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# Intelligence Community Spending Trends

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## Summary

The intelligence budget, as considered separate and distinct from the defense budget, dates to reforms initiated in the 1970s to improve oversight and accountability of the intelligence community. The intelligence budget funds intelligence and intelligence-related activities. These activities include the strategic and tactical collection, analysis, production and dissemination of information that is particularly relevant to United States national security; covert action; and counterintelligence programs directed against threats to the United States. Since the budget funds programs and activities that typically enable national security decision-making, military planning, and operations, changes to the topline figures for intelligence programs closely follow trends in national defense spending.

Intelligence spending is usually understood as the sum of two separate budget programs: (1) the National Intelligence Program (NIP), which covers the programs, projects, and activities of the intelligence community oriented toward the strategic needs of decisionmakers, and (2) the Military Intelligence Program (MIP), which funds defense intelligence activities intended to support operational and tactical level intelligence priorities supporting defense operations. The combined NIP and MIP budgets do not encompass the total of U.S. intelligence-related spending. Many departments have intelligence-gathering entities that support a department-specific mission, use department funds, and do not fall within either the NIP or the MIP. This report considers only the NIP and MIP budget figures.

The Director of National Intelligence (DNI) and Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security (USD(I&S)), respectively, manage the NIP and MIP separately under different authorities, and work together in a number of ways to facilitate the integration of NIP and MIP intelligence efforts. Although Congress has occasionally debated whether to declassify the topline figures for each of the 18 statutory elements of the intelligence community, to date only the NIP and MIP budget totals are released to the public each year. These totals are significant. For FY2025, funding *requested* for the NIP and MIP totaled \$101.6 billion, including \$73.4 billion for NIP and \$28.2 billion for MIP. Compared to FY2024 requested amounts, the FY2025 budget requested \$1 billion more funding for NIP and \$1.1 billion less funding for MIP. For FY2023, Congress *appropriated* a total of \$99.6 billion, \$71.7 billion for the NIP and \$27.9 billion for the MIP. The size of the intelligence budget has remained relatively constant over the past decade, approximately 11% of the total defense budget.

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## Introduction

This report examines intelligence funding from fiscal years (FYs) 1965 to 2025, with an emphasis on the period from 2007 to 2025, during which total national and military intelligence program spending dollars have been publicly disclosed on an annual basis.<sup>1</sup> A table of topline budget figures (see **Table 1**) and accompanying graphs (see **Figure 2** and **Figure 3**) illustrate that, like national defense spending, intelligence-related spending fluctuates on an annual basis (though to a somewhat lesser degree). Considered as a proportion of national defense spending, intelligence spending has remained generally consistent, approximately 11% of the total annual national defense budget.

Various tables and graphs included in this report illustrate trends in intelligence spending. **Figure 1** illustrates highs and lows in NIP spending between 1965 and 1994. **Table 1** compares NIP and MIP spending to national defense spending from FY2007 to FY2025, reporting values in both nominal and constant dollars. **Figure 2** and **Figure 3** use the data in **Table 1** to provide an overview of intelligence spending compared to total national defense spending.

## The Intelligence Budget

The intelligence budget funds *intelligence and intelligence-related activities*—defined in this report to include the following:<sup>2</sup>

- The collection, analysis, production, dissemination, or use of information that relates to a foreign country, or a government, political group, party, military force, movement, or other association in a foreign country, and that relates to the defense, foreign policy, national security, or related policies of the United States, and other activity in support of the collection, analysis, production, dissemination, or use of such information;
- Activities taken to counter similar activities directed against the United States;

<sup>1</sup> The *topline* number for the NIP was classified until 2007—with two exceptions (October 1997 and March 1998). The exceptions are discussed later in this report. *Topline* is a frequently used colloquial term referring to any aggregated budget total.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this report, CRS uses the definition of *intelligence and intelligence-related activities* established by the Rules of the House of Representatives for the operations of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) (see Rule X, clause 11, (j)(1) of U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, *Rules of the House of Representatives of the United States, 118th Congress, 118th Cong., 1st sess., January 10, 2023*, p. 16, at [https://cha.house.gov/\\_cache/files/5/3/5361f9f8-24bc-4fbc-ac97-3d79fd689602/1F09ADA16E45C9E7B67F147DCF176D95.118-rules-01102023.pdf](https://cha.house.gov/_cache/files/5/3/5361f9f8-24bc-4fbc-ac97-3d79fd689602/1F09ADA16E45C9E7B67F147DCF176D95.118-rules-01102023.pdf)). The definition was first adopted by the House through H.Res. 658 (95<sup>th</sup> Congress, July 14, 1977), which established the HPSCI whose purpose, according to the House Rules, was to “oversee and make continuing studies of the intelligence and intelligence-related activities and programs of the United States Government.” In contrast, S.Res. 400 (94<sup>th</sup> Congress, June 23, 1976), which established the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI), described the SSCI as “oversee[ing] and [making] continuing studies of the intelligence activities and programs of the United States government,” and specified that any such *intelligence activity* “does not include tactical foreign military intelligence serving no national policymaking function.” Unlike S.Res. 400, H.Res. 658 did not specifically exclude “tactical foreign military intelligence serving no national policymaking function” from its definition of intelligence and intelligence-related activities.

- Covert and clandestine activities affecting the relations of the United States with a foreign government, political group, party, military force, movement, or other association;<sup>3</sup>
- Collection, analysis, production, dissemination, or use of information about activities of persons within the United States, its territories and possessions, or nationals of the United States abroad whose political and related activities pose, or may be considered by a department, agency, bureau, office, division, instrumentality, or employee of the United States to pose, a threat to the internal security of the United States; and
- Covert or clandestine activities directed against persons within the United States, its territories and possessions, or nationals of the United States abroad whose political and related activities pose, or may be considered by a department, agency, bureau, office, division, instrumentality, or employee of the United States to pose, a threat to the internal security of the United States.

Total intelligence spending by the 18 elements of the U.S. intelligence community consists of both the National Intelligence Program (NIP), and the Military Intelligence Program (MIP).<sup>4</sup>

The NIP funds strategic-level intelligence planning and policymaking, as well as the intelligence capabilities and activities that support more than one department or agency. It funds the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), in their entirety, and the strategic-level intelligence activities associated with departmental intelligence community elements such as the National Security Agency (NSA) and National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) of the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) of the Department of State (see Appendix A for a list of the 18 statutory elements of the intelligence community). The NIP also funds Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI) programs throughout the intelligence community.

The MIP funds defense activities that address tactical or operational-level requirements specific to the DOD. Programs that support both national and tactical or operational military requirements may receive both NIP and MIP resources.<sup>5</sup>

The combined NIP and MIP budgets do not encompass the total of U.S. intelligence-related spending. Many departments have intelligence-gathering entities that support a department-specific mission, use department funds, and do not fall within either the NIP or the MIP. For example, the Homeland Security Intelligence Program (HSIP) is sometimes referenced in intelligence-related legislation.<sup>6</sup> The HSIP is a small program that exists within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to fund those intelligence activities of the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) that serve predominantly departmental-specific missions. With the exception of U.S. Coast Guard Intelligence (CG-2) and the DHS I&A, the NIP does not fund the intelligence activities of DHS, nor does the NIP fund law enforcement intelligence activities of state, local, tribal, and territorial governments of the United States. In addition, the MIP does not

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<sup>3</sup> For more information on the distinction between covert action and clandestine activities, see CRS Report R45175, *Covert Action and Clandestine Activities of the Intelligence Community: Selected Definitions*, by Michael E. DeVine.

<sup>4</sup> Statutory elements of the intelligence community are defined in 50 U.S.C. §3003(4).

<sup>5</sup> See also, Dan Elkins, *Managing Intelligence Resources*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Dewey, AZ: DWE Press, 2014), p. 4-12. This report addresses intelligence spending within the NIP and MIP. Intelligence-related spending (such as the Homeland Security Intelligence Program) that does not fall within the NIP and MIP, supporting organizations outside of the statutory elements of the IC, is outside the scope of this report.

<sup>6</sup> Per 6 U.S.C. §125(a), the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) and Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) have jurisdiction over the HSIP.

fund certain military platforms that can have a secondary intelligence application, but whose main purpose is not intelligence, such as the E-3 Sentry Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) or the MQ-9 Reaper unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) air-to-ground strike platform.<sup>7</sup>

## Origin of the Intelligence Budget

The intelligence budget, as considered separate and distinct from the defense budget, dates to reforms initiated in the 1970s to improve oversight and accountability of the intelligence community.<sup>8</sup> Presidents Ford, Carter, and Reagan gradually centralized management and oversight over what was then known as the *National Foreign Intelligence Program* (NFIP), which consolidated the CIA budget with portions of the defense budget associated with national intelligence activities, such as cryptologic and reconnaissance programs.<sup>9</sup> Originally, the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) managed the NFIP, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Council (NSC) provided oversight.<sup>10</sup>

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) of 2004 (P.L. 108-458) modified the NFIP as the NIP.<sup>11</sup> The IRTPA also created the position of Director of National Intelligence (DNI).<sup>12</sup> The DNI was given greater budgetary authority over the NIP in comparison to the authority the DCI had over the NFIP. Intelligence Community Directive (ICD) 104 provides overall policy to include a description of the DNI's roles and responsibilities as program executive of the NIP.<sup>13</sup>

Military-specific *tactical* or *operational* intelligence activities were not included in the NFIP. They were referred to as *Tactical Intelligence and Related Activities* (TIARA) and were managed separately by the Secretary of Defense. TIARA referred to the intelligence activities “of a single service” that were considered *organic* (meaning “to belong to”) to individual military units. In 1994, a new category was created called the *Joint Military Intelligence Program* (or JMIP) for defense-wide intelligence programs.<sup>14</sup> A DOD memorandum signed by the Secretary of Defense in 2005 merged TIARA and JMIP to create the MIP.<sup>15</sup> DOD Directive 5205.12, effective

<sup>7</sup> Generally, the MIP excludes the inherent intelligence gathering capabilities of a weapons system whose primary mission is not intelligence. For more information, see Dan Elkins, *Managing Intelligence Resources*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., (Dewey: DWE Press, 2014), p. 4-12.

<sup>8</sup> Dan Elkins, *Managing Intelligence Resources*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Dewey, AZ: DWE Press, 2014), p. 4-3.

<sup>9</sup> See Executive Order (E.O.) 11905 (July 29, 1976), E.O. 12036 (January 24, 1978), E.O. 12333 (December 8, 1981), successive executive orders, signed by Presidents Gerald R. Ford, James E. Carter, and Ronald W. Reagan, respectively, providing the authority for the United States to conduct foreign intelligence activities.

<sup>10</sup> Dan Elkins, *Managing Intelligence Resources*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Dewey, AZ: DWE Press, 2014), p. 4-3. The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-458) abolished the position of the DCI and established in its stead the position of Director of National Intelligence (DNI) who manages the NIP.

<sup>11</sup> See §1074 of P.L. 108-458.

<sup>12</sup> See §1011 of P.L. 108-458.

<sup>13</sup> ICD 104, “National Intelligence Program (NIP) Budget Formulation and Justification, Execution, and Performance Evaluation,” April 30, 2013, at <https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICD/ICD%20104.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> Dan Elkins, *Managing Intelligence Resources*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Dewey, AZ: DWE Press, 2014), p. 4-13. See also DOD Directive 5205.9 “Joint Military Intelligence Program (JMIP),” April 7, 1995.

<sup>15</sup> Janet McDonnell, “The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence: The First 10 Years,” *Studies in Intelligence*, vol. 58, no. 1 (Extracts, March 2014): 9-16, p. 13 at <https://www.cia.gov/static/3c5f936a8a9717fca3685b2d0b9cccf0/Leading-Defense-Intel-Community.pdf>. McDonnell cites the memorandum creating the MIP as follows: Acting Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England, Memorandum to the Secretaries of Military Departments et al., Subj: Establishment of the Military Intelligence Program, September 1, 2005.

November 2008, established policies and assigned responsibilities for management of the MIP, to include the role of USD(I&S) as MIP program executive and “principal proponent for MIP policies and resources to the Secretary of Defense and the DNI.”<sup>16</sup>

Thus, the DNI and USD(I&S), respectively, manage the NIP and MIP separately under different authorities.<sup>17</sup> A program is primarily NIP if it funds an activity that supports more than one department or agency, or provides a service of common concern for the IC.<sup>18</sup> The NIP funds the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), the CIA, and the national-level intelligence activities associated with the NSA, DIA, and NGA, which can be distinguished from their tactical-level activities supporting the military. It also funds Sensitive Compartmented Information programs throughout the intelligence community. A program is primarily MIP if it funds an activity that addresses tactical or operational-level requirements specific to the DOD. The DNI and USD(I&S) work together in a number of ways to facilitate the integration of NIP and MIP intelligence efforts.<sup>19</sup> Programs that support both national and tactical or operational military requirements may receive both NIP and MIP resources.

The NIP may be perceived as more complicated than the MIP because it funds an aggregation of programs that span the entire intelligence community. In general, NIP programs are based on capabilities such as cryptology, reconnaissance, and signals collection that span several IC components. Each program within the NIP is headed by a program manager. Program managers exercise daily direct control over their NIP resources.<sup>20</sup> The DNI acts as an intermediary in the budget process, facilitating communications between program managers, the President, and Congress.<sup>21</sup> The DNI determines and controls defense and nondefense NIP funds from budget development through execution.

In contrast, the MIP encompasses only those defense dollars associated with the operational and tactical-level intelligence activities of the military services.<sup>22</sup> According to the MIP charter directive:

The MIP consists of programs, projects, or activities that support the Secretary of Defense’s intelligence, counterintelligence, and related intelligence responsibilities. This includes those *intelligence and counterintelligence programs, projects, or activities that provide capabilities to meet warfighters’ operational and tactical requirements more effectively.*

<sup>16</sup> DOD Directive 5205.12, “Military Intelligence Program,” November 14, 2008; change 2, October 1, 2020 at <http://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodd/520512p.pdf?ver=2018-05-10-083514-693>.

<sup>17</sup> For more information on the position of USD(I&S), see CRS In Focus IF10523, *Defense Primer: Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security*, by Michael E. DeVine.

<sup>18</sup> 50 U.S.C. Section 3003(6) defines the term *National Intelligence Program* as “[A]ll programs, projects, and activities of the IC, as well as any other programs of the IC designated jointly by the Director of National Intelligence and the head of a United States department or agency or by the President. Such term does not include programs, projects, or activities of the military departments to acquire intelligence solely for the planning and conduct of tactical military operations by United States Armed Forces.”

<sup>19</sup> In May 2007, the Secretary of Defense and DNI formally agreed in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that the USD(I&S) position would be “dual-hatted”—the incumbent acting as both the USD(I&S) within the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and Director of Defense Intelligence (DDI) within the ODNI in order to improve the integration of national and military intelligence. According to the MOA, when acting as DDI, the incumbent reports directly to the DNI and serves as his principal advisor regarding defense intelligence matters. See Michael McConnell, DNI and Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense, “Memorandum of Agreement,” May 2007, *news release* no. 637-07, May 24, 2007, “Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence to be Dual-Hatted as Director of Defense Intelligence,” at [https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Newsroom/Press%20Releases/2007%20Press%20Releases/20070524\\_release.pdf](https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Newsroom/Press%20Releases/2007%20Press%20Releases/20070524_release.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> See ICD-104 for the roles and responsibilities of NIP Program Managers.

<sup>21</sup> Dan Elkins, *Managing Intelligence Resources*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Dewey, AZ: DWE Press, 2014), p. 4-5.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 4-11.

The term excludes capabilities associated with a weapons system whose primary mission is not intelligence.<sup>23</sup> (emphasis CRS)

MIP dollars are managed within the budgets of DOD military departments and agencies by component managers. Examples include the senior intelligence officer (SIO) for the intelligence element of the U.S. Air Force (USAF A2/A6), who manages Air Force MIP dollars, and the senior leader for the intelligence element of the U.S. Navy (OPNAV N2/N6), who manages MIP dollars for the Navy. Both manage funds in accordance with USD(I&S) guidance and policy.<sup>24</sup> MIP components include the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD); the intelligence elements of the military departments; the intelligence element of U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM/J2); and military intelligence activities associated with DIA, NGA, NRO, and NSA.<sup>25</sup> Some DOD intelligence components make use of both NIP and MIP funds. The directors of DIA, NGA, NRO, and NSA serve simultaneously as program managers for their NIP funds and component managers for their MIP funds.

## Secrecy vs. Transparency

Congress and the American public's ability to oversee intelligence dollars and understand how they are spent is limited by the secrecy that surrounds the intelligence budget process. IC officials have expressed general commitments to transparency.<sup>26</sup> Yet, in terms of intelligence community spending, some believe that intelligence community disclosure of intelligence-related spending beyond just the topline NIP and MIP figures would not pose risks to national security.<sup>27</sup>

Most intelligence dollars are embedded in the defense budget. Historically, it was for security purposes. Disclosure of details associated with the intelligence budget has been debated for many years, with proponents arguing for more accountability<sup>28</sup> and intelligence community leadership arguing that disclosure of such figures poses risks of damaging national security.<sup>29</sup> In 1999, then-DCI George Tenet articulated the potential risk of disclosure as follows:

<sup>23</sup> DOD Directive 5205.12(3)(a).

<sup>24</sup> DOD Directive 5205.12(3)(c).

<sup>25</sup> DOD Directive 5205.12(3)(b).

<sup>26</sup> For example, Former DNI Daniel Coats stated his commitment to transparency "as a foundational element of securing public trust in our endeavors." See Daniel R. Coats, "Issuance of Updated Intelligence Community Directive 107 on Civil Liberties, Privacy, and Transparency," *Memorandum for Distribution*, March 22, 2018, at <https://www.intelligence.gov/publics-daily-brief/public-s-daily-brief-articles/798-dni-affirms-commitment-to-transparency>.

<sup>27</sup> Some Members of Congress have occasionally introduced legislation to declassify the topline budget figures of each element of the intelligence community, most recently Representative Peter Welch, who introduced H.R. 2735, the Intelligence Budget Transparency Act of 2019 (116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session). Identical legislation was introduced during the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress: In the House, co-sponsored by Representatives Jim Sensenbrenner, Zoe Lofgren, Thomas Massie, Justin Amash, and James McGovern (H.R. 5406, the Intelligence Budget Transparency Act of 2018 (115<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session)); and in the Senate by Senators Ron Wyden and Rand Paul (S. 2631, the Intelligence Budget Transparency Act of 2018 (115<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session)). See "Wyden, Paul, Welch, and Sensenbrenner Introduce Legislation to Increase Transparency of Intelligence Spending," Press Release, March 23, 2018, at <https://www.wyden.senate.gov/news/press-releases/wyden-paul-welch-sensenbrenner-introduce-legislation-to-increase-transparency-of-intelligence-spending>.

<sup>28</sup> For a history of the debate over intelligence budget transparency, see Anne Daugherty Miles, "Secrecy vs. Disclosure of the Intelligence Community Budget: An Enduring Debate," *Secrecy and Society*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2018) at [https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/secrecyandsociety/vol2/iss1/4?utm\\_source=scholarworks.sjsu.edu%2Fsecrecyandsociety%2Fvol2%2Fiss1%2F4&utm\\_medium=PDF&utm\\_campaign=PDFCoverPages](https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/secrecyandsociety/vol2/iss1/4?utm_source=scholarworks.sjsu.edu%2Fsecrecyandsociety%2Fvol2%2Fiss1%2F4&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages).

<sup>29</sup> See ODNI News Release No. 46 of November 21, 2014: "Beyond this [NIP] disclosure, there will be no other National Intelligence Program disclosures of currently classified information because such disclosures could harm (continued...)"

Disclosure of the budget request reasonably could be expected to provide foreign governments with the United States' own assessment of its intelligence capabilities and weaknesses ... [T]he difference between Congressional appropriations from one year to the next provides a measure of Congress's assessment of the nation's intelligence efforts and their satisfaction of stated policy objectives. Not only does an increased, decreased, or unchanged appropriation reflect a congressional determination that existing intelligence programs are less than adequate, more than adequate, or just adequate, respectively, to meet the national security needs of the United States, but an actual figure also indicates the degree of change. This knowledge could assist foreign governments or other organizations in redirecting their own resources to frustrate U.S. intelligence collection efforts, with resulting damage to our national security.<sup>30</sup>

The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States (the 9/11 Commission) agreed with critics who argued for more transparency but also found that disclosure of numbers below the topline could cause damage to national security. It recommended that the total amount of money spent on national intelligence be released to the public:

[T]he top-line figure by itself provides little insight into U.S. intelligence sources and methods. The U.S. government readily provides copious information about spending on its military forces, including military intelligence. The intelligence community should not be subject to that much disclosure. But when even aggregate categorical numbers remain hidden, it is hard to judge priorities and foster accountability.<sup>31</sup>

In response to the 9/11 Commission recommendations, Section 601(a) of P.L. 110-53 (codified at 50 U.S.C. Section 3306(b)) directs the DNI to disclose the NIP topline number:

Not later than 30 days after the end of each fiscal year beginning with fiscal year 2007, the Director of National Intelligence shall disclose to the public the aggregate amount of funds appropriated by Congress for the National Intelligence Program for such fiscal year.

Section 601(b) (codified at 50 U.S.C. Section 3306(c)(1)(A)) allows the President to "waive or postpone the disclosure" if the disclosure "would damage national security."<sup>32</sup> The first such disclosure was made on October 30, 2007.<sup>33</sup> The Intelligence Authorization Act (IAA) of 2010 (P.L. 111-259) further amended Section 601 to require the President to publicly disclose the amount requested for the NIP for the *next* fiscal year "at the time the President submits to Congress the budget."<sup>34</sup>

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national security," available at <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/press-releases/press-releases-2014/item/1141-dni-releases-updated-budget-figure-for-fy-2015-appropriations-requested-for-the-national-intelligence-program>. See also U.S. Congress, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, *Whether Disclosure of Funds for the Intelligence Activities of the United States is in the Public Interest*, 95<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., S.Rept. 95-274, June 16, 1977 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1977), at <http://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/publications/95274.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> "Declaration of George J. Tenet," *Aftergood v. Central Intelligence Agency*, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, Case No. 02-1146, March 19, 2003, at <https://fas.org/sgp/foia/2002/tenet.html>.

<sup>31</sup> National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report* (Washington, DC: GPO, 2004), p. 416.

<sup>32</sup> P.L. 110-53, *The Implementing the Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007* and was enacted August 3, 2007.

<sup>33</sup> ODNI, "DNI Releases Budget Figure for National Intelligence Program," *press release*, October 30, 2007, at [http://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Newsroom/Press%20Releases/2007%20Press%20Releases/20071030\\_release.pdf](http://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Newsroom/Press%20Releases/2007%20Press%20Releases/20071030_release.pdf).

<sup>34</sup> P.L. 111-259 §364. See for example, ODNI Releases Requested Budget Figure for FY2016 Appropriations for the National Intelligence Program," ODNI *News Release* no. 24-15, February 2, 2015, at <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/newsroom/press-releases/press-releases-2015/item/1168-dni-releases-requested-budget-figure-for-fy-2016-appropriations>.

At the present time, U.S. law only requires the NIP topline figure to be disclosed. The DNI is not required to disclose any other information concerning the NIP budget, including whether the topline budget figures released concerns particular intelligence agencies or particular intelligence programs. In 2010, the Secretary of Defense began disclosing MIP appropriations figures on an annual basis and in 2011 disclosed those figures back to 2007.<sup>35</sup> These actions have provided public access to previously classified budget numbers for national and military intelligence activities with the assumption that doing so no longer presented a risk to U.S. national security.

The most recent congressional effort to require the disclosure of more information on the intelligence budget was in 2019, when Representative Peter Welch introduced H.R. 2735, the Intelligence Budget Transparency Act of 2019 (116<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session). This legislation would have amended Section 1105 of Title 31, U.S. Code by requiring the President to disclose in his annual budget request to Congress,

[T]he total dollar amount proposed in the budget for intelligence or intelligence related activities of each element of the Government engaged in such activities in the fiscal year for which the budget is submitted and the estimated appropriation required for each of the ensuing four fiscal years.<sup>36</sup>

Identical bills had been previously introduced in 2014 (H.R. 3855), 2015 (H.R. 2272 and S. 1307), and 2018 (H.R. 5406 and S. 2631).

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<sup>35</sup> Department of Defense, “DOD Releases Military Intelligence Program Top Line Budget for Fiscal 2007, 2008, 2009,” DOD *news release* no. 199-11, March 11, 2011.

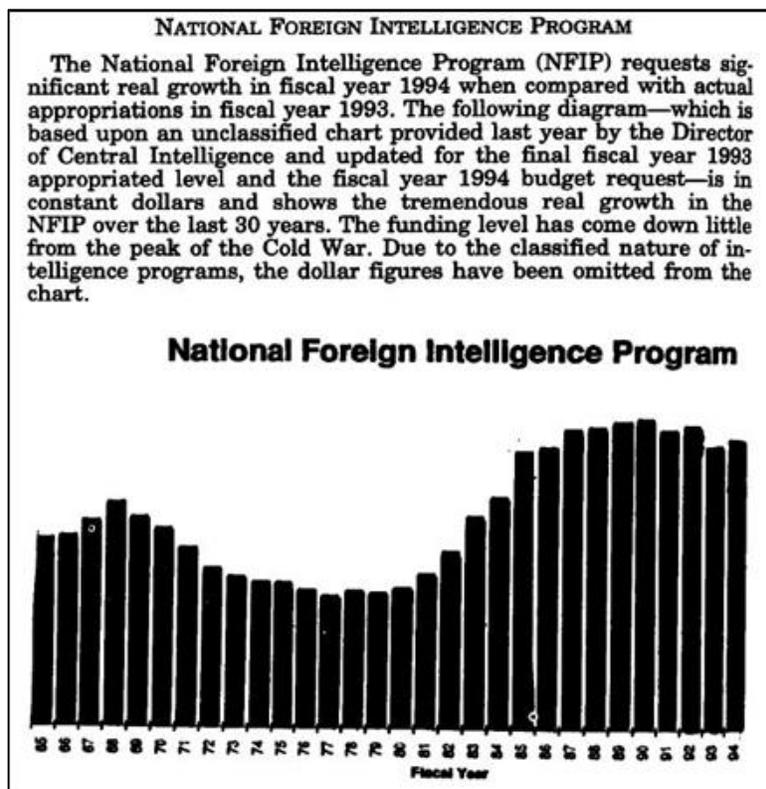
<sup>36</sup> §2(A) of H.R. 2735 (116<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> Sess.).

# Trends in Intelligence Spending

## Historical Trends

**Figure 1. Intelligence Spending 1965-1994**

1994 constant dollars



**Source:** H.Rept. 103-254, *Department of Defense Appropriations Bill, 1994*, to accompany H.R. 3116, p. 14.

**Figure 1** illustrates highs and lows in NIP spending between 1965 and 1994. Due to the classified nature of the intelligence budget at that time, the graphic does not include dollar figures.<sup>37</sup> **Figure 1** suggests that NIP spending appeared to decline steadily from about 1971 to 1980, climbed back to approximate 1968 levels by about 1983, and steadied to apparently constant levels between 1985 and 1994. The pattern of spending in **Figure 1** generally follows the pattern of world events and associated defense spending.<sup>38</sup> Analyses of defense spending over the past several decades usually attribute higher levels of defense spending in the 1960s to the Vietnam War; lower levels of defense spending in the 1970s to the period of *détente* between the United States and the

<sup>37</sup> U.S. Congress, House Appropriations Committee, Defense Subcommittee, *Department of Defense Appropriations Bill, 1994*, to accompany H.R. 3116, 103<sup>rd</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., H. Rept. 103-254 (Washington, DC: GPO, September 22, 1993), p. 14.

<sup>38</sup> See CRS presentation *FY2022 Defense Budget Request*, p. 6, “*National Defense Outlays, FY1940-FY2026*” at [https://www.crs.gov/Products/Documents/WVB00391\\_PresentationSlides/pdf/WVB00391\\_PresentationSlides.pdf#page=6](https://www.crs.gov/Products/Documents/WVB00391_PresentationSlides/pdf/WVB00391_PresentationSlides.pdf#page=6). See also CRS Video WVB00678, *FY2025 Defense Budget Seminar*, by Michael J. Vassalotti et al. slides 9 and 10. CRS Report R47110, *FY2022 National Defense Authorization Act: Context and Selected Issues for Congress*, by Brendan W. McGarry.

Soviet Union and to the worldwide economic recession; and higher levels of defense spending in the 1980s to the defense build-up under President Ronald Reagan.

## Recent Trends

**Table 1** compares NIP and MIP spending to national defense spending from FY2007 to FY2025, reporting values in both nominal and constant dollars. Budget topline appropriated for FY2013 show adjustments made in accordance with automatic spending cuts required under the Budget Control Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-25).<sup>39</sup> Topline numbers associated with national defense spending are reported in **Table 1** and illustrated graphically in **Figures 1** and **2**.

**Table 1. Intelligence Spending, FY2007-FY2025**

Dollars in billions, rounded (FY2025 is the base year for constant dollars)

	NIP <sup>a</sup>		MIP <sup>b</sup>		NIP MIP Total		National Defense <sup>c</sup>	
	Nom.	Const.	Nom.	Const.	Nom.	Const.	Nom.	Const.
<b>FY07</b>	43.5	63.4	20.0	29.1	63.5	92.5	626	911.7
<b>FY08</b>	47.5	66.6	22.9	32.1	70.4	98.7	696	975.6
<b>FY09</b>	49.8	70.0	26.4	37.1	76.2	107.0	698	980.5
<b>FY10</b>	53.1	73.2	27.0	37.2	80.1	110.5	721	994.2
<b>FY11</b>	54.6	73.2	24.0	32.2	78.6	105.3	717	960.7
<b>FY12</b>	53.9	71.2	21.5	28.4	75.4	99.6	681	900.0
<b>FY13<sup>d</sup></b>	49.0	55.1	18.6	20.9	67.6	76.0	610	749.2
<b>FY14</b>	50.5	65.3	17.4	22.5	67.9	87.7	622	803.8
<b>FY15</b>	50.3	64.8	16.5	21.2	66.8	86.0	598	769.9
<b>FY16</b>	53.0	68.0	17.7	22.7	70.7	90.7	624	800.6
<b>FY17</b>	54.6	69.0	18.4	23.2	73.0	92.2	656	828.7
<b>FY18</b>	59.4	73.2	22.1	27.2	81.5	100.4	727	895.5
<b>FY19</b>	60.2	72.6	21.5	25.9	81.7	98.6	746	900.2
<b>FY20</b>	62.7	74.8	23.1	27.6	85.8	102.4	775	925.0
<b>FY21</b>	60.8	70.6	23.3	27.1	84.1	97.7	760	882.9
<b>FY22</b>	65.7	71.9	24.1	26.4	89.8	98.3	838	917.0
<b>FY23</b>	71.7	75.1	27.9	29.2	99.6	104.3	920	964.0
<b>FY24<sup>e</sup></b>	72.4	73.8	29.3	29.8	101.7	103.7	968	987.6
<b>FY25<sup>e</sup></b>	73.4	73.4	28.2	28.2	101.6	101.6	921	921.0

**Source:** CRS, using numbers available at <http://www.dni.gov>, at <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/what-we-do/ic-budget>; OMB Historical Table 5.1, at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/historical-tables/>. For the MIP topline budget figure for FY2025, see U.S. Department of Defense Press Release, “Department of Defense Releases 2025 Military Intelligence Program Budget Request,” March 12, 2024, at <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3704641/department-of-defense-releases-fiscal-year-2025->

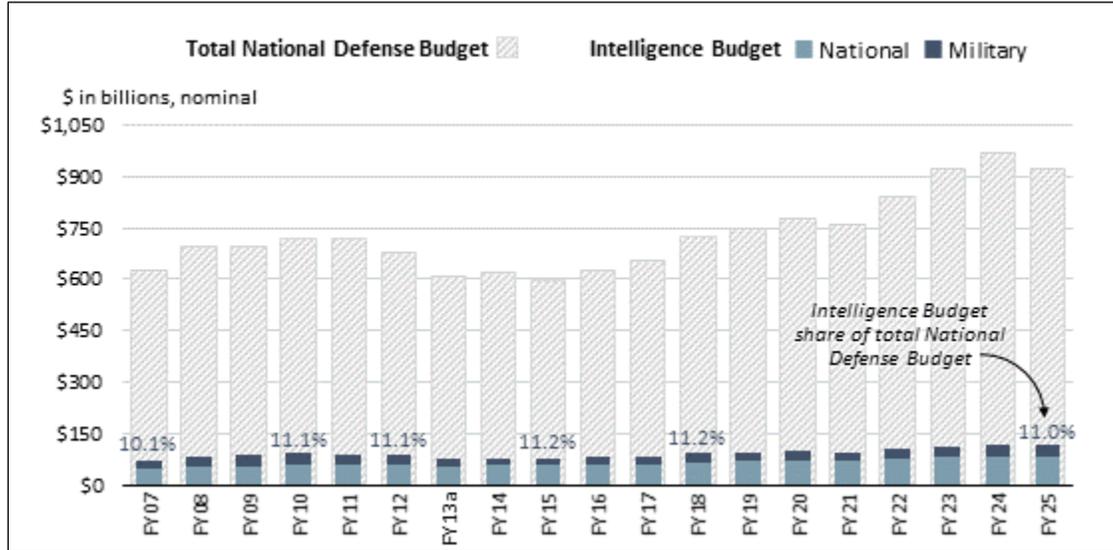
<sup>39</sup> P.L. 112-25. For more on required spending cuts and the Budget Control Act, see CRS Report R44039, *The Defense Budget and the Budget Control Act: Frequently Asked Questions*, by Brendan W. McGarry.

military-intelligence-program-b/. Deflators can be found under “Total Defense” of Table 10.1 of the OMB Historical Tables, adjusted for 2025 as the base year, at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/historical-tables/>.

**Notes:**

- a. National Intelligence Program (NIP) numbers include base budget and supplemental spending dollars known as Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) dollars up to FY2022 when the President’s budget request proposed discontinuing OCO as a separate funding category.
- b. Military Intelligence Program (MIP) numbers include base budget and OCO dollars up to FY2022.
- c. National defense spending (using topline numbers associated with Function 050 National Defense) is included for comparative purposes. See Office of Management and Budget, Historical Tables, Table 5.1, Budget Authority by Function and Sub function: 1976-2029.
- d. In 2013, in compliance with the Budget Control Act of 2011 (P.L. 112-25), the original \$52.7 billion NIP total was reduced to \$49.0 billion (DNI press release No. 24-13, October 30, 2013), and the original \$19.2 billion MIP total was reduced to \$18.6 billion (DOD press release No. 765-13, October 31, 2013).
- e. NIP and MIP data for FYs 2024 and 2025 are budget requests. National Defense data for FYs 2024 and 2025 are estimates.

**Figure 2. Intelligence Spending as a Percentage of the National Defense Budget: FY2007-FY2025**



**Source:** CRS, using numbers available at <http://www.dni.gov>, at <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/what-we-do/ic-budget>; OMB Historical Table 5.1, at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/historical-tables/>. For the MIP topline budget figure for FY2025, see U.S. Department of Defense Press Release, “Department of Defense Releases 2025 Military Intelligence Program Budget Request,” March 12, 2024 at <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3704641/departement-of-defense-releases-fiscal-year-2025-military-intelligence-program-b/>.

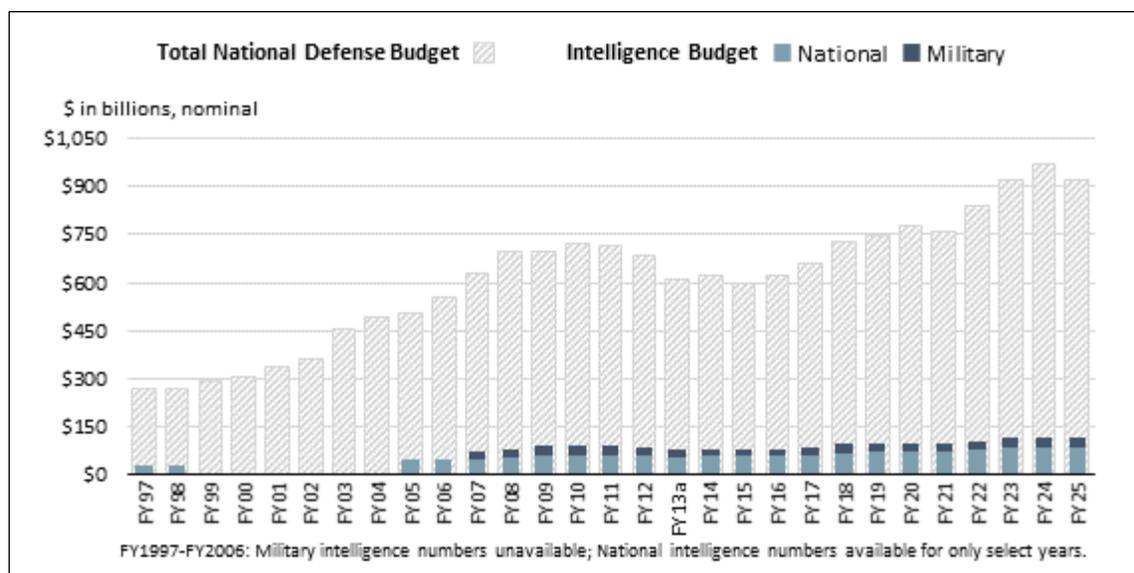
**Note:** FYs 2024 and 2025 are estimates based on budget requests. See **Table I** for the topline numbers used to produce this graph.

**Figure 3** adds four additional NIP *topline* values—numbers available for FYs 1997, 1998, 2005, and 2006. The topline number for the NIP was classified until 2007, with two exceptions. In October 1997, then-DCI George Tenet announced that the intelligence budget for FY1997 was \$26.6 billion.<sup>40</sup> In March 1998, then-DCI Tenet announced that the budget for FY1998 was \$26.7

<sup>40</sup> CIA, “DCI Statement on FY97 Intelligence Budget,” *press release*, October 15, 1997, at <https://sgp.fas.org/foia/tenet499.html>.

billion.<sup>41</sup> In addition, intelligence community officials retroactively declassified NIP topline numbers for FY2005 (\$39.8 billion)<sup>42</sup> and FY2006 (\$40.9 billion).<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, corresponding MIP topline dollars for 1997, 1998, 2005, and 2006 are not publicly available. **Figure 3** provides a snapshot of NIP spending over the past two decades. In spite of absent spending data between 1999 and 2004, the values that are present suggest relative constancy in NIP topline dollar appropriations.

**Figure 3. Intelligence Spending Based on Publicly Available Numbers: FY1997-FY2025**



**Source:** CRS, using numbers available at <http://www.dni.gov>, at <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/what-we-do/ic-budget>; OMB Historical Table 5.1, at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/historical-tables/>. For the MIP topline budget figure for FY2023, see U.S. Department of Defense Press Release, “Department of Defense Releases 2023 Military Intelligence Program Budget Request,” March 28, 2022. For FY1997: CIA, “DCI Statement on FY97 Intelligence Budget,” *press release*, Oct 15, 1997. FY1998: CIA, “Disclosure of the Aggregate Intelligence Budget for FY98,” *press release* Mar 20, 1998. FY2005: DNI, Memorandum for the Record, March 2015, FOIA response, May 20, 2015. FY2006: ODNI, Letter to Steven Aftergood, FOIA response, Oct 28, 2010, Mar 24, 2009.

**Note:** FYs 2024 and 2025 are estimates based on budget requests. **Table I** provides the other topline numbers used to produce this graph.

<sup>41</sup> CIA, “Disclosure of the Aggregate Intelligence Budget for FY98,” *press release* March 20, 1998, at <https://sgp.fas.org/foia/intel98.html#:~:text=In%20response%20to%20a%20Freedom,Year%201998%20is%20%2426.7%20billion.>

<sup>42</sup> James Clapper, Director of National Intelligence, *Memorandum for the Record*, March 2015, attached to a cover letter to Mr. Steven Aftergood, May 20, 2015: “The aggregate amount appropriated to the National Foreign Intelligence Program (NFIP) for FY 2005 is \$39.8 billion, which includes funding to support Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO),” at <http://fas.org/irp/budget/fy2005.pdf>.

<sup>43</sup> John Hackett, Director, Information Management Office, Office of the DNI, *Letter to Steven Aftergood*, October 28, 2010, in response to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request from Steven Aftergood, March 24, 2009: “The aggregate amount appropriated to the NIP for fiscal year 2006 was \$40.9 billion,” at <http://fas.org/irp/news/2010/10/fy06-intelbud.pdf>.

## Issues for Congress

In examining the intelligence community funding from a strategic perspective, Congress may want to consider the following:

- The risk, if any, to United States national security of declassifying and releasing to the public the topline annual budget figures for each of the elements of the intelligence community.
- The acceptable risk relative to budget limitations. Like all departmental and agency budgets of the federal government, the intelligence community must accept some risk in not being able to fund all of its priorities.
- The ways the intelligence community can become more efficient and cost-effective through enhancements in the collection, analysis and sharing of intelligence across its 18 elements. The Office of the Director of National Intelligence is, in part, intended to realize greater efficiencies across the intelligence community through greater collaboration and coordination.
- Whether the intelligence community investment in operational security programs and technology is sufficient alongside the threat of compromise by adversarial foreign intelligence services.
- Whether and how the intelligence community can leverage international partners effectively for coverage of emerging issues and areas where the intelligence community itself has limited investment. International partners can provide valuable insight in areas where they have particular exposure and experience that the U.S. IC may lack.
- Whether the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) is optimally organized to provide oversight of the budgets of the 18 intelligence community elements.

## Appendix A. Intelligence Community Elements

In statute, the intelligence community comprises 18 elements, across six separate departments of the federal government, and two independent agencies. NIP spending is distributed across all 18, while MIP spending is confined to the DOD.<sup>44</sup>

**Table A-1. Elements of the U.S. Intelligence Community (2022)**

<p><b>Department of Defense (DOD) Components:</b></p> <hr/> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)</li> <li>2. National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA)</li> <li>3. National Reconnaissance Office (NRO)</li> <li>4. National Security Agency (NSA)</li> </ol> <p><i>Intelligence elements of the military services:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. U.S. Air Force Intelligence (USAF A2/6)</li> <li>6. U.S. Army Intelligence (USA G2)</li> <li>7. U.S. Marine Corps Intelligence (USMC/MCISR-E)</li> <li>8. U.S. Navy Intelligence (OPNAV N2/N6)</li> <li>9. U.S. Space Force Intelligence (S-2)</li> </ol> <p><b>Non-DOD Components:</b></p> <hr/> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI)</li> <li>2. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)</li> </ol> <p><i>Department of Energy (DOE) intelligence component:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Office of Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence (OICI)</li> </ol> <p><i>Department of Homeland Security (DHS) intelligence components:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&amp;A)</li> <li>5. U.S. Coast Guard Intelligence (USCG/CG-2)</li> </ol> <p><i>Department of Justice (DOJ) intelligence components:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Drug Enforcement Administration's Office of National Security Intelligence (DEA/ONSI)</li> <li>7. Federal Bureau of Investigation's Intelligence Branch (FBI/IB)</li> </ol> <p><i>Department of State (DOS) intelligence component::</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR)</li> </ol> <p><i>Department of Treasury (Treasury) intelligence component:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Office of Intelligence and Analysis (OIA)</li> </ol>
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**Source:** 50 U.S.C. §3003(4), ODNI.

<sup>44</sup> See 50 U.S.C. §3003 for statutory definitions of the terms, *intelligence*, *foreign intelligence*, *counterintelligence*, *intelligence community*, *national intelligence*, *intelligence related to national security*, and *national intelligence program*.

## **Author Information**

Michael E. DeVine  
Analyst in Intelligence and National Security

Sofia Plagakis  
Research Librarian

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