

Intelligence community in the united states politics essay



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The History of the Intelligence Community in the United States can be traced back to intelligence operations conducted by then General Washington in the revolutionary army and as his time of the first president of the United States of America. The intelligence Community that so many of us work in today and all of us as Americans benefit from is a much more defined and structured society than it was during its early years. Most major changes have come from as of reforms and laws put into effect within the last 100 years. Unfortunately most major changes in the IC over the years have come as a result of major conflicts, failures or abuses. Three major events in our nations history caused significant changes within the Intelligence Community. The surprise attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese fleet and the subsequent entrance of the United States into World War II illustrated the first major need for change in the then outdated policies and organization of the Intelligence Community. The changes in the Intelligence Community that resulted from World War II and the end of the War are still evident today. The next major changes in the IC came unfortunately as a result of Senate Committees who were put together to investigate the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), National Security Agency (NSA), and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in order to look into suspected abuses of power that occurred in previous years. Again there were no proactive changes within the Intelligence Community the community simply needed to adapt to changes caused by the events at hand in this case abuses of power and negligence of fiscal responsibilities by those in charge. One would think that World War II and the congressional investigations of the 1970s would have shown the necessity for the Intelligence Community to be proactive and change in preparation of future trends and patterns in national

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security and national economic threats but it took another significant event in history to bring further change to the policies and organization of the IC. September 11th 2001, a day that would ever change the world the day which the worst terrorist attack in history, occurred on US soil. That day over 3000 Americans lost their lives when terrorist flew hijacked American plans into the World Trade Center (WTC), The Pentagon, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This tragic event put global terrorism on the front pages and led to US led war efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The terrorist attacks of September 11th 2001 like the December 7th 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor by the Empire of Japan showed flaws within the Intelligence Community and brought through necessity major changes within the IC.

World War II

Immediately following World War II progression in the Intelligence Community (IC) was slowed by their not being an immediate threat on National Security. Then President Truman along with many other senior government and military officials knew there was a need for drastic change in the IC. The events of and leading into World War II showed the nation that there was a need for better coordination between all intelligence agencies and that there was a need to produce a centralized national intelligence estimate. In 1947 what we now know as the Cold War began with President Truman offering to support Turkey's and Greece's economy and military to prevent its fall to the communist Soviet Union. The Cold War brought with it changes in mission, scope, organization, resources, and technology within the IC to address perceived national security concerns.

The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was created in June 1942, under the recently established Joint Chiefs of Staff to succeed the Coordinator of Information in order to have a centralized unit within the Intelligence Community which could handle intelligence analysis but also conduct clandestine operations in support of the War effort during World War II. The OSS proved to be successful during World War II but its premise was based solely for war and was not built for peacetime operations, for this reason the government chose to dismantle the OSS after World War II. In September 1945, while the debate continued, President Truman, acting on a recommendation from his Budget Director, abolished the OSS by Executive Order and divided its functions between the War and State Departments. State received the research and analysis function, combining it with the existing analytical office to form the Interim Research and Intelligence Service (IRIS). The War Department formed the Strategic Services Unit (SSU) out of the clandestine side of the OSS. (Federation of American Scientist 1996) At about the time the OSS was being disbanded, a study commissioned by Navy Secretary James Forrestal and chaired by private businessman Ferdinand Eberstadt was published. While the report dealt principally with the issue of military unification, it also recommended coordination of the intelligence function through the establishment of a National Security Council (NSC) and a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The NSC would coordinate the civilian and military national security policy for the President. The CIA, under the auspices of the NSC, would serve to coordinate national security intelligence. While the military generally supported the recommendation calling for centralized coordination of national security intelligence, it was unwilling to give up its own collection programs and

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analytical capabilities. On January 22, 1946 President Truman established the National Intelligence Authority (NIA), which was to guide and oversee the intelligence operations on a National level. The President then appointed a Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) whose main responsibility was to participate in the NIA procedures in establishing the new Central Intelligence Group (CIG), which would later become the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). On July 27, 1947, President Truman also signed into law the National Security Act of 1947, which established a post World War II Intelligence Community. A National Security Council was created to coordinate national security policy. The Act created the position of Secretary of Defense and unified the separate military departments (the Army, the Navy, and the newly-created Air Force) under this position. The Act also established the Joint Chiefs of Staff to serve as the principal military advisers to the President and the Secretary of Defense. Finally, a Central Intelligence Agency was established with the Director of Central Intelligence as its head. (Federation of American Scientist 1996)

James Srodes is quoted as saying the CIA first and foremost is a servant of the President of the United States. The agency is a tool, and often a weapon, that presidents use, and often misuse, as a shortcut through the tangles of foreign crises. This quote refers mostly to the CIA's ability to conduct covert operations in foreign nations that are intended to protect the United States or her interest domestic and abroad. Covert Operations during the Cold War were the most secretive of operations but due to their secretive nature when discovered by the public and media became the center of attention. 1947 the year that started the Cold War also saw the first known covert operation

by the United States against communist influence and power. The western thinking political party in Italy at the time was under strong political pressure by the communist party in the upcoming elections. The CIA is believed to have laundered over \$10 million from captured World War II, Axis funds to support the Christian Democratic Party and propaganda against the communist party in Italy. This began what would become one of the Intelligence Community's most publicized but effective tools with the use of covert operations. The early successes of covert operations conducted by the CIA in support of US foreign policy and governments which were pro-US forever changed the Intelligence Community in that the option to act not only as a collector but also an enforcer in policy and intelligence was granted to the US intelligence Community.

United States is known to have tapped undersea Soviet communication cables, and the United States and Britain tapped underground Soviet military communications cables in Vienna and Berlin in the 1950s. (Bailey 1997)

Between 1978 and 1986, the USS Parche, a special projects sub loaded with eavesdropping gear, made seven dangerous trips into Soviet territorial waters in the Barents Sea, north of Russia. By planting recording pods on a Soviet communications cable, the crew gathered data on how the Soviets planned to fight the United States in a nuclear war. Other subs did the same thing at the bottom of the Sea of Okhotsk, near eastern Russia (Newman 1998). The amount of valuable information that was attained through the monitoring of Soviet communications post World War II began the shift within the Intelligence Community to the advancement of technical means in collection intelligence.

The sweeping reform of American intelligence between 1945 and 1947 came about because a determined President Truman who wanted to reshape the national security establishment took full advantage of the opportunity provided him in the wake of the largest war in history. President Truman's initiatives received statutory ratification from Congress in the National Security Act of 1947. Section 102 of this Act, which transformed CIG into the CIA, largely reiterated the missions that Truman had stated in his January 1946 directive. The new Act unified (after a fashion) the armed services, created a Secretary of Defense, an independent Air Force, the CIA, and the National Security Council (NSC). It laid a firm legal and institutional foundation upon which to apply many of the lessons learned in World War II. It is still (with its many amendments) the charter of the US national security establishment. (Warner and McDonald 2005)

Congressional Investigations of the 1970s

The findings which have emerged from our investigation convince us that the Government's domestic intelligence policies and practices require fundamental reform. We have attempted to set out the basic facts; now it is time for Congress to turn its attention to legislating restraints upon intelligence activities which may endanger the constitutional rights of Americans. (Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations, 1976) The Church and Pike Committees of the 1970s investigated the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), National Security Agency (NSA), and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in order to look into suspected abuses of power that occurred in previous years, but they proved to be much more important and needed than originally thought. Their <https://assignbuster.com/intelligence-community-in-the-united-states-politics-essay/>

investigations went so far into many of the Intelligence Community's secrets that then President Ford tried many times to quiet the Pike and Church committees citing national security in the disclosure of classified information but their curiosity and appreciation of the public spotlight proved to be too strong. Among many things the committees released information on assassination plots of foreign leaders, Signals Intelligence capabilities and funds used to develop poisons and chemical weapons. Many to this day within and outside of the nation's Intelligence Community will argue that the information the Senate committees disclosed was harmful to national security and has hindered the Intelligence Community's ability to act swiftly in order to protect the nation and her interests abroad. These Senate Investigations although dramatic did make their recommendations for changes in the Intelligence Community and some were written into law. The Senate created the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, a modified version of the Church Committee, as an oversight and investigatory committee for the nation's intelligence services. In the 1970s and 1980s, the committee formalized the review and oversight process, and clearly defined instances of abuse of power and illegal activities that warrant committee investigation. The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence continues to operate today. The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) and Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC) were inspired by the recommendations of the Church Committee. Today, the FISC oversees requests for surveillance warrants of suspected foreign intelligence agents inside the United States by federal police agencies. (Cohen Wells, 2004) The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act forced agencies within the Intelligence Community to act only when they had probable cause and be able to justify it legally to a judge

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who would determine whether or not the act of surveying the individual would be legal. This has at least to public knowledge reduced the amount of collecting and wire tapping being done on United States Citizens without probable cause. At the same time that the court protects citizens it protects national security in that its submissions for request and its decisions on said manners are maintained at a classified level and at no point released to the public in order to maintain a level of national security that was lost when methods and strategy were released by the Senate committees in the 1970s. The Senate committees also recommended keeping the FBI as the major players in domestic intelligence which proves that they believed in their methods and the current government continues to believe that the FBI is abiding by laws even when it comes to domestic intelligence when so many believe the biggest terrorist concern is within our nations border.

September 11th 2001

The National Intelligence Strategy of the United States of America changed since the horrific attack of September 11th 2001 commonly referred to as 9/11. Al-Qaeda terrorists used an aerial assault consisting of hijacked US commercial planes to strategically hit the World Trade Center (WTC), The Pentagon, and Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. The WTC attacks took the lives of nearly 3, 000 people and it left the U. S. citizens frightened and in complete shock. (Davis 2009) This terrorist attack on US soil proved there was a need for change within the IC yet again. In response to this attack many changes have been made within the IC which have focused on inter-department and agency information sharing and on obtaining more focused analysis on terrorist groups and national threats.

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The first major change that came as a result of September 11th 2001 was the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT ACT) Act of 2001. The Act gives federal officials greater authority to track and intercept communications, both for law enforcement and foreign intelligence gathering purposes. It vests the Secretary of the Treasury with regulatory powers to combat corruption of U. S. financial institutions for foreign money laundering purposes. It seeks to further close our borders to foreign terrorists and to detain and remove those within our borders. It creates new crimes, new penalties, and new procedural efficiencies for use against domestic and international terrorists. (The Library of Congress 2001) The Patriot Act as it is commonly referred as brought powers back to the IC that hadnt been seen since before the Senate Committees of the 1970s. Some may argue that the powers given to the IC with the Patriot Act were too vague and crossed constitutional lines but the opposing argument is that there has not been a successful terrorist attack on US soil since 9/11 even with the two US led wars in the Middle East and its fight against Al-Queda worldwide.

Another major change that came upon as a result of September 11th was the Homeland Security Act of 2002 which established the Department of Homeland Security. According to their official website The Department of Homeland Security has a vital mission: to secure the nation from the many threats we face. This requires the dedication of more than 230, 000 employees in jobs that range from aviation and border security to emergency response, from cyber security analyst to chemical facility inspector. Our duties are wide-ranging, but our goal is clear - keeping

America safe. In order to assist with its mission the Homeland Security Act of 2002 placed the Secret Service, FEMA, the U. S. Coast Guard, Customs, Immigration Services, and the Transportation Security Administration under the control of the Department of Homeland Security.

On December 17, 2004, then President Bush signed into law the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act, 2004 which he called, the most dramatic reform of our nation's intelligence capabilities since President Harry S. Truman signed the National Security Act of 1947. The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act changed many things within the IC first and foremost it created the position of Director of National Intelligence (DNI). The law prohibits the Director from being located within the Executive Office of the President or simultaneously serving as head of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) or any other intelligence community (IC) element. It also gives the Director primary responsibility for: serving as head of the IC; acting as principal adviser for intelligence matters related to national security; and managing, overseeing, and directing the execution of the National Intelligence Program. (The Library of Congress 2004) The Act also established an Office of the Director of National Intelligence to work for the DNI. Another major part of the Act was the establishment of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCC) to: analyze and integrate all U. S. intelligence pertaining to terrorism and counterterrorism; conduct strategic operational planning for counterterrorism activities; ensure that intelligence agencies have access to, and receive, all intelligence needed to accomplish their missions; and serve as the central and shared knowledge bank on known and suspected terrorists and international terror groups. (The Library of

Congress 2004) The DNI and the office of personnel who support the DNI have been able to break down many of the walls that existed between the 16 different Intelligence agencies in the US when it came to sharing information. This has eased not only the intelligence efforts in the US two ongoing wars in the Middle East but also with threats to National Security here at home.

Another change that same after 9/11, was the creation of the National Security Branch (NSB). The National Security Branch (NSB) was created in September 2005 in response to a presidential directive it combines the missions and resources of our counterterrorism, counterintelligence, weapons of mass destruction, and intelligence elements under the leadership of a senior Bureau official. It also includes the Terrorist Screening Center, which plays a crucial role in providing actionable intelligence to state and local law enforcement. (Federal Bureau of Investigations n. d.) As part of the NSB the DNI has authority over the National Intelligence Centers to address intelligence priorities, including but not limited to regional issues.

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