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DIRECTOR BLAIR HIGHLIGHTS GLOBAL THREATS TO THE NATION

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In public testimony today before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Director of National Intelligence Dennis C. Blair outlined the most significant global security threats facing the nation. Recognizing that global threats comprise a diverse set of issues and factors, Director Blair framed the analysis by identifying key areas of risk, concern and opportunity that could have direct effects on the quality of life and security for Americans. The hearing also marked the first occasion where the Director, the leader of the nation's Intelligence Community, was the sole witness providing comprehensive analysis from all 16 intelligence agencies.

In his opening statement, Director Blair addressed several emerging areas of concern:

- 1) The global economic crisis and its destabilizing impact on allies and adversaries – including the likely decreased ability of our allies to meet their defense and humanitarian obligations;
- 2) The domestic and international impact of global climate change;
- 3) Access to secure and clean global energy resources and management of food and water supplies, especially in light of a projected population increase of 1 billion by 2025; and
- 4) Cyber security and threats to the U.S. information infrastructure posed by both state and non-state actors.

In referring to the global economic crisis that started in the United States and quickly spread to other countries, Blair said, "Time is probably our greatest threat. The longer it takes for the recovery to begin, the greater the likelihood of serious damage to U.S. strategic interests."

Director Blair also provided Intelligence Community updates on a wide range of threats and concerns. Some of the specific issues he addressed were:

- Notable progress in Muslim opinion turning against terrorist groups like al-Qaida;
- The fact that, despite setbacks, al-Qa'ida and its affiliates remain dangerous, adaptive and intent on attacking U.S. interests worldwide, including the US homeland;
- The need for sustained pressure against al-Qa'ida in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) to further degrade the organization;
- Positive security trends in Iraq;
- Noted increase in attacks in Afghanistan, both in scope and frequency;

- Continued concerns related to Iran's nuclear intentions and regional posture;
- Potential for an Iran-Israeli confrontation or crisis;
- The need for a more effective non-proliferation strategy with our partners; and
- U.S. concerns regarding Russia, China, Venezuela and other global powers.

Blair concluded, "The international security environment is complex. Whether we can succeed will depend on actions we take here at home and abroad. While these threats present us with both challenges and opportunities, we are nevertheless in a strong position to shape a world reflecting universal aspirations and values that we hold dear: human rights, the rule of law, liberal market economics and social justice."

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