

Director's Statement to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

Statement by the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency,
General Mike Hayden to the
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
Annual Threat Assessment Hearing

(as prepared for delivery)

February 5, 2008

It is my honor to meet with you today to discuss how the Central Intelligence Agency is responding to the threats facing America and its interests addressed by the DNI.

Admiral McConnell's statement underscored the unprecedented range and gravity of the security challenges that confront us as a nation. In response to those threats, the core mission of the Central Intelligence Agency remains what it always has been: to provide a first line of defense for the American people against foreign adversaries. We collect intelligence and run operations to counter threats before they do us harm; we provide our leaders with sophisticated analysis of the challenges they face; and we apply world-class scientific prowess to give our operations an edge our adversaries cannot match. In this effort we work closely with our partners in other intelligence agencies, the diplomatic community, law enforcement, and the military.

While our core mission remains the same, the means to achieve that mission are changing radically. In the global terrorist movement we face a ruthless enemy who shuns traditional hierarchical structures, who learns from mistakes and adapts. We need to be no less creative and resilient.

At CIA, we're promoting new methods of collecting intelligence on our 21st century adversaries, as well as deepening partnerships with foreign liaison services that face the same threats we do. At the President's direction, we're expanding the ranks of our core collectors and our analytic cadre while growing our language capability. We're promoting a wide range of technical innovation and exploiting an ever-growing torrent of open-source information.

Not only are CIA components reinventing their ways of doing business, but they're cooperating in new ways with one another. Overcoming the bureaucratic and cultural barriers of the past, collectors and analysts are breaking down barriers to information sharing while increasingly working side-by-side in overseas posts and in joint centers. We're beginning a single onboarding process that brings all of our new hires together to learn about Agency history, values, and traditions. Last fall we launched the "CIA World

Intelligence Review-electronic,” or WIRE, as an Agency-wide classified Web site that disseminates analysis, open-source content, and raw intelligence reports. It’s a model of technical innovation and partnership among our Directorates and of our substantive outreach into the broader Intelligence Community.

The WIRE is just one example of the many ways CIA is partnered with its fellow intelligence agencies to an extent never seen before. Assignments across agency boundaries are becoming routine, with many of our best CIA officers completing rotations in other IC components and vice-versa. The CIA cooperates intensely with the DNI staff and with other agencies in producing the President’s Daily Brief. We provide on-the-ground, day-to-day support to the war fighters defending our freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan. And our collaboration with the FBI in combating global terrorism is stronger than ever.

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I would like to share with you in this open session a few examples of the numerous specific contributions the CIA is making in confronting key threats to national security. I will also describe some of the extensive internal initiatives we’re launching to further adapt the way we collect and analyze intelligence. I would be glad to address more detailed questions on these issues in closed session.

As Admiral McConnell indicated, our country faces no more deadly threat than that of global terrorism. Our officers, cooperating closely with colleagues overseas and in the DNI’s National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), are working tirelessly against this threat. In Southeast Asia, for example, liaison partners have been able to act upon our leads to either capture or kill multiple terrorist group leaders. Our intelligence led directly to the foiling of a planned bombing in a crowded market in Southeast Asia last summer that would have caused mass casualties.

CIA also contributed to efforts to assess and disrupt terrorist threats targeting European countries in 2007. On 4 September, German authorities arrested three European operatives trained by the Islamic Jihad Union who were planning to bomb targets in Germany, possibly including U.S. facilities. The same day, Danish authorities detained individuals directly linked to al-Qa’ida who were preparing explosives, apparently for use in a terrorist attack.

Last July’s National Intelligence Estimate on Terrorist Threats to the Homeland assessed that al-Qa’ida will continue trying to acquire chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear materials (CBRN) and would not hesitate to use them in attacks. CIA and NCTC have formed a unique combined unit on this threat, which will help us better analyze and undertake operational activities against the CBRN problem. CIA has developed training materials to help its partners overseas to better recognize and take action against CBRN threats – materials that have been shared with domestic US consumers at the federal, state, and local levels.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by both state and nonstate actors remains a crucial intelligence priority. In 2007 CIA acquired critical new intelligence on Iran's nuclear weapons program that was used in the National Intelligence Estimate cited by Admiral McConnell. CIA is working in innovative ways across all disciplines to collect, analyze, and act upon intelligence on terrorist capabilities and intentions involving the use of weapons of mass destruction.

Our Agency continues to work vigorously with the US military in Iraq to protect the lives of our soldiers and Iraqi civilians. In September 2007, acting on intelligence, US military forces killed a senior al-Qa'ida in Iraq leader who was responsible for coordinating the movement of foreign fighters into Iraq. A windfall from the operation was the discovery of foreign fighter rosters, which has led to watch-listings and arrests. In October, CIA information made possible a raid by the US military on a home in Diyala province, north of Baghdad, that was being used by the Jaysh al-Mahdi to store a large quantity of weapons and Iranian-origin explosives. The US military also captured the terrorist responsible for the weapons cache.

CIA has been an integral part of US operations in Afghanistan since the start of the conflict there in 2001. CIA officers work closely with coalition forces and foreign government services to pursue and capture senior al-Qa'ida and Taliban leadership targets in Afghanistan. Over the past year, our intelligence contributed to the removal from the battlefield of numerous mid-level Taliban leaders. CIA also supports efforts to combat narcotics production in Afghanistan. We've also bolstered our analytic effort on Afghanistan, adding additional deployments of analysts to Afghan field sites and developing new and better metrics for measuring success against the Afghan insurgency.

Admiral McConnell has noted the threat posed to our nation's critical infrastructures from cyber attacks. CIA is providing threat information and analysis to our government and industrial partners on this critical issue. Similarly, CIA is working in close cooperation with law enforcement personnel and liaison services to track drug trafficking networks, identifying their key vulnerabilities and developing tactical approaches to disrupting them.

The United States today faces an increasingly complex set of counterintelligence threats from both state and nonstate actors, including Islamic extremists. To meet this challenge, last year I instituted a Strengthening CI Initiative that is bolstering our capabilities to counter espionage, validate assets, assess risks, mitigate ever-growing technical CI threats, and broaden CI awareness.

Working closely with private sector counterparts, we have developed an integrated global bio-surveillance capability known as Argus that monitors socially disruptive events such as epidemics, social conflict, mass killings, natural disasters, chemical accidents, and WMD testing. Using massive and sophisticated mining of about a million Internet articles a day, this system has given us indication of events weeks and months prior to other reporting, including signs of potential pandemics and biological weapons programs in areas otherwise denied to us.

Our Open Source Center in 2007 significantly increased its ability to monitor threats covered in both traditional and emerging media. The Center opened a new overseas bureau in Doha and established a unit to exploit new media sources such as social networking sites, virtual gaming, and mobile media.

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Responding to the plethora of threats we face requires continuous renewal of CIA capabilities and practices. I would like to touch on key elements of CIA's Strategic Action Plan, which implements my broad strategic objectives for CIA that I shared with you in January 2007.

We're pursuing two primary goals. First, we aim to strengthen core capabilities in the areas of operations, analysis, science and technology, and support. Second, we will integrate these capabilities within the CIA and with other IC partners in a way that brings the full power of this organization to bear against the challenges we face. Our underlying vision is that of an Agency unmatched in its core capabilities, functioning as one team, and fully integrated in the US Intelligence Community.

To boost capabilities, the Program includes a major initiative to extend our operational reach by supporting creative deployments that are not limited by traditional cover or operational constraints. We're also setting up Forward Deployed Analytic Cells in key regional centers abroad, to allow analysts to contribute "ground truth" perspectives while boosting their expertise in foreign cultures and languages. On top of numerous ongoing efforts in the realm of science and technology, we're initiating new programs to protect the identities of intelligence officers and to provide robust and agile clandestine communications.

We're also pursuing an array of initiatives to promote integration and collaboration within CIA and across the Intelligence Community. For example, we propose to create a new mission innovation center off the eastern power grid that will focus on creative solutions to both analytic questions and internal business practices while assuring continuity of operations in the event of a catastrophe here. As the lead human intelligence (HUMINT) player in the Community, we're creating an integrated operational HUMINT system to set common standards for such key concerns as collection requirements, performance standards, and training.

Beyond the open-source exploitation I mentioned previously, we've established a new unit composed of native linguists – vetted but in some cases without security clearances – who will conduct competitive unclassified analysis based on primary research and deep mining of the Internet.

The Strategic Action Plan includes many other elements that I would be glad to describe to you in further detail.

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I believe it's clear from the DNI's opening comments that intelligence has never been more important in protecting the security of the American people. Ultimately, achieving that mission depends on our people – on hiring, motivating, and empowering a work force with the highest standards of competence, ethics, and dedication.

I'm happy to report that we're currently building a new generation of officers second to none in their professionalism, their enthusiasm, and their patriotism. We're able to hire from among the best and brightest – our Recruitment Center received 125,000 resumes in Fiscal Year 2007, and we hired a near-record number of new officers, more than a quarter of whom belonged to racial or ethnic minorities. While many of these new officers are recent college graduates, many others have years of experience in the private sector, the military, or other government agencies. Almost 40 percent have advanced degrees.

We're a young work force – half of our officers have entered on duty since 9/11, and many are under 30. Training, developing, and retaining these new officers is a top priority, particularly because 20 percent of our work force will become eligible to retire during the next five years. We're intensifying our leadership training and have revamped our Strategic Language Plan to address our needs in Arabic and other mission-critical languages.

Last year we celebrated CIA's 60th Anniversary. It was a time to reflect on the sense of mission that motivated our predecessors in CIA and in the wartime Office of Strategic Services from which CIA emerged. That sense of mission motivates us equally today as, on the terrorist front, we fight a war unlike any other in our nation's history – a war whose outcome will depend in large measure on the contribution of American intelligence. In this effort I can pledge to you that CIA will continue to remain committed to integrity of action, diversity of thought, passion for innovation, and collaboration at all levels inside our Agency and within the Intelligence Community.

<https://www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/february08-statement-to-ssci.html>