



The Director of National Intelligence (DNI)

The DNI is responsible for the oversight and direction of the 18 elements of the intelligence community (IC). This includes managing the allocation and expenditure of National Intelligence Program (NIP) funds authorized and appropriated by Congress; promoting collaboration among intelligence agencies, law enforcement, and international partners; and establishing priorities for the collection, analysis and production of intelligence. Statute provides that the DNI, who is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, “shall have extensive national security expertise.” (50 U.S.C. §3023(a)(1))

Creation of the DNI Position

Prior to the creation of the DNI position, the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) was responsible for managing the diverse elements of the intelligence community, in addition to leading the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and serving as principal advisor to the President on intelligence matters. Following the attacks on the U.S. homeland of September 11, 2001, the *National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States* (also called the *9/11 Commission*) recommended replacing the triple-hatted position of DCI and establishing an overarching intelligence authority unencumbered by the responsibility of directing the CIA. According to the commission’s recommendation, this new position would enable dedicated management of the IC, with authority to allocate and oversee intelligence appropriations, improve the efficiency and integration of programs, and cultivate greater collaboration between agencies, to include improved the sharing of information and intelligence among government agencies. Acting on the recommendation, Congress established the DNI position through provisions in the 2004 Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (P.L. 108-458 or IRTPA). With the passage of IRTPA, Congress abolished the position of DCI, giving the DNI responsibility to manage the entire IC and serve as principal intelligence advisor to the President.

Table I. DNIs to Date

2005-2007	Ambassador John Negroponte
2007-2009	VADM (Ret.) J. Michael McConnell
2009-2010	ADM (Ret.) Dennis Blair
2010-2017	LTGEN (Ret.) James Clapper
2017-2019	Former Senator Daniel Coats
2019-2020	VADM (Ret.) Joseph McGuire (acting)
2020-2020	Ambassador Richard Grenell (acting)
2020-2021	Former Representative John L. Ratcliffe
2021-present	Ms. Avril D. Haines

Principal Responsibilities

Principal Advisor to the President on Intelligence Matters

The DNI advises the President on strategic intelligence programs and activities pertaining to U.S. national security (50 U.S.C. §3023(b)(2)). This may include obtaining presidential approval of covert action programs; briefing the President on intelligence indicating a threat of impending attack; strategic assessments of an adversary’s capabilities and intentions, particularly sensitive counterintelligence activities, or intelligence from international partners; and any significant gap in intelligence coverage or an intelligence failure.

Management of the Intelligence Budget

The DNI is directly responsible for oversight and implementation of the National Intelligence Program (NIP) (50 U.S.C. §3023(b)(3)). The NIP funds the Office of the DNI (ODNI) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in their entirety, as well as strategic-level intelligence programs and activities spread across multiple agencies. The DNI is responsible for participating with the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security (USD(I&S)) in the development of the Military Intelligence Program (MIP) (50 U.S.C. §3024(c)(3)(A)). The MIP funds tactical intelligence and intelligence-related activities specific to the Department of Defense (DOD). For Fiscal Year 2024, Congress appropriated \$106.3 billion for the NIP and MIP (\$76.5 for the NIP, \$29.8 for the MIP).

Selected Authorities

To carry out these responsibilities, the DNI has the statutory authority to:

- Manage and direct the tasking, collection, analysis, production, and dissemination of national intelligence. (50 U.S.C. 3024(f)(1)(A)(ii)).
- Establish policies and procedures to ensure “sound analytic methods and tradecraft, independent of political considerations.” (50 U.S.C. 3024(h)(1)(A)).
- Direct the “allotment or allocation” of congressionally appropriated funds for the NIP to elements of the intelligence community. (50 U.S.C. 3024(h)(1)(A)).
- Act as the “exclusive milestone decision authority” for the acquisition of major intelligence systems under the NIP (with the exception of acquisitions involving DOD programs in which the DNI shares authority with the Secretary of Defense). (50 U.S.C. 3024(q)(1)(B))

- Establish Functional Managers within the Office of the DNI to serve as principal substantive advisors on intelligence collection and analysis related to designated countries, regions, or functional areas such as cyber threat intelligence, and international terrorism. (50 U.S.C. 3034a(a))
- “Under the direction of the President,” oversee the coordination of relationships between elements of the intelligence community and foreign entities. (50 U.S.C. §3024(k))
- Protect intelligence sources and methods from unauthorized disclosure. (50 U.S.C. §3024(i)(1))
- Ensure the “elimination of waste and unnecessary duplication of effort within the intelligence community.” (50 U.S.C. §3024(f)(5))
- Evaluate the effectiveness of counterintelligence, security, and insider threat programs. (50 U.S.C. §3024(f)(8)(D).

A comprehensive, statutory list of the DNI’s responsibilities and authorities can be found at 50 U.S.C. §§3023-3034c.

Office of the DNI

To support the DNI, the IRTPA established the Office of the DNI (ODNI) (codified at 50 U.S.C. §3025), a statutory element of the IC staffed by permanent federal employees, contractors, and personnel detailed from other intelligence agencies, under the direction of a Chief Operating Officer. The DNI has periodically reorganized the ODNI consistent with Presidential administration policy and priorities. The current organizational structure of the ODNI as authorized by the FY2024 appropriation, includes

Principal Deputy DNI

The Principal Deputy DNI (PDDNI) is the official, appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, who is the principal assistant to the DNI in carrying out the Director’s responsibilities. Statute provides that the PDDNI “shall have extensive national security experience and management expertise.” In the event the DNI is absent or disabled, or the position is vacant, the PDDNI “shall act for, and exercise the powers of” the DNI (50 U.S.C. §3026(a)).

Deputy DNIs

The DNI may appoint up to four Deputy DNI’s who “shall have such duties, responsibilities, and authorities as the Director of National Intelligence may assign or are specified by law” (50 U.S.C. §3026(b)). There are currently two Deputy DNIs: The Deputy DNI for Mission Integration, and the Deputy DNI for Policy and Capabilities, who lead their respective divisions:

- The Mission Integration Division includes some of the most visible responsibilities of the DNI, such as the National Intelligence Council (NIC); the President’s Daily Brief (PDB); Mission Performance, Analysis, and Collection; the National Intelligence Management Council (NIMC); the Office of Partner Engagement; and the Executives for Space, Counternarcotics, and Open-Source Intelligence.

- The Policy and Capabilities Division includes offices involved with intelligence community management, planning, and acquisition; Human Capital; Data; Acquisition, Procurement and Facilities; Requirements, Cost and Effectiveness; Policy and Strategy; and Science and Technology. The Division also includes the Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity (IARPA).

Mission Centers

The DNI has the authority to establish Mission Centers that enable oversight and coordination of intelligence on areas of importance to U.S. national security. There are currently five Mission Centers: the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC); National Counterintelligence and Security Center (NCSC); National Counterproliferation and Biosecurity Center (NCBC); Foreign Malign Influence Center (FMIC); and Cyber Threat Intelligence Integration Center (CTIIC).

Offices Related to Oversight

Offices responsible for various aspects of oversight include the Inspector General of the IC (ICIG); the Office of the General Counsel (OGC); and the offices of Civil Liberties, Privacy and Transparency (CLPT); Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO); and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA).

Other ODNI Components

The ODNI also includes the Military Advisor to the DNI; the Chief Financial Officer; Chief Information Officer; the Assistant Directors of Legislative Affairs, and Strategic Communications; the President of the National Intelligence University; and the Economic Security and Emerging Technology Office.

Potential Issues for Congress

Congress may consider whether or not the existing authorities ensure the DNI is able to be responsive to the President’s priorities for the intelligence community, and whether they are adequate for ensuring the intelligence community provides timely, accurate, and comprehensive intelligence support to the President on threats to U.S. national security.

Relevant Statute
Title 50, U.S. Code, §§3023-3034c
CRS Products
CRS In Focus IF10525, <i>Defense Primer: National and Defense Intelligence</i> , by Michael E. DeVine
Other Resources
Executive Order 12333, <i>United States Intelligence Activities</i> ODNI Intelligence Activities Procedures Approved by the Attorney General Pursuant to E.O. 12333

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