

REPUBLICAN RESISTANCE INCREASES CHALLENGES FACING NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DIRECTOR

On Monday, the 9-11 Public Discourse Project will examine the challenges facing the new Director of National Intelligence, John Negroponte, as he attempts to oversee national intelligence centers and the national intelligence agencies. These challenges have only been heightened by Republican attempts to water down the power and the influence of the National Intelligence Director. Republicans opposed the creation of this position over the advice of experts. They did everything they could to weaken the position before the 9-11 bill passed. And they are still working behind the scenes to weaken the position even further.

9/11 COMMISSION RECOMMENDED STRONG, INDEPENDENT NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DIRECTOR

9-11 Commission Recommended Creation of a National Intelligence Director In 2004. The final report of the commission to investigate the Sept. 11th attacks recommended the creation of a cabinet-level post to oversee the nation's intelligence agencies and foster the sharing of intelligence information throughout the intelligence community. The 9-11 Commission wanted a NID who would report directly to the president and oversee national intelligence centers and the national intelligence agencies. The Director would have hiring and firing power across all agencies and have control over the budget. [9/11 Commission Report, Executive Summary, 7/22/04; [New York Times](#), 7/16/04]

- James Thompson, 9-11 Commission Member: "If I were the president of the United States, I would want sitting next to me in a cabinet meeting a national director of intelligence so that I could fix responsibility in one person for issues of this sort... And if I were in the Congress of the United States, I would want to make sure that I was protected from the accusation that oversight funding authorization and appropriations were not adequate." [[New York Times](#), 7/23/2004]

If A 'Shell' Of A Position Is Created, Might As Well Not Do Anything. Philip Zelikow, executive director of the 9-11 Commission: "If Congress takes the shell of this idea and then dilutes the powers so that it looks like they've done it but they haven't really done it, then you will have another bureaucratic layer, and I'll just say here, if that's the way it ends up, they might as well not do anything at all because they'll make us more worse off than we were before." [Newshour with Jim Lehrer, 7/23/04]

Director Must Have Power To Execute The Budget And Hire And Fire.

- Jamie Gorelick, 9-11 Commission Member: "There is a big danger in the recommendations being cherry-picked. For example, you could create a national intelligence director and not give him budget authority, or mess around with the budget authority in a way that's not real." [USA Today, 8/2/04]
- Robert Gates, former CIA Director: "I think that frankly one of the powers, . . . what's important is that the director or whoever is in charge have the power to execute the budget that he's given, in other words the power to move money and people around the entire intelligence community to deal with the highest priority issues, and that he, and that the leaders of those agencies know that he is the one to whom they are accountable and that he can hire them and that he can fire them." [Newshour with Jim Lehrer, 7/23/04]
- "Commission member Tim Roemer said a centralized intelligence chief with hiring and firing power over all intelligence agencies is needed," the Washington Times reported. "The bottom line is, there are only two phrases that really give you control in this town," Mr. Roemer said, 'You're fired,' and 'Here's the money.'" [Washington Times, 7/22/2004]

BUT GOP DISAGREED AND OPPOSED THE POSITION

VP Cheney: Opposed Creation of New Intelligence Director. NBC News: "In fact, sources tell NBC News that in deciding to name the national intelligence director, the president overruled deep reservations by Vice President Dick Cheney, and outright opposition from Defense Secretary Rumsfeld and acting CIA Chief McLaughlin." [NBC, "Today," 8/3/04]

Homeland Security Secretary Ridge: Intel Czar Not Needed. "Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge signaled administration opposition to the idea of a new intelligence chief" the Washington Post reported. "I don't think you need a czar... We already had one level of bureaucracy that we don't need." [Washington Post, 7/21/2004]

CIA Director McLaughlin: Intel Czar Not Relevant. "Rejecting a recommendation expected this week from the Sept. 11 commission, the CIA's acting director said Sunday a new national intelligence chief is unnecessary and that intelligence agencies have made changes since the 2001 attacks to better protect the country... [Acting Director John McLaughlin said] 'It doesn't relate particularly to the world I live in.'" [AP, 7/18/04]

Homeland Security Committee Chairman Cox: Intel Czar Not Needed. "Rep. Christopher Cox, R-Calif., chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, said commission chairman Thomas Kean, a Republican, and vice chairman Lee Hamilton, a Democrat, "acknowledged that the downside of their two main proposals for this mega-center and intelligence czar was the potential for more bureaucracy." [USA Today, 7/21/2004]

GOP WATERED DOWN THE POSITION AS MUCH AS THEY COULD

Republican Rep. Hunter Worked To Water Down NID Powers. The lawmaker who had been the main obstacle to passage of the bill -- House Armed Services Committee Chairman Duncan Hunter (R-El Cajon) - - said he had agreed to support the measure only after winning what he described as substantial curbs on the director's powers. [LA Times, 12/8/04]

Experts Skeptical Of Effectiveness Of NID, Congressional Compromises Weakened Position. The compromises that went into creating a director of national intelligence have left many government officials and espionage experts skeptical that key reforms will amount to more than an administrative reshuffling because the definition of the job's authority was watered down during congressional negotiations. [LA Times, 12/8/04]

- **President Must Tell Agency Heads To Cede Authority To NID.** "Unless the president really gets behind the new director and, in effect, tells the [agency heads] they've got to cede authority" to whoever gets the job, the intelligence chief is likely to struggle, said retired Navy Adm. Stansfield Turner, who served as CIA director under President Carter. . . Many of the provisions in the bill amount to "throwing the ball back in the president's camp," Turner said. "And I'm very worried because it appears this president won't buck Rumsfeld." [LA Times, 12/8/04]
- **NID's Responsibilities Outrun His Authorities.** A pressing problem for the spy chief is that, "to a certain extent, his responsibilities outrun his authorities," said commission co-chair Laurence H. Silberman, a federal judge appointed by Ronald Reagan. [Baltimore Sun, 4/1/05]

AND THEY'RE STILL WORKING TO WEAKEN THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DIRECTOR

Defense Department Ally Wants To Weaken NID Position Even More. Challenging the authority of the new national intelligence director, John Negroponte, Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA) proposed curbing NID's ability to shift personnel from one spy agency to another. The December 2004 law said Negroponte could move up to 100 employees, once he consulted with the appropriate congressional committees. But the provision in the annual intelligence budget bill - supported by Hunter - requires Negroponte to notify those panels and get a response. Hunter called that power "an important oversight function." That would mean in effect, requiring Hunter's approval for the transfer of even one person. [AP, 6/9/05; Washington Post, 6/9/05]

9-11 Commission Member Said Hunter's Proposal Served Those Who Oppose Sharing Authority. Former Navy Secretary John Lehman, a member of the Sept. 11 Commission, said the issue will determine whether the intelligence director will have the authority to supersede the parochial interests of the 15 intelligence agencies. "The people that have put Duncan Hunter up to this are the people in the agencies who do not want to share any of the authority that they have and certainly not share any of the good people that they have," Lehman said. [AP, 6/9/05]