



THE WHITE HOUSE  
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GEORGE W. BUSH

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## Vice President Cheney Discusses National Intelligence Director

Excerpt from August 4, 2004 speech. [Click here](#) for the whole speech.

Q My question is this, can you explain to us how the creation of the new national director of intelligence gathering is going to benefit the country, and how that will change the complexion of our intelligence agencies here in America and abroad?

THE VICE PRESIDENT: Sure. Basically, the proposition for a National Intelligence Director comes from the 9/11 Commission that just completed its work assessing what happened prior to 9/11, what worked, what didn't work. One of the problems we had, for example, prior to 9/11 is that there clearly was a lack of effective communication between the FBI on the one hand, and the CIA on the other.

Part of that was built in institutionally, because we've always wanted to keep the CIA out of our domestic business. Spies are to go spy against the enemy overseas, not here in the U.S., has always been our mind set. And the FBI was primarily a law enforcement operation. They'd go in after the terrorist attack, find the guilty party, such as Timothy McVeigh, in Oklahoma City, do a great job of prosecuting the wrongdoer. We needed to change their orientation and get them more in the business of counter-terrorism and preventing the attacks, not just cleaning up afterwards, and do a better job of building those links between the various segments of the intelligence communities. Part of the idea of this National Intelligence Director is that you'll have somebody that sits over the about 15 different intelligence agencies that we have in the federal government. We've got the CIA. The FBI, obviously, has significant intelligence capabilities. State Department has something called INR. We got the National Security Agency, the National Reconnaissance Office, Defense Intelligence Agencies. There is a need for a lot of intelligence various places in the government. And we don't want to inhibit those developments. Efficiency is not necessarily the right answer for intelligence the way it is some other places. If you got a little redundancy there, that's probably a good thing. You'd rather err on that side than the other side.

But the purpose of the NID is to do some things that were built into the statute from the standpoint of the Director of Central Intelligence years ago that have never really been fully carried out. The President has embraced the idea. There's still a lot of work to be done to flesh out the details, and that work will be done with the Congress in the weeks ahead.

We also have signed up -- we already have something called the Terrorism Threat Integration Center. We're going to expand that significantly into what the 9/11 Commission called the National Counter-terrorism Center, where you pull together the streams of intelligence from all over the government, and fuse it together into one piece of analysis that then is available to the President and other senior

policymakers to help us stay on top of the situation and be able to make those kinds of decisions. So it's an effort to improve coordination, a better, wiser allocation of resources to make sure the President and the top policymakers get the best advice possible with respect to the terrorist threat that's out there.

I think it's an important initiative. The President is prepared, as I say, to go forward with it, endorsed it just this week. Now the key is to write the legislation that actually implements the concept.

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