



**Remarks by Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper**

**Intelligence to Protect the Homeland Symposium**

**“The Evolving Terrorist Threat and the Importance of Intelligence to Protect the Homeland”**

**Co-Hosts: Intelligence and National Security Alliance & the Center for Strategic and International Studies**

**Introduction:**

**Fran Townsend**

**Chairwoman of the Board, Intelligence and National Security Alliance**

**Ronald Reagan Building & International Trade Center  
Washington, D.C.**

**September 7, 2011**

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FRAN TOWNSEND: (In progress) – among the best for last. To wrap up today’s great event we are honored to have the director of national intelligence to address us and share his thoughts on the role of intelligence in protecting our homeland. Jim Clapper is the epitome of a selfless public servant – 32 years in the Air Force, retiring as lieutenant general; a Vietnam veteran; former director of DIA. He is the – he was the first civilian director of NIMA, and under his initiative and vision getting – he got congressional authorization to rename it the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency.

He is the former president of SASA, which, as most of you know, was the predecessor to INSA, the Intelligence and National Security Alliance. He is the – he was the second undersecretary of defense for intelligence, and he is now the fourth director of national intelligence. He is a former colleague, a dear friend, a mentor and just an all-around great American patriot.

Please join me in welcoming an inspiring intelligence professional, Jim Clapper.  
(Applause.)

JAMES CLAPPER: Well, thank you very much. Great to be with you. And – but I do realize that I’m standing between, cocktails or whatever you’re going to do after this. So I’ll try not to take too long. But I do think it’s a very important forum, and I did want to have the opportunity to engage with you a little bit.

Certainly a pleasure as well to engage with both INSA and CSIS – both organizations I have a great deal of respect for and have had long association with each of them having served a long, long time ago, back in the ‘90s, as president of SASA, which was a predecessor to INSA. And I was a fellow or senior adviser or something for John Hamre at CSIS. So I do have a connection with both, and it’s even better when they’re doing something together.

I did want to offer congratulations on the publication yesterday of the excellent INSA report – “Intelligence to Protect the Homeland” – taking stock 10 years later and looking ahead. David Petraeus and I are going to have an opportunity to do that with a very rare joint hearing of the HPSCI and SSCI, House Intelligence Committee and Senate Intelligence Committee, next Tuesday the 13<sup>th</sup>, which should be interesting and that – it’s much the same subject, where have we come, what have we done and what do we need to do.

So there is a lot of this going on about, considering the last 10 years. First, it should – it’s obvious to all of us that al-Qaida today certainly isn’t the same as al-Qaida of 2001 was. I think, the pressure that – apart from, the dramatics of the raid in Abbottabad, but the consistent, steady, constant pressure on al-Qaida has really had an effect. They’re not done. I would characterize them as WIA, wounded in action, but certainly not KIA yet.

But we’ve rigorously attacked its leadership, kept them off balance. We’ve worked to deny its members and those who would direct its activities, a sense of security. We certainly have complicated, disrupted their flow of resources – meaning money. We undermine their ability to plan and train under central direction. And of course, last but not least, we sent Osama bin Laden to the fate that he so richly deserved. And having played a small part in that – particularly those of you who saw the iconic picture in the style section of the Post, it was one of the most intense and also, for me, having spent about 48 years in intelligence one of the most gratifying experiences of my professional career.

All these accomplishments stand as testimony to the dedication and skill of many officers – intelligence officers and our military forces. Our citizens, I think, are safer because of this, and so while we have got a great reason to take pride, we don’t have a reason to gloat, to do high-fives in the end zone, soften our focus or relax our efforts. The terrorists are still out there and we need to cope with them. They’re smart, they go to school on us, and the nature of the threat they pose continues to evolve.

So while core al-Qaida is now weaker, it – and not as able to recruit, train and deploy operatives because the attrition rate as of late has been pretty high – it still, I think, represents a – the ideological touch point of the global extremist movement. It still continues to influence terrorists and would-be terrorists through public statements. That includes its affiliates and the home-grown violent extremists who were inspired by al-Qaida’s global agenda.

I think there've been three critical IC related factors to our success countering terrorists in the last 10 years. And I think the most important is the dedication, skill and sharply focused attention of the IC workforce, something I intend to try to protect even as we downsize. By the way, I've, been through one of these exercises before. I'm speaking of – since I think John Brennan earlier today made mention of something, we're going to take on here which I actually think is a real litmus test for the Office of DNI since the last 10 years we've been on a steady upward growth slope, both in money and people, which encompasses the entire six-year existence of the Office of DNI and now we're going to be in a different mode. And I hope to profit from my hard-won experience in the early '90s when I served as director of DIA and we went through this before – but anyway, taking care of people.

The second, which is something I'm pushing very hard in this capacity, is integration of intelligence activities. And integration is my thing, my spiel, my schtick – it's what I'm pushing. Not only horizontally across the so-called stove pipes, but also vertically, to the federal to state, local, tribal, and private sector. Now, this is an area that I have learned, in this job particularly, is hugely important. It's not that – as an area the domestic arena's not as mature as our classical foreign intelligence apparatus. And that stands to reason since we have – we've only been doing this for 10 years. The third area is the expansion and maturation of responsible information sharing, which of course kind of relates to integration.

So I'd like to focus a little bit on integration and the sharpening of our focus and tell you how that's improved our CT posture. So we've worked on the policy front, which is kind of boring maybe – not very sexy, but it's important to work the policy and the mechanisms that permit broader, responsible sharing across the IC with our partners and customers. CIA has, of course, the principle emphasis on the prevention of another attack on the homeland and, importantly, the defeat of the terrorists abroad. And more than ever, it has a highly integrated partnership of analysts and operators who regularly team up with our military forces, the other intel agencies, our foreign partners and the private sector – organizations that many of you belong to.

The FBI is, I think, under the leadership of Bob Mueller – and I think the nation is blessed to have him stay on for another two years. If you can imagine, taking on kind of a high-wire stress – high stress job like that for 12 years, I salute him. And they've done, I think, a remarkable transformation in moving from a almost exclusively a law enforcement organization to an intelligence driven organization. I was down at Quantico recently to visit their training academy down there, and they're about to open up a magnificent new facility dedicated to just training intelligence analysts. And I think it's another very physical manifestation of the commitment that the FBI has to transformation.

Bob – I had Bob over last week to speak to the workforce out at LX, Liberty Crossing. And he told our workforce that the FBI's transformation is a huge change in mindset, which – and I can relate to this – is something you don't get done by close of business next Friday; it takes time. And it took him a long time to wrap his head around what he was about, and to infuse that in the larger FBI workforce. But the old way of doing business, prosecuting bad guys as a preventive deterrent, isn't enough when dealing with suicide bombers.

As one example, the FBI's transformation has included the expansion of interagency joint terrorism task forces led by the FBI in some 106 cities nationwide; and they carry out a critical function.

There's been a remarkable transformation going back over 10, 12 years at NSA. And they, too, are working to address the terrorists' increasing sophistication and use of technology, which is a challenge. DIA, my old agency, has established a joint intelligence task force for counterterrorism, which provides tailored support for force protection purposes in DOD and the COCOMs. It provides all-source, national-level terrorism intelligence analysis, warning and enterprise integration. NGA, another – I've also had the honor of serving as NGA's director for almost five years. And it too has done a great deal to embed and integrate geospatial intelligence analysts and capabilities with its CT mission partners in the field and overseas.

So every IC component in one way or another is contributing to what's become, I think, a truly comprehensive counterterrorism mission. Some other examples: The Treasury Department's intel professionals work closely with IC partners to identify terrorists financing sources. Even terrorists require resources; they require money. This is a common denominator for them. If we can get them in the pocketbook, that has huge impact. Occasioned by that is the designation of Leslie Ireland as the – who's in the Treasury Department running their intelligence operation. She's dual-hatted for me as what we call a national intelligence manager for threat finance, which is an affirmation and recognition of the importance of that as an intelligence endeavor.

I think Matt Olsen was here earlier today. I do want to particularly commend the National Counterterrorism Center, which is the primary organization for cataloguing and integrating all CT intel, except that which only pertains exclusively to domestic terrorists. And it serves as a basis for sharing information about known and suspected terrorists, screening of airline passengers, visa applicants and immigrants. Very, very pleased to have Matt Olsen succeed Mike Leiter at NCTC and he too is also a national intelligence manager for counterterrorism. And Matt is having a huge impact already and is doing great.

Last but not least – and I'm saving this one for last intentionally – is the Department of Homeland Security, and it too has, of course, an intelligence component, and I thank Caryn Wagner, who was just here. And I view them as our principal interlocutors for strengthening ties to state, local and tribal authorities, and working with Caryn to try to enhance that. And they partner with both NCTC and FBI and lead an Interagency Threat Assessment Coordination Group, and to figure out what and how to best pass down to our state and local partners and private sector officials.

I might mention something, just an example of – maybe a small one, but an important one with where we've come - is after we established a community task force to exploit the treasure trove – as the media came to call it – of media that was picked up at Abbottabad, we set up a task force to exploit it and scarfed up just about every Arabic linguist we could put our hands on to start exploiting it, and the first day of reporting had included reporting that went to state and local entities, and I think that's, again, a small anecdote, but an important one. It's indicative of the changes we're making.

And of course there – and then I also wanted to mention, which I think are very important, are the fusion centers, 72 of them, which is the local nexus for imparting intelligence that we collect at the national level and also acting the other way as kind of a – conveying upwards – I call it street intelligence, which only state and local officials, I think, have good insight into. That too, though, is clearly a work in progress, and we're going to keep at it.

Let me just dwell for a moment on the importance of homeland security and law enforcement because that's actually where, for most Americans, the rubber really meets the road.

When I first took this job, I was enjoined by many to look for efficiencies in the IC and further ways to sort of sharpen our focus. So one of my reviews, among others, was on the number, role and results of all DNI advisory boards and panels. And we had a lot of advisers, I found, like 250 of them, and we had some 18 different panels and all this sort of – was like kind of too much. There's just so much advice I can absorb. (Laughter.)

So, based on that review, I pared them down from 18 to four. One of these groups – of course, I have an overarching senior adviser group, and Fran Townsend is on that, and there may be some others out there – I don't – I can't see (looking out). But the other three boards I kept were one on technology, one on diversity, and the homeland security and law enforcement partners board, so just to emphasize the importance I place on that and the unique perspective that the people on that panel provide to me.

In fact, coincidentally, I just met with them last week to receive their input on some key issues. And it – I have found this group to be a gold mine of wisdom and insight in the area I'm personally not as well-grounded on. And so they made a very articulate, eloquent case for improving the intelligence enterprise domestically, and I think they are right on the money. And I intend to take that on; and, by the way, they brought up training, particularly for analysis – advanced analysis, so we're going to work that; and then trying to police up the battlefield a little bit on reporting processes and vehicles.

And I notice that this kind of comports with the INSA report that – which has a number of recommendations for me, and so I certainly have resonated with that. And I – but I think particularly with this issue of how to describe that enterprise and who does what to whom in a domestic intelligence enterprise – is very important.

The other thing that really struck me about this group was their great attention to and sensitivity about the protection of civil liberties. And that's also something that we in the intelligence business have to be very sensitive about. One of the staff elements under my cognizance is the civil liberties and privacy officer, which is a very, very crucial position on my staff. I have a police intelligence, law enforcement, and homeland security 32-year veteran on my senior staff, Russ Porter, who's fantastic. He is absolutely essential in directing our homeland security and law enforcement partnership efforts with federal, state and local and tribal entities.

About a year ago, I met with the board of governors for the International Association of Chiefs of Police, another very valued group. And that encounter, which was almost – I actually was down in Orlando originally just to meet with the convention or conference of all the FBI special agents-in-charge and learned that they were – the board of directors was meeting at another hotel. So I went over there, and it turned to a fantastic session, and so I am engaging with them as well.

I have visited state and major urban area fusion centers; I'm going to do some more of that in October – three more fusion centers I want to hit – and that just to get me more sensitized to the perspective that the people operating these things have. Last spring I visited sites along the southwest border to better understand our capabilities there and was tremendously impressed with what I saw. So, this business of intelligence integration is a – that's a big order. But it's something I'm very committed to improving.

And of course, I alluded earlier to the raid and the takedown of UBL, and I would submit to you that that's a classic example of intelligence integration. You know, CIA kind of got a lot of the credit and deservedly so, lots of publicity; but I would also tell you that, were it not for NSA and NGA, that would not have happened. So it's a great example of integration and where the sum is greater than the parts.

I'm happy to tell you that this sort of integration is becoming more and more routine. We kind of dwell on things here in the beltway, but let me tell you: If you go out to the pointy end of the stick, integration – intelligence integration has become kind of the standard. In the last month and a half, I've visited five embassies in Delhi, Islamabad, Kabul, Phnom Penh and Bangkok, and have really been impressed with the role that – the second role that chiefs of station play as DNI representatives in which they are the leader of the IC contingents in these embassies, and increasingly you'll find several of the IC organizations represented at these embassies. And two ambassadors in – of the five, just without any prompting or solicitation on my part, mentioned what impact that has of having a designated leader in – for intelligence matters in each embassy. So, the UBL takedown is a very visible, dramatic example of this, but I think this kind of goes on a lot.

So let me close on perhaps a sobering, but what I think is a realistic note, and that is that despite all we've done over the last 10 years, we can't guarantee we're going to bat a thousand every day. Certainly we're not in intelligence, and we just have to recognize that truth, I think, both within the intelligence community and as a people. When we're inevitably attacked again someday, we're going to have – we will continue, I believe, to be relentless in going after those who planned and coordinated, executed such an attack, and we must absolutely be resilient. We must not allow anyone to – or anything to distract us from our mission and our principles and our values as a country.

You know, 135 years ago today marked the end of the infamous James Younger gang in what was called the Great Northfield Minnesota Raid, their final bank robbery and murder spree. And law enforcement officials were ready for them and gunned them down, and some were killed. Cole Younger and his brothers were captured, and Frank and Jesse James were wounded, but got away. Five agonizing years later, Jesse was killed for the \$5,000 bounty on his head.

A few months after that, his brother Frank walked into the state capitol building in Missouri and turned himself in to the governor. And he said, and I quote, “I was tired of an outlaw’s life. I’ve been hunted for 21 years. I have literally lived in a saddle. I’ve never known a day of perfect peace. It was one long, anxious, inexorable, eternal vigil. When I slept, it was literally in the midst of an arsenal. If I heard dogs bark more fiercely than usual or the feet of horses in a greater volume of sound than usual, I stood to arms. Have you any idea of what a man must endure who leads such a life?”

And I think it’s the job of those of us in the intelligence community to make every terrorist out there even more miserable than Frank and Jesse James were. And I have to say in this regard that I think something we’ve underestimated is the effects of six years of isolation on UBL and the effect that had on his leadership of al-Qaida.

But we’ve put in place some remarkable capabilities that the nation’s invested in and achieved significant successes. And so it’s clearly something we recognize; it’s our obligation to do all we can to prevent another attack. And so we will – we will prevail, and we will not relent in that effort.

So that concludes my remarks. It’s great to see you and my thanks again to INSA and CSIS for sponsoring this. From what I’ve heard, there’ve been some great panel presentations and some great speakers. So thanks very much. Enjoy. (Applause.)

(END)