

service, Congress concentrated its efforts on a “passenger bill of rights,” to improve capacity, efficiency, and customer satisfaction in the aviation system. There was no focus on terrorism.⁶³

3.4 . . . AND IN THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY

The National Security Act of 1947 created the position of Director of Central Intelligence (DCI). Independent from the departments of Defense, State, Justice, and other policy departments, the DCI heads the U.S. intelligence community and provides intelligence to federal entities.

The sole element of the intelligence community independent from a cabinet agency is the CIA. As an independent agency, it collects, analyzes, and disseminates intelligence from all sources. The CIA’s number one customer is the president of the United States, who also has the authority to direct it to conduct covert operations.⁶⁴ Although covert actions represent a very small fraction of the Agency’s entire budget, these operations have at times been controversial and over time have dominated the public’s perception of the CIA.

The DCI is confirmed by the Senate but is not technically a member of the president’s cabinet. The director’s power under federal law over the loose, confederated “intelligence community” is limited.⁶⁵ He or she states the community’s priorities and coordinates development of intelligence agency budget requests for submission to Congress.

This responsibility gives many the false impression that the DCI has line authority over the heads of these agencies and has the power to shift resources within these budgets as the need arises. Neither is true. In fact, the DCI’s real authority has been directly proportional to his personal closeness to the president, which has waxed and waned over the years, and to others in government, especially the secretary of defense.

Intelligence agencies under the Department of Defense account for approximately 80 percent of all U.S. spending for intelligence, including some that supports a national customer base and some that supports specific Defense Department or military service needs.⁶⁶ As they are housed in the Defense Department, these agencies are keenly attentive to the military’s strategic and tactical requirements.

One of the intelligence agencies in Defense with a national customer base is the National Security Agency, which intercepts and analyzes foreign communications and breaks codes. The NSA also creates codes and ciphers to protect government information. Another is the recently renamed National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), which provides and analyzes imagery and produces a wide array of products, including maps, navigation tools, and surveillance intelligence. A third such agency in Defense is the National Reconnaissance Office. It develops, procures, launches, and maintains in orbit