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**DNI BLAIR ANNOUNCES PLAN FOR THE
NEXT GENERATION OF ELECTRO-OPTICAL SATELLITES**

Director of National Intelligence Dennis C. Blair announced today that the Office of the DNI along with the Department of Defense (DoD) have put together a plan to modernize the nation's aging satellite-imagery architecture by prudently evolving government-owned satellite designs and enhancing use of U.S. commercial providers.

"Imagery is a core component of our national security that supports our troops, foreign policy, homeland security and the needs of our Intelligence Community," Blair said. "Our proposal is an integrated, sustainable approach based on cost, feasibility and timeliness that meets the needs of our country now and puts in place a system to ensure that we will not have imagery gaps in the future.

"When it comes to supporting our military forces and the safety of Americans, we cannot afford any gaps in collection," Blair added. "We are living with the consequences of past mistakes in acquisition strategy, and we cannot afford to do so again. We've studied this issue, know the right course, and need to move forward now."

The joint decision by the DNI and DoD was based on the results of multiple government studies over the past several years, and on the findings and recommendations of an independent panel of former defense and intelligence experts convened by Blair to assess the U.S. government's review. The studies examined imagery needs, alternative architectures, cost and affordability, technological risk and industry readiness.

Key features of the final plan endorsed by both the DNI and the DoD include:

- Government-owned satellites would be developed, built and operated by the National Reconnaissance Office. The unique capabilities of these satellites, evolved from existing designs, would give the nation a timely, and often decisive, information advantage.
- The Department of Defense and the Intelligence Community would increase the use of imagery available through U.S. commercial providers. This additional capability would provide the government with more flexibility to respond to unforeseen challenges. These less-complex satellites, which are based on technologies already in production by U.S. vendors, would be available sooner than the much more capable NRO-developed and acquired systems – making them especially useful as a near-term supplement and backup to the government's existing imagery architecture.

- The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency would continue to provide the infrastructure that integrates capabilities as well as imagery products – all of which would be available on a timely basis for military, intelligence, foreign policy and civilian users.

Once Congress approves funding for the plan, implementation will begin in the next several months. The commercial imagery elements of the architecture would likely be operational in the next several years. The overall architecture would be fully deployed before the end of the next decade.

The Director of National Intelligence oversees 16 federal organizations that make up the U.S. Intelligence Community. Additionally, the DNI serves as the principal intelligence adviser to the president, the National Security Council and senior policy makers.

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