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ODNI Marks Five-Year Anniversary With Ceremony
DNI Blair Celebrates Achievements, Reflects on Challenges

Director of National Intelligence Dennis C. Blair was joined today by the leaders of the 16 Intelligence Community organizations and hundreds of ODNI employees to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. The ODNI was created to make the IC more integrated, agile and effective. Director Blair used the occasion to congratulate ODNI employees on their accomplishments over the past five years, and to challenge the work force to continue moving forward.

“...We are the only intelligence organization that wakes up every morning and thinks: ‘How can we make this entire intelligence enterprise better? How can we combine the magnificent, individual agency skills into the very best intelligence team?’” Director Blair asked the audience.

“Some of you here work in core DNI staff, leading the crucial, cross-Community action plans. Some of you work in mission centers, dedicated to the defeat of terrorists, proliferators, outlaw nations and adversary intelligence services. You lead vital cross-agency missions and research, information sharing, many other areas. ...You knew what great things an integrated Intelligence Community could do.”

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 established the ODNI to help the Community work seamlessly to keep the nation safe. Given the Community’s size and the scope of the job, reform is a Herculean task. But since its birth on April 21, 2005, the ODNI has spurred progress in information sharing and the use of technology across intelligence agencies; heightened the attention paid to collaboration; and leveraged the IC’s collective wisdom to tackle many knotty problems, Director Blair and other speakers said in a courtyard ceremony at the ODNI’s McLean, Va., headquarters.

Intelligence professionals should be encouraged by significant gains that have already been made. For the next five years and beyond, the DNI said, continuous improvement and collaboration will be critical.

“If we can truly combine signals, human intelligence, geospatial intelligence, law-enforcement information, open-source intelligence, new kinds of intelligence that haven’t even been invented yet; if we can bring analysts together with all the information they need in seamless, imaginative, constantly evolving ways; and if we can maintain and increase the trust of the American people – not only in what we do, but how we do it; if we can do all of that, we’ll be the best. But if teamwork, integration or trust falters, we’ll be left behind. It’s that simple. So, we can’t allow that to happen. Ever.”

The ceremony followed a meeting of the Intelligence Community Executive Committee, a forum the DNI convenes every other week with the heads of each IC organization to flag, flesh out and resolve a host of issues. At that meeting’s conclusion on Wednesday, Director Blair and other IC executives – including CIA Director Leon Panetta, FBI Director Robert Mueller and NSA Director Lt. Gen. Keith Alexander – filed into the courtyard for the start of the anniversary celebration.

(MORE)

In his opening remarks, Lt. Gen. John Kimmons, director of the ODNI's intelligence staff, said "unprecedented threats to our homeland and way of life" underscore the need for the ODNI.

"No single agency, no single intelligence element in our Community can do what needs to be done across the entire enterprise," he said. "If they could, it would be done already. If we do our jobs right, every intelligence agency and element is more successful, more effective and more integrated than would otherwise be possible."

Striving for excellence is a daily goal at the ODNI, said Andrew Towne, an analyst from the Central Intelligence Agency, now assigned to the office. "It's a place where smart people work hard to find solutions to some extremely tough problems."

For more information about the history and accomplishments of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, click here (http://www.dni.gov/press_releases/2010_Fact_Sheet.pdf).

Transcripts and video footage from the five-year anniversary celebration are available online at www.dni.gov.

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