



06/04/98

Jeremiah News Conference

2 June 1998

Thanks very much. I'd like to open my remarks with a report that we have had no advance warning that Ginger is leaving the Spice Girls and George Tenet is forming another commission to take care of that problem for us.

George Tenet asked me to conduct for him an independent evaluation of the actions taken by the Intelligence Community leading up to the Indian nuclear test. I was assisted by a number of individuals within the IC and by one of my associates at Technology Strategies and Alliances. The IC provided full cooperation across the board. We solicited and received comments from all relevant agencies and anybody who wanted to come in and ask us questions or provide information. The report and recommendations, obviously, are my responsibility.

The identification of the Indian nuclear test preparations posed a difficult collection problem and a difficult analytical problem. Their program was an indigenous program. It was not derived from the US, Chinese, Russian or French programs. It was totally within India. And therefore, there were some characteristics difficult to observe. In addition, they took pains to avoid any characteristics that they may have learned were of value to us, and the test preparations they made in 1995/96. And as you and your colleagues have reported, apparently only a limited number of senior level political and government people were aware of the tests within India. So, as a result, our policymakers, and in fact the Intelligence Community, reported back that there was no indication the Indians would test in the near term.

I suppose my bottom line is that both the intelligence and the policy communities had an underlying mindset going into these tests that the BJP would behave as we behave. For instance, there is an assumption that the BJP platform would mirror Western political platforms. In other words, a politician is going to say something in his political platform leading up to the elections, but not necessarily follow through on the platform once he takes office and is exposed to the immensity of his problem.

The BJP was dead serious and to some degree I think they were motivated by the fact that the last time they were in office they were only there 13 days. And so they were ready to move as fast as they could this time given that they were in a 14 party coalition to execute their objectives that were stated in stuff you guys all read on the web. So, first of all, we had a mindset that said everybody else is going to work like we work. Why would anyone throw away all the economic advantages associated that they would lose with testing, why would they hazard all that stuff when there is no reason to do that? And we don't think like the other nation thinks. What drives them, what are their national security requirements, what is their national pride and psyche drive them to do? And second, I think that you'll see through the recommendations that I have made to Director Tenet, a requirement for a better need to integrate all of the capabilities that we have within our intelligence agencies so that they focus better on certain kinds of problems and cross feed and tip off each other so that we

get a coordinated attack upon the problem.

I have provided recommendations that are intended to improve the process recognizing that no process will be perfect in the art of intelligence collection. ~~These recommendations~~ are in several broad categories in the areas of analytical practices, collection processes, manpower and training and organization. Obviously the security classification is going to prohibit me from talking about a lot of these recommendations, and in fact, to cite and provide a full range of my recommendations. The recommendation -- and that will tend to bias the balance in the report, so put that in the back of your head as you go through these recommendations.

First, analytic. More rigor needs to go into analysts' thinking when major events take place. Two mechanisms would help: A) bring in outside substantive experts in a more systematic fashion, so that we work against this "everybody thinks like us" mind set. And B) bring in experts in the process of analysis when the IC faces a transition on a major intelligence issue, like the BJP election, and like other things that you can think of. Look at establishing effective mechanisms to guarantee stronger integration of the analysis and greater collaboration and coordination of intelligence agencies and disciplines. So that instead of looking up at each of these stovepipes, we look at the product and the interaction between the stovepipes.

Realign collection priorities so that high-priority issues within individual countries compete more evenly with the rogue states, which we collect against across the board -- there are issues such as weapons of mass destruction that we want to provide the same priority to.

We have an imbalance today between the human skills associated with reading photography, looking at reports, understanding what goes on in a nation, and the ability to technically collect that information. In everyday language, that means there is an awful lot of stuff on the cutting room floor at the end of the day that we have not seen. We need to realign the priorities so that we have more ability to provide analysts depth and that those analysts have an opportunity for training so that they can improve their skills. They need better tools to allow them to course through that data more rapidly.

Within the Organization category, there needs to be a community manager with the authority to demand accountability to in carrying out the DCI decisions, directives, and priorities. Right now that only exists at the DCI and DDCI level.

There needs to be a management structure to integrate the collection systems so that we task collection as a "system of systems" rather than each of the individual pipelines and we need to look at the specific problems particularly in today's context of collection and analysis in South Asia, and specifically, the weapons of mass destruction problem.

The organization needs to be scrubbed and I am talking about the IC organization, not necessarily the CIA, to improve the clarity of the structure, to fix responsibilities, to resource the staff with appropriate tools and to inform the organization once that review has taken place.

And I would like to conclude by saying when you look at reviews like this, it always spotlights and makes more egregious problems that in retrospect might appear obvious to everybody. And, in fact, these events took place within a milieu of other events, all clamoring for attention and for increased resources and collection.

But at the end of the day, senior-level attention needed to get on the process and the problem earlier. Leadership should have been focused on critical intelligence requirements even at the expense of the traditional livelihood of Washington of looking at resource

allocations and regulatory issues that tend to dominate our structures today.

To some degree, that means senior levels, and I am talking about the levels right under the DCI -- the people who have been in this organization and understand the processes, know what the requirements are, know how you do it, know what the decision makers need -- that level needs to be able to do a little more risk taking in order to pursue the things that need to be done. With that, I think I'd like to close my remarks and move forward to questions.

Q: Senator Shelby has said in his words that this is perhaps the worst intelligence failure of more than a decade. What is your reaction to that?

A: Well, this is not Beirut, this is not Khobar Towers. There were things that should have been done. I've ticked off some of them. We should have been much more aggressive in thinking through how the other guy thought. When the BJP party came to power, we could have looked harder at our intelligence systems, to make sure that we got as much coverage as we possibly could, even at the expense perhaps of coverage in other areas. But at the end of the day, no one was killed as a result of this decision - correction, as a result of this event. And, so, you can draw your own conclusions. I think it was a serious problem and I don't think anyone is going to walk away from that but it is also true that this is an art. This is not something you do. And if you put x and y in, you will always get z out. Things change.

Q: Sir, saying the IC needs to be scrubbed is a pretty powerful statement, and I wonder if you could expand on that and perhaps talk about the priorities for this scrubbing in a different way. We have been through a number of exercises where people have proposed moving boxes around, moving lines of communication around, and what we come up with often is a problem with talent, of people, of human brain power. Would you speak to that a little bit?

A: The talent is here. The organization has had a startling number of successes I think over the years, and probably those successes have caused the exception to be such a glaring apparent problem. The question is organizing talent so that everybody is pulling on the same set of traces, and I believe that can be done. I think Director Tenet will address that later in the day on what he plans to do, certainly he'll have to address that aspect when he speaks to the Senate. But I think the talent is here and all of the agencies around town to cause that to happen. And we don't want to go through another four year study on how to reorganize anything. That is not the objective. The objective is what are we really trying to do, who is in charge, take charge, make things happen, report back, and move on down the road, and that can be done.

Q: Admiral, if I am hearing you correctly, it seems as if you are suggesting that there is too much compartmentalization within the process. And, of course, many people in the security field will tell you that that is the way you maintain security. Are these two things working against each other? How do you get less compartmentalization and still maintain your security?

A: I think that compartmentation is an important issue. It is a requirement if you are going to continue to maintain your sources. But the issue really is how do I use this particular intelligence system to collect the data that allows me to target that system on a particular objective? And that coordination across the INTs, is the phraseology, has not been as clear and as clean as it should be. And I think that is the issue we want to try to get at.

Q: May I follow-up to that please? I also hear without you using the word. I hear you

suggesting that perhaps on some levels there was some complacency in place. Am I choosing too big a word?

A: I don't think that is fair. Complacency says no one is paying attention to the problem. There is a good deal of reporting, there is a good deal of activity inside the Community on the nuclear issue but it was working against the criteria that you would expect for our systems, not necessarily the way they went about doing it. And it was ameliorated a little bit by the feedback coming back from the Indians. And nobody is required to tell us the truth. But it was ameliorated a little bit by their responses that laid out for instance this business about establishing the National Security Council and then subsequently I think we had some evidence that suggested that not all the leadership knew what was going on, and therefore, were not able to deal with it.

Q: Admiral, other than the failure to react to public statements during the campaign, were there any clues that intelligence analysts overlooked or did the Indians successfully hide all their preparations? In retrospect, was there something on the ground that should have given it away.

A: I am going to deal with that in the retrospect part. We put 10 analysts on a problem for about five days with three supporting personnel for the same period of time. And in doing that, we reviewed everything we could see about the areas. And when you do that retrospectively you can begin to piece together things that might have brought you to the conclusion that something might be going on. If that were in isolation, that in of itself would say, got something. But this is part of a history that goes back to 1974. This train left the station twice in a quarter of a century. Once in 1974 when they tested and again in 1998. There was, many of the things that took place in 1995 and 1996 took place before that in the early 90s and through the rest of the decade until today were taking place. So there was activity and it was a question of identifying the degree to which it was unusual in the last few days before the test.

Q: So, Admiral, to what degree was this an intelligence failure, and to what degree was it a success on the part of India in keeping it a secret?

A: About equal. I'd like to say that - I guess I'd rather not say that it was a success on the part of anyone in keeping secrets from us. But, in fact, that happens and some of that occurred here. And some of it was not putting enough assets against it and the competition for assets to deal with other things.

Q: There were ramifications beyond the Indian test; it has ramifications for ensuring compliance with the vast range of arms control agreements by the world. What do you propose in terms of ensuring that we, the United States intelligence, takes action that would better ensure monitoring and verification of a broad range of arms control agreements and proliferation problems?

A: I think that many of the recommendations that I have made to Director Tenet will address our ability to do all of those things and do them more effectively. I don't promise that it will do it a 100 percent, but more effectively.

Q: When you say that you put 10 people on this with three assistants, how many were on it at the time this was going on in real time?

A: Less.

Q: And does that reflect a failure on the part of somebody up the chain of command to task people based on very strong indications that were coming out of India?

A: A, I don't agree with the premise that there were very strong indications. As a matter of fact, to the contrary, they were counter. Their public statements were that we will not test, we will create the National Security Council, and so on and so forth. But there were indications. I don't believe that that is a failure, I think that that is a question of how do you allocate resources in a time of scarcity.

Q: As a follow-up Admiral, was there only one person on duty at the time of the test as has been reported and the rest of the analysts were at home asleep?

A: At the time of the test? I don't know that. There is one analyst who is regularly assigned to the task.

Q: Can you explain the word scrub - what do you mean by scrubbing the organization?

A: I mean scrubbing the organization as with a wire brush and going out and kind of polishing it up to find out--to make sure it works right--that everyone understands what their responsibilities are, that somebody is in charge of certain areas and that they have a reporting mechanisms and authority.

Q: Somebody in charge specifically of cooperation and coordination?

A: Somebody in charge of the allocation of assets, generally speaking of collection assets across the spectrum of requirements so that you get as much from our collection systems as we can.

Q: Admiral, the CIA, the NRO, the NSA and DIA are all involved here. How would you allocate responsibility and was a lack of cooperation between these agencies?

A: It was not lack of cooperation. It was an absence of coordination to some degree. And I wouldn't propose to allocate across because I was looking at it as a Community--I wouldn't try to segment out who did what to whom--tried to look at the whole context of the problem.

Q: Two things. First of all, you talked about the preoccupation with the rogue nations and the focus of the Agency was diverted. And secondly, you seem to exonerate the DCI and place the blame one level below.

A: No, I'm sorry, I don't mean to do that. George wouldn't tolerate that, if I did say that. What I am saying is that there needs to be more aggressive activity by the old hands in the organization in stepping forward and taking some risks and doing what is right and not waiting to be told to do things every time.

Q: Can you focus on rogue nations, sir? The preoccupation, I guess.

A: My impression out of this report and also of my prior experiences--when a unified commander is engaged, has troops on the ground, we throw assets at him--and we make sure he has got everything that is required to deal with his problem. In some cases, we give them far more coverage and more assets than the demand requires, particularly in the context of theater assets that are available to them. I think there is some balancing--let me put it in my own terms that you would understand. It is a classic allocation of carriers--we've only got so many deployed and we've got to deal with the Persian Gulf, Eastern Mediterranean, and Western Pacific and how do you

get all that covered. Somebody has got to make a decision, and that is the kind of issue, that we have here.

Q: Admiral, will anyone be held accountable for this and when Congress, as they usually do, call for a head on a platter, what recommendation do you make? Is there any punitive recommendation?

A: I think George Tenet would step forward and say I'm accountable and so is the Community. We are responsible for our actions. I would say that is correct. They are running a very fine organization, the best in the world, and we do not have anything here that, I believe, is serious enough to require that kind of activity.

Q: At the press conference yesterday, members of the Pakistani government, the Parliamentarians who were here, said that they had warned the US explicitly that they were preparing a test like this.

A: Since about 1974, I think.

Q: The Pakistani ambassador went so far as to say that India deceived the United States and that was now evidence in State Department memos. Would you go so far as to say that it was deception?

A: I would certainly say that they had an effective denial activity.

Q: Admiral, could you talk a little bit more about this mind set of the IC some sort of basic assumed that we didn't have the same sort of mind set associated in this country? How did they arrive at the conclusion that they would be thinking?

A: It wasn't just the IC.

Q: And the policymakers?

A: And us, and I've talked to several other nations and this was not on their scope. But, you know, you begin to fall into a pattern. You operate the way you expect things to happen and you have to recognize that when there is a difference and you could argue that you need to have contrarian view that might be part of our warning process, ought to include some diversion thinkers who look at the same evidence and come to a different conclusion and then you test that different set of conclusions against other evidence to see if it could be valid. I think that is what we are looking are here, a different set of analytical techniques that would compliment, and you'll get analysts in this building who will tell you we did precisely that, but at the end of the day their answer came out the way data and the answers have come out over the last decade or so.

Q: Were there any analysts in this building, during your investigation, that were saying that we need to look at a different way, was their anybody or were there any memos or anything that you can talk about?

A: I think we came to that conclusion predominately based on the material that we read. But there is sporadic evidence that there were people who were looking at things differently.

Q: Admiral, along those lines, is there a lack of understanding in this building and with other Intelligence agencies of the different cultures in India and how Indians react to

certain problems or behave in certain ways, and if there are not people here in this building, are you out to get some people like that or if they are here, just not heard from or ignored maybe?

A: One of our recommendations is when you have significant events in countries like this, you seek outside sources which would include those who have spent a good deal of time in India, including Indians, or whatever particular nation that we are interested might be to bring more to bear. I know when we started in Somalia, for instance, it was very difficult to find anybody who had any background or understanding of Somalia. Ambassador Oakley came into the process because of his long standing background and experience there, but he was one of the few that we had.

Q: Admiral, what about human intelligence. There was comment after this episode that it underscored the idea that their simply were no solid sources inside India, and that pointed to a larger weakness in the human intelligence community.

A: I think that generally across the board without being specific to India that I think we could say our human intelligence capacity is seriously limited. It is limited because of the tremendously expanded coverage that we are required to deal with in today's world. We are no longer looking at Russia and China as sort of the key places - we now have to be able to look at almost anywhere in the world for that kind of problem.

Harlow: We have time for just one last question, please.

Q: Admiral, how confident are you that the United States is in a good position to assess the continuing tension between India and Pakistan?

A: I think that you, we, are going to have to be quite careful in understanding what it is going on there and it will require probably significant amount of diplomatic interchange to understand what they really have in mind.

Q: One last follow-up-two points really. They were published reports suggesting India had essentially fooled the US intelligence community by creating a diversion with some missile tests that it really wasn't planning to do - diverting our attention. Would you comment on that?

And generally just when the US had confronted India in the past with evidence that it is prepared to conduct nuclear tests, did that, in fact, give them an edge in terms of giving some insights about how to better defeat US efforts to monitor what is going on there.

A: With respect to the missiles, I wouldn't give too much credence to that report. With respect to the disclosures - in part from our Ambassador and in part from press reports, I think that whenever there is an opportunity to look at what someone else is looking at in your territory it gives you some insights into what you would want to do to cover that and that is all I would conclude from that--we probably did suffer a little bit--that is going to happen though because the value of intelligence is not keeping it inside a building somewhere--the value of intelligence is using it to make and achieve national objectives. In that case, we believe that we, I believe, probably averted a test in 95 and 96, and you could argue that it was an effective policy. And as a generalization, if that happen though, then we have to focus on, okay, we may have disclosed certain kinds of indicators, now what do we have to do in order to tune up our ability to look for other kinds of indicators that will help us. And of course, you don't have to show every kind of whole card you have.

Q: Do you think with the proper intelligence we could have averted tests this time around too?

A: Personal opinion, no. I don't think you were to going to turn them around.

[\[Press Releases and Statements Page\]](#) [\[Public Affairs Page\]](#) [\[CIA Home Page\]](#)