

US spy spending revealed for first time, tops \$80 billion

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STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- \$53.1 billion was spent on non-military intelligence, the administration says
- The military spent about \$27 billion on its spy activities
- Sen. Dianne Feinstein says there is waste and duplication in the budget

Washington (CNN) -- The United States spent \$80 billion on spy activities in 2010, the first time the government has officially announced the total tab for intelligence spending.

The amount included \$53.1 billion on non-military intelligence programs, a 6 percent boost from the previous year, according to a statement released Thursday by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

The military spent an additional \$27 billion on its intelligence apparatus, said Pentagon spokesman Col. Dave Lapan.

No further details were released.

The government is required by law to reveal the total amount of money spent to spy on other nations, terrorists and other groups by the CIA, the National Security Agency and the other agencies and offices that make up the 16-member intelligence community.

While the total intelligence spending has never formally been announced, this is the fourth year the Office of the Director of National Intelligence has released the national intelligence budget figure for non-military activities. The intelligence community had resisted efforts to reveal the number, arguing that enemies of the United States could learn valuable information by watching trends in spending.

The amount designated for military battlefield intelligence had remained classified. Last year, however then-Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair revealed to reporters the total cost for all intelligence gathering was \$75 billion, and indicated the amount spent on strictly military intelligence was approximately \$25 billion.

At the urging of the commission set up to investigate the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Congress passed a law in 2007 mandating public disclosure of the non-military spending number at the end of each fiscal year. Specific details on how much each agency spends and on what remain classified.

The current director of national intelligence, James Clapper, had said at his confirmation hearings this past summer that the budgets for both strategic intelligence and military spying should be officially made public.

The head of the Senate Intelligence committee said it is time to pare down non-military intelligence spending, which has doubled since the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001.

"Given the nation's financial situation, it is my view that the intelligence budget needs to be carefully reviewed and that cuts will be necessary," said Sen. Dianne Feinstein, a California Democrat.

The senator indicated there is waste and duplication within the budget and added, "It is clear that the overall spending on intelligence has blossomed to an unacceptable level in the past decade."

Approximately 100,000 people work on national intelligence, with the majority of employees serving at the big four intelligence agencies: the National Security Agency, the CIA, the National Reconnaissance Office and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency.

The United States spent \$49.8 billion on its national intelligence programs in 2009, \$47.5 billion in 2008 and \$43.5 billion in 2007, according to the previous reports.