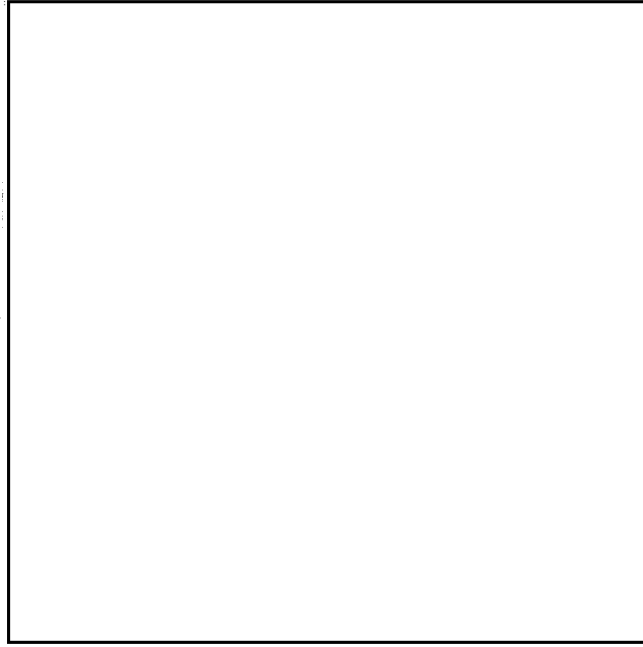


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SIWA Study Guide

INTELLIGENCE ALERTING FUNCTIONS  
in the  
U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY SYSTEM

School of Intelligence and World Affairs  
OFFICE OF TRAINING

Central Intelligence Agency

February 1971

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Foreword

The purpose of this brief study guide is to describe the Intelligence Community's task of alerting senior U.S. officials to events and situations in foreign countries which vitally affect U.S. national security.

The guide consists of explanatory text, several functional charts, and a glossary of terms.

The text (1) discusses some of the basic concepts and assumptions associated with the alerting functions of the U.S. intelligence system including: the meaning and scope of intelligence watch functions, the relationship of critical intelligence to current intelligence, and the role of indications intelligence; (2) outlines the structure and functional relationships involved in U.S. intelligence alerting activities.

The three charts depict the special relationships among the organizations and components involved in the alerting systems.

The glossary explains the most frequently used designations and abbreviations associated with alerting functions.

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A. The General Nature of the Alerting Process

The alerting process carried out by the U.S. Intelligence Community makes a major input to the determination of U.S. policies and actions intended to enhance the security of the U.S. The need for such an alerting mechanism was a prime reason for the establishment of the CIA. Certain basic assumptions, functional concepts, organizations, and methodologies are unique to this alerting process.

For the U.S. national security structure to be truly effective-- within the limits of available resources such as manpower, facilities, and funds--key foreign policy officials must be able to make their judgments and decisions on the basis of accurate and timely intelligence reporting on foreign affairs. The U.S. national security system was detailed in the National Security Act of 1947 when members of the U.S. foreign intelligence community were formally charged with this awesome and continuing responsibility. During WW II, the U.S. Army, Navy, and other organizations had conducted some intelligence alert functions. The systems that have been developed over the more than two decades since WW II to accomplish these alerting functions, now involve large numbers of people in various departments and agencies and utilize sophisticated methodologies. One of the principal reasons CIA was established by Congress in 1947 was to provide such a capability at the national level of government. In virtually every

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international crisis since WW II--the recurring revolts in Eastern Europe, the several Berlin crises, the Cuban missile crisis, the six-day war of 1967 in the Middle East, the Viet-Nam conflict--the alerting machinery has proven more than adequate for the task; but in a few cases, as during the Suez crisis of 1956, new arrangements had to be worked out. A detailed description of what is involved in intelligence alerting, and who is responsible at various levels, is given in the next section of this study guide and in the glossary.

To provide effective alerting, the U.S. intelligence system must

- (1) collect intelligence information around the clock and world wide,
- (2) use rapid and sophisticated communications to bring the data back to Washington or other command centers in minutes, (3) apply rapid and expert selection and dissemination techniques to the information received,
- (4) analyze, evaluate and interpret the developments around the clock, and
- (5) transmit the findings in the form of finished intelligence to appropriate senior officers in sufficient time and in a form for them to fulfill their responsibilities in the crisis.

Thus, an important feature of the alerting function is that it provides for the continuity of essential operations of the U.S. intelligence organization after normal working hours--both in Washington and overseas. These after-hours arrangements are commonly referred to as the "watch" function in a given organization (a recent study identified approximately 100 centers in the Washington area having round-the-clock operations). CIA has always had a Watch Office, which is now called the CIA Operations Center,

to care for after-hours responsibilities, particularly for current intelligence reporting but also for other matters requiring continuity of operations in support of senior levels. In the military commands and in the Department of Defense in Washington, the watch functions are usually centered in facilities with titles such as situation rooms, operations centers, and command centers. In the Department of State, the Operations Center in the Executive Secretariat provides this service. The National Military Command Center (NMCC) in the Pentagon performs this function for the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and senior military commands. The Watch alert group in the National Indications Center (NIC) has unique functions in providing full time support for activities of the Watch Committee of USIB which are described later. The National Security Agency (NSA) has certain alerting responsibilities in the SIGINT field. The purpose of a watch office (no matter what its title) is to provide a single facility where an organization can depend upon having its essential functions monitored after its normal work force has departed for the day or weekend. An underlying assumption of the watch concept is that after-hours work requires the same quality dedication of professional resources as during normal hours except they are fewer in number. The big differences are in number (thousands vs. a few) and in expertise (specialists vs. generalists). Often, after hours, a single watch officer is responsible for distinguishing the important from the irrelevant and must act accordingly. In the military forces, the duty-officers, deck officers, charge-of-quarters perform such functions. In the intelligence alerting structure, the watch functions vary from such routine tasks as relaying telephone messages or monitoring

communications equipment, to such responsibilities as waking key officials at night in preparation for command action.

A more specialized, and more restricted, use of the term "watch" in connection with intelligence alert functions has evolved since the early 1950's. Here "watch" refers to the selection, analysis, and reporting activities and organizations which culminate in what is called indications intelligence for national security (discussed below and in the glossary). In this context, "watch" focuses on the task of providing strategic warning of indications of hostilities through a careful monitoring of current intelligence information. This activity continues regardless of whether it is during or after normal working hours.

A basic principle of the over-all alerting function for U.S. national security purposes is that it is a shared responsibility of the entire U.S. Intelligence Community. No single agency or department has sole responsibility for alerting the top echelons of this government; each agency plays a distinct and complementary role. CIA for instance, is considered to have the national intelligence alert responsibility; the National Military Command Center and DIA's Intelligence Support and Indications Center are expected to alert the DoD (see Chart A). Overseas each military command has an assigned alerting role. Indeed, much of the "warning" and "alerting" system is possible only because of the cooperative effort and resources assigned to these tasks by the Department of Defense and other segments of the Executive Branch of government.



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Once the Intelligence Community has alerted the appropriate U.S. officials of a crisis, the management of US resources in response to the crisis is the responsibility of the White House--the President, his Assistant for National Security Affairs, the NSC, and others. The discussion of crisis management is beyond the scope of this study guide.

#### B. The Alerting Function

The alerting functions to meet national security objectives arise principally from the mission assigned to the Intelligence Community to produce current intelligence for U.S. policy makers and policy implementers. The prime purpose of current intelligence reporting is to bring to the attention of senior policy makers an evaluation of the critical and significant events taking place throughout the world that might have a direct or indirect impact on U.S. security interests. These evaluations of current events are performed by area and subject specialists using intelligence information received in Washington, electrically for the most part, from all sources. For example, a political analyst evaluates reports of a coup in the country for which he is responsible.

Intelligence analysts provide reporting on critical events, including both the facts and their evaluation, often within minutes of the receipt of intelligence information on the event. The goal is to achieve as near "real time" reporting as the collection, communications, and dissemination systems allow. At times, the process may be slowed, however, by the vast

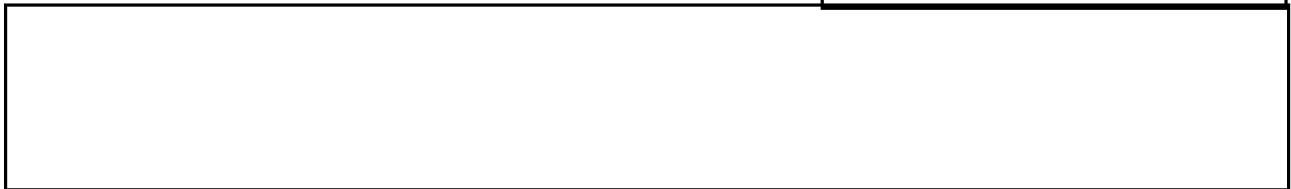
volume of intelligence information received in Washington--some as a result of continually improving collection and communications systems. Rapid analysis may also be delayed by fragmentary information and the need to coordinate. The separation of critical intelligence and other significant intelligence information from the remaining mass of incoming data is the first task of the intelligence watch or alerting function. Its purpose is to shorten the period between the occurrence of an event and the alerting of key intelligence and policy officials.


The CIA Operations Center, managed for the DDI by the Office of Current Intelligence, fulfills this alerting responsibility for CIA on an all-source basis, around the clock (see Chart B). Its personnel scan all intelligence information received electrically in the Agency, and select that which is critical and significant. Operations Center personnel are experienced generalists who are competent to recognize the significance of any departure from what is considered normal or anticipated (the critical situation usually appears in sharp contrast to the norm). Because they do not have the depth of experience in all fields to provide full analysis, intelligence officers in the CIA Operations Center call upon appropriate specialists--such as those in the Office of Current Intelligence, the Foreign Missile and Space Analysis Center, or the Clandestine Service--for immediate evaluation of and amplification of facts on critical developments. After the selected intelligence information is subjected to rapid analysis and interpretation (including verification or evaluation, and any necessary background data) key officials may be alerted orally or in writing. The decision to alert key officials depends upon the importance of the

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development and the time factors involved in acting upon the information. The Operations Center thus is the focal point for all of CIA's intelligence alerting functions.

There are several other Agency elements which participate in alerting functions in various ways both in response to their own operational or intelligence needs, and to fulfill the overall requirement to keep the DCI and other key Agency officials informed. Chart B shows the location of some of these other activities that are most directly involved with overall intelligence alerting functions. Within the Directorate of Intelligence, in addition to the primary role of the Operations Center, there are alerting responsibilities assigned to intelligence production elements--OCI, OSR, and OER, for example--and intelligence information alerting functions based on imagery analysis are discharged by NPIC and IAS.



one point during the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962,  teletype in the White House was the first communications channel through which the late Pres. Kennedy received the text of the note from Premier Khrushchev stating that he would remove Soviet offensive missiles from Cuba. The official text, which went through normal diplomatic communication channels, was received much later. It is not an exaggeration to state that on that fateful day in October 1962, war between the US and the USSR--and possibly WW III--hung in the balance.

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C. The Meaning of Critical Intelligence

Current intelligence information sometimes indicates a situation which may affect the security interests of the U.S. to such an extent that it may require the immediate attention of the President. Such reports, constituting "critical" intelligence information are given special and priority handling within the U.S. intelligence system. For instance, a report of a major civil or military disturbance such as the overthrow of a government may originate from any part of the world and from any source--an attache, foreign service officer, other U.S. civilian or military officer-- and is introduced directly into a special high-speed communications system known as the CRITICOM Network operated by the National Security Agency. This system of priority communications was established in 1958 and is designed to bring such information into Washington electrically within ten minutes. The message indicator CRITIC is used to identify all such reports including practice messages to test the system.

Critical Intelligence thus can be thought of as a special product of the current intelligence alerting function. Among the examples of critical intelligence information are the following: declarations of war or initiation of hostilities; statements however fragmentary or unsupported, that Communist forces anywhere will initiate hostilities against the U.S.;

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sudden or unannounced changes in top government leadership; and other major international developments such as the molesting of key U.S. officials in a foreign country. CRITIC messages were transmitted in great numbers

during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and critical intelligence was transmitted between Moscow and Washington in the period just following the ouster of Premier Khrushchev in 1964.

Critical intelligence is produced as part of the general intelligence alerting process under the guidance of National Security Council Intelligence Directive (NSCID) #7, Director of Central Intelligence Directive (DCID) 7/1 and similar directives and memoranda at operating levels. Analysts at all levels in each USIB Agency play specialized roles in evaluating and interpreting the intelligence information reports coming into Washington via the CRITCOM system. Although very few actually are brought to the personal attention of the President, the machinery exists to assure that National Security decision-making has the benefit of this timely, world wide reporting. The methods and facilities involved are extensive and costly, but there is no substitute, particularly when the CRITIC messages include indications of imminent hostilities.

#### D. Role of Indications Intelligence

It was pointed out earlier in this text, that a more restricted and specialized type of intelligence alerting is that associated with "strategic warning." This kind of alerting focuses on the production of "indications" intelligence derived from a study of current intelligence information for any indication that a potential enemy is developing the capability or has the intention of launching a military attack on the U.S., our forces overseas, or upon our Allies. Indications intelligence is, therefore, synonymous with strategic warning. It is important to distinguish between critical

intelligence, discussed earlier, and indications intelligence which is a term used only when referring to hostilities or the preparatory steps leading to military actions. For example, Gen. de Gaulle's death was critical intelligence, whereas reports of the preparations leading up to and including the actual Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 represented indications intelligence. Both types, however, were sent via CRITICOM channels.

The system for providing strategic warning and producing indications intelligence associated with it, developed immediately after WW II as a result of official reflection on the Pearl Harbor attack of 1941. The aim of indications intelligence over the years has been to prevent surprise attack on the U.S. or its Allies principally, but not exclusively, by the armed forces of Communist nations.

The Intelligence Community in general, and the Director of Central Intelligence in particular, is responsible for indications intelligence for U.S. national security. The senior body which manages the operation of the entire system for strategic intelligence warning is the Watch Committee--one of the 14 committees of the USIB. The chairman of the Watch Committee is the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence. The full-time working group for the Watch Committee is in the National Indications Center (NIC)--a 24-hour facility located in the Pentagon under the direction of a CIA officer. The Watch Committee meets weekly and can be called into special session at any time to assess information which requires immediate attention.

In essence, indications intelligence is one facet of current intelligence production. Indications intelligence seeks to bridge the gap between estimative intelligence and current intelligence. Between a judgment that we can expect trouble and current "tactical" intelligence reporting that an attack has begun, there is a time gap during which the other side is making preparations for that attack. Indications intelligence tries to bridge that gap by a careful monitoring and assessment of a whole spectrum of indications gleaned from current intelligence information. Hopefully this process is successful long before the initial critical intelligence alert is received in Washington.

The system for producing indications intelligence on a continuing, round-the-clock cycle under the guidance of the Watch Committee has been improved over the past two decades. From a vast network of indications centers operated throughout the world by the Dept. of Defense, indications analysis culminates in a all-source intelligence product The Watch Report which is normally sent to the USIB weekly for its approval. In one sense this report could be considered a temperature reading of the world's confrontation posture. The central responsibilities and functional relationships of the NIC to the rest of the "watch" system are shown on Chart C.

#### E. Functional Relationships

In the preceding discussion it has been established that intelligence alerting functions of the U.S. government are extensive and in some respects rather complicated. All elements of the U.S. intelligence community relate in one way or another to the over-all system according to their special

responsibilities and competencies under national law. The details of these organizational and functional relationships involved in the alerting processes are shown in the three attached charts:

Chart A - shows the policy and command level structure of alerting functions for U.S. national security. All of the mechanisms here point to the National Security Council and the President; all major elements of the Intelligence Community are shown.

Chart B - this chart shows the alerting functions within CIA and encompass all four directorates. The focus is on the DDCI and DCI in their managerial and advisory roles both in CIA and in USIB.

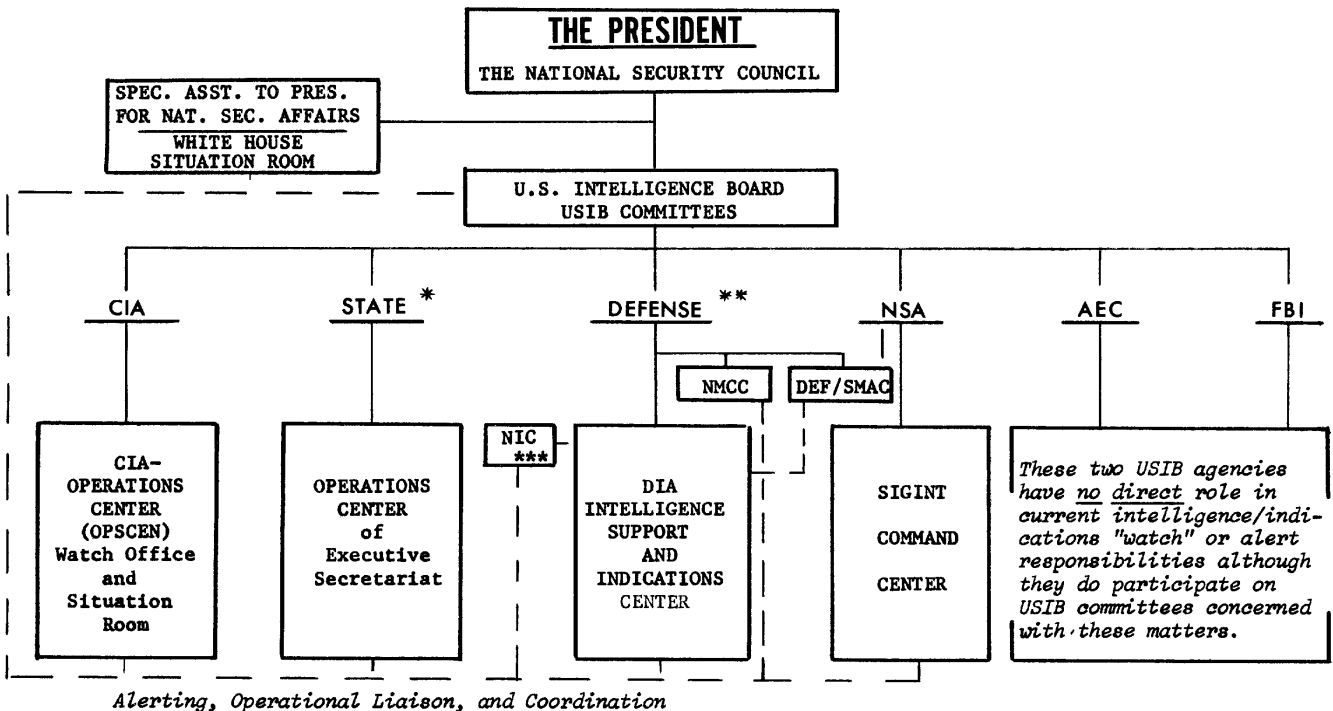
Chart C - depicts the various echelons involved in the production of indications intelligence and the strategies involved, and focuses on the effort in support of the Watch Committee and USIB.



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## STRUCTURE OF ALERTING FUNCTIONS FOR U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY

(POLICY & COMMAND LEVELS)

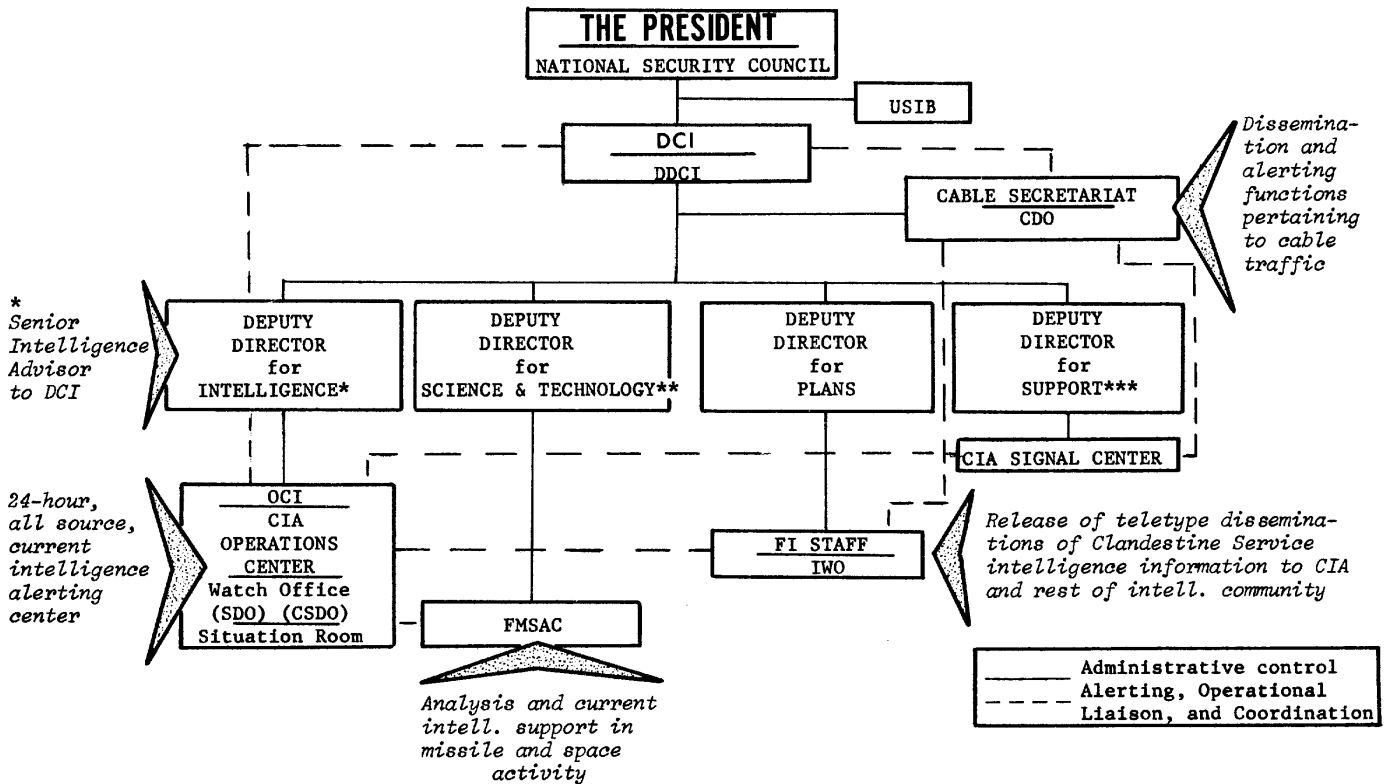


- \* The Office of Current Intelligence/Indications, within INR, provides support to the Operations Center of the Department of State.
- \*\* The Department of Defense also maintains other intelligence alerting and operations centers within major military commands both within the U.S. and overseas.
- \*\*\* The National Indications Center (NIC) is located in and supported by the Department of Defense but is responsible to the USIB Watch Committee for its tasking and intelligence production.

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### STRUCTURE FOR ALERTING FUNCTIONS WITHIN CIA



\*\* DDS&T provides, in addition to FMSAC input, general and indirect support to intelligence production activities such as the JAEIC and GMAIC inputs to current intelligence.

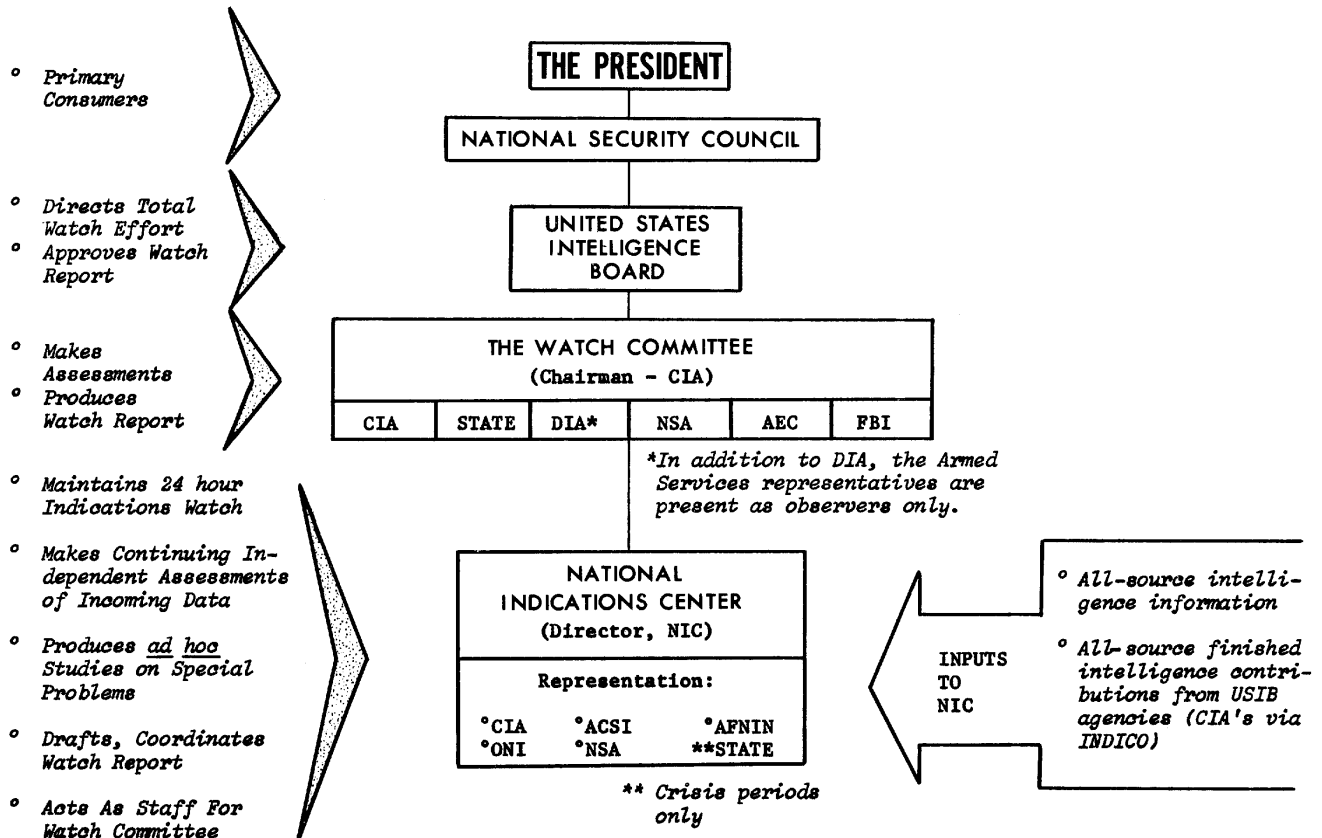
\*\*\* DDS has no direct responsibility for intelligence alerting and watch activities but does provide comprehensive support for all CIA contingencies in such matters as rapid communications.

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CHART B

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## STRUCTURE FOR INDICATIONS INTELLIGENCE



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

General Terms

Critical intelligence is information indicating a situation or pertaining to a situation in a foreign country which affects the security or interests of the U.S. to such an extent that it may require the immediate attention of the President (e.g., initiation of civil war, a coup, or other major civil or military disturbance). Critical intelligence information may originate from any collection element in the U.S. intelligence system, from anywhere in the world. Under provisions of National Security Council Intelligence Directive #7 and the related Director of Central Intelligence Directives, such reports must be transmitted by priority high-speed communications to Washington, marked CRITIC.

CRITIC. A message indicator used on all reports of critical intelligence information.

CRITICOM. The communications system specially designed to handle critical intelligence information over a high speed "consumer broadcast" network operated by the National Security Agency. This net, first established in 1958, is manned twenty-four hours a day, and all addressees--the White House, Department of Defense and military commands, and such agencies as CIA--normally receive CRITIC messages [redacted] from the time they are introduced into the CRITICOM system. The instant the message hits the NSA terminal, it is re-transmitted automatically to designated addressees both in and outside of the U.S.

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Indications Control Officer (INDICO). The person responsible for indications intelligence matters in CIA. The INDICO is an OCI officer who works closely with the Chairman of the Watch Committee and with the National Indications Center.

Indications intelligence deals with reporting and analysis of hostile intent or hostile activity directed against the U.S., our forces overseas, or our allies. The production of indications intelligence--a special category of current intelligence--is intended to provide the USIB with the earliest possible intelligence warning of, and a continuing judgment on, Soviet, Chicom, and other nations' intentions to engage in aggressive action by regular or irregular armed forces.

Indicator. An activity or event which satisfies the established definition for indications intelligence above. The designation "indicator" is used in various USIB collection guides and procedural papers to identify specific actions indicating imminent hostilities, and other critical situations not necessarily involving only Communist countries.

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National Indications Center (NIC) is the full time staff which supports the USIB Watch Committee in the analysis and reporting of indications intelligence. It is located in the Pentagon and is under the direction of a CIA officer. It is staffed by personnel from CIA, NSA, Army, Navy, and the Air Force.

Warning. Term often used synonymously for indications intelligence. In military circles, warning is modified by the use of the term strategic (long time-span) or tactical (short time-span). "Early Warning" is a term often associated with radar-derived intelligence (such as that provided by missile and aircraft detection systems).

White House Situation Room is an alerting and command center within the White House under the control of the Special Asst. to the President for National Security Affairs. It is manned around the clock, largely by officers assigned from CIA. (See Chart A)

Terms Associated with CIA

Cable Secretariat Duty Officer (CDO) represents the Cable Secretary after hours, and expedites delivery of all cables containing intelligence information to the OPSCEN, the CSDO and the Intelligence Watch Officer. When cables appear to warrant prompt action, the CDO delivers them to the CSDO or notifies an officer in the action unit, as appropriate.

CIA Operations Center (OPS/CEN) is an all-source, current intelligence and operations alert center serving the DCI through the DDI, 24 hours a day. Because of its close association with current intelligence reporting, the center receives day-to-day guidance from the Director of Current Intelligence. (See Chart B)

Clandestine Service Duty Officer (CSDO) is the Chief Duty Officer for the Clandestine Service after normal working hours. The CSDO--located in the CIA Operations Center--is responsible for alerting the Clandestine Service on cable traffic requiring immediate action. He may consult with the Intelligence Watch Officer (IWO), of the Clandestine Service, located in the CIA Cable Secretariat.

FMSAC. The Foreign Missile and Space Analysis Center in the Directorate of Science and Technology has as its principal functions analysis and reporting on foreign missile and space events, including the production of current and estimative intelligence on offensive missile and space developments. FMSAC is also responsible for collection support and the evaluation of collection systems.

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25X1 Intelligence Watch Officer (IWO) is the Foreign Intelligence (FI) Staff officer, located in the Cable Secretariat, who is responsible for releasing all Clandestine Service-acquired intelligence information [redacted] to CIA components, and to other elements of the intelligence community both during and outside of normal duty hours.

Senior Duty Officer (SDO) serves as the senior officer in charge of all after-hours responsibilities of the CIA Operations Center. During normal duty hours, the SDO is responsible for the alerting function of the Center while the other responsibilities of the Center are carried out by the Chief and other members of his staff. This officer was formerly designated SIDO (Senior Intelligence Duty Officer).

Note: There are several other officers--under various titles--who serve in after-hours duty assignments for CIA components, e.g., the Night Security Officer (Office of Security), the Signal Center Officer (Office of Communications), and the duty officers in FMSAC.

Terms Associated with the Department of Defense (DoD)

DEF/SMAC. DoD operations center, at Ft. Meade, Md., jointly managed by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the National Security Agency (NSA).  
[redacted]

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Intelligence Support and Indications Center. A component of DIA providing a 24-hour intelligence alert facility for the DoD. It is linked directly with the CIA Operations Center, and DoD operations centers world-wide.

NSA SIGINT Command Center. The operations center at NSA serving its operating and staff elements on a 24-hour basis. It is linked directly with CIA and other USIB operations facilities.

National Military Command Center (NMCC). A major DoD control facility located in the Pentagon which serves as the "voice" of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for military operational activity. It is manned by all services. It has a CIA representative assigned for liaison on a 24-hour basis and has communication links with the CIA Operations Center.

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Terms Associated with the Department of State

Office of Current Intelligence/Indications (INR/RCI). This element in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) produces current and indications intelligence and provides support to the State Department Operations Center.

State Department Operations Center. A 24-hour alert facility under the Department's Executive Secretariat. It is closely linked by secure communications with the CIA Operations Center.

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