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DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE  
WASHINGTON, DC

JAN 05 2022

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Wyden and Senator Moran:

Thank you for your 04 October 2021 letter regarding the need for reform of our declassification system. It is my view that deficiencies in the current classification system undermine our national security, as well as critical democratic objectives, by impeding our ability to share information in a timely manner, be that sharing with our intelligence partners, our oversight bodies, or, when appropriate, with the general public. This reduces the Intelligence Community's (IC) capacity to effectively support senior policymaker decision-making, and further erodes the basic trust that our citizens have in their government. It is a fundamentally important issue that we must address.

How to both adequately protect and judiciously share national security information is not a new challenge, nor is it an easy one to solve. As you noted, numerous reviews have documented concerns across the entire lifecycle of the current system and sought to identify remedies: cultural, structural, and technical. In the meantime, the volume of classified material produced continues to grow exponentially in a digital-first environment, bringing with it the expanding burden of mandatory declassification requirements. The current prioritization given to remediating these issues and the resources dedicated to making tangible progress are simply not sufficient. I think this is something we can work on together.

To that end, attached are examples that illustrate efforts currently underway within the IC to improve the declassification process, many of which have potential for improving other agencies' processes as well. These examples represent areas of investment that we believe will allow us to enhance and modernize the declassification process and methods for identifying and prioritizing review of material that is in the public interest.

Along with the ongoing pursuit of these improvements, we will continue to work with our partners in the Executive Branch to modernize policies that govern classified information, as appropriate. As your letter references, the IC continued to provide timely, insightful, objective, and relevant intelligence and support during the pandemic. As a result, there may be lessons learned from this period that offer opportunities to further our work in this regard.

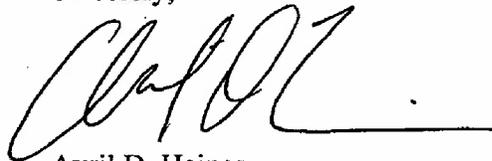
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The Honorable Ron Wyden  
The Honorable Jerry Moran

I appreciate your efforts in this realm and hope to work with you further on these challenges, which I also know are of great importance to the President. If you have additional questions, you may contact Legislative Affairs at (703) 275-2474.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Avril D. Haines', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Avril D. Haines

Enclosure:

Declassification Efforts Currently Underway within the IC (U//FOUO)

Cc:

Mr. Mark A. Bradley, Director of the Information Security Oversight Office