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CHALLENGES FACING THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE

The Intelligence Reform Act established the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) and gave him statutory authority to lead the Intelligence Community. Director Negroponte has been in his job 7 weeks.

For intelligence reform to succeed, what are the most important issues that demand his personal attention?

1. Defining and Implementing a Vision

The DNI needs to define and implement a vision for the future of the Intelligence Community. He needs to drive reform and change. He needs to create unity of effort within the Intelligence Community. His vision should include :

- A focus on the joint mission, with agencies acting in concert, not competition;
- An emphasis on outcomes, not process;
- Making information available where and when it is needed; and
- Staying at the forefront of science and technology.

2. Exercising Leadership over the Intelligence Community

To carry out his vision for the Community, the DNI will need to exercise clear authority over its constituent agencies. The Intelligence Reform Act gave the DNI clear authority to:

- Set budgets for the Community;
- Transfer personnel as needed to accomplish the joint mission; and
- Establish Community-wide policies for security, information technology, personnel and training.

3. Focusing on Information Sharing

Information sharing is a critical challenge for the DNI. To succeed, he will need to:

- Force a shift in culture from “need to know” to “need to share”;
- Develop an information system that enables intelligence professionals to draw upon information from across the Community; and
- Take direct and personal responsibility for information systems. He must take charge.

In its final report, the 9/11 Commission recommended a strong Director of National Intelligence, responsible for managing the National Intelligence Program and overseeing the agencies that contribute to it.

This recommendation was designed to rectify three pre-9/11 shortcomings:

- The Director of Central Intelligence had too many jobs (head of the CIA, head of the intelligence community, President’s chief intelligence adviser) to focus on managing the Intelligence Community.
- At the same time, the DCI did not have sufficient authority over agencies beyond CIA to truly lead a unified Intelligence Community. No one was in charge.
- Institutional stovepipes meant that all the relevant information was not all in one place. Intelligence agencies weren’t working together. They weren’t “connecting the dots.”