



Updated December 30, 2020

## Defense Primer: National and Defense Intelligence

The Intelligence Community (IC) 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, National Security Council (NSC), designated personnel in executive branch departments and agencies, the military, Congress, and the law enforcement community.

The IC comprises 17 elements, two of which are independent, and 15 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. 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 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 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, the 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.

National and defense intelligence are not discrete enterprises. The 17 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 cultivates ties to 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, and a central intelligence producer and manager 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, encompassing 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 or 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 expertise of each department. They also contribute valuable strategic analysis of cross-cutting issues such as treaty compliance, counterterrorism, transnational finance, and transnational organized crime.

## 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 (IRTPA) of 2004 (P.L. 108-458), the core mission of the DNI and, by extension, the Office of the DNI (ODNI), is "to lead the IC in intelligence integration" and ensure the 17 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 his 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 or global situation; assists in 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 to their forces and changes in the operational environment; and provides commanders with obstacle intelligence.

**Source:** CRS adapted from Joint Publication 2-0, *Joint Intelligence*, October 2013, p. 1-24.

### Relevant Statutes

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

### 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.)

**Michael E. DeVine**, Analyst in Intelligence and National Security

## Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.