

The central
intelligence agency:
is it a positive or
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The Central Intelligence Agency better known as the CIA is a sort of mythological agency in the United States. It has starred in hundreds of Hollywood motion pictures that have done nothing but increase its aura and increase the public's curiosity. The questions most citizens ask about it go something like " Is it really the way we see it in the movies? "" Was he CIA really responsible for the assassination of John F. Kennedy? " " Could have the CIA prevented the September 11th attacks? " The primary knowledge regarding the CIA's operations is kept strictly confidential.

CIA agents live in a seemingly underground world where they travel unidentified living double lives. The word CIA cannot be said without its negative connotation. The CIA's legendary secrecy comes along with a legendary worldwide reputation of being the American equivalent of terrorists. The CIA has been a tool of control that the United States government has called upon often since its inception in 1947. Some feel that the CIA is only a instrument of American imperialism which the United States deny and defend by saying that it's only a tool of national security.

Is the United States excuse for the CIA a viable one or is it like the rest of the world says, an American institution of terrorism. The United States has carried foreign intelligence activities since the days of George Washington. 1 They did not created a department or agency for this matter until 1947 when President Henry Truman signed the National Security Act. Before 1947 the establishment of an organization to conduct foreign intelligence activities was seen as unnecessary until President Franklin Roosevelt came to office.

He was the first American President that was concerned the deficiencies in American intelligence even before the attack on Pearl Harbor. 2 Roosevelt established the Coordinator of Information (COI) and made New York attorney William J. Donovan as director. This was the nation's first peacetime intelligence organization. 3 After the United States entered World War II the Office of Strategic Service (OSS) was created to replace the COI. Its job was to " collect and analyze strategic information required by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and to conduct special operations not assigned to other agencies. " 4

After World War II the OSS was dismantled because the nation was in a hurry to demobilize. Many wartime agencies were dismantled along with the OSS. The intelligence services that the OSS provided were passed on to the State and Defense departments on a smaller scale. One other agencies were established prior to the signing of the National Security Act of 1947, the CIG or Central Intelligence Group was created in 1946. 5 It was disestablished in 1947. After World War II President Truman acknowledges the United States need for a concrete intelligence agency that could concentrate on foreign affairs that had to do with national security.

The National Security Act of 1947 mandated a major reorganization of foreign policy and military establishments of the U. S. government. 6 Its purpose was to create institutions that would make the Presidents foreign policy easier to implement. The National Security Act created the National Security Council (NSC), which consists of the President, Vice-President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and members of other agencies including the Director of the newly created Central Intelligence Agency.

The National Security Act also established the Central Intelligence Agency. The CIA served as the primary intelligence-gathering agency in the United States. 7 The CIA has been involved in thousands of different operations around the world. From helping foreign governments overthrow unwanted leaders to investigating drug cartels. The CIA was created with five specific reasons in mind: 1. To advise the National Security Council in matters concerning such intelligence activities of the government departments and agencies as related to national security. 2. To make recommendations to the National Security Council for the coordination of such intelligence activities of the departments and agencies of the government as related to national security. 3. To correlate and evaluate the intelligence relating to national security, and to provide for the appropriate dissemination of such intelligence within the Government, using, where appropriate, existing intelligence agencies and facilities.

4. To perform for the benefit of existing intelligence agencies such additional services of common concern as the National Security Council determines can be more effectively accomplished centrally. and 5. To perform other such functions and duties related to intelligence affecting the national security as the National Security Council may from time to time direct. 8 The present CIA has taken its functions to another level. It is a first class espionage agency that makes James Bond look like it belongs in the last century with all their new technological advancements.

The first CIA operation came in 1953 in Iran where it overthrew Iranian President Mohammed Mossadeq. The CIA went into Iran after Mossadeq had nationalized the oil fields. The CIA organized a coup d'état that brought down

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Mossadeq and brought back the popular Shah. The real reason behind this coup was not revealed until the year 2000. The coup d'état was thought to have just been a " popular uprising by the Iranian people. " This was the first of many CIA operations that have been directed at overthrowing leaders of foreign governments.

The CIA has overthrown other foreign leaders such as Salvador Allende in El Salvador, Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala, and Manuel Noriega in Panama just to name a few. ⁹ The CIA defended its intervention by saying that it saved Iran from falling into the influence of the Soviets. Donald Wilbur wrote a paper after interviewing different people that worked on the CIA operation in Iran. They all said that the number one reason behind the coup was oil. The CIA has been under constant scrutiny since its inception. After the failed invasion of the Bay of Pigs in Cuba in 1961 the CIA came under fire.

In the mid 1970's a Senate Select Committee and a Presidential Commission headed by Nelson Rockefeller charged the CIA of being involved in illegal activities such as planning the assassinations of foreign leaders including Fidel Castro and conspiring to prevent the election of Salvador Allende in El Salvador. ¹⁰ After this tighter restrictions were placed on the CIA's secret operations. The CIA's failure to anticipate the revolution in Iran in 1979 made President Ronald Reagan lift some of the restrictions that were placed on the CIA. The Iran-Contra Affair of 1984 brought more scandal to the CIA.

The CIA was involved in an operation that involved the United States government trading sales of arms to the Iranian government in return for American hostages. The profits from this scheme were given to the Contras

in Nicaragua. The Contras were a rebel group that was trying to overthrow the Sandinista government that had been in power since 1979. This scandal took away from the credibility of the Reagan administration and the CIA. Has the CIA been a good thing for the United States of America? Yes, it has been involved in many shady schemes have given it a bad reputation around the world.

Yes, it is a device that the United States uses to maintain its position as the only super power in the world. And yes, it is a good thing for America. The problem with the CIA is that we only find out things about their operations when they go wrong. We never hear about the operations that go smoothly and the ones that save the lives of Americans. The CIA has been accused of working for the sole interests of the profits of the United States government. I do not doubt the fact that is partially true. I know that there are many other reasons behind the CIA other than national security.

But in a post September 11th world where national security is on the minds of every single American citizen the CIA is necessary even if national security is not always the priority. After September 11th suddenly everyone in the United States became aware of the fury of Anti-Americanism around the world. In a world where the United States has an "either you are with us or against us" mentality we need the CIA's and other intelligence agencies to be alert The CIA has always been an asset and positive agency for the United States.

It has not only been responsible for sorting out and obtaining information that is vital for U. S. national security but it has also been responsible for

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helping the United States continue to be the number one power in the World. As an American I hate calling the United States imperialist but I cannot deny the fact that they are to a certain extent. The CIA has allowed the U. S to maintain control in foreign countries around the world especially in Latin America. The CIA has always been a double-edged sword that has cut the United States previously, but in a world where United States supremacy is key the CIA is vital.