

## CONCLUSION



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We have approached our task mindful of its historical context. In truth, looking to the past, we find cause for discouragement. Many of the ideas and recommendations that we have made in this report were advanced with compelling reasoning by previous commissions. After ceremonious presentations to the President and to Congress, the previous recommendations were ignored or implemented weakly. Most of them failed to take hold. The question is inescapable: why should this Commission be different from the others?

Nevertheless, we are hopeful. The Intelligence Community is at the juncture of a number of powerful historical forces: the end of the Cold War, the first catastrophic attacks in the United States by international terrorists, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, the failure of U.S. intelligence in Iraq, the broad-based demand for change by the American people, and enactment by Congress of the most sweeping legislative reform since the creation of the existing Intelligence Community in 1947. These are reasons enough to believe that our work may be put to good purpose.

Perhaps the single most prominent and recurring theme in our recommendations is a call for *stronger and more centralized management* of the Intelligence Community, and, in general, the creation of a *genuinely integrated Community* instead of a loose confederation of independent agencies. This is not a new idea, but it has never been successfully implemented.

Part of the solution is to put more power and authority in the hands of the DNI. This was a principal purpose of the intelligence reform act of 2004. As we have noted elsewhere, however, the DNI's authorities under the new legislation are far from absolute. In many instances, the DNI will require the support and concurrence of the Secretary of Defense. He will need, as well, the commitment of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to become a part of the Intelligence Community and to be subject to DNI oversight. The DNI will need to use his new authorities swiftly to overcome the barriers that have plagued previous efforts. The new Intelligence Community leadership will also need to cross the old boundaries. The Mission Managers, as we have described them in our report, show how a new approach to management can bring together previously isolated activities and orchestrate an effort that embraces the entire Community.

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But it is also incontrovertible that the Intelligence Community's flaws cannot be cured by top-down management alone. Reform must rise from the bottom too, and it must involve true cultural change within the Community. We make a number of specific suggestions along these lines in our report. To state just a few: processes to support analysts working long-term strategic topics; an innovation center to incubate new concepts in human intelligence; an open-source directorate that can freely experiment with new information technologies; a sizeable, uncommitted research and development budget that is available to quickly infuse funding; entirely new approaches to gathering intelligence on biological weapons; and incentives to promote the behaviors that lead to better intelligence (and discourage those that don't). Some of these challenges—especially support for long-term analysis, for innovative collection, and for aggressive research and development—will require greater resources. We are not in a position to make a precise estimate of the costs, but we believe that budget is less likely to be a constraint than culture and tradition. At every level, new and better ways of doing business should be encouraged, nurtured, and protected.

Throughout our work, we have been struck by the range of opinions on reform of the Intelligence Community. Some former and current leaders with impressive experience believe that most of what needs to be done has already occurred. We respectfully disagree. We have unquestionably seen a break with the past and many brave initiatives. We have heard of stunning successes, many of which are too sensitive to mention even in an unclassified report. But too many of these efforts are “more of the same,” and many of those that break with past practices are only timid forays into new territory that could easily end in retreat.

There is another group of highly respected individuals, also with long and deep experience, who are fundamentally pessimistic about the recent legislative changes. They foresee new layers of bureaucracy with little value added weighing on institutions that are already overloaded with formalities. We also disagree with this group, but we understand their concern.

Every person with whom we spoke was unanimous on one point: there is nothing more important than having the best possible intelligence to combat the world's deadliest weapons and most dangerous actors. We agree, wholeheartedly; indeed, our survival may well depend upon it. Of course, even the most improved intelligence process is no guarantee against surprise or against

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weapons of mass destruction. Biological and nuclear weapons are becoming too easy to obtain for any intelligence reforms to provide absolute protection from catastrophe. But in the face of such staggering risks, we must do all we can to avoid danger. That means building an integrated, innovative, and agile Intelligence Community. Despite the uncertainties, we have done our best to chart a course that will take us to the Intelligence Community that our nation deserves.

