



**Remarks by the Director of National Intelligence
Mr. Dennis C. Blair**

National Intelligence Community Awards Ceremony

**ODNI Headquarters
McLean, Virginia**

May 15, 2009

DIRECTOR BLAIR: I'm honored and humbled to be here with today's award recipients, whose packets I was privileged to be able to read earlier and be amazed at.

Being at this ceremony is the highlight of my time here so far. Those selected make me proud to be here. They're a source of pride for us all; and they're just the tip of the iceberg when you think about the wonderful work done by the entire Intelligence Community.

It's also a real pleasure for friends and family to get the chance to see such excellence rewarded across the full range of the Intelligence Community.

What's unfortunate is that family members, and of course the public, don't get to know the half of it – because what so many of our people do is classified.

But those of us who've been privileged to read the complete packets on today's honorees know.

Those of us who've worked with these incredible people know.

And yet, those who've benefited the most – the American public who you did it for – will probably never know. And that's just sort of the nature of our business.

There are really three icons in America of those who serve their country, or the community, while putting many members of their profession in harm's way:

There are those in the armed forces – soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coastguardsmen;

There are those in law enforcement, who serve at the federal, state, county or local level;

And there are those first responders, who fight fires and work in rescue operations.

But we know that our country also has a fourth group of heroes. They're the ones who receive little praise, and are in fact sometimes even unfairly viewed with suspicion by their fellow Americans.

I place the entire Intelligence Community – including those in the armed forces – in this category. Most of us are not case officers risking our lives by infiltrating some overseas terrorist cell in a foreign country. Just as most police officers are not on the SWAT team, and most members of the armed forces are not in Delta Force. Those organizations are as diverse as we are.

Most of us do something far less glamorous, certainly no less difficult, certainly no less important. Because to be sure, it takes the entire team to do the job. It's that way with the other three icons. It's that way with America's fourth group of heroes, those of the intelligence services.

One of the things I was most impressed with as I read the packets for this awards ceremony is how many team awards there were. We've come a long way in our integration, in our jointness.

You team awardees brought your skills together, without any regard to credit. In so doing, you enabled a far greater success, a result that was much more than the sum of its parts, a more satisfying and growing glory for all.

You put the mission first.

And when you do that, we all win.

So I'd like to say thank you, awardees, and also to the families who supported your excellent service.

And this close to Memorial Day, we also thank the ones who served this country and have gone before us. We're especially proud to honor one of them today as well.

Now, let's hear about some excellence.