

IC ON THE RECORD

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SIGNALS INTELLIGENCE REFORM

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DNI CLAPPER'S INTRODUCTION TO THE 3RD ANNUAL SIGINT PROGRESS REPORT

This month marks the three-year anniversary of Presidential Policy Directive-28, Signals Intelligence Activities (PPD-28). Each year since issuance of PPD-28, the Intelligence Community (IC) has published a Signals Intelligence Reform Progress Report. This is the third such report. I wanted to take this opportunity to reflect on some of the measures summarized in these reports.

The general principles articulated in PPD-28 reflect core values of the IC. These principles include ensuring that signals intelligence collection is legally authorized and for foreign intelligence and counterintelligence purposes; that privacy and civil liberties are integral considerations; and that such collection is not for the purpose of suppressing or burdening criticism or dissent, or the disadvantaging of persons based on their ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, or religion. These values are also reflected in the Principles of Professional Ethics for the IC, which I issued in 2012: Mission, Truth, Lawfulness, Integrity, Stewardship, Excellence, and Diversity.

As shown in these reports, the IC has worked tirelessly to implement PPD-28. In particular, IC elements have developed and published policies for safeguarding the privacy of individuals regardless of nationality, and are now carrying out

those policies in a manner that protects both individual privacy and the security of our nation. In my view, implementation of these privacy policies and principles has enhanced public support for our mission, at home and abroad, without impeding our mission effectiveness.

These reports also describe the IC's diligent implementation of the USA FREEDOM Act. Its requirements included the prohibition on use of key authorities to engage in bulk collection, and the creation of a new legal mechanism allowing the government to obtain specific call detail records held by providers, pursuant to individual orders. The USA FREEDOM Act is an important statutory authority that supports our national security mission while safeguarding civil liberties and privacy. Under this new authority, the IC now has the ability to obtain the information it needs, under circumstances that promote the protection of privacy.

As is evident from these reports, we have remained mindful of the vital role of intelligence oversight. After all, as articulated in our professional ethics principles, we are accountable to our oversight institutions, and through those institutions, ultimately to the American people. For example, the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board has played a key role in the oversight framework for the nation's counterterrorism activities and the implementation of several signals intelligence reforms. The IC routinely provides the Board with the information and access it requests to carry out its oversight duties. We have found the independent and informed perspective it brings to be valuable as we formulate and carry out counterterrorism policies.

Finally, the reports highlight our transparency efforts. I issued the Principles of Intelligence Transparency two years ago, and believe more strongly than ever that responsible transparency is becoming increasingly inseparable from public trust, and consequently, from mission success. We cannot accomplish our mission without public trust, and to earn and retain that trust, we must better explain both our role in protecting national security, and the rules and oversight framework that governs our activities. This includes engaging with the public to enhance their understanding of the IC—including meeting with civil society representatives to hear their concerns and better explain our perspectives. Of course, we must continue to carry out our obligation to protect intelligence sources, methods, and activities when disclosure would harm national security. Transparency is difficult, but also, in my view, essential.

I am proud of the IC's work implementing these and other changes. Once again, the IC has proved itself to be resilient and agile as we adapt to—and hopefully stay ahead of—the rapid pace of change, all while continuing to perform our vital mission. Our intelligence professionals continue to exhibit selfless dedication to the security of our Nation while protecting civil liberties and privacy, embracing diversity, serving as responsible stewards of the public trust, and providing appropriate transparency.

*James Clapper
Director of National Intelligence*

January 18, 2017

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