

Testimony of the Acting Director of Central Intelligence
9-11 Commission Findings
17 August 2004

Mr. Chairman, as this Committee considers reorganization proposals by the President, the Kean Commission and the Congress, I want to speak to the structure and capabilities of the Intelligence Community as it is today, not as it was in 2001. I believe that today's Intelligence Community provides a much stronger foundation than many people realize for whatever changes you decide to make. That said, we can still do better, and I will close with some thoughts on how this can be accomplished.

Intelligence Community Today

Three years of war have profoundly affected the Intelligence Community. Since 9/11, our capacity and effectiveness have grown as our resources have increased and as we have taken steps to address many of the issues others

have highlighted. This has been the most dramatic period of change in my memory. Some examples:

- Our policies—the Nation's and the Intelligence Community's—have changed—we are on the offensive against terrorists worldwide and many of the most dangerous are captured or dead.
- Our practices have changed—intelligence, law enforcement and military officers serve together and share information real time on the front lines at home and abroad. And in Washington, I chair an operational meeting every day with Intelligence community and law enforcement elements represented. Decisions made there go immediately to officers in the field whose penetration and disruption of terrorist groups yields the kind of increasingly precise intelligence you have seen in the last two weeks.

- Our worldwide coalition has changed—it is broader, deeper, and more committed. Where terrorists found sanctuary before, they find our allies now—and we are seeing the results from Manama to Mexico City.
- Our laws have changed—the Patriot Act has given us weapons in the war we did not have and we have saved lives because of them.
- Our institutions have changed—The Terrorist Threat Integration Center enables us to share intelligence collected abroad with law enforcement information collected at home—and plots have been stopped in the US because of that. Twenty-six different data networks now flow there to be shared by officers from the widest array of foreign and domestic intelligence agencies ever assembled in one organization. People who think we can't break down the so-called “stovepipes” need to visit TTIC.

In turn, the changes affected our ability to wage war and the impact of change has been striking.

- It was imaginative covert action—CIA officers working with the US military—that helped drive military operations and ousted the Taliban from power in Afghanistan and broke up the al Qaida sanctuary.
- Terrorist arrests are increasing steadily. That evidence comes with your morning newspapers nearly every day now.
- CIA, FBI, Treasury, and other partners, at home and abroad are starving the al Qa'ida of its lifeblood-- money.
- CIA has worked with the FBI, as it has taken down extremists in Lackawanna, Columbus, and New York City.

- Our coalition partners include, by varying degrees, Libyans and Russians, Chinese and Hungarians, Pakistanis and Saudis—and our traditional allies in Europe and Asia.

In short, the situation has changed dramatically from where the 9/11 Commission left off. Two things, however, are still true: al Qaida and other terrorists remain dangerous and there is still room for improvement in the Intelligence Community. But the image that many seek to perpetuate of a Community that does not share information or work together, a Community of turf-conscious people competing for influence—that is not the Community I lead. It is a caricature that does a great disservice to the men and women who put it on the line every day, 24/7.

Supporting the Warfighter

Because of this Committee's special responsibilities, I need to say a word about the Intelligence Community's support to the warfighter. And as we discuss various proposals for restructuring the Intelligence Community today, let me be clear about one thing: no matter what course the Administration and Congress choose, intelligence support to the military, especially in time of war, should not be allowed to diminish—and I believe such support can and will be preserved under any of the options being considered. Everyone in the Intelligence Community understands that NSA, NGA, and NRO, all vital parts of the National Intelligence Community, are also combat support agencies. Let me give you the assurance that the relationship between the Intelligence Community and the uniformed military has never been closer. Some data points:

- The Secretary of Defense has met frequently with George Tenet and myself to coordinate policies across the board.

- A Navy Seal Three Star—Admiral Calland—sits right across the hall from me with the mission of ensuring we and the military are connected and that both sides are getting what they need.
- CIA and US military officers have been living and fighting together for three years in the mountains and plains of Afghanistan where they have al-Qa'ida on the run.
- Our collection, operational, and analytic support to military efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq is close and continuous.
 - The CIA deployed 12 Crisis Operations Liaison Teams to CENTCOM specifically tailored to work side-by-side with Special Operations and conventional forces in Afghanistan and Iraq.
 - I hold frequent video conferences with CENTCOM Commander Abizaid to personally assure that we understand his perspective and needs.

- We have upgraded information technology support to the military in the field, so that Intelligence Community products are now available in 80 military intelligence centers around the globe.

Thoughts on Reform

Looking ahead now, it is important to note that the threat from terrorist organizations is not stagnant. These organizations learn and adapt. It is not enough for us to keep up, we must anticipate and keep ahead. As we seek to build on the improvements we've made in recent years, we should keep in mind a few of what I would call "first principles":

First, speed and agility are the keys to the war on terrorism, and profoundly important to the nation's other intelligence challenges. Speed and agility are not promoted by complicated wiring diagrams, more levels of bureaucracy,

increased dual hatting, or inherent questions about who is in charge.

Second, as in architecture, form should follow function. The functions intelligence must perform today are dramatically different than during the Cold War. Back then, we focused heavily on large strategic forces and where countries stood in the bipolar competition of the day. Today, the focus is more on locating people, tracking shipments of dangerous materials, understanding politics down to the tribal level in a world where the only constant is change.

Third, in this world clear structure and clear chain of command is better than its opposite.

Fourth, most important to knowing how and what to change is consensus on what we want from our intelligence agencies, constancy in resource and moral support for them

through good and bad times, and patience. The Commission says that the country cannot be patient. But to quote a saying I learned during my Army years: if you want it bad; you will get it bad.

Drawing on these principles, I believe that short, clear lines of command and control are required in whatever structure you establish, regardless of what you call its leader. Three words are key: agility, flexibility, and speed. You need to build these into any new structures and procedures.

No matter how successfully we anticipate future challenges, we will not foresee them all. So, we will need the ability to adapt our organizations to change, easily and quickly. We will need flexibility in shifting resources, people and money to respond to shifting priorities. The DCI can do some of this with existing authorities. But frankly, it is too complicated and

ponderous. It involves more negotiation and signoffs than the times will allow.

That is why, should the President's proposal to create a National Intelligence Director be adopted, I believe that individual should have the clear authority to move people and resources and to evaluate the performance of the national intelligence agencies and their leaders. And this should be accomplished in the cleanest and most direct manner you can devise.

People often remark that DCIs allow too much in the Intelligence Community to be "CIA-centric"—whether it is the staffing of centers or the preparation of National Estimates. Well, the reason is simple. It's because the DCI "can"—that is these are the troops he directly commands and can task and move with little effort or resistance. If the DCI had enhanced authorities along the lines I've suggested or if you create a NID

like that, you should expect to see much more integration of effort in the Community and a greater capacity to create cross-Community task forces and centers in a more agile and seamless way.

You would also see more progress by a DCI or NID on things like common policies for personnel, training, security, and information technology.

As you consider all of this, here is a key thing to think about: who will you hold responsible not just when things are going well but when something goes wrong with intelligence? Today, it is the DCI even though his authorities over the rest of the Community outside CIA are limited. If in the future it will be a National Intelligence Director, what authorities would be commensurate with that kind of responsibility? And what would that person actually be responsible for? What the Community concludes substantively about major issues, like Iraq, North

Korea, or terrorism? If the answer is yes, that person will need direct access to sizeable numbers of collectors and analysts, just as the DCI has today. The question then arises about where those people will come from and with what impact.

Or would the NID be responsible less for substantive matters and principally for the “management” and integration of resources—and can the two be separated? If they can, will responsibility and accountability be harder to pin down than it is today—especially in view of the fact that the person you now hold responsible—the head of CIA—would then be at least a layer away from the top?

I regret to close with a series of questions, but I believe they illustrate the complexity of these issues and the need to proceed cautiously and with care as we contemplate changes to an Intelligence system on which the nation must depend, more than ever, for its security.