

## Fact Sheet: National Applications Office

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The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) National Applications Office (NAO) is the executive agent to facilitate the use of intelligence community technological assets for civil, homeland security and law enforcement purposes within the United States. The office will begin initial operation by fall 2007 and will build on the long-standing work of the Civil Applications Committee, which was created in 1974 to facilitate the use of the capabilities of the intelligence community for civil, non-defense uses in the United States.

While civil users are well supported for purposes such as monitoring volcanic activity, environmental and geological changes, hurricanes, and floods through the current Civil Applications Committee, homeland security and law enforcement will also benefit from access to Intelligence Community capabilities. As a principal interface between the Intelligence Community and the Civil Applications, Homeland Security and Law Enforcement Domains, the National Applications Office will provide more robust access to needed remote sensing information to appropriate customers by:

- Enabling a wide spectrum of civil applications, homeland security, and law enforcement users greater access to the collection, analysis, and production skills and capabilities of the intelligence community;
- Enhancing intelligence and information sharing and dissemination to federal, state, and local government and law enforcement users;
- Educating customers about the capabilities and products of the intelligence community;
- Advocating future collection technology needs of the civil applications, homeland security and law enforcement customers in the intelligence community and Department of Defense forums; and
- Providing a forum for discussion of proper use oversight and management of new uses of classified information on behalf of domains, in addition to already established uses.

### National Applications Office Background

- In 1974, the Rockefeller Commission urged the creation of a Civil Applications Committee to facilitate the appropriate use of Intelligence Community remote sensing capabilities for civil purposes within the United States. For more than 30 years, the Civil Applications Committee, comprising members representing 11 federal civil agencies, has facilitated requests by civil agencies to make use of space-based imaging and remote sensing capabilities for purposes such as monitoring volcanic activity, environmental and geological changes, hurricanes, and floods.
- Following the attacks of 9/11, an independent study group was appointed by the Director of National Intelligence to review the current operation and future role of the Civil Applications Committee and study the current state of Intelligence Community support to homeland security and law enforcement entities.
- The study group unanimously recommended in its September 2005 report that the scope of the Civil Applications Committee be expanded beyond civil applications to include homeland security and law enforcement applications, and concluded that there is an urgent need for action. The study group concluded a new approach is needed to effectively employ Intelligence Community capabilities for civil applications, homeland security and law enforcement uses.
- In March of 2006, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff notified the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) that DHS would work with the DNI to implement the recommendation of the study group that DHS be the executive agent of the new office, the National Applications Office.
- In May 2007, Director of National Intelligence Michael McConnell designated the Department of Homeland Security as the executive agent and functional manager of the National Applications Office.
- Congress agreed with this approach and provided funding for the office to initiate operation in the fall of

2007. Intelligence and Appropriations oversight committees have been briefed and approved the reprogramming.

### **National Applications Office Organization**

The National Applications Office will be led on a day-to-day basis by the Department of Homeland Security. A National Applications Executive Committee will be established to provide senior interagency oversight and guidance. The National Applications Office will work with its customers to meet their requirements with the advice and support of three customer domain working groups:

- *Civil Applications Domain Working Group:* This working group will continue the efforts of the Civil Application Committee that have been ongoing for more than 30 years, including scientific, geographic and environmental research.
- *Homeland Security Domain Working Group:* The "Homeland Security Domain" includes those government agencies and activities involved in the prevention and mitigation of, preparation for, response to, and recovery from natural or man-made disasters, including terrorism, and other threats to the homeland. This domain can encompass the many operational and administrative components of DHS, as well as other federal, state, local, and tribal elements who partner with the department. Its work will complement the Civil Applications Working Group in areas like natural disaster response.
- *Law Enforcement Domain Working Group:* This working group includes federal, state, local, and tribal entities, and those activities which support both the enforcement of criminal and civil laws, and the other operational responsibilities and authorities of these entities.

### **Protecting Civil Liberties and Privacy**

- The NAO prioritizes the protection of privacy and civil liberties. All activities fall under existing legal authorities, including Executive Order 12333 and the Privacy Act.
- The NAO will rely on existing, longstanding practice and procedures established by the Intelligence Community to ensure the appropriate protection of privacy and civil liberties.
- Because it is a part of the Department of Homeland Security, the NAO is subject to compliance oversight by the DHS Inspector General, Chief Privacy Officer, and the Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. Additional oversight will be provided by the Civil Liberties Protection Officer for the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.
- The NAO will be reviewed annually on its performance and this will include a review of NAO's protection of privacy and civil liberties.

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