



NATIONAL GEOSPATIAL-INTELLIGENCE AGENCY NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

Commercial GEOINT Activity Q&A with NGA lead Mike Foster

The Commercial GEOINT Activity officially stood up Sept. 30, 2016. NGA's Mike Foster is the co-lead of the activity with NRO's Peter Muend.

What is the Commercial GEOINT Activity (CGA)?

MF: The CGA concept bore out of the collective visions of two agencies to capitalize on how far the commercial market has come with regards to collection, data analytics and new, innovative capabilities. NGA and NRO must lead the way in this critical environment and Director Cardillo and Director Sapp both envision tapping into this innovation and exploiting it to benefit our intelligence missions. A joint activity, the CGA was specifically developed to enable NRO and NGA to execute a joint strategy and framework to take advantage of capabilities available in established and emerging companies that exist in the private sector. CGA will shape how our two agencies interact with the commercial industry and will identify and examine the broad spectrum of commercial GEOINT capabilities, products and services that can make our agencies better. Through industry, greater partnership and user engagement, we'll explore commercial solutions and alternatives to traditional collection, production and analysis approaches.

What is the objective of the CGA?

MF: Quite simply – to leverage ingenuity in the commercial space and collection markets and integrate them into our IC framework to advance intelligence collection and analysis. The CGA is advisory in nature and will serve as a single voice for IC engagement with the commercial imagery industry. It will also inform and synchronize NGA and NRO decisions related to the acquisition of commercial imagery capabilities.

Why is there a need for the CGA and more in depth integration?

MF: The growth of the commercial GEOINT environment is escalating. The future of Commercial GEOINT is likely to be a competitive and dynamic environment. We're seeing new companies pop up every day with technologies that could potentially contribute to our mission and we're seeing larger, established companies develop new technology and capabilities to keep pace in such a competitive market. The bottom line is the CGA is at the doorstep to ensure the U.S. government takes full advantage of the incredible bow wave of new and emerging commercial GEOINT to maximize efficiency and effectiveness of overhead architecture.

How will the CGA focus on industry and user engagement?

MF: We want to make it easier for industry to engage with us. We anticipate a high level of consistent engagement, with the CGA speaking on behalf of the IC, NGA and NRO when it comes to the commercial

GEOINT architecture. CGA will lead industry outreach, including everything from soliciting information from vendors, communicating mission needs and working closely with industry on a case-by-case basis.

How will the CGA support the NGA and NRO user community?

MF: The CGA brings a unified voice and one-stop-shop to both communities. The CGA will communicate coordinated, unified positions to U.S. government and industry partners on all commercial imagery issues.

Technology in the commercial sector is evolving at such a high rate and so are the corresponding benefits to the US government. In order for NGA and NRO to offer the best support possible, we need to incorporate these newly available technologies into our operations.

Ultimately by effectively leveraging emerging commercial imagery capabilities, NGA and NRO will be able to deliver better products and services to warfighters, first responders and policy makers.

Why is it called “Activity” vice “Office”?

MF: The CGA is advisory in nature and does not duplicate the functional management authorities, governance bodies and policies of NGA or NRO. Director Cardillo remains the GEOINT functional manager.

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