



DNI Clapper: Ukraine intelligence 'not a failure by any stretch'

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When did U.S. intelligence learn about Russian plans to take over Crimea? That question was at the heart of a firestorm on Capitol Hill set off by Arizona Sen. John McCain's confrontation with Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel. During a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing Wednesday, McCain, a Republican, said it was a "massive failure" that the U.S. intelligence agencies did not predict Russia's activities. But Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, in an exclusive interview with WTOP, disputed that characterization.

"I have lived through some genuine intelligence failures in my career and this was not a failure by any stretch," Clapper said. "We tracked (the situation in Ukraine) pretty carefully and portrayed what the possibilities were and certainly portrayed the difficulties we'd have, because of the movements of Russian troops and provided anticipatory warning of their incursion into Crimea," Clapper added.

During an expansive interview in his office, Clapper pointed out that, "We were following closely the political and economic developments in Ukraine. We spoke to it in our statement for the record at the time and as the situation unfolded with the Russians."

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