Geospatial Intelligence Forum Interview with Robert Cardillo

Robert Cardillo, Deputy Director of National Intelligence, for Intelligence Integration

Robert Cardillo was sworn in as the first deputy director for intelligence integration, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, in September 2010. This newly created position facilitates information sharing and collaboration through the integration of analysis and collection.

Prior to this assignment, Cardillo served as the deputy director of the Defense Intelligence Agency [DIA]. The deputy director is the second- ranking position at DIA and assists the director in both the daily operation and long-term planning for the organization. Cardillo also served as the agency's deputy director for analysis.

Cardillo began his career with DIA in 1983 as an imagery analyst. In May 2000, he was selected to the Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service. Throughout his career, he has served in a variety of leadership positions within the intelligence community. In the summer of 2009, he served as the acting J2, a first for a civilian, in support of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Other key leadership positions have included director, analysis and production, and director, source operations and management, at the National-Geospatial Intelligence Agency.

Cardillo earned a Bachelor of Arts in government from Cornell University in 1983 and a Master of Arts in national security studies from Georgetown University in 1988.

Cardillo was interviewed by GIF *Editor Harrison Donnelly.*

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Q: What is your mission as deputy director of national intelligence for intelligence integration?

A: The top-level description is pretty straightforward. The DNI created this position and asked me to stand up this office to deliver on his vision for the intelligence community. The touch-point, foundation and central idea that he brings to his job is integration. I am to create positions, mechanisms and governance processes to strategically align the IC against the nation's highest priorities. That's easy to say, but it gets more complicated after that.

There are a number of sub-components to that, which I'll list in no particular order. I have the responsibility for the presidential daily briefing [PDB], so on any given day I can be the last person to edit it before it is finalized for the president. If it's my morning to brief, I'm the first person to engage with him about what he thought of what we wrote the night before. That is really job one.

The second job I have is to be Director Clapper's principal deputy on the National Security Staff [NSS]. The way the NSS runs is that there are principals' committee meetings, where he is the principal, and many deputies committee [DC] meetings under that. When there is a DC meeting on Somalia, Yemen, North Korea, Iran or elsewhere, I'm always the invited participant, although I can delegate that function, since there are only so many hours in the day and there are some issues I don't need to cover. That takes up a good chunk of my time, because three hour-and-a-half meetings in a given day add up.

Third, within the ODNI structure, I manage the directorate called Intelligence Integration. It is the "homeroom" for a number of activities, including as I mentioned the PDB, where the staff works for me. I haven't mentioned the National Intelligence Council [NIC], where the staff and chairman, Chris Kojm, work for me. Both the PDB and NIC existed before I got here. In addition, we created a new division, Mission Integration, which is largely the combination of what used to

be the DDNI for Analysis and the DDNI for Collection. Going back to Director Clapper's initial focus and mission mantra, integration, he didn't want analysis and collection to be in two separate entities. Finally, we have the Integration Management Council, which is the homeroom for the new positions we have stood up, the national intelligence managers [NIMs].

The NIMs are built on the legacy, best practices and good results of the original mission managers as authorized under the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act. Congress legislated the first set of mission managers, of which four are designated: Korea, Iran, proliferation and terrorism. Over the years from passage of the law to September 2010, we added some, including Cuba/Venezuela for a period of time, and we were working on one for the Horn of Africa, Somalia and Yemen. They were designated by the prior DNI on a case-by-case basis.

When DNI Clapper came in, he said he wanted to be about integration. He liked the model of mission managers, and wanted to extend it across all regions and functions. So I have a set of 17 NIMs who work for me, of which nine are regionally designated and eight are functional, including proliferation, cyber, threat finance, military, science and technology, economics, counterterrorism and counterintelligence. If you think about what Director Clapper wanted to do, which was to strategically align the IC with the highest priorities, those are his and my soldiers'. They have his authority to do a number of basic efforts. First, through interaction with our customers, whether the administration or the combatant commanders, the priority is to understand the need. What are the intelligence questions, the key enigmas and the policymakers' priorities? Two is to understand what the IC is doing on those issues—if that's the need, what are we doing across 17 different agencies? Three, where are the gaps between need and capability, and can we turn those gaps into opportunities by finding new ways to align the community? When you line up need and capability, you see the gaps.

The other piece is to understand not the gaps that are specific to a problem set like Iran, but to the intelligence profession, such as information access, compartmentation or open source. We call those our enduring challenges. Each NIM is responsible for capturing and documenting those. I then bring the NIMs together, and we try to adjudicate across the 17 accounts and figure out what are our highest priority gaps, and which enduring challenges affect all of the missions that I need the community to work.

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Finally, let me also discuss the NIM structure. While all of the NIMs are different, because all of the accounts are different, they have four key components. There is the NIM, the manager in charge; a national intelligence officer, who is a member of the NIC and is the IC's chief analyst; a national intelligence collection officer, whose job is to effect the best collection against the priorities in the NIM's account; and a national counterintelligence officer who is looking at the counterintelligence risks and opportunities in the account. That was another theme that the director brought to the job when he came on board in August 2010—to make more visible and effective the entirety of our counterintelligence effort. Each NIM has a designated counterintelligence officer for his/her account.

Q: How will you know if you are successful in achieving integrated intelligence?

A: Another part of the DNI's focus is output. This is a very complicated business—the nation spends a lot of money on its intelligence capabilities, with 16 agencies or departments, laws, statutes and directives. Let's face it: Our adversaries don't make it easy, and it's a complicated job. Running that enterprise is very difficult, and figuring out how to connect everyone so they can communicate, and setting up processes and procedures so that we can share the same information base before we make assessments, are all necessary. But I wouldn't answer the question with any of that—that we're more internally effective, or we've cut the cycle time for production. You should expect me to do that—to be as efficient as possible. My definition of success is this: when the policymaker makes a more informed decision, the combatant commander makes a more confident troop deployment, or a specific operator engages his target.

All of those are outputs, which leads to the reasonable question of how we are doing on outputs. I can't give you a percentage increase in our outputs, or tell you that are customer satisfaction ratings have gone up. That is probably unrealistic, given the business we are in. We're in the confidence business. If you ask me a question that is a knowable fact, we'll find the source to answer you. But I usually don't get that type of question, and I probably shouldn't. I get more questions about a series of different events, and what they all mean. And

after you've told me what it means, where is it going? Is that going to go into something that's potentially a threat to the U.S. or U.S. interests, or is it moving to a place where there is an opportunity to engage diplomatically or militarily in a partnership? To answer those questions, I have to get inside someone's head, not just what they are thinking about, but also how they think about us and how they react to external questions.

What I try to do is to raise my customer's confidence as high as I can at his or her point of decision. They have tough decisions to make. If you're in the State Department, for example, you may be trying to decide whether to engage diplomatically with Burma. Have they made enough progress in reinstituting democratic governance? That's a complicated question, and highly classified sources and methods are required to address it. All the decision-maker cares about is whether I'm convinced that we're seeing a trend that is either positive or negative, and leads to a decision to engage diplomatically. At the point of decision, you want to make sure that there is the highest likelihood of having the effect you want.

So while I can't give you a pure measure of our progress, I do feel that because of the interactions that I have, we hit the mark more often than not. I know that's the case. And now that we have the NIM positions, we're affecting your output informally as much as formally. These are the phone calls and meetings that don't get into production. These are the meetings that you can go to and diffuse or amplify, depending on the situation, a certain policy prescription. You save lots of people time and effort by doing that.

As I tell my NIMs, you should be seeking to create conversations that are uncomfortable but necessary. What you want to do is to create some tension in the system, to get to the heart of the decision-maker's problem. Back here, in our business, you should also be creating the critical conversations that are needed to find the best practice in this. I designate you the lead for the DNI; you clarify the lanes in the road, and people move out smartly. Although we're sometimes accused of being the opposite, I tell the NIMs that they should be macro-managers. If you find yourself with a screwdriver or adjusting a small knob, back away. That's not your job.

Q: Why do you want to unify analysis and collection, given that they appear to be

different functions, and what are some of the issues involved in doing so?

A: Collection is a specific job, with a professional tradecraft, discipline and career field. I've been in that business, and I would never tell anyone that we all need to become homogenized, integrated officers. There is a role for those, but if we didn't have collection specialists, we wouldn't have anything to work on. If we didn't have the analytic specialists, we wouldn't have any products to turn in. So don't take the mantra of integration to mean that everyone has to be cross-educated.

In September 2010, when I had just joined, the director had pulled together a proposal for President Obama about his integration concept. It was my first time being in the same room as the president, and I remember when we got to the briefing slide that talked about bringing collection and analysis together. I thought we'd get through that slide pretty fast, but the president asked the same question you have: Aren't those businesses unto themselves? It's true, they are. But if you're the customer, you shouldn't have to worry about that. You have a question, not a collection question or an analysis question, and should only have to worry about communicating that to me.

We're under no illusion that we invented the idea just because we've labeled everything integration. Integration has existed since the beginning of this business. The director's purpose was message— everyone should be thinking about output, regardless of their individual contribution. Some part of your day, you should be thinking about that. Now we have the NIMs, who are specifically charged with being the hub on the 16-spoke wheel that is the IC. I think of the NIMs as a way of creating an atmosphere and environment in which people can come together. Trust me, when the NIM pulls back the cover, he or she is going to see a lot of integration. If it's working and the output is there, you should be doing nothing other than checking it every once in a while. You don't need to start putting NIM labels on things and taking credit for good work.

There are wonderful examples of integration across the community today, and they happened way before the ODNI stood up. Sometimes, I tell the NIMs that their job is to be the

spotlight—you find good work that is humming along but isn't well known. People aren't aware of it, so they aren't leveraging it or may be duplicating it unknowingly. So you introduce the two capabilities. It's not all wine and roses, and sometimes they aren't happy and tell the other person to stop. So the DNI has to tell people to get in line. He prefers the alternative, to use communication and to shine the light on something to enable the community to come together.

Q: You have written about the importance of cultural change in the IC. Have you seen positive change in the past decade, and is there more to be done?

A: I have, but I don't know if we should take any credit for it. We've hired a lot of people recently whose experience is very different from my own. I like to think of myself as an integrated kind of person, but when I was hired in 1983, I was sent to a cubicle in the basement of a windowless building, where as an imagery analyst I focused only on the imagery on the film. It was a very isolated world. Compartmentation ruled, and "need to know" was the mantra. Even though you and I might have the same badge, we might have been working on different projects, so it was better to be safe than sorry, and not share. I stayed in Washington, and hardly even knew what a deployment was. This was the '80s, when the Soviet Union was the big, bad adversary and production was very deliberate.

Contrast that with someone we hired in 2003. We were already in Afghanistan, and in or about to get into Iraq. You would have already had forward-deployed intelligence specialists, at least, if not collectors and analysts. They were there in Iraq and Afghanistan, and if not there, in Qatar or Bahrain, and if not there, back in Tampa, Fla., supporting CENTCOM. You got hired into a completely different business model. It was much better connected to the customer, and had much more direct interaction, like live theater as opposed to a movie.

We now have had 10 years of that experience. When I was at DIA, beginning in 2006, more than 50 percent of my workforce had not been there on September 11, 2001. A quarter of the workforce had been deployed, and even if you hadn't been deployed, the person in the next cubicle had, and they would come back with a different mentality. It shapes how you interact with your computer. When I was an analyst in 1983, I wondered whether anyone cared how

many Soviet tanks I counted in the desert. But there was no one I could ask that question, so I just kept typing the answers into the computer. Now, when you come back from Afghanistan, you could see what happened to your intelligence product. You don't have to go back to a job on Afghanistan, but could work on another region or proliferation. The mentality— that what I'm working on needs to be contributory to someone's output— is hugely improved. And it's going to get better, because the young people of today are going to get promoted into management positions, and they will have that experience. I moved through all that management experience, but I was weighed down by the Soviet Union.

I'm not saying that everyone we have hired was very young, since we hired a lot of former military, contractors and academics. But all of them with that experience are going to be wonderful analysts and managers. In my generation, you were as good as the number of billets you had under you. If another person had 11 billets and I only had 10, he or she was 10 percent more valuable than me, so I had to figure out how to get one of their billets. Some of that still goes on today, but I like to think that the people who were forged with the mindset of output will cause more integration to occur.

Q: Intelligence community CIOs are working on a plan to restructure the community's information architecture. How can technology contribute to intelligence integration?

A: You could have exquisite, connected, online IT, but if you had the wrong culture it wouldn't help. So let's build on having people with the right intentions and mindset. Today, they are inhibited by IT. I can go to a terminal to try to integrate across the IC, and be held back by email addresses, firewalls and classification levels. The IT is definitely holding us back today. It's much better than in 1983, but it still is holding us back. The DNI knew early in his tenure that if he didn't tackle that, along with everything else I've mentioned, we'd have an uneven output, with wonderful integration, personnel, mindsets and business processes, but that you couldn't access through a network. Now he is serious about the push to the cloud, and is investing billions of dollars on this. He's already counting on IT savings in the out-years, to accommodate some of the cuts. That's not a new idea, but the reason I think we have a fighting chance on this is because of the budget cuts.

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I mentioned how the decade after 9/11 saw positive changes on culture. We had a lot of new money, and our budgets got larger. The negative of that is when your budget is getting larger, you're not so interested in connecting with the next guy. Life is good; there's more money and people, so I'll integrate with you later. It's not that way anymore. The budgets are capped, we've already taken some reductions, and who knows where the economy is going, or where the congressional budget debate will end up. That focuses everyone's attention on efficiency. We know we can't afford the exquisite NSA IT system, or the optimum CIA or DIA system. Everyone knows we have to find savings. So while no one wants budget cuts, the cuts have had a side benefit mentally, and have caused people to think and act differently. At the recent DoDIIS conference, I told attendees that I was counting on them to set the IT conditions for us to change those behaviors. If we fail at the IT piece of this, we will fail overall.

Q: A widely noted recent photo shows you giving President Obama his daily intelligence briefing, with a mobile computing device in your hands. How is mobile technology changing how the IC does business?

A: We're still on the cusp. I'd describe what we are doing today as the equivalent of paving a cow path. We're speeding up a pre-existing process. We know how to type things on pages or put pages in a binder for an executive to read. It's easy to put that on a tablet, and instead of turning pages, they are clicking or touching the screen. It's not really advancing very much. I believe that we have much to learn from education, the entertainment industry and medicine about what humans can get out of an interactive digital display that we haven't yet figured out. As you can see from the photo, we have given a few such briefings to this president. But I would never take in a tablet to impress him with the graphics. Every time we've used one, there's been a purpose, to simulate some scientific event or kinetic scenario, or to help him to think differently or challenge an assumption. We're really at the beginning here, and I don't think it's something we need to figure out on our own. There are a lot of people thinking about how to make the best use of technology. We're on the cusp of something here, and there's more to be done in leveraging that technology.

Q: With increased mobility come increased security challenges. Where do you draw the line between making information more accessible and protecting it?

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A: We're going through that issue now. It's now much easier for an adversary to get the totality of the U.S. intelligence community's effort in one small device, so smart people are figuring out ways to mitigate the loss of that. And if lost, how do you mitigate further exposure? Today, we basically "kill" a tablet to use it, because we don't want it communicating or transmitting. That's today, because we're trying to figure out how to use the interface, but eventually we want it to communicate. We want it to communicate securely, encrypted and with confidence. My job is that when I tell you something at the secret or top secret level, I'm going to keep that, and so are you, because of our trust relationship. This is not without risk, and we need to be mindful about how we protect as we evolve. But I'd remind you that we've been dealing with that ever since we entered the computer age. As the director has said, you can put all the fixes, checks and monitors in the system you want, but the weak link was and will be the human. It comes down to doing good internal counterintelligence awareness, and having procedures for security review.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to add?

A: We think we're on the right track, and making progress. But we're sure we don't have all the answers. I've always believed that an open marketplace is good for everyone. In the marketplace of ideas about how best to integrate our efforts in the IC to support customers doing their job better, we'd like to be challenged—challenged against the assumptions that we may have about what's needed, as well as with innovations that are beyond my current bias. So I would invite input. We spend a lot of time on outreach, formally through the National Intelligence Council, as well as a partnership engagement effort here at ODNI led by Lieutenant General Flynn. We would welcome ideas and help on how to do this better. ?