



Defense Primer: National and Defense Intelligence

The Intelligence Community (IC), comprised of 18 statutory elements (50 U.S.C. §3003(4)), is charged with providing insight into actual or potential threats to the U.S. homeland, the American people, and national interests at home and abroad. It does so through the production of timely and apolitical products and services. Intelligence products and services result from the collection, processing, analysis, and evaluation of information for its significance to national security at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. Consumers of intelligence include the President, the National Security Council (NSC), designated personnel in executive branch departments and agencies, the military, Congress, and the law enforcement community.

The IC comprises 18 elements, 2 of which are independent, and 16 of which are component organizations of six separate departments of the federal government. Many IC elements and most intelligence funding reside within the Department of Defense (DOD).

Statutory IC Elements

DOD Elements:

- Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)
- National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA)
- National Reconnaissance Office (NRO)
- National Security Agency (NSA)
- U.S. Air Force Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (AF/A2)
- U.S. Space Force Intelligence (S-2)
- U.S. Army Intelligence (G2)
- U.S. Marine Corps Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Enterprise (MCISR-E)
- U.S. Naval Intelligence (N2)

Non-DOD Elements:

- Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI)
- Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)
- Department of Energy (DOE) intelligence component: Office of Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence (I&CI)
- Department of Homeland Security (DHS) intelligence components: Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) and U.S. Coast Guard Intelligence (CG-2)
- Department of Justice (DOJ) intelligence components: the Drug Enforcement Agency's Office of National Security Intelligence (DEA/ONSI) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Intelligence Branch (IB)
- Department of State (DOS) intelligence component: Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR)
- Department of the Treasury intelligence component: Office of Intelligence and Analysis (OIA)

Source: 50 U.S. Code §3003(4); ODNI.

National and Defense Intelligence

National intelligence addresses the strategic requirements of national security policymakers such as the President and

the Secretaries of Defense and State. National intelligence programs and activities are funded through National Intelligence Program (NIP) budget appropriations, which are a consolidation of appropriations for the ODNI, CIA, general defense, and national cryptologic, reconnaissance, geospatial, and other specialized intelligence programs. The NIP, therefore, provides funding for not only the ODNI, CIA, and IC elements of the Departments of Homeland Security, Energy, the Treasury, Justice, and State, but also, substantially, for the programs and activities of the intelligence agencies within the DOD, to include the NSA, NGA, DIA, and NRO.

Defense intelligence comprises the intelligence organizations and capabilities of the Joint Staff, DIA, combatant command joint intelligence centers, and the military services that address strategic, operational, or tactical requirements supporting military strategy, planning, and operations. Defense intelligence provides products and services on foreign military capabilities, plans and intentions, orders-of-battle, disposition of forces, and the political, cultural, and economic factors influencing the environment in areas of actual or potential military operations. Military Intelligence Program (MIP) appropriations fund military service intelligence personnel, their training, and tactical military intelligence programs and activities. Since MIP appropriations relate to tactical rather than strategic capabilities, they fund a narrower range of programs than defense intelligence programs overall.

National and defense intelligence are not discrete enterprises. The 18 organizational elements of the IC are required to collaborate closely to address intelligence gaps and disseminate products to appropriately cleared personnel across the government in a timely manner. The IC also leverages relationships with international partners to address mutual national security concerns.

Who Does What?

Executive Order (EO) 12333, codified in 50 U.S.C. §3001, establishes general duties and responsibilities for each element of the IC. Other laws, executive orders, and policy issuances may establish additional duties and responsibilities for particular IC elements.

- **DIA** is a DOD combat support agency that collects, analyzes, and disseminates foreign military intelligence to policymakers and the military. DIA serves as the nation's primary manager and producer of foreign military intelligence; it manages the production of intelligence for the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the combatant commands.

- **NGA** produces geospatial intelligence products and services in support of policymakers, warfighters, other intelligence agencies, and first responders.
- **NRO** builds and operates satellites and ground stations whose main purpose is collecting imagery and signals intelligence to support other agencies' intelligence products and services.
- **NSA** specializes in cryptology, which encompasses signals intelligence and information assurance, and is responsible for computer network operations in support of national security requirements.
- **Military service intelligence elements** collect and analyze strategic, operational, and tactical intelligence supporting the requirements of the military services jointly and separately. Tactical and operational intelligence supports military commanders and deployed warfighters. National military service intelligence organizations such as the Navy's Office of Naval Intelligence specialize in threat analysis and strategic intelligence assessments that can support defense platform and weapons systems development.
- **CIA** collects, analyzes, evaluates, and disseminates foreign intelligence and counterintelligence in support of a broad range of senior national security consumers including the President, NSC, and military. In addition to its clandestine and open source collection activities, CIA has been the leading agency in conducting covert action as directed by the President.
- **Other non-DOD elements** within the Departments of Energy, Homeland Security, Justice, State, and the Treasury provide intelligence supporting national requirements particular to the mission of each department.

IC Leadership

Together, the DNI and Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security (USD(I&S)) coordinate programs and activities across the IC to promote an integrated approach to intelligence collection, analysis, and dissemination.

Director of National Intelligence (DNI)

The DNI is the principal advisor to the President on intelligence matters. Created by the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA; P.L. 108-458), the core mission of the DNI and, by extension, the ODNI is "to lead the IC in intelligence integration" and ensure all elements are appropriately integrated.

Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security (USD(I&S)/Director of Defense Intelligence (DDI))

The USD(I&S) position is *dual-hatted*. When acting as the USD(I&S), the incumbent reports directly to the Secretary of Defense and serves as the Secretary's principal staff assistant for intelligence, counterintelligence, security, and other intelligence-related matters. When acting as DDI, the incumbent reports directly to the DNI and serves as the

DNI's principal advisor regarding defense intelligence, counterintelligence, and security matters.

Strategic, Operational, and Tactical Intelligence

Table 1 provides an overview of the intelligence corresponding to what the DOD refers to as the *strategic*, *operational*, and *tactical* levels of war.

Table 1. Levels of Intelligence

Strategic Intelligence assists senior military and civilian leaders in developing national strategy and policy; monitors the international situation; helps with developing military plans; assists in determining major weapon systems and force structure requirements; and supports the conduct of strategic operations.

Operational Intelligence focuses on military capabilities and intentions of enemies and adversaries; analyzes the operational environment; identifies adversary centers of gravity and critical vulnerabilities; monitors events in the joint force commander's area of interest; and supports the planning and conduct of joint campaigns.

Tactical Intelligence supports military commanders in the planning and execution of battles, engagements, and other joint force activities; provides commanders with information on imminent threats and changes in the operational environment; and provides commanders with obstacle intelligence.

Source: CRS adapted from the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Joint Publication 2-0, *Joint Intelligence*, October 22, 2013, pp. 1-24.

Relevant Statutes

Title 10, U.S. Code, Chapter 21 – DOD Intelligence Matters
Title 50, U.S. Code, Chapter 44 – National Security

Related CRS Products

CRS In Focus IF10523, *Defense Primer: Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security*, by Michael E. DeVine

CRS In Focus IF10524, *Defense Primer: Budgeting for National and Defense Intelligence*, by Michael E. DeVine

CRS In Focus IF10574, *Defense Primer: Intelligence Support to Military Operations*, by Michael E. DeVine

CRS Report R45175, *Covert Action and Clandestine Activities of the Intelligence Community: Selected Definitions in Brief*, by Michael E. DeVine

Other Resources

DOD, Joint Publication 2-0, *Joint Intelligence*, October 22, 2013

DOD, Joint Publication 2-01, *Joint and National Intelligence Support to Military Operations*, July 5, 2017

(Note: This In Focus was originally written by former CRS Analyst Anne Daugherty Miles.)

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