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LOOKING FORWARD
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Until now, this report has focused on the limitations and strengths of today’s Intelligence Community. We reviewed the Intelligence Community’s recent performance in assessing the unconventional weapons programs of Iraq, Libya, and Afghanistan. We also assessed the Intelligence Community’s current capabilities to confront several of today’s priority intelligence challenges—including Iran, North Korea, and terrorism. (As we have noted elsewhere, while classification concerns precluded us from including our Iran and North Korea findings in our unclassified report, the lessons we learned from these reviews inform our recommendations.) And we complemented the formal “case studies” that appear in Part One of this report with reviews of other important challenges the Intelligence Community faces today, including the need to share intelligence across the Intelligence Community and the difficulties of coordinating intelligence across the foreign-domestic divide.

We found an Intelligence Community that has had some significant successes, but that is, on balance, badly equipped and badly organized to confront today’s threats. We found human intelligence collectors who have struggled in vain to find sources with valuable information—and often failed to vet properly the sources they did find. We found technical intelligence collectors whose traditional techniques have declining utility against threats that are increasingly elusive and diffuse. And we found an analytical community too quick to rely upon assumptions or conjecture, and too slow to communicate gaps and uncertainties to policymakers.

But above all, we found an Intelligence Community that was too disorganized and fragmented to use its many talented people and sophisticated tools effectively. There are not enough coordinated and sustained Community-wide efforts to perform critical intelligence functions—ranging from target development to strategic analysis—and critical information still too often does not
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get to the analysts or policymakers who need it most. On the flip side of the same coin, we found that many of the Intelligence Community’s recent successes stemmed from cross-agency efforts—such as the innovative fusing of different collection capabilities to penetrate a particular intelligence target. We found, in short, an Intelligence Community that needs to be better integrated and more innovative if it is to be able to confront today’s intelligence challenges.

With these lessons in mind, our report now turns toward the future. In the chapters that follow, we set forth our recommendations for change within the Community. We begin our discussion of proposed reforms with a chapter on leadership and management (Chapter 6). However, the task of transforming the Intelligence Community, if it is to be complete, must go beyond questions of organization. As a result, we make recommendations addressing several specific areas of intelligence (or challenges the Intelligence Community faces): Collection (Chapter 7); Analysis (Chapter 8); Information Sharing (Chapter 9); the challenge of uniting intelligence efforts across the foreign and domestic divide (Intelligence at Home, Chapter 10); Counterintelligence (Chapter 11); and a largely classified chapter on managing covert action (Chapter 12). Finally, we conclude with a stand-alone chapter examining our intelligence capabilities with respect to the most dangerous unconventional weapons threats the United States faces today, and offer recommendations on how to improve those capabilities (Proliferation, Chapter 13).