

## Protecting our National Security

It is increasingly clear that we are compromising our national security through our failure to educate our young people effectively. The 2012 report entitled *U.S. Education Reform and National Security* by a Council on Foreign Relations task force, chaired by Joel Klein and Condoleezza Rice, found that:

- **“The lack of language skills and civic and global awareness among American citizens increasingly jeopardize their ability to interact with local and global peers or participate meaningfully in business, diplomatic, and military situations.”**
- **“Too many Americans are also deficient in both global awareness and knowledge of their own country’s history and values. An understanding of history, politics, culture, and traditions is important to citizenship and is essential for understanding America’s allies and its adversaries.”**
- **“A failure to learn about global cultures has serious consequences: a recent report by the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences asserted that ‘cultural learning’ and ‘cultural agility’ are critical skills in the military.”**

At a Congressional briefing in November 2011, Keith Masback, President of the U.S. Geospatial Intelligence Foundation (USGIF) and formerly the Army’s first Director of Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Integration, discussed how geography is at the heart of integrated intelligence. Mr. Masback said that the current lack of geography education and understanding is a critical national security issue. Based on a poll of the USGIF’s more than 200 member companies, government organizations, and academic institutions, employers in the Washington, D.C. area alone have over 1,000 job vacancies available for people with geospatial skills. Masback said that “if we are not preparing young Americans to do this, then we are not going to be able to fill those jobs, we aren’t going to develop the intelligence analysts we need, and we aren’t going to be able to adequately provide for our national security.”

The Teaching Geography is Fundamental Act would help provide American students with the foundational knowledge of geography that our society needs in its military, intelligence, and foreign service personnel, and in its voting population.

*Continues on reverse*



Education Foundation



A military officer scans the path of a Russian satellite

**“Geospatial products and specialists are expected to play a large role in homeland security activities. Information gathering needs to protect critical infrastructure have resulted in an enormous increase in the demand for such skills and jobs.”**

—Lorraine Castro  
National Imagery and  
Mapping Agency



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Satellite technologies require skilled personnel to analyze data and advance the field

**“We have in our hands a new scientific instrument as powerful as any that have come before it, including the microscope and telescope. Collectively, GIS, GPS, satellite remote sensing, and popular geographics constitute a *macroscope* that allows scientists, practitioners, and the public alike to view the earth as never before.”**

—Jerome E. Dobson  
American Geographical Society

## National Security in the Geo-technological Age

“Geospatial technology affects almost every aspect of life, from navigating an unfamiliar neighborhood to locating the world’s most wanted terrorist. ‘They couldn’t have found Osama bin Laden without it,’ says Phillip Davis, director of the National Geospatial Technology Center, referring to the recent U.S. Navy SEALs raid on bin Laden’s compound hideout in Pakistan, where he was killed. ‘The world is so interconnected today, and everything is based on spatial relationships. It is one of our nation’s essential core tools.’”

*U.S. News & World Report, May 11, 2011*



To mitigate the social and economic impacts of natural disasters like floods, earthquakes, and hurricanes, American students need to understand the relationship between human and physical systems—a core component of geography education. Understanding these systems helps students make sound decisions that can have far-reaching impacts like knowing whether or not their next home is vulnerable to flooding. Plus, a foundational geography education prepares students for disaster mitigation, emergency preparedness, and emergency response careers. Geographers monitor the impact of natural disasters using data from the field and satellite data. Whether it’s assessing the impact of floods on agricultural lands, tracking meteorological changes to predict the spread of wildland fires, or planning urban evacuation routes, geographic knowledge and skills are vital.