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## Moving Beyond Ames

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My recent report to Congress on the damage inflicted by Aldrich Ames during his eight years of spying for Soviet and Russian intelligence has underlined the devastating harm he did to U.S. intelligence and security interests. The extent of the damage was due mostly to inexcusable laxity on the part of the professionals of the Directorate of Operations and others at the CIA. It is an intelligence calamity of massive proportions.

This is not the first time our country has had to face an intelligence failure; nor is it likely to be our last. Nor should we forget that during the period of Ames's espionage, our clandestine intelligence service had some notable successes supporting our most senior policy and military leaders. We have provided unmatched intelligence about developments in the Balkans, given information that has led to the arrest of drug lords in Colombia and prevented terrorist actions in various parts of the world. Unfortunately, the details of these successes do not and often cannot reach the pub lic.

I believe that we must now move beyond the horror of the Ames case. Our future direction should be determined by the post-Cold War threats the nation faces, not by the old Soviet threat and not using the inexcusable intelligence practices that have been shown by the Ames case to be both ineffective and inappropriate in today's world.

As President Clinton said in his visit to the CIA last July, the clandestine service is the most danger ridden and fragile of our intelligence capabilities. Yet for some of the most important threats we face, it is the only way to gain the very special information that can make a real difference to our policy makers: What are the intentions of the political leadership of foreign adversaries? What are the plans that are hatched daily against Americans in terrorist cells in distant parts of the world? What actions can we take to stop the acquisition of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons by rogue states? These are important questions only a clandestine service can answer. It would be folly of a high order to abandon the CIA's clandestine service at this point in history.

That said, the American people certainly deserve to know that their intelligence service has made the changes needed to restore its effectiveness. The measures needed to reestablish the only world-class clandestine intelligence services are straightforward and compelling. First, we must focus our efforts on the hard intelligence questions of critical importance to our "customers" in the White House, State Department, Defense Department and Justice Department. Second, we must take advantage of our strengths by better integration of human intelligence collection with our superb technical collection capability.

Third, we must improve our management of agent recruitment and operations to emphasize quality in agents and in their reports. Fourth, we must improve the process of career development at the CIA to ensure that we continue to attract and retain the very best people to the clandestine service. Finally, we must carry out all of our activities with integrity and be accountable for our actions. It goes without saying that this means being honest with ourselves and with

our customers about intelligence we collect.

We have management actions in place to achieve all this. And, although it may come as a surprise to regular readers of the popular press, the people of the Directorate of Operations are already making the strategic and operational adjustments necessary to address the mistakes of the Ames era and the changing threats the nation faces. These professionals are both capable and motivated. They face daily risks to protect their country. I disagree with those who believe that change requires either massive reorganization or massive dismissal of personnel.

Nonetheless, as a manager I know, and I want the public to understand, that it will take time and hard work to implement these changes. In the six months that I have been director of Central Intelligence, a significant fraction of my time and the time of the senior leadership of the CIA has been spent explaining errors of the past to CIA employees, Congress and the public. Now it's time to devote our energy to seeing that the necessary changes underway are fully implemented and to attacking the hard intelligence problems that face the country.

We are asking Congress and ultimately the American people to give us a fair chance to do what has to be done. We absolutely need their support. Most important, their patience will be required in the year or two needed to put new policies into practice. But I hope and believe that the judgment the American people and Congress will come to is that effective human intelligence can continue to play a vital role in the security of our nation.

The writer is director of Central Intelligence.

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