

US Spy Agencies Spent Nearly \$50 bn in 2009

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US spy agencies have spent \$49.8 billion in fiscal year 2009, which is \$2 billion more than the previous year and the second such multibillion-dollar increase in as many years.

The aggregate figure was released by National Intelligence Director, Dennis Blair, on Friday.

The US has 16 intelligence agencies, which include the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Pentagon, and the Homeland Security Department.

Around 80 percent of the intelligence budget is consumed by the Pentagon intelligence agencies, including the National Security Agency, the National Reconnaissance Office, National Geospatial Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency, AP reported.

According to the Office of the Director National Intelligence (ODNI), the budget has grown for two years running, from \$43.5 billion in 2007 to \$47.5 billion in fiscal 2008.

The ODNI has refused to provide any other specific details on how much each agency spends and on what, saying the release of such information "could harm national security."

Budgets for the United States' 16 intelligence agencies and their 200,000 employees were a closely-guarded secret until 2007.

Under a law passed that year, however, the US secret intelligence community has been required to disclose the annual budget.

The Clinton administration voluntarily disclosed the budget in 1997 and 1998. It was then \$26.6 billion and \$26.7 billion, respectively.

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