Statement by Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper on Allegations of Economic Espionage

September 8, 2013

It is not a secret that the Intelligence Community collects information about economic and financial matters, and terrorist financing.

We collect this information for many important reasons: for one, it could provide the United States and our allies early warning of international financial crises which could negatively impact the global economy. It also could provide insight into other countries' economic policy or behavior which could affect global markets.

Our collection of information regarding terrorist financing saves lives. Since 9/11, the Intelligence Community has found success in disrupting terror networks by following their money as it moves around the globe. International criminal organizations, proliferators of weapons of mass destruction, illicit arms dealers, or nations that attempt to avoid international sanctions can also be targeted in an effort to aid America's and our allies' interests.

What we do not do, as we have said many times, is use our foreign intelligence capabilities to steal the trade secrets of foreign companies on behalf of - or give intelligence we collect to - US companies to enhance their international competitiveness or increase their bottom line.

As we have said previously, the United States collects foreign intelligence - just as many other governments do - to enhance the security of our citizens and protect our interests and those of our allies around the world. The intelligence Community's efforts to understand economic systems and policies and monitor anomalous economic activities is critical to providing policy makers with the information they need to make informed decisions that are in the best interest of our national security.

James R. Clapper, Director of National Intelligence