

Example of essay on united states intelligence entities

[War](#), [Intelligence](#)



The United States of America was arguably the safest nation in the world until the 9/11 terrorist attacks the sent chilling messages. From henceforth, America and indeed Americans have had a suspicious approach to matters of security. It has consequently been in the nation's interest to harness all of its intelligence agencies with the objective of working together in protecting Americans. In that vein, it is should be appreciated that all levels of governments including the federal, state and local governments have their unique roles to play in matters of intelligence. In brief, it is noteworthy that the complicated nature of intelligence demands for the participation of all security related agencies. This paper shall, therefore, consider the roles and participation of the military, the federal, state and local law enforcement agencies as well as the Homeland security entities in the protection of the homeland. From the onset, it should be appreciated that the state and law enforcement agencies play an auxiliary role while the military, the federal and homeland security agencies have been tasked with the substantive portion of the work.

The military, the federal agencies and the homeland security agencies are organized in seventeen units which come together under the United States Intelligence Community, IC. The IC is led by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. The officer is answerable to the President of the United States of America and may at times be called to answer to the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defence, Congress and any relevant executive unit. The IC's history can be traced to the reign of Ronald Reagan. Through Executive 12333, Reagan signed into law the Act that created the IC. It has since grown in leaps especially with the developments in America creating the need for

security and counterterrorism measures. This paper shall examine the constituent members of the IC and would be keen to identify where each unit or entity belongs to among the military, federal and homeland security departments.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence is the nerve center of the Intelligence Community. The office is a federal entity deriving its mandate from the federal government. In addition, the office liaises with all entities in respect to intelligence gathering. It should be appreciated that although the office is directly answerable to the Presidency and thus falls squarely under the Executive, it is as well answerable to Congress. The spirit is that Congress as policy makers may require intelligence information for purposes of formulating policies in relation to matters of security. In fact, after the 9/11 attack, Congress has been on the forefront of curbing terrorism and security threats. This has been manifested in the nature of laws formulated by the same which is intended to create a secure nation by harnessing the intelligence available. Some of the laws that are a direct consequence of the Office of Director of National Intelligence reports to Congress include the Patriot Act 2001, the Homeland Security Act 2002 and the Intelligence Reform and Counterterrorism Prevention Act 2004. The main function of the Office is to liaise with all the seventeen intelligence agencies at the national level and collate the information so gathered by the different factions for purposes of countering any security threats to the nation. In addition, the office also conducts its own intelligence gathering activities within the federal government's jurisdiction. It should be noted that the office's mandate in the gathering of intelligence is restricted to the national

boundaries and does not go into foreign territories.

Having canvassed the agencies within the military ranks, it is now essential to consider the agencies falling under the federal government. The agencies include the following, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Coast Guard Intelligence Agency, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, the Marine Corps intelligence, the National Reconnaissance Office and the National Security Agency. It is imperative to appreciate the fact that the functions of these agencies are interrelated and in some ways often do overlap. In addition, there have been situations where all or some of these agencies had to work together for the collective good of the nation. In respect to national intelligence, the CIA and FBI assume center stage and as a consequence would be discussed substantially. The CIA is charged with the provision of intelligence information to the national government especially to the policy formulation units. In that respect, the CIA gathers information that would affect issues of national policies as well as foreign policies. CIA, therefore, has concurrent jurisdiction within and outside America. It equally conducts investigations that address any errors, omissions and contradictions. The CIA is the main agency charged with intelligence gathering and the other agencies merely perform support functions.

On the other hand, the FBI performs investigative functions on issues of crime and terrorism. As a result, the FBI may run into information that is considered useful for intelligence mandarins. However, it has no role in intelligence gathering and may only do so in its efforts to investigate past and anticipated crimes. Some of the crimes that the FBI investigates include

terrorism, counterintelligence, cybercrime, corruption, civil rights crimes, violent crimes and white collar crimes. It is critical to appreciate the relation between crime and intelligence. This is because lately criminal factions have assumed approaches that threaten the safety of the citizenry. In extreme cases some of these criminal factions have even embraced terrorism thus the newly coined term criminal-terrorism.

The other federal factions only play support roles as follows. The Coast Guard Intelligence performs intelligence operations within the internal waters in America. It ensures that the waters are safe from any threats and reports any cases that raise suspicion. The Drug Enforcement Administration essentially regulates the use of drugs in America. Its mandate is limited to tracking smuggling and illegal distribution and consumption of drugs the subject of the Controlled Substances Act. However, in the discharge of its operations, it has the responsibility of giving intelligence it deems useful for the maintenance of security. In addition, the other agencies such as the FBI equally support the Drug Administration with relevant intelligence they gather that could be useful in the delivery of their mandate. The National Reconnaissance Office is charged with the national satellites. As such it manufactures satellites and provides support services to other agencies such as CIA. It, therefore, helps in the monitoring of suspect environments, the installation of military operational bases and the consequential running of such bases. The agency falls within the larger Department of Defense. The National Security Agency performs coordination, direction and specialized activities intended to protect the information within the intelligence system. In that vein, it is equipped with the technical and personnel capacity

intended for the protection of information. This agency should be appreciated especially in the context of the complex and huge intelligence community. It is the agency that determines what level of information should be given to what agency and why. It equally sieves the information and ensures its authenticity before communication to the president for action. The agency also recommends action to be taken in line with the security concerns. Lastly the Marine Corps Intelligence conducts intelligence gathering at the marine level for purposes of battlefield support. This should be seen as a support agency for its functions are limited to research for improvement of the marine unit. However, the agency is a member of the intelligence community for purposes of adding value to the information at the community's disposal.

The intelligence community also has federal departments which do not necessarily play intelligence gathering roles. However, their memberships are considered useful for their functions are interrelated and overlap at times. At the federal level four important departments sit within the ranks of the IC. These are the departments of Treasury, Energy, Homeland Security and State. The Treasury controls the budgetary allocations and its membership is often for it to appreciate the demands of the IC and consequently fairly budget for the same. On the other hand, the Energy department runs scientific laboratories and plants that are critical in the analysis, storage and preservation of information and intelligence. The Department of State is responsible for foreign policies and needs to be in the know of likely occurrences within and outside the world and their relation to the security of America. Lastly, the Department of Homeland Security is the

federal organ charged with security at home. It focusses on four main strategic areas which include the understanding of threats, the collection of information, the sharing of the same information and the management of the homeland security intelligence enterprise. It should be appreciated that the departments offer more of support roles as the gathering of intelligence is conducted by the agencies as mentioned.

Having discussed the federal levels substantially, it is critical to consider the contribution of state and local law enforcement agencies. However, it is essential to take note of the state of affairs. As it stands, intelligence functions are mainly managed at the federal level. The state and local levels have been donated to only aspects of law enforcement within limited jurisdictions. As such their roles remain majorly recommendation and sharing on information to the mentioned federal agencies. There has, however, been debate on how the state and local law enforcement can be involved in the intelligence gathering functions. The state and local law enforcement agencies refer to the local police. This is what in essence creates the wrangles. Their mandate remains to deal with the civilians who do not observe the rule of law. It is anticipated that these law enforcement agencies only deal with the misdemeanors and felonies that do not involve high stakes of the nature of intelligence gathering. For that reason, the former's contribution to the intelligence community has been minimal. In fact, in many cases federal intelligence agencies prefer conducting their own independent investigations and operations. They often decry the ill-equipped and limited knowledge nature of the state and local law enforcement entities. In that context, the latter have been left to perform only information

roles.

In conclusion, it is imperative to appreciate the complex nature of the intelligence community. In fact, the main obstacle that threatens the success of these entities often is the lack of coordination and communication within their own ranks. This is brought about by the bureaucracies, the turf wars among the entities and the lack of clarity of roles. If all those issues are addressed, the American citizenry would be in safer hands.

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