

The Defense Investigative Service and its Role in the Key Asset Protection Program

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ABSTRACT

This article provides an overview of the structure and functional responsibilities of the Defense Investigative Service (DIS). Organized in 1972 and based in Washington, D.C., the DIS organization has a Personnel Investigations Center (PIC) in Baltimore, Maryland, a Defense Industrial Security Clearance Office (DISCO) in Columbus, Ohio, two Offices of Industrial Security International for Europe and the Far East, as well as eight Regional Offices. Overall, DIS has approximately 350 field activities.

Most of the DIS investigative effort is expended on personnel security investigations which is controlled at the PIC in Baltimore. The industrial security mission of DIS consists of three major programs: the Defense Industrial Security Program (DISP); the DoD Key Asset Protection Program (KAPP), and the DoD inspection program of prime and subcontractors manufacturing or possessing sensitive conventional arms, ammunition, and explosives (AA&E) in connection with defense contracts. In summary, DIS has evolved dramatically from being a single-mission security investigation agency to the more complex security organization it is today.



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By Larry Senires

The Defense Investigative Service (DIS) was established in April 1972 under DoD Directive 5105.42. In 1970, a Blue Ribbon Committee Report stated that personnel security investigations was a non-combatant function in which consolidation might lead to savings. As a result, the Office of Management and Budget recommended the creation of an "Office of Defense Investigation." This recommendation, which was approved by the President, ultimately led to the establishment of DIS.

Gradually, over the years, DIS has evolved into the complete security organization it is today. Today, the DIS mission encompasses not only personnel security investigations, but includes three major programs involving industrial security as well.

The DIS organization consists of a management headquarters located in Washington, D.C., a Personnel Investigations Center (PI), located in Baltimore, Maryland, eight regional Offices (with numerous subordinate field offices and resident offices assigned to each) located throughout the country, two Offices of Industrial Security International (Europe and the Far East), and a Defense Industrial Security Clearance Office (DISCO), located in Columbus, Ohio. Overall, we currently have approximately 350 field activities.

DIS Headquarters reflects a program manager concept of management, with four Deputy Directors; one each for Investigations, Industrial Security Resources, and Information Systems Management and Planning. This concept likewise extends to the eight regions wherein each Regional Director has a Director of Investigations and a Director of Industrial Security for their respective operational programs.

Most of the DIS investigative effort is expended on personnel security investigations, all of which are controlled at the PIC, which is located in Baltimore. Here, all requests for investigations are received from approximately 2,700 authorized requesters. The requests are distributed to modular teams which control the investigations from start to finish. Cases are broken down geographically and sent to DIS field elements where the subjects of the investigations have resided, been employed, attended school, etc., and it is at this point that our special agents conduct the investigation. When the investigative work is completed, the individual reports are returned to the PIC, where they are assembled, checked for sufficiency, and then forwarded to the requester who must make the determination whether or not the individual should have access to our nation's secrets. During FY 91, DIS completed 232,000 investigations and about 700,000 National Agency checks.

The industrial security mission of DIS consists of three elements or programs. The first of these programs or elements is the Defense Industrial Security Program. The DoD Key Asset Protection Program, and the inspection program of prime and subcontractors manufacturing or possessing sensitive conventional arms, ammunition, and explosives (AA&E) in connection with defense contracts represent the second and third elements of our industrial security mission.

The basic purpose of the Defense Industrial Security Program (DISP) is to ensure the safeguarding of classified defense information which has been entrusted to industry via contractual agreement. Basically, it is a team program approach in which the government establishes certain requirements for the protection of classified data and industry implements those requirements via government assistance. To assure the safeguarding of classified information, the DISP currently provides clearances for approximately 11,500 industrial facilities which employ about 850,000 personnel who work on classified defense contracts. Thousands of compliance inspections are conducted annually (approximately 17,000 during contractors in establishing and maintaining information security systems, adequate for the protection of classified information. In addition to the entire Defense community, this service is provided for twenty other non-DoD federal departments and agencies as well as for designated foreign governments.

The second element of the DIS industrial security mission, the DoD Key Asset Protection Program, is better known as the KAPP program. The objective of this program is to develop and promote physical protection of industrial facilities within the United States which are important to defense production and mobilization. We call such facilities "key assets."

The KAPP has seen increasing emphasis placed on its mission and purpose in the last two years. Notwithstanding the fact that the protection of private property is an inherent responsibility of ownership, and that participation in the survey portion of the KAPP program by asset management is not mandatory, the program continues to draw high level interest from key officials in the Pentagon and private industry.

The primary DIS responsibility in the KAPP is to conduct vulnerability surveys and periodic site visits at key assets. We perform these services, and related tasks, for a variety of "customers."

Our first and primary customer is the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Forces Command (FORSCOM). As the Executive Agent for KAPP, FORSCOM has the overall responsibility for administering the program. To assist FORSCOM, we conduct quality, in-depth surveys of complex key assets to assess the asset's physical security and fire prevention/protection measures, emergency preparedness against sabotage and other hostile or destructive acts, natural disaster planing and reconstitution procedures. The results of our assessments are subsequently forwarded to the defense planners at FORSCOM and at the STARCs (State Area Commands of the National Guard).

We consider the survey portion of the program to be the most important operational element of the KAPP. Without it, defense planning requirements for the protection of the DoD identified key assets would be a "guesstimate" at best. In our role as professional security program evaluators and consultants to industry, our goal is to advise and assist management in improving all aspects of physical security and emergency preparedness. In addition to DIS Industrial Security Specialists, our teams also frequently include representatives of the STARCs, the FORSCOM Engineer and, in some instances, the U.S. Coast Guard. Recognizing that practical security measures for the protection of the property must be affordable to the owner, we make every effort to achieve a realistic balance between costs and a reasonable degree of asset protection.

As the importance of key assets protection in emergency preparedness planning becomes more widely understood and appreciated, DIS continues to work closely with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and with FORSCOM to refine our specific role in the developing National Asset Identification and Protection Planning System (NAIPPS), and we participate in the Asset Protection Subworking Group that is chaired by FEMA.

Our primary mission in support of the third industrial security element, the DoD AA&E program, is to assess contractor compliance with the physical security provisions contained in contracts involving sensitive, conventional AA&E. We accomplish our mission in this program by conducting on-site inspections of contractors identified by the military departments. Such inspections are designed to ensure that all sensitive, conventional AA&E items are adequately safeguarded to preclude theft, misappropriation or loss. In addition, DIS conducts preaward surveys of prospective contractors to assess their ability to satisfy the physical security requirements of applicable contracts involving sensitive AA&E.

In summary, DIS has undergone a dramatic evolution from its initial days as a single-mission agency to the current complex security organization which it is today.