

CONFRONTATION OR COLLABORATION?
CONGRESS AND THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY



INTELLIGENCE BASICS

ERIC ROSENBACH AND AKI J. PERITZ



HARVARDKennedy School
JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT



BELFER CENTER
for Science and International Affairs

INTELLIGENCE BASICS

Intelligence is a critical tool lawmakers often use to assess issues essential to U.S. national policy. Understanding the complexities, mechanics, benefits and limitations of intelligence and the Intelligence Community (IC) will greatly enhance the ability of lawmakers to arrive at well-grounded decisions vital to our nation's foreign and domestic security.

This memo provides an overview of U.S. intelligence and its primary functions, including intelligence collection and analysis, covert action, and counterintelligence activities.

What is Intelligence?

Intelligence is information that agencies collect, analyze and distribute in response to government leaders' questions and requirements. Intelligence is a broad term that entails:

- *Collection, analysis, and production* of sensitive information to support national security leaders, including policymakers, military commanders and Members of Congress.
- *Safeguarding* these processes and this information through counterintelligence activities.
- *Execution of covert operations* approved by the President.

The IC strives to provide valuable insight on important issues by gathering raw intelligence, analyzing that data in context, and producing timely and relevant products for customers at all levels of national security—from the war-fighter on the ground to the President in Washington.

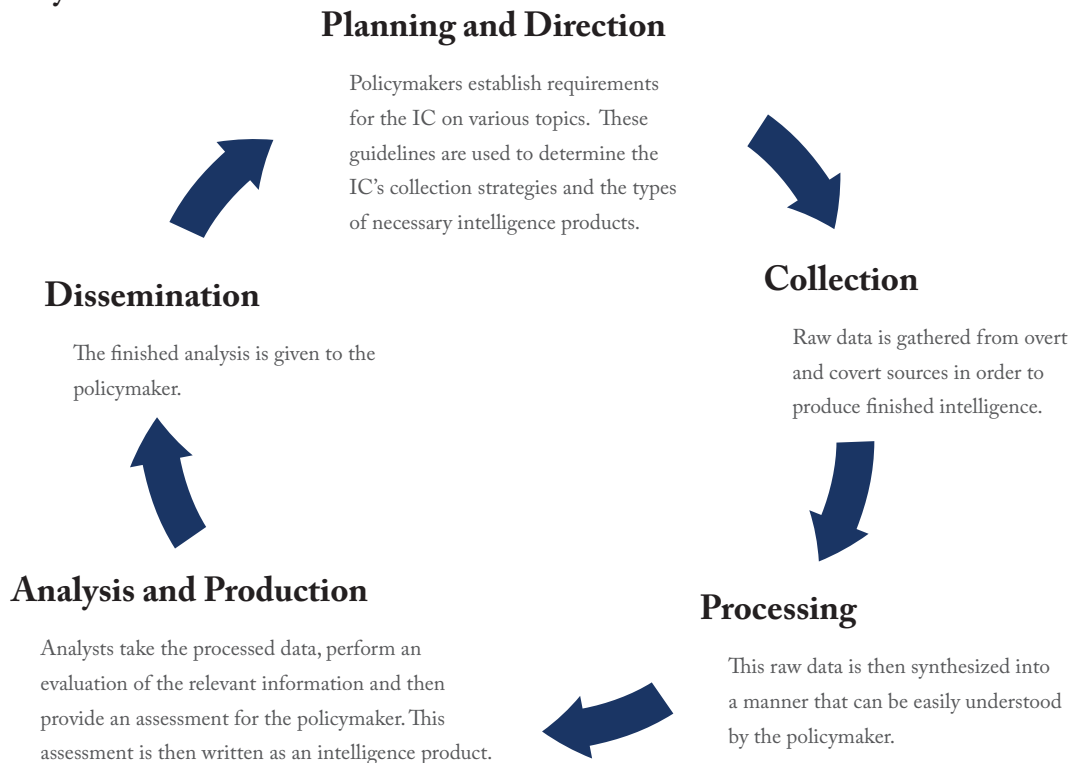
Levels of intelligence include:

- *Strategic*: intelligence needed by policymakers to make policy and military decisions at the national and international level.
- *Operational*: intelligence used by military leaders to plan and accomplish strategic objectives within the operational area.
- *Tactical*: intelligence provided to military leaders in the field to accomplish immediate tactical objectives.

Intelligence Cycle

The intelligence cycle is the process in which intelligence officers convert collected information into valuable intelligence for national security consumers. The cycle begins with establishing priorities and requirements, often with input from policymakers. The cycle then involves collecting, processing, analyzing, and disseminating information for intelligence customers. Some of the most well-known published intelligence products include:

Intelligence Cycle



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- *President's Daily Brief (PDB)*, the flagship intelligence product that the Director of National Intelligence delivers every day to the President. This document emphasizes strategic analysis.
 - *Worldwide Intelligence Review (WIRe)*, a CIA product that several hundred senior Executive and legislative branch policymakers receive daily.
 - *National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs) and National Intelligence Assessments*, products written by the National Intelligence Council (NIC) with input from the entire IC. NIEs often provide a longer-term perspective on issues of critical national security.
 - *Secretary of Defense/Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Daily Intelligence Update (SECDEF/CJCS J2 Daily Intelligence Update)*, a Department of Defense (DoD) product that the DoD leadership receives daily.
 - *Secretary's Morning Summary (SMS)*, A State Department product that the Secretary of State receives daily.

Types of Intelligence

Intelligence analysts use five primary disciplines of intelligence collection to draft finished intelligence reports:

Signals Intelligence (SIGINT): Signals Intelligence involves the interception of Communications Intelligence (COMINT) and Electronic Signals Intelligence (ELINT). COMINT is based on information intercepted from messages between individuals, while ELINT refers to the information gleaned from analyzing electronic signals, such as radars.

- The National Security Agency (NSA) has primary responsibility for SIGINT collection and reporting.
- Example: A conversation between foreign adversaries held via telephone is collected by the U.S. using technical means.

Human Intelligence (HUMINT): HUMINT is intelligence collected from human sources, where operations officers and foreign agents conduct clandestine collection.

- CIA's National Clandestine Service (NCS, formerly known as the Directorate of Operations), is the nation's primary collector of HUMINT, though the DoD also conducts HUMINT missions.
- While HUMINT plays a crucial role in the United States' ability to learn more about our adversaries, the IC must carefully scrutinize the information provided by human sources.
- Examples: A U.S. operations officer recruits a foreign scientist to share secrets from that country's nuclear weapons laboratory, or recruits a local tribesman in a conflict zone who provides information on the whereabouts of local belligerents.

Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT): OSINT is based on information in the public domain either domestically or abroad. Sources may include traditional media, Internet forums and media, government publications, and professional or academic papers.

- The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) established the national Open Source Center (OSC) in November 2005.
- Examples: Monitoring terrorist video releases, researching military strategy found in foreign "gray" literature, or reading foreign newspapers for insights into adversarial thinking and foreign public opinion.

Geospatial Intelligence (GEOINT): Geospatial intelligence is the visual representation of activities on earth.

- The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) is responsible for GEOINT collection, processing and dissemination. NGA provides GEOINT in all forms, including imagery, imagery

intelligence and geospatial information.

- Examples: A high-resolution satellite photo of a foreign military base with topography and other interactive features, or an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) flying over Iraq providing time-sensitive images of insurgent weapons depots for the U.S. military.

Measurement and Signatures Intelligence (MASINT): MASINT is scientific and highly technical intelligence obtained by identifying and analyzing environmental byproducts of developments of interest, such as weapons tests.

- The Central MASINT Office (CMO), a division of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) is primarily responsible for MASINT collection and analysis.
- Example: Sensors help identify types of missiles launched by foreign countries by detecting plume signatures, while other sensors detect uranium particulates in the air or water in order to find foreign nuclear programs.

Covert Action

Defined by the National Security Act of 1947 as “an activity or activities of the United States Government to influence political, economic, or military conditions abroad, where it is intended that the role of the United States Government will not be apparent or acknowledged publicly,” covert action is a White House-sanctioned operation that is planned to ensure that the U.S. can mask or plausibly deny its role. Sometimes there are certain unintended consequences of covert action, resulting in negative publicity for the U.S.

- Example: The 1953 coup in Iran, where the U.S. and British intelligence services covertly helped to overthrow Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeq, contributed to long-term mistrust and resentment that strains relations between the U.S. and Iran to this day.

Counterintelligence

Counterintelligence (CI) initiatives seek to stymie the efforts of foreign intelligence services (defensive counterintelligence) and manipulate information to confuse foreign intelligence gathering (offensive counterintelligence). The DNI's National Counterintelligence Executive (NCIX) manages the counterintelligence activities of the IC.

- Example of counterintelligence concerns: Foreign agents approaching U.S. businessmen and scientists to learn about U.S. technology advances with military applications.

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