

National Security Threat List

The FBI's foreign counterintelligence mission is set out in a strategy known as the National Security Threat List (NSTL). The NSTL combines two elements:

- First, it includes national security threat issues regardless of the country of origin.
- Second, it includes a classified list of foreign powers that pose a strategic intelligence threat to U.S. security interests.

The issue threat portion of the NSTL was developed in concert with the U.S. Intelligence Community and key elements of the U.S. Government. As a result, the FBI identified eight categories of foreign intelligence activity that were deemed to be significant threats to U.S. National security interests. The FBI will investigate the activities of any country that relate to any of these eight issues.

The Key Issue Threats are:

1. Terrorism
2. Espionage
3. Proliferation
4. Economic Espionage
5. Targeting the National Information Infrastructure
6. Targeting the U.S. Government
7. Perception Management
8. Foreign Intelligence Activities

The following is an explanation of the above Key Issue Threats:

1. Terrorism
2. This issue concerns foreign power-sponsored or foreign power-coordinated activities that:
 1. involve violent acts, dangerous to human life, that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State, or that would be a criminal violation if committed within the jurisdiction of the United States or any state;
 2. appear to be intended :
 - to intimidate or coerce a civilian population;
 - to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or
 - to affect the conduct of a government by assassination or kidnapping; and

3. occur totally outside the United States or transcend national boundaries in terms of the means by which they are accomplished, the persons they appear intended to coerce or intimidate, or the locale in which their perpetrators operate or seek asylum.
3. Espionage
4. This issue concerns foreign power-sponsored or foreign power-coordinated intelligence activity directed at the U.S. Government or U.S. corporations, establishments, or persons, which involves the identification, targeting and collection of U.S. national defense information.
5. Proliferation
6. This issue concerns foreign power-sponsored or foreign power-coordinated intelligence activity directed at the U.S. Government or U.S. corporations, establishments or persons, which involves:
 1. the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to include chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons, and delivery systems of those weapons of mass destruction; or
 2. the proliferation of advanced conventional weapons.
7. Economic Espionage
8. This issue concerns foreign power-sponsored or foreign power-coordinated intelligence activity directed at the U.S. Government or U.S. corporations, establishments, or persons, which involves:
 1. the unlawful or clandestine targeting or acquisition of sensitive financial, trade or economic policy information, proprietary economic information, or critical technologies; or
 2. the unlawful or clandestine targeting or influencing of sensitive economic policy decisions.
9. Targeting the National Information Infrastructure
10. This issue concerns foreign power-sponsored or foreign power-coordinated intelligence activity directed at the U.S. Government or U.S. corporations, establishments, or persons, which involves the targeting of facilities, personnel, information, or computer, cable, satellite, or telecommunications systems which are associated with the National Information Infrastructure. Proscribed intelligence activities include:
 1. denial or disruption of computer, cable, satellite or telecommunications services;
 2. unauthorized monitoring of computer, cable, satellite or telecommunications systems;

3. unauthorized disclosure of proprietary or classified information stored within or communicated through computer, cable, satellite or telecommunications systems;
4. unauthorized modification or destruction of computer programming codes, computer network databases, stored information or computer capabilities; or
5. manipulation of computer, cable, satellite or telecommunications services resulting in fraud, financial loss or other federal criminal violations.

11. Targeting the U.S. Government

12. This issue concerns foreign power-sponsored or foreign power-coordinated intelligence activity directed at the U.S. Government or U.S. corporations, establishments, or persons, which involves the targeting of government programs, information, or facilities or the targeting or personnel of the:
 1. U.S. intelligence community;
 2. U.S. foreign affairs, or economic affairs community; or
 3. U.S. defense establishment and related activities of national preparedness.

13. Perception Management

14. This issue concerns foreign power-sponsored or foreign power-coordinated intelligence activity directed at the U.S. Government or U.S. corporations, establishments, or persons, which involves manipulating information, communicating false information, or propagating deceptive information and communications designed to distort the perception of the public (domestically or internationally) or of U.S. Government officials regarding U.S. policies, ranging from foreign policy to economic strategies.

15. Foreign Intelligence Activities

16. This issue concerns foreign power-sponsored or foreign power-coordinated intelligence activity conducted in the U.S. or directed against the United States Government, or U.S. corporations, establishments, or persons, that is not described by or included in the other issue threats.