OPEN SOURCE INTELLIGENCE **STRATEGY**

Bureau of Intelligence and Research

U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE

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About
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As both a bureau in the Department of State and a member of the Intelligence Community, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) is the only U.S. intelligence component charged with supporting the Secretary of State and American diplomats around the world. At INR, we are on a mission to deliver and coordinate timely, objective intelligence that advances U.S. diplomacy. *Intelligence empowering diplomacy.*

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From the Assistant Secretary

The explosion of open source intelligence (OSINT) in recent years has transformed how governments and people around the world consume and process information about society and global issues. The abundance and accessibility of OSINT has made it an essential source of data to enrich intelligence analysis, inform U.S. diplomats and policymakers, and enable intelligence diplomacy. In this new era, the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) must harness the power and potential of OSINT to empower American diplomacy.

To realize this vision, I am pleased to share INR's inaugural OSINT strategy. The new INR OSINT Strategy is a key part of our modernization agenda and complements the broader Intelligence Community OSINT Strategy 2024-2026. The INR OSINT Strategy focuses on developing sound governance and policy guidance regarding the use of OSINT, investing in OSINT capabilities and resources, strengthening OSINT training and analytic tradecraft, and deepening cooperation on OSINT with allies and partners, industry, academia, and other nongovernmental entities. Together, these actions will help INR realize the full potential of OSINT in an efficient, secure, and responsible manner while continuing to deliver expert insights to U.S. diplomats and State Department officials worldwide.

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CONTEXT

The proliferation of open source intelligence (OSINT)—defined in the Intelligence Community (IC) OSINT Strategy 2024-2026 as intelligence derived exclusively from publicly or commercially available information that addresses specific intelligence priorities, requirements, or gaps—is transforming how the U.S. IC, including the Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), operates. In INR, open source information is an invaluable resource—enriching analytic assessments, driving intelligence diplomacy, and giving U.S. diplomats worldwide greater access to INR products at lower classification levels. The demand for INR products and services at the unclassified level will only grow in the coming years, as commercial technologies generate more open source data and as the United States seeks to share more information with traditional and non-traditional partners to support and enable U.S. diplomacy.

Against this backdrop, INR created the Open Source Coordination Unit in 2022 to capitalize on the rapidly evolving OSINT landscape. The Unit, which sits in INR's Office of Analytic Integration, established initial operating capability in 2023. The purpose of the Open Source Coordination Unit is to empower INR to use open source information more efficiently, effectively, and responsibly. We envision a future where, by meeting the demands of our diplomatic community, expanding accessibility to INR products and services, and responding quickly to fast-moving events in the world, OSINT provides strategic insights and information advantage to U.S. diplomats and policymakers.

To achieve our OSINT vision, we have established four strategic goals. These goals align with INR's 2025 Strategic Plan and the IC OSINT Strategy 2024-2026.

Strategic Goals

1

Establish Governance and Policy for OSINT Use

Establish and adopt effective governance, policies, standards, and procedures regarding the use of OSINT in INR research and production, consistent with Executive Order 12333 and other applicable legal and policy requirements.

2

Invest in OSINT Capabilities

Develop and execute budget planning, acquisition, deployment, and adoption strategies for commercially available data, tools, and platforms to fill information gaps and empower all-source analysts.

3

Strengthen OSINT Training and Tradecraft

Develop formal training, workforce development initiatives, and analytic support channels to advance research and production using OSINT.

4

Deepen Collaboration with Allies, Partners, Industry, Academia, and Other Nongovernmental Entities

Strengthen collaboration on open source intelligence and research with a wide range of government and nongovernmental entities to share best practices and stay current with the latest technology, tradecraft, resources, and trends.

GOAL 1

Establish Governance and Policy for OSINT Use

OSINT has always informed the IC's understanding of issues around the globe. However, recent advances within the discipline and INR—including new technologies and policy empowering INR analysts to produce unclassified assessments—highlight the need for tradecraft standards, policies, and procedures to govern how INR acquires and uses open source information consistent with Executive Order 12333 and other applicable legal and policy requirements.

To achieve this goal, INR will pursue the following lines of effort:

1.1. Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Best Practices

- Establish an INR OSINT Working Group comprising experts from analytic, operational, and support functions.

- Develop policies and procedures for the use of open source information that implement applicable legal and policy requirements—in particular, the safeguarding of privacy and civil liberties.

- Establish SOPs to facilitate analytic production at the lowest level of classification possible using OSINT.

- Develop guidance on producing unclassified assessments or other products that rely solely on open source data.

1.2. Promote INR OSINT Equities in IC Policy and Guidance

- Coordinate with the National Open Source Committee (NOSC) to align with IC policies, standards, procedures, and other guidance as appropriate. Promote INR equities in the development of this guidance.

1.3. Monitor and Evaluate OSINT-Derived Production

- Establish measures to assess the impact of OSINT-derived unclassified production.

- Track OSINT citations in INR analytic production.

GOAL 2

Invest in OSINT Capabilities

Advances in the academic and commercial sectors and the development of government-provided tools offer the potential to reduce the time required to exploit open source information. These advances enable new data science insights using innovative analytic methods and capabilities and accelerate the delivery of relevant data to INR analysts.

To achieve this goal, INR will pursue the following lines of effort:

2.1.   Acquire and Develop OSINT Data and Tools

- Identify and regularly update INR's OSINT requirements.
- Work with the NOSC to maximize the pooling of resources for and knowledge on open source data acquisition.
- Engage with industry and government partners to stay current on OSINT trends that will inform INR acquisition decisions.
- Use Department of State and IC data catalogs to facilitate information sharing on open source data capabilities.
- Make any necessary technology enhancements to support INR's ability to access relevant open source data feeds.
- Acquire and deploy non-enterprise network (NEN) machines to facilitate access to specialized tools.
- Identify core open source datasets and information platforms to promote consistency across INR products.
- Seek and secure funding for OSINT programs.
- Pursue tools to enhance analysis, collaboration, and open source information sharing.

2.2.   Administer Resources, Manage Knowledge, and Deploy Data and Tools

- Administer and oversee use of OSINT data, platforms, and tools in INR.
- Provide guidance on and support effective and appropriate use of OSINT data, platforms, and tools, with due consideration for the safeguarding of privacy and civil liberties.
- Develop mechanisms to regularly share with INR's workforce important updates in the OSINT field, as well as recent OSINT products from within and outside of the IC.
- Develop and maintain a curated online resource guide for OSINT information available to INR, including data, platforms, analytic methods, tools, and relevant policies, standards, and procedures.

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GOAL 3

Strengthen OSINT Training and Tradecraft

Collecting, reviewing, structuring, and analyzing open source information requires technical and methodological skills that take time and effort to acquire, refine, and maintain. INR will need a dedicated, sustained training program to ensure the workforce can optimize its use of OSINT.

To achieve this goal, INR will pursue the following lines of effort:

3.1. Facilitate Open Source Training and Tradecraft

- Facilitate in-house education on research and analytic techniques using open source data.
- Develop a curriculum of OSINT research, analysis, and production courses, leveraging existing IC and private sector offerings.
- Establish guidelines to distinguish between OSINT and open source research.

3.2. Provide Training and Guidance on Unclassified Production and Analysis

- Maintain an expert consultation mechanism for analysts looking to incorporate open source data and advanced analytic methods into products.
- Provide in-house training on the use of OSINT in unclassified assessments and other unclassified products.
- Improve product dissemination for unclassified production by regularly posting products on INR's unclassified online distribution platform (Tempo).
- Periodically provide refresher guidance on the safe, secure, ethical, and legal use of OSINT, including the safeguarding of privacy and civil liberties.
- Organize internal seminars to provide a venue for analysts to present on the use and impact of open source information in their work.

GOAL 4

Deepen Collaboration with Allies, Partners, Industry, Academia, and Other Nongovernmental Entities

Many U.S. Government agencies and international allies and partners devote significant resources to collecting and analyzing OSINT in support of intelligence assessments and other products. Academia, the private sector, and other nongovernmental entities are investing heavily in new technologies and pioneering new approaches to the application of open source information to support a wide range of academic, business, journalistic, and general research and analysis functions. INR must foster new and deepen existing partnerships in the IC, the Department of State, other U.S. Government agencies, industry, academia, and other nongovernmental entities to take advantage of existing open source data capabilities and resources, stay current on emerging technologies and tools, and adopt best practices for open source research and analysis.

To achieve this goal, INR will pursue the following lines of effort:

4.1.   Strengthen IC Partnerships

- Participate in NOSC activities.
- Maintain regular contact with partner agencies to foster resource and data sharing.
- Participate in exchanges with IC OSINT practitioners, including inviting analysts to present data, methods, and tools to INR and encouraging joint duty assignments.

4.2.   Develop International Partnerships

- Maintain regular communication with like-minded allies and partners working on OSINT.
- Exchange best practices with allies and partners and cooperate on OSINT tools and capabilities.

4.3.   Increase Intra-Departmental Coordination and Cooperation With Other U.S. Government Agencies

- Establish a process for coordinating and collaborating with other bureaus in the Department of State to encourage information sharing, minimize redundancies, and nurture relationships between those bureaus and the IC.
- Develop and administer a process for State Department clients to propose requirements for unclassified OSINT-derived analysis and other INR products.

4.4.   Develop Partnerships With Academia, Industry, and Nongovernmental Entities

- Strengthen ties with OSINT practitioners in academia, the private sector, think tanks, and civil society organizations.
- Identify opportunities to collaborate with the private sector and academic institutions to gather, structure, clean, and analyze publicly available data.

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