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Opening Statement for Ranking Member Sue Myrick
Subcommittee on Intelligence Community Management
House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
Hearing on Critical IC Management Challenges
April 1, 2009

Thank you, Madame Chairwoman, and welcome Mr. Maguire. We appreciate you taking the time to appear before the subcommittee to discuss the informative report compiled by your office on the critical intelligence community management challenges.

The point may be made that the report covers the period of time before the current Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair was confirmed for office, but I hope this will not serve as an excuse for inaction on the part of the current director.

As we learn from your report, at the start of the tenure of the third DNI, the office still does not have a clear mission statement or clearly defined roles and responsibilities. How is it that four years after ODNI was established, ODNI employees themselves are voicing confusion about lines of authority within the office and a lack of transparency and poor internal communication?

One has to ask, “If the head does not know what it is doing, how can the body be expected to follow?” The director of national intelligence is supposed to direct our nation’s intelligence community, but how can he be expected to lead when there is uncertainty on his own staff?

This committee has repeatedly criticized growth in the staff and budget of ODNI, and in its past two authorization bills, voted to cut both on a bipartisan basis. Despite this, ODNI under its first directors has continued to grow and amass scarce intelligence resources for itself.

Now we learn through your report that this growth has been without direction or purpose. Instead of the lean coordinating body Congress envisioned ODNI to be when it passed IRTPA, we got fat—layer upon layer of bloated bureaucracy at the top of the community.

To wit, your report states as one of its noteworthy findings, “IC agencies complained that the ODNI sends duplicative taskings and conflicting messages to the IC, thereby undermining the ODNI’s credibility and fueling assertions that the ODNI is just an ‘additional layer of bureaucracy.’”

You also note in your report the finding of the WMD Commission that, “No shortcoming of the Intelligence Community has received more attention since the September 11 attacks than the failure to share information.”

The issues of information sharing and collaboration in the IC are of critical importance to me, and I intend to devote much of my time and effort as Ranking Member of this subcommittee to focus on them

Therefore I am pleased that you report the IC has made some improvements in information sharing, including new tools for the dissemination of information and creation of virtual work environments to improve analytic efforts.

I note, however, that there is still room for significant improvement. Much has been made of the IC’s move from “need to know” to “responsibility to share,” yet we learn from your report that compartmentalization of information continues to be an impediment to thorough IC analysis. I’m sure you would agree Mr. Maguire that it does us no good to collect the dots, if we don’t give analysts the information they need to connect the dots.

It is disappointing to hear that so many years after 9/11, personal relationships are still a driving force for IC information sharing. What should this subcommittee, indeed the full committee, be pushing to break down the barriers to communication in the intelligence community? It would be helpful if you could update us on any findings or information you have garnered on the status and implementation of Intelligence Community

Directive 501, which establishes IC rules for access and dissemination of intelligence.

It would also be helpful if you could shed additional light on what you have learned about continued “stove piping” of information and its impact on collaboration. What specific recommendations would you make to the current DNI to help eliminate the turf battles within ODNI and between intelligence community agencies and elements? Also, what recommendations would you make to improve collaboration between the intelligence community and law enforcements organizations, while being mindful of the need to protect the civil liberties of Americans?

You highlight a number of issues that, for the sake of time and so we can hear more of what you have to say, I will not go into in my statement. But before I conclude, I would like to hear your thoughts on the challenges to intelligence community management caused by having IC elements that report to both ODNI and another government agency, such as the Department of Defense, Homeland Security or State. Can the DNI effectively lead the IC when he, in fact, has to share management of so many of its parts?

Mr. Maguire, your report provides an illuminating read into the challenges of IC management. It also provides a good starting point for this subcommittee and for the DNI to examine the vexing, ongoing management issues that plague ODNI and hobble the director’s leadership of the community. I look forward to hearing your testimony and any, specific recommendations you would make to address the problems your office has identified. Thank you.