

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2018

Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony for Gina C. Haspel as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency in Langley, Virginia

May 21, 2018

The President. Well, thank you very much. And good morning. I want to thank all of you and our distinguished guests for joining us today for a ceremony like few will ever have again—this is a very special one—including Vice President Pence, Secretary Pompeo, Secretary Mnuchin, Secretary Chao, Secretary Perry, Secretary Nielsen, Director Coats, and my nominee for the VA Secretary, who will do a fantastic job, Robert Wilkie. Thank you very much.

I want to give a special thank you for being here to Chairman and Senator Richard Burr. Thank you very much, Richard. And a very courageous man—he's courageous—Congressman Devin Nunes. Thank you very much, Devin, for being here. Appreciate it.

Most especially, I want to thank you, the dedicated men and women of the Central Intelligence Agency. It is a true honor to stand here today before the most elite intelligence professionals on the planet Earth. Nobody even close.

You face down our enemies. You protect our families. You stand and watch over our great nation. You don't do it for fame or fortune or glory. You do it for your country. America is forever grateful. Thank you very much.

We're here today for the swearing-in of a very special person, your new CIA Director, someone who has served this agency with extraordinary skill and devotion for 30 years: Gina Haspel.

Gina, congratulations. There is no one in this country better qualified for this extraordinary office than you. By the way, if you don't agree with that, please let me know now before it's too late, okay? *[Laughter]* Immediately. Have to do it quickly.

You live in the CIA—you live the CIA, you breathe the CIA. And now you will lead the CIA. Congratulations. *[Applause]* Okay, that means we're keeping her, right? *[Laughter]* That was—that's what we were waiting for. They love you. They respect you. They respect you too.

A native of Ashland, Kentucky, Gina's father served in the U.S. Air Force. She spent much of her childhood overseas. From a young age, she was instilled with a deep love of our country, which, combined with a thirst for adventure—that led her to the CIA.

Throughout her storied career at this agency, Gina has truly done it all. She's completed seven field tours, served as a case officer, recruited assets, run stations, captured terrorists, and disrupted networks that proliferate deadly weapons. They send those weapons all over, and you catch them. You're going to get even better now, better than ever before. You're the best. You're going to be better than ever before, and we're getting you the resources to do it.

Our enemies will take note: Gina is tough. She is strong. And when it comes to defending America, Gina will never, ever back down. I know her. I spent a lot of time with Gina.

Gina played a crucial role in our fight against Al Qaida. Her first day in the job at the CIA's Counterterrorism Center was September 11, 2001. And she tirelessly hunted terrorists

for the next 3 years. She went on to become Deputy Director of the National Clandestine Service and, most recently, Deputy Director of the CIA.

During her decades of distinguished service, Gina has earned the George H.W. Bush Award for Excellence in Counterterrorism and the Intelligence Medal of Merit. Most importantly, she has earned the universal respect, admiration, and trust of her colleagues here at the CIA, throughout the Government, and all over the world. Gina is truly respected.

And today we also mark another proud milestone, as Gina becomes the first woman ever to lead the CIA. *[Applause]* That's big. That's big. That's big.

Now Gina will lead this agency into its next great chapter. Gina assumes the role of Director at a crucial moment in our history. We are reasserting American strength and American confidence. And by the way, America is respected again. And you see that.

Instead of apologizing for our Nation, we are standing up for our Nation, and we are standing up for the men and women who protect our Nation. We will be counting on you to confront a wide array of threats we face, and to help usher in a new era of prosperity and of peace.

Since the CIA's founding more than 70 years ago, its courageous operatives have combined ancient craft with modern marvels to achieve unsung victories in every corner of the globe. I see what you do, I understand what you do, and it's incredible.

Marked on the hallowed walls of this building are the stars honoring the CIA's fallen heroes who gave their last breath for our Nation. Though many of their names remain secret, their stories of service and sacrifice and daring will live for all time.

Today we think of them, and we honor them by pledging that the patriots of the CIA will have the tools, the resources, and the support they need to accomplish their incredible, complicated, and oftentimes very dangerous mission. The exceptional men and women of this agency deserve exceptional leadership, and in Gina Haspel, that is exactly what you're getting.

Director Haspel, congratulations again. I know that you will thrive as the Agency's Director and help keep our Nation safe, and strong, and proud, and free. Good luck, God bless you, and God bless the men and women of the CIA. God bless America.

And I just want to thank everybody in this room for doing such an incredible job and for giving Gina that unbelievable support that she needed. It took courage for her to say "yes" in the face of a lot of very negative politics and what was supposed to be a negative vote. But I'll tell you, when you testified before the committee, it was over. There was not much they could say. There was nobody more qualified than you. And you are going to do a fantastic job, Gina. Thank you very much. Thank you, Gina.

So with that, I'd like to ask our great Vice President to administer the oath of office. Thank you all very much. Thank you.

[At this point, Vice President Michael R. Pence administered the oath of office. He then made brief remarks as follows.]

Vice President Michael R. Pence. Congratulations.

Director Haspel. Good morning, everyone. And thank you, Mr. Vice President, for administering the oath. Let me begin by thanking President Trump for joining us today and for

offering those kind words. Mr. President, it means a great deal to me and to the Agency that you made time to come out to Langley for this ceremony.

The President. Thank you. Thank you.

Director Haspel. You have placed enormous trust in CIA throughout your Presidency. And the men and women of CIA do not take that for granted. So thank you, Mr. President, for your confidence in me and your steadfast support of our mission and our people.

I am truly honored to have this opportunity to lead the best workforce in Government. It has been nearly 50 years since an operations officer rose up through the ranks to become the Director. And after the experience of the last 2 months, I think I know why that is. [*Laughter*]

I look out in the crowd today and I see a strong representation of the CIA's past, present, and possibly even the future. I am looking at two young ladies, special guests, who join us today. CIA has been more than a career. It has been, for me—like many of you—a calling.

In this building and around the world today, there are officers carrying out a vital mission, sometimes at great personal risk. I want each of you to know that I took on the position of Director because I want to represent you, as well as lead you.

My years at CIA have rewarded me in ways that I could never have imagined, and I will continue to give it and you my all. There are countless role models and mentors who paved the way for me to stand here today. As the Director, I want the current CIA leadership team to be role models and mentors for our next generation of officers who will walk the streets of far-flung capitals and work the late nights here at headquarters and abroad.

For me, being Director is about doing right by all of you so that you have the tools and support needed to carry out our sacred mission. Every CIA officer has taken the same oath that I just did to support and defend the Constitution against all enemies. And today I recommit that I will do everything in my power to justify the faith that President Trump and the American people have placed in us and to make sure that CIA continues to provide the intelligence needed to keep our country safe.

I would be remiss if I did not also note the tremendous pride I take in being the first woman to serve as Director. I would not be standing before you today if not for the remarkable courage and dedication displayed by generations of OSS and Agency women in roles both large and small, who challenged stereotypes, broke down barriers, and opened doors for the rest of us.

I am deeply indebted to them, and I'm extremely proud to follow in their footsteps and to carry on their extraordinary legacy. I stand on the shoulders of heroines who never sought public acclaim, but served as inspirations to the generations that came after them.

I also want express a special thank you and welcome to Eliza and Zoe, who have joined us today. The notes from these two young ladies, ages 6 and 7, sent to me sat on my desk these last 2 months and motivated me daily. In their own words and pictures, they expressed their excitement about the opportunity my nomination represented. And to Eliza and Zoe, I would simply say, we did it.

Lastly, allow me just a moment to talk about the future of this agency. A little over a year ago, Secretary Pompeo first spoke to me about becoming the Deputy Director. At that time, he said, "CIA is the world's preeminent intelligence service, and I want to make sure we position it to stay that way." Mike was right: We are the best, and our challenge is to always be the best.

We cannot rest on our laurels. We must learn from the past, but we cannot dwell in the past. We must constantly learn, adjust, improve, and strive to be better. We demanded of ourselves, and America deserves nothing less. That includes boosting our foreign language proficiency, strengthening our partnerships overseas and here at home, and deploying more of our officers to the foreign field. We are a foreign intelligence service, and our workforce and our priorities need to reflect that.

We also need greater focus and effort on the strategic threats our Nation faces, as well as the persistent threat from global terrorism. As always, the key to our success against these challenges will be empowering the incredible talent that resides within CIA. The men and women who serve here are a national treasure: from the operations officers who collect our intelligence, to the analysts who contextualize and evaluate it for senior policymakers; to the support officers who enable every aspect of our mission; to the scientists, engineers, and cyber specialists who give us a decisive edge over our adversaries.

The only way to confront these threats is to forge ahead with determination and with the same expeditionary spirit that has defined our agency since its founding more than 70 years ago. I am profoundly honored to lead you in that fight and to work alongside each one of you as we advance our vital mission.

So, Mr. President, thank you again for giving me the opportunity to serve, to represent the men and women of CIA, and to carry out the critical work of helping protect our country, our people, and our way of life. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:51 a.m. at Central Intelligence Agency Headquarters.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Central Intelligence Agency Director Gina C. Haspel, swearing-in ceremony.

Locations: Langley, VA.

Names: Burr, Richard M.; Chao, Elaine L.; Coats, Daniel R.; Haspel, Gina C.; Mnuchin, Steven T.; Nielsen, Kirstjen M.; Nunes, Devin G.; Pence, Michael R.; Perry, J. Richard; Pompeo, Michael R.; Wilkie, Robert L., Jr.

Subjects: Central Intelligence Agency; Energy, Department of : Secretary; Homeland Security, Department of : Secretary; Intelligence, Office of the Director of National; State, Department of : Secretary; Terrorism : Counterterrorism efforts; Terrorism : September 11, 2001, attacks; Transportation, Department of : Secretary; Treasury, Department of the : Secretary; Veterans Affairs, Department of : Secretary-designate; Virginia : President's visits; White House Office : Vice President.

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