**National Security Council**

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| **United States National Security Council** | |
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| **Agency overview** | |
| **Formed** | 1947 |
| **Agency executives** | [Barack Obama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama), Chairman, [President of the United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_the_United_States) [Vice President of the United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vice_President_of_the_United_States), [Secretary of State](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Secretary_of_State), [Secretary of Defense](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Secretary_of_Defense), [National Security Advisor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Security_Advisor_(United_States)), Others as necessary |
| **Parent agency** | [Executive Office of the President of the United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executive_Office_of_the_President_of_the_United_States) |
| **Website** | |
| [NSC Website](http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/nsc/) | |



President Barack Obama at a NSC Meeting in the Situation Room. Participants include Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Defense Secretary Robert Gates, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. James Cartwright, DNI Dennis Blair, White House Counsel Greg Craig, CIA Director Leon Panetta, Deputy National Security Adviser Tom Donilon, NSC Advisor Gen. James "Jim" Jones, and Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel

The [White House](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House) **National Security Council** (**NSC**) in the [United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) is the principal [forum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forum) used by the [President](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_the_United_States) for considering [national security](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_security) and [foreign policy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_relations_of_the_United_States) matters with his senior [national security advisors](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Security_Advisor_(United_States)) and [Cabinet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Cabinet) officials and is part of the [Executive Office of the President of the United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executive_Office_of_the_President_of_the_United_States). Since its inception under President [Harry S. Truman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_S._Truman), the function of the Council has been to advise and assist the President on national security and foreign policies. The Council also serves as the President's principal arm for coordinating these policies among various government agencies. The U.S. Council has counterparts in the [national security councils](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_security_council) of many other nations.

**History**

The National Security Council was created in 1947 by the [National Security Act](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Security_Act_of_1947). It was created because policymakers felt that the diplomacy of the State Department was no longer adequate to contain the USSR in light of the tension between the Soviet Union and the United States. The intent was to ensure coordination and concurrence among the [Navy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Navy), [Army](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Army), [Air Force](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Air_Force) and other instruments of national security policy (such as the Central Intelligence Agency, or CIA, also created in the National Security Act).

On May 26th, 2009, President Obama merged the White House staff supporting the [Homeland Security Council](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homeland_Security_Council) (HSC) and the National Security Council into one National Security Staff (NSS). The HSC and NSC each continue to exist by statute as bodies supporting the President.

The decision process inside the structure has become less and less formal, but influence of the Council has become stronger and stronger. Detailed history of the National Security Council under each Presidential administration since its inception can be found at:

* [History](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_United_States_National_Security_Council)
  + [1947-1953](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_United_States_National_Security_Council_1947-1953)
  + [1953-1961](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_United_States_National_Security_Council_1953-1961)
  + [1961-1963](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_United_States_National_Security_Council_1961-1963)
  + [1963-1969](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_United_States_National_Security_Council_1963-1969)
  + [1969-1974](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_United_States_National_Security_Council_1969-1974)
  + [1974-1977](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_United_States_National_Security_Council_1974-1977)
  + [1977-1981](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_United_States_National_Security_Council_1977-1981)
  + [1981-1989](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_United_States_National_Security_Council_1981-1989)
  + [1989-1992](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_United_States_National_Security_Council_1989-1992)
  + [1993-2003](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_United_States_National_Security_Council_1993-2003)

**Membership**

The National Security Council is chaired by the President. Its regular attendees (both statutory and non-statutory) are the [Vice President](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vice_President_of_the_United_States), the [Secretary of State](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Secretary_of_State), the [Secretary of the Treasury](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Secretary_of_the_Treasury), the [Secretary of Defense](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Secretary_of_Defense), and the [Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Security_Advisor_(United_States)) (or *National Security Advisor*). The [Chairman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chairman_of_the_Joint_Chiefs_of_Staff) of the [Joint Chiefs of Staff](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joint_Chiefs_of_Staff) is the statutory military advisor to the Council, and the [Director of National Intelligence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Director_of_National_Intelligence) is the intelligence advisor. The [Chief of Staff to the President](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House_Chief_of_Staff), [Counsel to the President](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_House_Counsel), and the [Assistant to the President for Economic Policy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Economic_Council) are also invited to attend any NSC meeting. The Attorney General and the Director of the [Office of Management and Budget](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Office_of_Management_and_Budget) are invited to attend meetings pertaining to their responsibilities. The heads of other executive departments and agencies, as well as other senior officials, are invited to attend meetings of the NSC when appropriate.

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| **Structure of the United States National Security Council (Current)** | |
| **Chair** | [Barack Obama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama) (President of the United States) |
| **Statutory Attendees** | [Joe Biden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Biden) (Vice President of the United States) [Hillary Clinton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hillary_Clinton) (Secretary of State) [Robert M. Gates](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Gates) (Secretary of Defense) |
| **Military Advisor** | ADM [Michael Mullen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Mullen) (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) |
| **Intelligence Advisor** | [Dennis C. Blair](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dennis_C._Blair) (Director of National Intelligence) |
| **Regular Attendees** | [James L. Jones](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_L._Jones) (National Security Advisor) [Rahm Emanuel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rahm_Emanuel) (Chief of Staff to the President) [Thomas E. Donilon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_E._Donilon) (Deputy National Security Advisor) [Howard Schmidt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Howard_Schmidt) (White House Cybersecurity Coordinator) |
| **Additional Participants** | [Tim Geithner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim_Geithner) (Secretary of the Treasury) [Eric Holder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric_Holder) (Attorney General) [Janet Napolitano](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Janet_Napolitano) (Secretary of Homeland Security) [Bob Bauer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bob_Bauer) (Counsel to the President) [Lawrence Summers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawrence_Summers) (Assistant to the President for Economic Policy) [Susan Rice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susan_Rice) (Ambassador to the United Nations) [Peter Orszag](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Orszag) (Director of Office of Management and Budget) |

**Staff**

* [Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Security_Advisor_(United_States)): [James L. Jones](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_L._Jones)
  + [Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism and Deputy National Security Advisor](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Assistant_to_the_President_for_Homeland_Security_and_Counterterrorism&action=edit&redlink=1): [John O. Brennan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_O._Brennan)
    - Deputy Assistant to the President for Homeland Security: Heidi E. Avery
  + [Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Assistant_to_the_President_and_Deputy_National_Security_Advisor&action=edit&redlink=1): [Thomas E. Donilon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_E._Donilon)
    - Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications: [Ben Rhodes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ben_Rhodes)
      * Spokesman: [Michael Hammer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Hammer)
    - Deputy Assistant to the President, Deputy White House Counsel and Legal Advisor to the National Security Council: [Mary DeRosa](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mary_DeRosa&action=edit&redlink=1)
    - Deputy Assistant to the President and National Security Council Chief of Staff: [Denis McDonough](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denis_McDonough)
      * Special Assistant to the President and Executive Secretary of the National Security Council: [Nate Tibbits](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nate_Tibbits&action=edit&redlink=1)
      * Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Strategic Planning and Institutional Reform: [Mary Carlin Yates](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Carlin_Yates)
      * [Special Assistant to the President, Senior Advisor and Coordinator for Afghanistan-Pakistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Special_Assistant_to_the_President,_Senior_Advisor_and_Coordinator_for_Afghanistan-Pakistan&action=edit&redlink=1): [Lt. Gen. Douglas Lute](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douglas_Lute)
      * Special Assistant to the President and White House Coordinator for Arms Control and WMD, Proliferation and Terrorism: [Gary Samore](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Gary_Samore&action=edit&redlink=1)
      * Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Multilateral Affairs: [Samantha Power](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samantha_Power)
      * Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Global Development, Stabilization and Humanitarian Assistance: [Gayle Smith](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Gayle_Smith&action=edit&redlink=1)
      * Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Non-Proliferation: [Dan Poneman](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Dan_Poneman&action=edit&redlink=1)
      * Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Defense: [Barry Pavel](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Barry_Pavel&action=edit&redlink=1)
      * Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Intelligence Programs: [Mike Epperson](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mike_Epperson&action=edit&redlink=1)
      * Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Counterterrorism: [Nick Rasmussen](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nick_Rasmussen&action=edit&redlink=1)
      * Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Western Hemisphere Affairs: [Dan Restrepo](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Dan_Restrepo&action=edit&redlink=1)
      * Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Europe: [Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Elizabeth_Sherwood-Randall&action=edit&redlink=1)
      * Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Russia and Eurasian Affairs: [Michael McFaul](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_McFaul)
      * Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for the Central Region: [Dennis Ross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dennis_Ross)
      * Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Near East and North Africa: [Daniel B. Shapiro](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_B._Shapiro)
      * Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Africa: [Michelle Gavin](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Michelle_Gavin&action=edit&redlink=1)
      * Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for the Gulf States, Iran and Iraq: [Puneet Talwar](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Puneet_Talwar&action=edit&redlink=1)
      * Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for South Asia: [Anish Goel](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Anish_Goel&action=edit&redlink=1)
      * Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Asia: [Jeffrey Bader](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jeffrey_Bader&action=edit&redlink=1)

**Authority**

The National Security Council was established by the [National Security Act of 1947](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Security_Act_of_1947) (PL 235 - 61 Stat. 496; U.S.C. 402), amended by the National Security Act Amendments of [1949](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1949) (63 Stat. 579; 50 U.S.C. 401 et seq.). Later in 1949, as part of the Reorganization Plan, the Council was placed in the Executive Office of the President.

**Further reading**

* Ivo H. Daalder and I.M. Destler, [*In the Shadow of the Oval Office: Profiles of the National Security Advisers and the Presidents They Served--From JFK to George W. Bush*](http://www.intheshadowoftheovaloffice.com) Simon & Schuster; 2009, [ISBN 978-1416553199](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:BookSources/9781416553199).
* Karl F. Inderfurth and Loch K. Johnson, eds. "Fateful Decisions: Inside the National Security Council." Oxford University Press, 2004. [ISBN 978-0195159660](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:BookSources/9780195159660).
* David J. Rothkopf, *Running The World: the Inside Story of the National Security Council and the Architects of American Power*, PublicAffairs; 2006, [ISBN 978-1586484231](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:BookSources/9781586484231).
* [Journey to the Center of the World: U.S. National Security Council](http://www.avsam.org/fpr/NSC-UGK.pdf) - [Arzın Merkezine Seyahat: ABD Ulusal Güvenlik Konseyi](http://www.avsam.org/fpr/NSC-UGK.pdf) - Article on US NSC in Turkish
* [Cody M. Brown, *The National Security Council: A Legal History of the President's Most Powerful Advisers*, Project on National Security Reform (2008).](http://www.pnsr.org/data/images/the%20national%20security%20council.pdf)

**See also**

* [National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection and Counter-Terrorism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/PDD-62)
* [National Security Medal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Security_Medal)
* [Iran Contra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran_Contra)
* [Tower Commission](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tower_Commission)

**References**

* [NSC page at the White House website](http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/)
* [Story on the NSC](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=2601&page=0) in [*Foreign Policy*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_Policy) journal.

1. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_National_Security_Council#cite_ref-0#cite_ref-0) [Encyclopedia of American foreign policy](http://books.google.com/books?id=QHDkqb-myscC&pg=PA499&dq=National+Security+Council&lr=&as_brr=3&as_pt=BOOKS), 2nd ed. Vol. 2, New York: Scribner, 2002, National Security Council, 22 April 2009
2. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_National_Security_Council#cite_ref-1#cite_ref-1) [In Security Shuffle, White House Merges Staffs](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/27/us/27homeland.html?ref=us)

* [Annual Report To Congress On White House Office Staff;](http://www.whitehouse.gov/assets/documents/July1Report-Draft12.pdf) [Executive Office of the President](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executive_Office_of_the_President), Wednesday, July 01, 2009