21st Century Trusted Workforce
October 30, 2018 | National Security Institute at GMU

Panel

- **Senator Mark Warner,** *Vice Chairman, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence*
- **Susan Gordon,** *Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence, Office of the Director of National Intelligence*
- **Kevin Phillips,** *CEO and President, ManTech*
- **Tish Long,** *Chairman, INSA (moderator)*

Overview

The security clearance process may be reaching a positive inflection point, with the clearance backlog slowly declining and organizational reforms forthcoming. The government is beginning to update policies and processes, modify inefficient practices, and develop continuous evaluation (CE) programs. However, truly transforming the security clearance system requires sustained effort and attention from both government and industry.

Panel Summary

Senior leaders from Congress, the executive branch, and industry examined the efforts to reform the security clearance process, including legislative proposals and policy initiatives to reduce the clearance backlog and make the process more effective and efficient. Panelists discussed clearance investigation timelines, backlog inventory reduction, investigative and adjudicative standards, implementation of continuous evaluation, reciprocity, and the role of social media in vetting and monitoring.

Key Insights

- According to ODNI, the security clearance backlog is set to drop from 600,000, to 300,000 by Spring 2019.

- ODNI is developing common investigative and adjudicative standards for government and industry. These standards, which are needed to implement clearance reciprocity and portability across agencies, are expected to be in place and promulgated among government agencies by the end of 2019.

- The changing nature of work—many employees no longer work for a long time on the same projects, or even for the same employer—is increasing the need for clearance portability (i.e. "clearance-in-person") and reciprocity. This is especially true for contractors who support projects at multiple agencies.

- Twenty agencies have agreed to use ODNI's continuous evaluation (CE) system, which draws on seven distinct categories of information (such as credit and law enforcement data). ODNI expects that CE will, in most cases, eventually replace periodic reinvestigations.

- The Senate's proposed FY2018–2019 Intelligence Authorization Act calls for 90% of clearance investigations to be completed within 30 days for Secret clearances and 90 days for Top Secret clearances; it also requires vetting and reciprocity standards for contractors to be consistent with those for government.

INSA Recommendations

- The clearance process should be based on uniform applications, investigations, and adjudication standards so a person's clearance can be accepted across agencies and contracts.

- Government should make investigative and adjudicative standards transparent and available to industry.

- With appropriate protections for privacy and civil liberties, continuous evaluation of publicly available data should replace periodic reinvestigations in almost all cases.

- Congress should promptly pass clearance-related provisions contained in Title VI of the Senate's Intelligence Authorization Act (S. 3153).

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