**"DNI Clapper: Cyber Bigger Threat Than Terrorism," by Boyd, from Federal Times (2016).**

Obama said Thursday that there was no "specific" terror threat to the United States but urged Americans to remain alert over the holiday period.

The cyber threat is real, James Clapper, director of national intelligence, told midshipmen during a speech for the Naval Academy's Cyber Lecture Series on Jan. 29, and has surpassed terrorism as the No. 1 threat facing the nation.

Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson made a similar point during a keynote speech at [CyberCon](http://www.federaltimes.com/cybercon/) in November, naming cybersecurity as a top priority alongside counterterrorism. Clapper took it a step further.

"A lot of people find this surprising in our post-9/11 world but in 2013 'cyber' bumped 'terrorism' out of the top spot on our list of national threats," he said. "And cyber has led our report every year since then."

Clapper said that trend will continue, with cyberattacks as the biggest threat to national security for the year ahead, as well.

While cyberattacks on critical infrastructure could have dire effects — even fatal — the director said he is more concerned with the constant trickle of smaller intrusions and attacks happening every day.

"Our primary concern is low-to-moderate level cyber intrusions from a variety of sources which will continue and probably expand," he said, noting every aspect of American life is being connected to the Internet. "They impose increasing costs to our businesses, to U.S. economic competitiveness and to national security."

Clapper said the Intelligence Community is leading the charge in raising awareness of this threat and urged the midshipmen to develop the skills to help the government stay ahead on this never-ending struggle.

"The cyber threat is here," he said. "It's upon us now and we need the people here today to help us defend our systems and our nation."