



Truman National Security Project

Intelligence

Point #1 Good intelligence works like preventive medicine: it spots and stops problems before they start.

Point #2 Attracting top talent, including loyal Americans with foreign backgrounds, will be critical to ensuring a top notch Intelligence Community.

Point #3 Quality U.S. intelligence is an unpublicized American export. It helps build alliances and track down threats to U.S. and international security alike.

Under Executive Order 12333, the United States Intelligence Community (IC) “provide[s] the President and the National Security Council with the necessary information on which to base decisions concerning the conduct and development of foreign, defense and economic policy, and the protection of United States national interests from foreign security threats.”

Sixteen organizations comprise the Intelligence Community under the leadership of the new Director of National Intelligence (DNI), a post created in 2004, who acts as the President’s principal advisor on intelligence matters. The members of the Intelligence Community consist of the independent Central Intelligence Agency, as well as offices and bureaus within many of the U.S. Government’s federal executive departments.

16 Members of the Intelligence Community

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)

Department of Justice:

- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA)

Department of Defense:

- Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)
- National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA)
- National Reconnaissance Office (NRO)
- National Security Agency (NSA)
- Air Force Intelligence
- Army Intelligence
- Marine Intelligence
- Navy Intelligence

Department of Energy:

- Office of Intelligence and Counterintelligence (OICI)

Department of Homeland Security:

- Coast Guard Intelligence
- Office of Intelligence and Analysis (OIA)

Department of State:

- Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR)

Department of the Treasury:

- Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence (TFI)



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Counterintelligence

Counterintelligence (CI) refers to efforts to neutralize the hostile intelligence operations of foreign nations or enemy groups. This involves both defense steps, such as the shoring up of one's own vulnerabilities, and offensive steps, such as counter-espionage, to detect and eliminate or exploit hostile operatives or other intelligence activities. The FBI is the lead agency for domestic CI, while the CIA has primary responsibility abroad.

Covert Action and Clandestine Action

Covert Action refers to an operation designed to promote U.S. interests but carried out in such a way that the involvement of the U.S. government is hidden. Most U.S. covert operations are related to counter-proliferation, counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics and cyber warfare. Common covert activities include the provision of political, financial or technical assistance, propaganda, security training, sabotage, and information warfare.

By law, the CIA is the only agency that may conduct covert action and then may only do so with a "Presidential Finding" authorization and Congressional notification.

Clandestine Action is distinct from covert action in that, while covert operations hide the sponsor's identity, clandestine operations hide the existence of the operation itself. Most clandestine operations are related to intelligence gathering.



Types of Intelligence:

Human Intelligence (HUMINT): Information gathered from human sources. This type of intelligence can come from conversations with government officials, foreign defectors, businesspeople or travelers; detainee interrogations; or clandestine espionage.

Signals Intelligence (SIGINT): Information gathered from intercepted communications (COMINT) or electronic signals (ELINT). This type of intelligence can come from telephone, radio or email communications or from the electronic signals that emanate from defense systems, such as radars, surface-to-air missiles or aircraft.

Geospatial Intelligence (GEOINT): Information gathered from imagery (IMINT) and mapping data, pertaining to the geographic location and characteristics of natural or man-made features on, above, or below the earth's surface. This type of intelligence comes from satellites, aircrafts, maps and census information.

Measurement and Signature Intelligence (MASINT): Information recorded by remote sensors; used to characterize events (ex. nuclear explosions) or to locate & characterize military targets. This type of intelligence comes from remote sensors that pick up on radar, radio, radiation, acoustic or seismic activities.

Open Source Intelligence (OSINT): Information from publicly available sources. This type of intelligence comes from the media, the internet or publicly available government or business data.



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Objectives and Priorities for U.S. Intelligence:

In order to protect U.S. interests in the twenty-first century, the Intelligence Community will increasingly need to focus its efforts on non-traditional threats, including non-state actors. Foremost amongst this group remain transnational terrorist networks such as al Qaeda.

Terrorism. Since September 11, 2001, the Intelligence Community has prioritized early-warning and denial of a terrorist attack on the U.S. homeland as a primary mission. Intelligence support to counterterrorism operations and law enforcement is a critical component within all U.S. government efforts to deter, deny, and remove the base of support for militant radical groups at home and abroad.

Disease and Environmental Issues. Non-traditional threats also encompass challenges to U.S. interests in the form of civil conflict, environmental catastrophes, natural disasters, and global health issues. From forecasting natural disasters such as the Asian tsunami of 2004, to monitoring civil wars that can quickly escalate into regional conflagrations, to pandemic diseases such as Avian Flu, what were at one time localized issues are increasingly recognized as threats to the security of America and its allies.

Non-Governmental Organizations. We must increase our capability to identify threats before they fully materialize, which will often mean coordination with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the medical and scientific communities, and international and regional organizations such as the UN, NATO, and the African Union (AU).

Other Countries. Despite the increased emphasis placed upon identifying non-traditional threats, the Intelligence Community must also maintain its capability to conduct more traditional intelligence assessments relating to the intentions and capabilities of potentially hostile states like Iran and North Korea, as well as those of potential global powers such as China, India, and Russia.



Such assessments range from the development and employment of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), to strategic leadership profiles, and to military order of battle, among others.

Cybersecurity. These priorities must be undertaken in an environment of maintaining operational security for U.S. facilities and property, including cyber security. The Intelligence Community views threats to U.S. freedom of action in cyberspace as an increasingly attractive means of attack by America's enemies and competitors.

China has been particularly aggressive, and is believed to have been behind cyberattacks on U.S. nuclear laboratories, the Pentagon and US Naval War College, and hacking computers in the U.S. Congress. Efforts to defend and protect communications infrastructure from hostile penetration is thus an emerging field of concern.



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Challenges for U.S. Intelligence

Stove Piping. The Intelligence Community must increasingly act as “one community.” An update to Executive Order 12333 (signed by President Bush on July 31, 2008) recognizes the historical failure of the Intelligence Community to collaborate and share information, which constitutes the first step toward tackling this long-festering problem. The revamped E.O. 12333 attempts to break down the walls between the 16 government agencies involved in intelligence collection and analysis, and tries to force greater information sharing among what can sometimes be separate fiefdoms. Intelligence sharing within the 16 agencies is especially vital if the U.S. is to combat nimble, non-traditional, non-state threats like al Qaeda.

Attracting and Keeping Top Talent. The Intelligence Community must also effectively recruit and *retain* the most talented and competitive officers. Experienced intelligence officers that were hired in the 1980s, during the last hiring boom in the Intelligence Community, are aging and retiring, leaving major gaps in management, leadership, and institutional knowledge. While Congress has funded the hiring of thousands of new intelligence officers to address the anticipated wave of retirements, we now have an influx of talented but inexperienced intelligence officers. National trends suggest that unlike past generations, the post- 9/11 workforce will likely stay in the community for 3-5 years, rather than 20-30 like the preceding generations. The Intelligence Community must try to retain top talent and develop innovative ways to compress the “learning curve” to adapt to the new generation of workers.

Recruit loyal U.S. Citizens with Relevant Foreign Backgrounds. Finally, the Intelligence Community must find creative ways to reach out to high-value, low-density assets within the U.S. population. These assets include first and second- generation immigrants who may not readily qualify for security clearances, but are culturally conversant and can easily “blend” into hostile areas. Another example would be loyal U.S. citizens who are fluent in hard-target languages and have travelled extensively overseas. Such persons are currently likely to be denied security clearance due to the long list of foreign national contacts they have established during their travels abroad. The Intelligence Community must do a better job at finding such individuals and devising a security clearance process whereby those who have experience abroad— something the intelligence agencies should value in their attempt to gather foreign intelligence – can make it through the screening process and serve their country.



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