

Message from the Director: Promoting an Effective Transition

Presidential elections are a centerpiece of our democracy. Now that the American people have had their say, their federal government assumes an additional responsibility. Beyond all the tasks in place on November 4th, the public expects us to do what we can to ensure a smooth, effective transition to a new administration. Our Agency would have it no other way.

For CIA, on duty since 1947, this is familiar ground. As intelligence officers, we know that the insights we provide are national assets, a decisive advantage for any President. We understand that our mission of protecting America and advancing its ideals and interests abroad is constant. And we recognize that the challenges facing our country, and the enemies who would do it harm, are not about to disappear for the next few months.

That means that we in the Intelligence Community will have—until noon on January 20th—two sets of consumers. As we continue to serve the current administration, we are also in touch with President-elect Obama and his national security team. Through expanded access, greater than what he had in his briefings as a candidate or as a Senator, he will see the full range of capabilities we deploy for the United States.

As you would expect, CIA will play a central part in the Intelligence Community's outreach to the President-elect. The Agency leadership will meet this morning to discuss the transition. We have already prepared a great deal of information about CIA for the Obama team. The goal today is to review what has been done and to ensure that every part of the Agency is well-placed to contribute in the weeks ahead. DNI McConnell, who will launch the first briefing of the incoming administration, has asked Michael Morell, our Director for Intelligence, to be his representative throughout that process. The two principal briefers for the President-elect are also CIA careerists. That is but one reflection of the deep expertise that resides here.

With every transition comes speculation about personnel changes across government. At this point, I would urge you to ignore it. I certainly have. Those privileged to lead this organization understand that they serve at the pleasure of the President. I am proud to represent you and your work to the President and the country at large. CIA has had, in the past few years, many successes against some of the toughest targets imaginable. The job of senior leadership at CIA is, more than anything, to create conditions that allow you to excel. What counts most is your further success. It is what our nation needs and deserves.

Your dedication, skill, creativity, and courage are true sources of inspiration. I have no doubt that your hard work—defined by integrity—will earn the trust and confidence of America's new leaders, just as it has before.

Mike Hayden