The Inspector General of the Intelligence Community Issues Statement on Artificial Intelligence

(May 30, 2019) Inspector General of the Intelligence Community Michael K. Atkinson recently issued a statement on the need for oversight authorities to stay current with the transformative powers of cognitive technologies, particularly artificial intelligence (AI). In the Office of the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community's September 2018 - March 2019 Semiannual Report to Congress, Inspector General Atkinson made the following observations on the subject of AI.

The United States Intelligence Community expects AI to fundamentally change the way intelligence is produced. A corollary to that intent is that AI will fundamentally change the way intelligence oversight must be conducted. This has led to the growing realization that, for Intelligence Community oversight authorities to remain effective, there will need to be sufficient focus on and investments in oversight of AI in the Intelligence Community (IC).

Maintaining American leadership in AI and shaping the global evolution of AI in a manner consistent with our Nation's values, policies, and priorities have become national security issues. In February 2019, the White House issued Executive Order 13859, *Maintaining American Leadership in Artificial Intelligence*. The President's *National Security Strategy*, the Director of National Intelligence's *National Intelligence Strategy*, and the Secretary of Defense's *National Defense Strategy*, among other high-level strategic guidance documents, also reflect the rising significance of AI as a national security issue.

There are several major AI efforts within the national security enterprise focused on this issue. For example, the Intelligence Community's *AIM Initiative: A Strategy for Augmenting Intelligence using Machines* seeks to use AI technologies to fundamentally change the way intelligence is produced. The Department of Defense's major AI efforts include establishing the Joint Artificial Intelligence Center and spearheading the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency's *AI Next Campaign*. These multiple, costly, and complex efforts will pose profound challenges for intelligence oversight authorities.

Fortunately, there is a recognized need and desire for effective oversight of AI. The President's Executive Order on AI established as one of its five principles that the "United States must foster public trust and confidence in AI technologies and protect civil liberties, privacy, and American values in their application in order to fully realize the potential of AI technologies for the American people." Further, the Director of National Intelligence's 2019 *National Intelligence Strategy* included for the first time as one of its enterprise objectives safeguarding privacy and civil liberties and practicing appropriate transparency to enhance accountability and public trust in all of the IC's efforts.

As Executive Order 13859 and the *National Intelligence Strategy* recognize, Americans have reasonable expectations that the IC will act consistently with the rule of law and American values. Reassuring statements that the IC is currently using AI technologies – and will use AI technologies in the future – will not be sufficient. The IC will need to validate those statements for the American people in ways consistent with the rule of law and American values.

Although publicly available reports refer to planned investments of hundreds of millions of dollars in AI for the national security enterprise, there is little indication that investments in oversight of AI are currently a high priority. Investment asymmetry between mission performance and intelligence oversight in AI efforts may lead to an accountability deficit. Intelligence oversight authorities may lack the people, tools, and focus needed to effectively evaluate vulnerabilities in AI technologies as well as the analytic integrity and legality of AI methods, uses, and products. The unintended, but nevertheless likely, outcome of investment asymmetry in the IC's AI efforts will be reduced trust in those efforts.

To help prevent this outcome, the ICIG has identified as one of its primary programmatic objectives the improved oversight of AI to prevent an accountability deficit. The ICIG is unique in that it has statutory oversight authority over all of the programs and activities within the responsibility and authority of the Director of National Intelligence. The ICIG, in collaboration with other intelligence oversight authorities, will collect and analyze data on the IC's implementation of AI technologies to ensure it is cohesive, comprehensive, and compliant with the rule of law and American values, while continuing to emphasize the need for appropriate investments in oversight of AI.

Full Semiannual Report

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The Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 established the Office of the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community within the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. The ICIG's mission is to provide independent and objective oversight of the programs and activities within the responsibility and authority of the Director of National Intelligence, to initiate and conduct independent audits, inspections, investigations, and reviews, and to lead and coordinate the efforts of the Intelligence Community Inspectors General Forum. The ICIG's goal is to have a positive and enduring impact throughout the Intelligence Community, to lead and coordinate the efforts of an integrated Intelligence Community Inspectors General Forum, and to enhance the ability of the United States Intelligence Community to meet national security needs while respecting our nation's laws and reflecting its values. The Forum consists of the twelve statutory and administrative Inspectors General having oversight responsibility for an element of the Intelligence Community. The Chair of the Forum is the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community.

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