

**Remarks and Q&A by the Director of National Intelligence  
Ambassador John D. Negroponte**

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*Video of this event is available at: <http://www.iop.harvard.edu>.*

AMB. NEGROPONTE: Thank you very much for that kind introduction, Graham [Allison] – and for that very nice quote from Teddy Roosevelt. It's a great pleasure to be here this evening with Harvard's students and faculty. The university's registrar probably has no record of it, but here's a personal factoid I thought I'd share with you: I attended Harvard myself forty-six years ago. I was enrolled in the Law School for no more than a week when I heard from the Department of State that I had been admitted to the Foreign Service. So much for my legal career! In fact, I went to the Dean, Dean Griswold at the time. It was within a week of matriculation and I got there and told him I'd been offered this appointment and that I wanted to leave the school. I remember he looked at me sort of as if he felt that I would grow to regret this decision. But, in any case, he said that kind of wryly, he said 'Well you have arrived in time to get your tuition refunded.' I've been traveling the globe as a diplomat and businessman ever since, and now I am here in my current incarnation as head of the Intelligence Community.

Some of you may think, "Aha, he means the CIA!" Yes, the CIA is a key member of the Intelligence Community, but there are fifteen other members of the Intelligence Community in addition to the CIA. These include the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Branch of the FBI, the National Security Agency, the National Reconnaissance Office, and the National Geospatial Agency; intelligence bureaus in the Departments of Energy, Homeland Security, the Department of State, Treasury and the Drug Enforcement Administration; and of course also the military intelligence services. I don't directly run any of these organizations, but under the intelligence reform act passed two years ago this month, it is the responsibility of my office to lead, coordinate, and above all, seek to integrate these efforts.

From a management perspective, this means many things, notably promoting better information sharing, common standards and policies, and the efficient use of taxpayers' dollars. We want to ensure that the foreign, military, and domestic dimensions of our intelligence effort function as a unified enterprise. But intelligence always starts with what we call threats and challenges to our national security. This evening, therefore, I would like to focus on some of the threats and challenges we confront in a 21<sup>st</sup> century that is less dangerous than the 20<sup>th</sup> century in certain respects, but more dangerous in others.

I won't address all the issues on our intelligence agenda in these remarks, but if you're interested in a topic that I omit, I'd be happy to hear your comments and questions after I conclude. Right now I'd like to share with you our assessment of some important subjects to give you an idea of why we maintain a robust national intelligence capability and seek to strengthen it. Many of the

threats we confront overlap. Some of them are not threats in the sense that “this might happen,” but threats in the sense that “this is happening” and could get worse if we are not united in vigilance. The subjects I have in mind are:

- Terrorism;
- The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction;
- North Korea;
- Iran;
- Iraq;
- Darfur; and
- Developments in a region of particular significance to us as Americans: our own hemisphere.

With respect to terrorism, let me be clear: Violent jihadists worldwide pose immediate and long-term threats to our citizens here at home and to United States national security abroad.

These terrorists justify using force in an effort to impose an extreme autocratic rule over Muslim populations and to prevent Muslim citizens from having a role in governing themselves. Highly disciplined terrorist groups like al-Qa’ida, other transnational networks, and individual cells have no interest in listening to those they profess to champion. In fact, most victims of terror are Muslim. But we should have no doubt that these groups, networks, cells, and individuals also are eager to strike non-Muslim societies they believe obstruct their revolutionary agenda – the United States, above all.

This is a decades long struggle that will see many tactical ebbs and flows even as we make strategic progress.

This summer, for example, the United States military succeeded in killing Abu Mus’ab al-Zarqawi, who was responsible for a huge number of Muslim murders. But despite al-Zarqawi’s death and the death or capture of other senior members of his group, the movement continues to pursue his violent course of action as we just saw in the late-November attacks in Sadr City – in the Eastern part of Baghdad.

Also last summer, our British partners disrupted a terrorist network that was close to attacking multiple Western aircraft. This could have killed thousands of innocent people. While the UK counterterrorism effort was a clear success, al-Qa’ida’s involvement in developing the plot, the role of Western Muslims as operatives in the attack, and the use of liquid explosives meant to circumvent heightened airport security is a stark reminder that our enemies are resilient, innovative, and lethal.

So tactical successes are important, but neutralizing any appeal associated with terrorists’ ideology of hate and violence remains one of the most significant challenges facing Muslims and non-Muslims alike. That is an important reason why we have strengthened the National Counterterrorism Center and focused substantial collection and analytic resources on better understanding this ideology, identifying the trends and key players in the debate, and supporting international efforts to counter it. Authentic Islamic voices will play a key role in this, but it is

also clearly true that Western nations need to address the negative effects on social cohesion from rapidly expanding, and poorly integrated, enclave immigrant Muslim communities. Some of our closest allies face disillusioned immigrant populations that are spawning violent jihadists. These societies must work to ensure that their growing immigrant populations are welcomed, receive equal justice under the law, and incorporate into their lives the fundamental social contract of Western societies, including tolerance, freedom of religion, and freedom of speech.

The ongoing development of weapons of mass destruction, WMD, and delivery systems constitutes another major threat to the safety of our nation, our deployed troops, and our allies. WMD proliferation is hard to stop because of the worldwide diffusion of scientific knowledge and the inherent utility of most of the relevant technologies for both civil and military purposes. This is compounded by indigenous WMD and missile production capabilities in countries such as North Korea and Iran, and by successful efforts to circumvent international export controls.

We assess that most of the countries that are still pursuing WMD and missile programs will continue to try to improve their capabilities and level of self-sufficiency over the next decade. We're also focused on the potential acquisition of WMD by states that do not yet have such programs and by terrorist organizations like al-Qa'ida. We also pay close attention to the potential for non-state-affiliated networks to supply related equipment and technology.

The dangers of proliferation are so grave that we have established the National Counterproliferation Center to strengthen our response. The NCPC works within the Intelligence Community and with other elements of the United States Government in a broad effort to identify and interdict acquisition attempts, to help improve export controls, and to help secure nuclear weapons and fissile material, pathogens, and chemical weapons in select countries.

North Korea and Iran represent major WMD proliferation challenges and are the focus of efforts by our newly created Mission Managers for North Korea, Iran, and Counterproliferation. As you know, North Korea underscored its previous claims to have nuclear weapons by conducting a nuclear explosion on October 9. This provocative act defied a UN Security Council statement warning North Korea not to test and compounded its destabilizing July 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> tests of seven ballistic missiles, which included a failed launch of the intercontinental-capable Taepo Dong-2 system. In addition to adding to its own nuclear and missile arsenal, Pyongyang sells ballistic missiles to any country wishing to buy and has threatened to proliferate nuclear weapons abroad. Accordingly, North Korea remains a major challenge to the global nonproliferation regime, a key threat to our allies and US troops in Northeast Asia, and a source of instability in the Middle East, where it proliferates missiles.

Turning to the Middle East, our concerns about Iran are shared by many nations, also by the International Atomic Energy Agency, and of course, by Iran's neighbors. Iran continues to develop a uranium enrichment capability in violation of UN Security Council restrictions. Despite its claims to the contrary, we assess that Iran seeks nuclear weapons, although we judge that Tehran probably does not yet have a nuclear weapon and probably has not yet produced or acquired sufficient fissile material. Iran already has the largest inventory of ballistic missiles in

the Middle East, and is developing systems able to reach beyond its immediate region to at least Western Europe.

There is much more to be said about Iran, notably with respect to its sponsorship of terrorism in pursuit of greater influence in the Middle East, but let me turn now to its neighbor, Iraq, where the ongoing conflict is complex, difficult, and tragic.

In broad terms, much of the majority Shia population, deeply concerned about its security, is determined to ensure that Iraq's new government reflects its will as expressed in a democratic election. Meanwhile, many Sunnis view the Shia as Iranian controlled and regard the current government as predatory. For their part, the Kurds want to keep and expand the substantial autonomy they have exercised since 1991.

Despite these fears and competing goals, it is noteworthy that the Shia and the Kurds, with some Sunni participation, have crafted a democratic constitution that could allow Iraqis to settle their differences peacefully.

This prospect is undercut, however, by escalating ethno-sectarian violence that has been fomented and fanned by al-Qa'ida in Iraq, a cynical strategy it pursued well before the watershed bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samara last February. Al-Qa'ida in Iraq's murderous attacks accurately reflect what I said a moment ago about violent jihadists in general: they have no interest in listening to those they profess to champion and most of their victims are Muslim. Now violence between the Sunnis and the Shia has become self-sustaining and spread to a wider range of confessional groups and actors.

This situation, which I have presented in a compressed form, presents great challenges for Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki in trying to implement reforms needed to improve life for all Iraqis and to reverse the escalating trend of ethno-sectarian violence. Nonetheless, the key to moving Iraq in the direction of a fully functioning, stable democracy must come from Iraqi leaders themselves. Only if they seek to resolve their differences, reach compromises on important issues, and assert the state's authority on the full range of political, security, and economic challenges facing Iraq can they chart a successful path forward. Coalition forces will remain an important counter to an erosion of central authority that would have disastrous consequences for the people of Iraq, and for stability in the region, and United States strategic interests in the Middle East.

In Africa, the situation in Darfur is another tragic conflict with devastating humanitarian consequences that is showing signs of escalating into a regional conflict. The United States, as I am sure you know, is committed to ending the violence and providing assistance to the suffering people of Darfur, and ensuring a peaceful democratic transformation throughout Sudan. In synthesis, rebel groups in Darfur believe that the recent negotiated peace agreement fails to satisfy their security concerns and demands for power sharing and compensation. In response, the Sudanese military, with assistance from local militia, is conducting a campaign against civilian villages suspected of harboring rebels. These actions continue to result in the death and displacement of many innocent civilians.

Regrettably, Chad and the Central African Republic are becoming entangled in the Darfur crisis. The spillover of violence in the past month threatens to destabilize already weak regimes in both countries with recriminations being made on all sides. The United States Intelligence Community continues to work hard to provide more comprehensive analysis, which will help the relief effort and support policymaker actions aimed at finding a solution to this complex crisis. In contrast to the Middle East and Africa, Latin America offers a much less violent and more positive story. 2006 has been an election-packed year in which the continued consolidation of democracy remained the dominant trend. Moderates on the center-left such as Chile's Bachelet and Costa Rica's Arias joined a reelected Brazilian President Lula and Uruguay's Tabare Vazquez as leaders who promote both macroeconomic stability and poverty alleviation while working to strengthen democratic institutions. Able center-right democrats, who share many of the same values with the moderate left, won in two key countries, Mexico and Colombia.

At the same time, however, the election of radical populists in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua, and the strong showing of candidates with similar views in other countries speaks to the growing impatience of national electorates with the failure to improve the living standards of large elements of the population. These radical populists will continue to have electoral appeal if incumbent governments fall short of public expectations.

Indeed, polls indicate that Venezuela's President Chavez, the region's most prominent radical populist and virulently anti-American political leader, is likely to be reelected on Sunday. A respectable showing by opposition candidate Manuel Rosales would boost prospects for post-election unity of democratic forces. But Chavez's meddling in the domestic affairs of other states in the region – granting Colombia's FARC insurgents safe haven and other material support, for example – already has made him a divisive force. Venezuela's permissive attitude toward drug trafficking is another serious regional problem, while Chavez's growing ties to Iran and other states, such as North Korea, Syria, and Belarus, clearly demonstrate a desire to build an anti-US coalition that extends well beyond Latin America.

As in all such remarks dealing with global security threats and challenges, I inevitably have omitted a great deal. I haven't spoken about Afghanistan where our soldiers and our allies continue to fight a determined enemy, the rise of Asia, the growing stature of countries like China and India, the political evolution of Russia, or lingering problems the United States and our friends face in places like the Balkans, the Levant, or ninety miles south of Miami in Cuba. We can talk about those items now if you like, or we can return to some of the issues that I mentioned.

Any one of these subjects lends itself to a fundamental point with which I'd like to conclude: As a nation with global interests, including alliances and friendships based on common values and aspirations, the United States must pay close attention to more intelligence topics than ever before in its history. Intelligence is not a panacea – far from it – but we are making progress in intelligence reform, and that is important. Better intelligence collection, analysis, coordination, and information-sharing give our policymakers, legislators, the armed forces and law enforcement officers valuable tools with which to respond to the complex challenges that I have described this evening. Insofar as they can be forewarned, they can mitigate the consequences of

actions by adversaries who mean us ill, capitalize on opportunities to promote peace, and defend our citizens, our values, and our allies around the globe.

Thank you very much.

DR. GRAHAM ALLISON: Thank you very much. Let me remind you the ground rules here. There are microphones on the ground floor and at the loges. We have only one speaker tonight, Ambassador Negroponte, so people are allowed and invited to ask questions about any topic they would like, but they should be brief and they should be questions.

John, maybe one minute about the point you raised earlier when we were discussing about the average length in service of people in the current Intelligence Community and therefore the opportunities that affords for people who might be a freshman in Harvard College or even a Kennedy School student.

AMB. NEGROPONTE: Right. Thanks for that opportunity to make a recruitment pitch here, for the community as a whole.

With the end of the Cold War and the advent of the 1990's, there was a hollowing out, if you will, of the national security community in Washington and that applies to the Intelligence Community as well as other elements so there really was a significant decline in the size of these various agencies and in their various capabilities.

9/11 provoked an effort to try and rebuild those capabilities and we are still very much ramping up the number of analysts and intelligence collectors throughout the entire Intelligence Community.

So without citing facts and figures, not all of which I have at my fingertips except to tell you that the analytic community, for example, in our intelligence agencies today is very very young. People come in out of graduate school. They get a lot of responsibility at a fairly early age because there are these gaps to fill. So as you, those of you who are looking for various kinds of employment opportunities upon completion of your studies and who are interested in considering government service in general. I always put in a plug for the Foreign Service since I'm a career diplomat. Or the Intelligence Community in particular. I think it's something you should take a serious look at.

QUESTION: Good evening. I'm a student here at the Kennedy School, mid-career MPA.

Mr. Negroponte, in your career you've been witness to many of the darker aspects of human nature. I'm wondering through your career, what have you learned about where human rights versus real politik intersect? And as we go forward as a nation, is there a role for us seeking redemption for some of our past actions in the name of a greater good that have come at a great cost? Will that make us stronger in the long run?

AMB. NEGROPONTE: First of all, you're right. I've seen a lot of different situations around the world during the course of my career. I've had an opportunity to serve in eight different

countries overseas during the course of my career, and most of those countries in the less developed world. I think there is not an incompatibility between pursuing our national interests and our national security interests and promoting the cause of democracy and the defense of human rights. I think that these are not competing or conflicting interests. In fact if we're going to be successful over the long term they are mutually reinforcing, and that is as true today as it ever has been.

Think about the situation in Iraq. Democracy and the protection of the human rights of individual Iraqis seems to be a bedrock goal of ours in that country.

QUESTION: In terms of redemption for past actions –

AMB. NEGROPONTE: I'm not sure entirely what you're talking about.

QUESTION: For instance, [inaudible] in Iran, and now a whole country remembers that or –

AMB. NEGROPONTE: I think one has to just go forward in life. There's certainly debate about particular actions taken at a particular time in history, but I think the best way we can deal with those situations is going forward with the correct and the right policies.

QUESTION: Without acknowledging what's happened –

AMB. NEGROPONTE: I think that is very situationally dependent.

QUESTION: I'm a freshman at the college. I'd like to thank you for coming and speaking to us. I must admit that my dream career would be something like a combination of yours and Condoleezza Rice's. It's great to hear from you.

My question, I'm particularly interested in East Asia and I was wondering, within this intelligence framework what do you think the future of communist authoritarianism is in China and what implications would that have on our intelligence relationships, particularly on something like North Korea?

AMB. NEGROPONTE: I don't know – I'd hesitate to predict for you when the communist – when the political nature of the regime in China is going to change. I started my diplomatic career actually being assigned to Hong Kong as a Vice Consul in 1961, so I've seen a lot of the evolution of China since that time and there have been enormous changes. But to me the question is when is the economic, the system of market economic activity and principles that they seem to be adopting in large measure, going to come into some kind of collision with the efforts by the leaders of that state to maintain their monopoly on political power? Surely there's going to be some kind of a, there is a collision between those two factors but when in fact or how it exactly is going to play itself out, I don't know. But I've just got to believe there's going to be some kind of political evolution in China towards greater political freedom as this country continues to progress economically and modernize itself.

As far as the relationship with China on North Korea, we are partners with China in the six-party talks. I think we share a common interest in North Korea not becoming a nuclear weapons state. I think both of us see the very negative implications that would arise to the security of the region and to the behavior of some of the other actors in the region including Japan if the trend of North Korea's development of a nuclear capability were to continue.

QUESTION: Hello. I'm a sophomore at the college.

I'd like to ask quickly about a region that I know you know quite a lot about, having served there, which is Southeast Asia. Malaysia and Indonesia are often seen as bastions of moderate Islam, but I guess at the IOP [Harvard University Institute of Politics] earlier this month they talked about three kind of worrying phenomenon. I'm wondering if you could just comment briefly on how we're working to address them. Those are the rise of terrorist groups like Jemaah Islamiyah, the rise of anti-Americanism generally in the wake of the Iraq war. Also a trend he described in which, he said something along the lines of far more young Indonesian and Malaysian Islamic scholars are going to the Middle East and South Asia and becoming radicalized than there are South Asian and Middle Eastern Islamic scholars coming to Southeast Asia and studying a more moderate version of Islam.

I was wondering how we're addressing those three trends in terms of protecting our strategic interests in Southeast Asia. Thanks.

AMB. NEGROPONTE: It is part, I think, of this phenomenon that we confront with respect to violent Jihadism. I think Jemaah Islamiyah has got connections with al-Qa'ida. There are some Filipino groups in southern Mindanao who also espouse some of these violent ideologies. Even though you mentioned some of these trends that are occurring there, it seems to me that so far at least the trends towards these kind of violent activities has not been as extreme as in some other parts of the world.

I'd like to believe that in part at least is attributable to some of the actions that the newly elected President of Indonesia and his government have taken. I remember meeting him when he came to Washington earlier this year, and hearing him talk about some of the efforts that they are making to reach out and foster dialogue amongst moderate Islamic elements in his country. So I do think a political response of leaders in Muslim countries is a very very important factor in this situation, indeed.

QUESTION: I'm a freshman here at the college. Thank you for speaking with us today.

Ron Suskind recently wrote a book in which he argues that the administration's national security and counter-terrorism strategy is based on a one percent doctrine of risk assessment, where if there's a one percent chance that a threat will materialize we treat it as though it is absolutely certain and act on it like that. I was wondering if you could comment on that strategy and its potential for success.



AMB. NEGROPONTE: I'm not sure I would characterize it that way. First of all, one percent or not, 9/11 did happen. That was a devastating attack. I think our citizenry demanded and required that we respond to that situation.

Now in terms of how we perceive the terrorist threat around the world, I think we try to come to a measured view of the situation. These threats are out there. We don't give credibility to every single intelligence report we see or every rumor that we hear. We run things to ground. We try to have, I think the most important contribution that the Intelligence Community could make is to try to have the most thorough possible understanding of these threats so that our response can in fact be the appropriate one, rather than one based on exaggerated fears, if you will, or an imperfect understanding of the situation. So I think that's where intelligence comes in. It informs our actions. The better it is, I think the better it enables us to respond to these things in an appropriate way.

QUESTION: Thank you for being here. I'm an MPP2 here at Kennedy School.

My question actually pertains to one of your last comments on the hiring within the Intelligence Community. As students here, we know that there's been a ramp-up for like 50 percent hiring in CIA and late night advertisements for coming into the Intelligence Community. My question is, is this the best method in order to improve our intelligence capabilities? Do we have the capability to train all these people at once? And understanding that we have to build our Intelligence Community because of the 1990's, but are these the best methods? Are we getting the right people? Because we do have intelligence mistakes that have gone unnoticed.

AMB. NEGROPONTE: Right. A couple of things. First of all, I was talking to, I'm trying to remember the country now, but I was talking to the leader of another intelligence service and it turned out that in his country they couldn't recruit any of their intelligence officials except from the military or the police force of their country. I just thought, aren't we blessed as a country that we recruit our intelligence personnel from the citizenry at large.

If for no other reason, I think it's important that we recruit in the way that we do. Our intelligence officers come from the population as a whole.

Secondly, the question of being able to train people when they come in. When you're looking for analysts, for example, country analysts and analysts about China or India or the Middle East, of course your academic training is really one of the most important credentials. If you have a Master's or a Ph.D., this is an extremely valuable qualification within the analytic community.

As far as the operations officers are concerned, of course people who have to carry out various types of operational activity are going to have to have the requisite training and we're careful not to take in more people than our training facilities can absorb. We do have to modulate that a little bit just to make sure that we don't over-tax our training capabilities.

So I'm not going to tell you it's necessarily a perfect system, but I'm satisfied with the way it's working.

QUESTION: I am a Ph.D. student here at the Kennedy School.

A recent book by Rod Beckstrom called *Starfish and Spiders* elucidates the unstoppable power, as he calls it, of leaderless organizations. Given that our military and intelligence doctrine, classic doctrine, have focused on conventional threats with hierarchic structures, I'm wondering how the Intelligence Community has evolved to focus on decentralized networks and leaderless organizations?

AMB. NEGROPONTE: It's hard, if you're referring for example to the fact that the terrorists, the al-Qa'ida, for example, as we were saying earlier has become something of a movement and it has sort of an inspirational role. While it may do, and I think it does do a certain amount of planning and conceiving of operations around the world, a lot of it ends up originating in this more decentralized world that I think you're referring to. But I don't think these organizations are necessarily leaderless, it's just that maybe these organizations are not as large or monolithic as what we've had to deal with previously. And I think you touch on what has become a significant challenge for the Intelligence Community which is following a much greater variety of threats than it had to follow, for example, during the Cold War when it was quite clear that the Soviet Union was the adversary, and that if you had people who were well trained in Russian and understood something about how Soviet society operated, you were well on your way to achieving your goal. I think it's become a lot more complicated than that these days and the issue you raise I think is one element in that situation.

QUESTION: Hello. I'm a freshman at the college here. Thank you very much for coming today.

Your position, national intelligence coordinator [DNI], was created at least in part because of concerns expressed by the 9/11 Commission and others that increased information sharing and coordination among the intelligence agencies – the CIA, the FBI and the others that you mentioned – may have helped to prevent 9/11.

Five years later, is the Intelligence Community sufficiently coordinated to prevent another major attack?

AMB. NEGROPONTE: It's better coordinated. It's more vigilant. And in that sense I think we're safer than pre-9/11. We've done a lot in the area of information sharing. We've done a lot in terms of getting these agencies together and encouraging them to accept, and in fact I don't think they have any difficulty accepting the fact that it's through working together, through these intelligence disciplines working together that we're going to be the most effective.

I can give you a couple of examples, illustrations of that. One is the reaction of this National Counterterrorism Center where all of these key agencies have representatives. The FBI, the CIA, the Homeland Security Department. They're all out there in this open kind of bull pen and there are all the different databases with terrorism information that flow into that center whose leadership meets with the entire, by video-teleconference three times a day, every day of the week, to exchange information on the latest threats and problems. That's just one example of the efforts that are being made. Technological fixes have been instituted, procedures, questions

about security clearances and harmonizing the issues of access to classified information. There's a whole range of issues that needed to be addressed and are being addressed and I think the situation has improved.

QUESTION: Thank you.

AMB. NEGROPONTE: We've still got a long way to go.

QUESTION: Good evening, Mr. Ambassador. Thank you for coming to speak with us. I'm a student here at the Kennedy School.

You mentioned in your remarks that President Chavez is noted as trying to develop some anti-American coalitions throughout the world and perhaps better recognized, at least on the world stage, as an ardent anti-American, is Osama bin Laden. While the structure of al-Qa'ida may not allow for the decapitation and the total breakdown of the network should we capture the head, he continues to be a constant reminder of the inability of the United States to capture him and serves as a thorn in this administration's side.

My question is three-fold. First, why hasn't the United States captured Osama bin Laden yet? Second, in your new position, what reforms would you advocate in the intelligence agency to change that? And third, what is this administration's position on covert action and use of assassination against terrorist leaders?

AMB. NEGROPONTE: On your first question, why he hasn't been captured, well, he hasn't. I don't have a – I don't think there's any purpose served in giving you a long exegesis. His scope of action has been narrowed, his organization has been degraded, he's lost many of his closest collaborators, people who he was collaborating with prior to 9/11 – I think personally he and Zawahiri probably operate in a very confined kind of environment. Obviously we're not going to give up on our efforts to track him down.

Your second question was what recommendations would I have as to what we can do to improve that situation. Well, I think this is something you just have to keep chipping away at. I think sooner or later he ought to be captured or put out of commission. I'm sure that will happen but I just can't forecast for you when. In the mean while I think we'll keep going after his lieutenants and the people around him or who work with him. Sooner or later we will be successful vis-à-vis bin Laden.

On the third question, I think it's a question that if you're in a shootout with these guys in Iraq or in Afghanistan, a number of these people have lost their lives and I think that's understandable. If you can capture them alive, then I think that is the preferable course if only for the intelligence value that you would gain from having these people in custody.

QUESTION: Hi Ambassador Negroponte, I'm a second year Master's student here at the Kennedy School.

Before I came here I worked in Army Operations in the Pentagon and I worked with a lot of those intelligence agencies that you described. I know that a lot of the work of intelligence is taking events and trends from the past and trying to predict the near future.

My question is sort of a twist on that. How much time do you have to take the past, to consider the past of your position in the whole Intelligence Community and predict the future of the DNI and what's going to happen with your position?

AMB. NEGROPONTE: I've had a certain amount of time to read about the past organizational setup and some of the debate that has occurred in previous years about intelligence reform, because that's not a new issue. It's one that's been around Washington for years and years.

But frankly, most of our time is focused on either the here and now or the future and I think that's what we devote most of our energy and attention to.

We also, I'm also very interested when I travel around the world in how other countries have dealt with their organizational setup. One of the things that I find quite interesting is that there's really no cookie cutter mold for how intelligent countries organize their intelligence activities. They're all over the place, if you will, in how they're organized.

I've come to the conclusion that the organizational setup and the boxes and where they are on the chart really are not nearly as important as those three issues that I believe I referred to earlier – information sharing, integration, and speed with which, the agility with which you move information both vertically and horizontally across the community. Those are the three critical factors that I think are far more important than how specifically you're organized in any kind of a hierarchical sense of the word.

QUESTION: Thank you for your speech, Director Negroponte. I'm a freshman at the college.

Stephen Hadley's memo to President Bush regarding Prime Minister Maliki's administration in Iraq was recently leaked to the press. Do you agree with Hadley's suggestion that Prime Minister Maliki, his actions reflect pro-Shia policies in Iraq?

AMB. NEGROPONTE: First, let me just say something about leaks, since you're giving me this opportunity. It's very damaging. It's damaging to, it undercuts the policy process. It obviously can be damaging diplomatically. And when it comes to the leaking of intelligence information where sources and methods are revealed, this is something that can be not only damaging to national security but downright dangerous for people who might have been involved in helping us obtain the information in question. This was not an intelligence report, this was a policy memorandum, I recognize that, but I just thought it was a good opportunity to mention this.

The other point I would mention is there comes a point where if you have too many of these situations, you have difficulty maintaining liaison, intelligence liaison relationships and diplomatic relationships with other countries. If they feel that whatever information they confide to you runs the risk of being leaked to the press, that can put a damper on various types of cooperation.

I don't want to comment on any specific aspect of Steve Hadley's memo, but what I will say about the political situation in Iraq as concerns the Shia and the other groups and Prime Minister Maliki, I think he wants to make the political system, the constitutional system they have devised, work. I think he knows that in order to do that that even though the Shia may be in the majority in the legislature and holds a preponderance of the positions in the government, that the human rights and the political rights of the other groups in that society must be respected if that political experiment is to succeed. Because if not, you will always have somebody in a state of perpetual violence against the central government.

So the respect for the human and political rights of all Iraqi groups is an extremely important thing and I think the top political leaders in Baghdad understand that.

QUESTION: Thank you. I'm an alumnus of the college.

My question has to do with your current job but also with your tenure as Ambassador to the United Nations.

Our current leadership in Washington has had its frustrations with the United Nations in the last few years, and some have even expressed outright hostility, whether warranted or not.

I'm curious, based on your personal experience with the institution, how you feel the UN is currently performing in maintaining collective security around the world. And how would you change the UN if you feel like it should be doing a better job?

AMB. NEGROPONTE: First let me say I don't think I've – I mean I've had a lot of interesting jobs in my diplomatic career, but certainly being Ambassador to the United Nations was one of the most interesting if not the most interesting that I ever undertook. It was really fun, if you don't mind me saying, negotiating in the Security Council. I thought that was really interesting work. I think negotiating Security Council Resolutions is extremely interesting. And of course you can imagine for somebody who's devoted their lives to this kind of work, the idea of being at the UN where literally every hour or every, yes, literally every hour you're dealing with a different subject of one kind or another, it's an extremely interesting place to be.

I personally believe that the United Nations is a very important instrument and if you're talking specifically about, and I think that's one of the problems. People sometimes don't make the distinction between the UN organization, the administrative machinery that is run by the Secretary General on the one hand, and the Security Council on the other.

I think the Security Council can play and does play a very very important role in international affairs. When I think of some of the peacekeeping operations that we mounted in Africa, for example, in Sierra Leone and the Congo and elsewhere in the African region, I wonder what we would have done if we had not had the United Nations. When you think of how thinly stretched the United States and NATO forces are around the world, what would we have done without the international community contributing to those types of peacekeeping operations which I think in a number of instances have had a modicum of success.

So my attitude towards the UN is work with it, I think it's very dependent on the members themselves, and particularly the membership of the Security Council. I think the effort we invest in the United Nations is well worth it.

QUESTION: In a recent article in Foreign Affairs, it was argued that the reason there haven't been any terrorist attacks on US soil since 9/11 is not a result of the intelligence work, but is in fact caused, is a result of the general lack of terrorist presence on US soil. The argument was if there were a significant terrorist presence and the US knew about it, there would be more convictions for terrorism, and if 9/11 is to be taken as any indicator of the time the planning would take, there has already been sufficient time for another major attack to have been planned.

So insofar as your position allows you to discuss this, what do you personally think is the reason there haven't been any major terrorist attacks on US soil since 9/11?

AMB. NEGROPONTE: Obviously this is a judgmental thing. No one knows for sure. But I think one of the things that I would list is the fact that we did, after 9/11, go on the offensive against al-Qa'ida, and we deprived them of their sanctuary in Afghanistan, and that we have continued to be on the offensive, if you will, against them since that time. I think that has been helpful.

I think you're right, they probably don't have as much to work with here in the United States as they might have in other societies, perhaps Western Europe would be an example. But I think probably having gone on the offensive would be a factor that I would cite as the most important one.

Let me just say, I want to thank you for this opportunity to appear before all of you this evening. I thank you very very much for that opportunity and hope that at least some of you will pursue an interest in, a career in government service. I've done it pretty much all my life since 1960 with the exception of four years in the private sector. I've found it very rewarding, very satisfying, and I hope that some of you out there might choose to follow some similar type of course in your lives once you leave these hallowed halls.

Thank you.

DR. ALLISON: I think for those of us at a school of government, but for the whole audience, the opportunity to have a person whose whole career has contributed so much in the arena and who's now doing this job as Director of National Intelligence, to talk to us so candidly and so informatively is a great honor. As a citizen I count myself fortunate. So let's say thank you very very much.

AMB. NEGROPONTE: Thank you.