

**Statement of
Senator Susan M. Collins**

“Ten Years After 9/11: Is Intelligence Reform Working? Part II”

May 19, 2011

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The operation that tracked and killed Osama bin Laden demonstrates the kind of successful collaboration of intelligence and operations that we envisioned in reforming our capabilities and intelligence community in the wake of the attacks of 9-11-01.

This was a great victory for our intelligence efforts and a great blow to al Qaeda. But al Qaeda is not going away.

That is why it is time for Congress to examine and build on the successes since the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act -- which created the Director of National Intelligence. It is the opportune time to identify any shortcomings in that structure and work to correct them.

I look forward to hearing from Admiral Blair about what worked during his tenure as DNI, what didn't work, and what might be changed about the structure we designed seven years ago.

Admiral Blair is a fellow Mainer - hailing from Kittery, home of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. So, either coming from a great Navy town or following five generations of Naval officers preordained his career. We all hope he has a fine Navy Day here as we hear from him about his experiences as the DNI and his recommendations now with the benefit of 20/20 hindsight.

Almost 10 years since September 11 and seven years since our landmark legislation, we are safer but not yet safe. Our intelligence community is stronger and more effective than ever before, but plenty of turf battles remain. During his tenure, Admiral Blair was at the center of some unusually public battles with the CIA.

To help address lingering deficiencies in the Intelligence Community, the DNI must be the “quarterback” that the 9-11 Commission envisioned and we intended. At last week's hearing, General Hayden preferred the term “coach.” I will be interested to hear whether or not Admiral Blair believes the DNI has been empowered to fill this critical role.

Page 2 of 2

At the first hearing in this series, the leaders of the 9-11 Commission, Governor Kean and Congressman Hamilton, agreed that presidential adviser John Brennan is, in many respects, performing the role we envisioned for the DNI when we authored the legislation. That troubles me, not due to any doubts about Mr. Brennan's capabilities, but because that structure undermines the statutory role of the DNI.

We must ask whether changes to the law are required, or whether it is simply a matter of more fidelity to the 2004 law to realize the potential of the DNI.

Admiral, thank you again for being here. I look forward to hearing your perspective.

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