



James Clapper warns of sequester's impact on spy agencies

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With a March 1 deadline for sequestration legislation approaching, it's the season for scare talk about the effects of budget cuts. But even discounting for this, the warning Thursday from Director of National Intelligence James Clapper about the impact on America's spy agencies was ominous.

Clapper discussed in a telephone interview Thursday what sequestration will mean for the 16 intelligence organizations he oversees. His remarks were amplified by a statement his office emailed Friday morning. Clapper warned that "the sheer size of the cut will create an immediate national security crisis situation" because some key collection and analysis programs will have to be cut. He made similar comments in an interview yesterday with Reuters.

Cuts to intelligence budgets are especially sensitive because the United States is fighting a war against Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations that seek to target the United States. Clapper said he will seek to mitigate these effects by redirecting money or cutting low-priority spending, but he cautioned: "Absorbing these cuts in short a short timeframe will require the budgetary equivalent of emergency amputations."

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