



NCTC At a Glance

A Brief History

At the State of the Union address Jan. 28, 2003, then President George W. Bush declared, “Tonight I am instructing the leaders of the FBI, Central Intelligence, Homeland Security, and the Department of Defense to develop a Terrorist Threat Integration Center to merge and analyze all threat information in a single location.” On May 1, 2003, the Terrorist Threat Integration Center (TTIC) opened its doors. TTIC filled its ranks with approximately three dozen detailees from across the US government and was mandated to integrate counterterrorism (CT) capabilities and missions across the government.



Front of NCTC Building

Prior to the establishment of TTIC, individual federal departments and agencies (largely CIA and FBI) provided the President their own assessments of the terrorist threat. In effect, the White House was being forced to synthesize Community reporting and draw its own conclusions. With the stand-up of TTIC, information sharing, watchlisting, and situational awareness were beginning to be addressed as government-wide activities that continue to be critical today.

In August 2004, and at the recommendation of the 9/11 Commission, TTIC was incorporated into the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) by Executive Order (EO) 13354, which became the foundation for codifying NCTC’s authorities in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) of 2004. Through EO 13354 and subsequently IRTPA, NCTC was given the responsibilities for not only integrating analysis and coordinating information sharing and situational awareness, but also for strategic operational planning in direct support to the President.

In 2005, NCTC’s mission was expanded further as the WMD Commission called for mission management, and NCTC was established as what is now known as the National Intelligence Manager for Counterterrorism (NIM-CT). The attempted bombing of a US airliner on Christmas Day 2009 led to the most recent addition to NCTC’s roles and responsibilities, prioritizing and thoroughly pursuing the threads of terrorism threats.

Today, NCTC is a center for the production of analysis, the maintenance of the authoritative database of known and suspected terrorists, information sharing, and strategic operational planning. NCTC is aligned under the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) and the NCTC Director (D/NCTC) is appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. NCTC is staffed by more than 1,000 personnel from more than 20 different departments and agencies—a tribute to the recognition by the intelligence, homeland security, and law enforcement communities of NCTC’s vital role in protecting the Homeland and US interests around the world from the threat of terrorism.

Given NCTC’s unique authority to access both domestic and foreign terrorism information, NCTC analysts are singularly positioned within the Intelligence Community (IC) to make independent assessments and judgments, particularly on sensitive issues, unencumbered by the pressures and considerations that accompany the intelligence collection process. For this reason, NCTC analysts are perceived by other US government partners as “honest brokers,” and these analysts are expected and trained to reinforce the strong working relationships and collaboration that NCTC promotes with all its IC CT partners.



The 24/7 NCTC Operations Center





Key Mission Areas

NCTC performs five key missions in support of our Nation's CT efforts:

Threat Analysis

Under IRTPA, NCTC serves as the primary organization in the US government for analyzing and integrating all intelligence possessed or acquired by the government pertaining to terrorism and CT except intelligence pertaining exclusively to domestic terrorism. NCTC has a responsibility to inform its partners on all international terrorism issues, and unique authorities allow personnel to analyze intelligence collected both inside and outside the US.

Information Sharing

In addition to fulfilling its own analytic and planning responsibilities, NCTC ensures other agencies with CT missions have access to and receive intelligence needed to accomplish assigned activities. NCTC's analysis is coordinated throughout the IC, supporting senior policymakers and other members of the policy, intelligence, law enforcement, defense, homeland security, and foreign affairs communities. NCTC produces IC-coordinated assessments on critical issues, including terrorism safe havens, state sponsors of terrorism, CT cooperation worldwide, and regional terrorism. NCTC also provides the CT community with 24/7 situational awareness, terrorism threat reporting, and incident information tracking.

National Intelligence Management

NCTC's role as NIM-CT requires integrating the CT mission across intelligence functions, disciplines, and activities to achieve unity of effort and effect. NCTC leads US IC efforts to optimize CT community performance and capabilities, and advocates on behalf of the CT community to ensure the US IC is postured to support national strategy and policy objectives. NCTC ensures that collection activities for CT are responsive to and inform analytic judgments and that analytic activities produce intelligence judgments, identify intelligence gaps, and provide the basis for guidance to collectors. This includes informing and aligning the US IC's activities against the highest priority terrorism threats. D/NCTC reports to the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) as the NIM-CT and serves as the DNI's principal adviser on intelligence operations relating to CT.

Strategic Operational Planning

NCTC also has the statutory responsibility to conduct strategic operational planning for CT activities across the US government, integrating all instruments of national power—diplomatic, financial, military, intelligence, homeland security, and law enforcement within and among agencies to ensure unity of effort. Planning efforts include broad strategic plans as well as specific action plans to maximize coordination on key issues. NCTC also leads interagency task forces designed to analyze, monitor, and disrupt potential terrorist attacks. D/NCTC reports directly to the President for CT strategic operational planning activities.

Identity Management

NCTC has the statutory responsibility to serve as the central and shared knowledge bank on known and suspected terrorists and international terror groups, as well as their goals, strategies, capabilities, and networks of contacts and support. To fulfill this role, NCTC maintains the Terrorist Identities Datamart Environment (TIDE), the US government's central classified repository for all known or suspected international terrorists and their networks of contacts and support. TIDE includes biographic information, such as names and dates of birth; biometric information, such as photos; and derogatory information explaining a subject's link to terrorism. NCTC receives international terrorism information from law enforcement and intelligence partners and consolidates it into TIDE, which is an analytic tool as well as a database that supports screening activities across the US government.



Mission Statement

Lead and integrate national counterterrorism (CT) effort by fusing foreign and domestic CT information, providing terrorism analysis, sharing information with partners across the CT enterprise, and driving whole-of-government action to secure our national CT objectives.

