

Nowhere in the world has intelligence agencies anywhere near as large or as numerous as those in the US. Such a labyrinthine system might be expected to have problems with co-ordination – and it does. In the wake of the Christmas day bomb attempt, President Barack Obama acknowledged that no agency had lead

responsibility for dealing with specific threats. It was not meant to be like this. After well publicised failures of communication between the FBI and the CIA in the run-up to the terrorist attacks on the US of September 11 2001, the national intelligence system was redrawn. The post of director of national intelligence was created, precisely to

co-ordinate the different agencies. Funding poured in: half the CIA's employees were hired after 9/11 and last year's total US intelligence budget was \$49.8bn. Our graphic shows the relationship between the agencies, and their areas of responsibility

**The White House**

President Barack Obama and his staff are ultimately responsible for US intelligence services. John Brennan, Obama's senior counter-terrorism adviser, has a prominent role – for example, chairing national security conference calls after the alleged Christmas day bombing attempt

**Office of Director of National Intelligence**

Dennis Blair, the director of national intelligence, is formally entrusted with leading the US intelligence community and transforming it 'into a unified, collaborative and co-ordinated enterprise'. He is responsible for the overall budget for US national intelligence as well as setting priorities. He does not have chain of command control over all the agencies

