

The National Security Act of 1947

The National Security Act is the fundamental and founding legislation for the modern U.S. Intelligence Community. This landmark legislation reorganized and modernized the US armed forces, foreign policy, and the Intelligence Community apparatus; and it created many of the institutions that US presidents would find useful when formulating and implementing foreign policy.

The act also made a crucial concession to members concerned about threats to civil liberties. It drew a bright line between foreign and domestic intelligence and assigning these realms, in effect, to the CIA and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, respectively. The CIA, furthermore, would have no "police, subpoena, or law enforcement powers," according to the act.

General Provisions –

As amended, the National Security Act created or modified much of the U.S. intelligence, defense, and national security communities. Among its effects, the Act and its subsequent amendments:

- Reorganized the Intelligence Community,
- Reorganized the Department of Defense (the act merged the War and Navy departments into the National Military Establishment (NME); at the same time the NME was renamed the Department of Defense),
- Established the National Security Council,
- Established the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA),
- Established the position of Director of National Intelligence (DNI) to serve as the President's chief intelligence advisor and the head of the Intelligence Community, and to ensure closer coordination and integration of the sixteen agencies that make up the Intelligence Community,
- Established the National Counterterrorism Center to serve as a multiagency center analyzing and integrating all intelligence pertaining to terrorism, including threats to U.S. interests at home and abroad,
- Mandated the development of procedures for the disclosure of foreign intelligence information acquired in criminal investigations and for notice of criminal investigations of foreign intelligence sources,
- Mandated the development of procedures for access to classified information, and
- Provided for presidential and congressional oversight of intelligence activities.

Amendments –

The Act has been extensively amended and added to over the past 60 years. Amendments and additions relevant to the Information Sharing Environment (ISE) include those provided by the:

- The CIA Information Act of 1984
- The USA PATRIOT Act of 2001
- The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) of 2004
- The National Security Intelligence Reform Act of 2004

Source:

- The U.S. Intelligence Community: An Annotated Bibliography (Mark Lowenthal, Graland Publishing Inc., New York & London, 1994)
- <https://www.cia.gov/news-information/featured-story-archive/2008-featured-story-archive/national-security-act-of-1947.html>
- <http://it.ojp.gov/default.aspx?area=privacy&page=1280#contentTop>