

***Counterintelligence
Considerations for
Personnel Vetting Short
Student Guide***

May 2025

Center for Development of Security Excellence

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Introduction

Adversaries, to include foreign intelligence entities (FIEs) want placement and access to U.S. facilities, infrastructure, and information. One way they achieve this is by exploiting the inherent placement and access of trusted insiders. This could mean recruiting someone already on the inside, like Benjamin Bishop—a former U.S. Army officer who worked as a civilian employee of a defense contractor, or by attempting to place someone on the inside, like Glenn Duffie Shriver, who attempted to gain employment over a 5-year period with the Department of State (DOS) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The Federal Government has a process in place known as Personnel Vetting (PV) that ensures individuals granted access to U.S. Government facilities and information are trustworthy throughout their association with the Government. Throughout this vetting process, counterintelligence (CI) risk indicators may be uncovered. In this Short, we will explain the relationship between CI and PV in identifying and mitigating threats posed by FIEs. We will also provide you with examples of CI concerns that can be uncovered during PV, so that you will be able to explain how CI relates to the PV process.

PV and Trusted Workforce 2.0 Overview

Personnel Vetting considers background investigations and other sources to make trust determinations for personnel and potential personnel.

Trusted Workforce (TW) 2.0 is a whole-of-government approach to reform the PV process. It establishes a single vetting system for the Federal Government in making trust determinations or adjudicative decisions across several domains.

- The National Security domain considers eligibility for access to classified information or eligibility to hold a sensitive position. Eligible individuals must be loyal, trustworthy, and reliable.
- The Suitability domain considers whether an individual should hold a Public Trust position. Eligible individuals must have traits to conduct and carry out the duties of federal service with integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness.
- The Fitness domain considers whether an individual has the character and conduct necessary to perform work on behalf of an agency as an excepted service employee, a contract employee, or as a non-appropriated fund employee.

- Lastly, Credentialing provides a determination that an individual requiring logical or physical access to Federal systems and facilities are not known or reasonably suspected of being terrorists, do not provide an avenue for terrorism, and do not pose a risk to personnel or assets.

PV under TW 2.0 better supports insight in to workforce behaviors to ensure protection of people, property, information, and mission throughout the individual's affiliation with the federal government.

This includes five PV scenarios:

- Initial vetting,
- Continuous vetting,
- Upgrades,
- Transfer of trust, and
- Re-establishment of trust.

Initial Vetting

Initial vetting is conducted to establish trust with an individual not previously vetted.

Continuous Vetting

Continuous vetting is conducted to maintain the government's confidence trusted insiders will continue to protect people, property, information, and mission. This is done through near real-time risk assessment processes such as automated data checks and investigative activities.

Upgrades

Upgrades are when an individual changes positions or assumes new responsibilities that require a higher level of trust. The vetting of upgrades requires a higher level of investigation and occurs after an individual has undergone an initial trust determination and been enrolled in compliant continuous vetting.

Transfer of Trust

A transfer of trust, also known as reciprocity, streamlines the movement of trusted insiders from one agency to another while holding a current trust determination at the same level.

Re-establishment of Trust

A re-establishment of trust is a vetting scenario that simplifies the re-entry of trusted insiders back into the workforce after a period of time away from Government work. This occurs when a trusted insider stops performing work for or on behalf of the Government for a period of time and then seeks to return to perform work for or on behalf of the Federal Government.

Personnel Vetting Case Studies

To understand the personnel vetting scenarios, let's look at two real-life cases -- those of Benjamin Bishop and Glenn Duffie Shriver. You'll use these case studies to answer questions about PV scenarios.

Benjamin Bishop

Benjamin Bishop, a civilian employee of a defense contractor at U.S. Pacific Command, held Top Secret security clearance and had access to Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI).

Bishop met a Chinese woman at a military defense conference. She was believed to have attended the conference to target individuals who could help her gain access to classified information.

Bishop began an undisclosed relationship with the Chinese woman and, on several occasions, shared with her classified information regarding nuclear weapons, missiles, defenses, and other capabilities.

Glenn Duffie Shriver

Glenn Duffie Shriver developed a relationship with three People's Republic of China (PRC) intelligence officers while living in Shanghai.

Shriver agreed to apply for positions within the Department of State (DOS) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and, over the next 5 years, attempted to gain employment with the goal of obtaining sensitive information.

Shriver's objective was to transmit classified information to the PRC officers in exchange for cash payments.

Knowledge Check 1

Check your knowledge.

Based on the details provided in the Bishop case study, which of the following PV scenarios is relevant to Bishop's case?

Select the best response. Check your answers in the Answer Key at the end of this Student Guide.

- Initial vetting; Bishop entered the workforce with nefarious intent.
- Continuous vetting; Bishop was recruited by a foreign intelligence entity (FIE) after being a trusted insider.
- Transfer of trust; Bishop sought reciprocity in a new agency before he shared classified information with a FIE.
- Re-establishment of trust; Bishop sought to gain re-employment after taking a long break.

Knowledge Check 2

Now try this one.

Based on the details provided in the Shriver case study, which of the following PV scenarios is relevant to Shriver's case?

Select the best response. Check your answers in the Answer Key at the end of this Student Guide.

- Initial vetting; Shriver was seeking employment with nefarious intent.
- Continuous vetting; Shriver was a trusted insider who attempted to exploit his access to sensitive information to gain money.
- Upgrade; Shriver sought a promotion to gain access to a higher level of classified information than he already had as a trusted insider.
- Transfer of trust; Shriver sought reciprocity during a transfer to another agency to maintain his current trust determination.

CI Overview

The information gathered as part of PV is also of great value in CI. While the information gathered as part of PV depends on the position designation and associated investigative tier, it generally includes at a minimum a background check and a high yields records check to support making trust determinations or adjudicative decisions based on concerns. These concerns include regard for rules; engagement with others; conduct consistent with U.S. interests. They also include willingness and ability to protect people, property, information, and mission.

CI seeks to gather information and conduct activities to identify, deceive, exploit, disrupt, or protect against espionage or other intelligence activities, sabotage, or assassinations

conducted on behalf of foreign powers, organizations, persons, their agents, or international terrorist organizations.

PV activities to learn about individuals and trusted insiders can support CI's goals, particularly in identifying individuals who may pose CI risks such as espionage and sabotage. These are often motivated by money, ideology, coercion, and ego (MICE).

CI Activity Part 1

PV activities, like initial vetting, can uncover CI risks associated with the individuals in question.

Let's revisit the case of Glenn Duffie Shriver, who sought employment with nefarious intent to exchange classified information with the PRC for money.

Consider the additional case details. Initial vetting might have shown that Shriver lived in China while attending school as an undergraduate student and was fluent in Mandarin. Initial vetting would have also revealed that Shriver's accounts totaled about \$70,000, which was paid by PRC officials over the course of their relationship.

As a result of CI investigation, Shriver admitted to making false statements on the CIA employment questionnaire to hide his connection with the PRC.

Knowledge Check 3

Consider the details of Shriver's case and answer this question.

Which considerations would be made during the initial vetting scenario to make a trust determination about Shriver prior to granting his employment?

Select all that apply. Check your answers in the Answer Key at the end of this Student Guide.

- Motivation; Initial vetting would consider Shriver's intent of employment and question if he posed a CI risk by examining his motivators such as MICE.
- Affiliation; Initial vetting would consider Shriver's engagement with others and his historical ties to other countries.
- Safeguarding; Initial vetting would consider Shriver's ability and willingness to protect people, property, information, and mission.

CI Activity Part 2

Continuous vetting may also uncover CI risks.

Let's revisit once more the case of Benjamin Bishop, a trusted insider who was recruited by a Chinese woman with whom he had an undisclosed personal relationship to share classified defense information.

Consider the following additional case details. Since Bishop maintained a clearance at the time, continuous vetting would reveal that he traveled abroad on at least one occasion. Additionally, Bishop updated and submitted revised SF-86 forms for security and compliance but failed to report his foreign contacts.

Knowledge Check 4

Now consider Bishop's case and try this question.

Based on these additional details of Bishop's case, how would continuous vetting uncover a CI risk associated with Bishop?

Select the best response. Check your answers in the Answer Key at the end of this Student Guide.

- CI investigations would reveal that Bishop was unlawfully traveling.
- Impromptu home searches would have uncovered that Bishop was in a romantic relationship.
- Continuous vetting would take into account Bishop's travel, personal relationships, and interactions.
- None of these describe how continuous vetting aids in detecting CI risks in Bishop's case.

CI Indicators

PV often exposes CI risk indicators. There are several CI indicators within PV to look for, including foreign contacts, associations, travel, and/or preference; anti-American statements, activities, and associations; suspicious financial transactions, unexplained affluence or debt, and other financial considerations; personal conduct, criminal or suspicious activities; sexual behavior that increases vulnerability; psychological conditions; and negligent handling or mishandling of personal or proprietary information.

Keep in mind that PV seeks to learn about a person's character. Motivators of espionage and sabotage, such as MICE, are often directly related to one's character. You can find a complete list of indicators in Security Executive Agent Directive (SEAD) 3 and SEAD 4.

CI Indicators in Case Studies

CI concerns were uncovered through PV in the cases of Bishop and Shriver.

For Bishop, CI indicators included mishandling of classified information and an undisclosed romantic relationship. Continuous vetting revealed Bishop was traveling but not properly reporting his foreign contacts. Although Bishop did not disclose his relationship with the Chinese woman, continuous vetting uncovered a request of leave

to travel to the United Kingdom which, in conjunction with suspicious activity reporting from peers, raised concerns. Further investigation revealed he altered her name to obscure her identity.

For Shriver, CI indicators included anti-American activities and associations and suspicious financial transactions. Initial vetting uncovered Shriver's previous associations with the PRC, including his relationship with PRC officers. Initial vetting also uncovered large sums of money in the form of three cash payments from the PRC officers.

For their crimes, Bishop was sentenced to 87 months in prison and Shriver was sentenced to 48 months in prison.

Conclusion

Congratulations. You have completed the CI Considerations for Personnel Vetting Short. In this Short, you learned about five PV scenarios through which CI indicators may be exposed, ensuring the protection of people, property, information, and mission.

By engaging in PV processes to examine an individual's character and motivations, CI risks can be uncovered and mitigated. You should now be able to explain how CI relates to the PV process.

Visit the [Short resources](#) to access the case studies you saw in this Short.

Appendix A: Answer Key

Knowledge Check 1

Based on the details provided in the Bishop case study, which of the following PV scenarios is relevant to Bishop's case?

- Initial vetting; Bishop entered the workforce with nefarious intent.
- Continuous vetting; Bishop was recruited by a foreign intelligence entity (FIE) after being a trusted insider. (correct response)
- Transfer of trust; Bishop sought reciprocity in a new agency before he shared classified information with a FIE.
- Re-establishment of trust; Bishop sought to gain re-employment after taking a long break.

Feedback: Bishop was a trusted insider before he was recruited by a FIE. Continuous vetting aims to detect and deter existing insiders from posing threats.

Knowledge Check 2

Based on the details provided in the Shriver case study, which of the following PV scenarios is relevant to Shriver's case?

- Initial vetting; Shriver was seeking employment with nefarious intent. (correct response)
- Continuous vetting; Shriver was a trusted insider who attempted to exploit his access to sensitive information to gain money.
- Upgrade; Shriver sought a promotion to gain access to a higher level of classified information than he already had as a trusted insider.
- Transfer of trust; Shriver sought reciprocity during a transfer to another agency to maintain his current trust determination.

Feedback: Shriver was not yet an employee but was actively seeking employment with nefarious intent. Initial vetting aims to detect potential threats at or before the time of employment.

Knowledge Check 3

Which considerations would be made during the initial vetting scenario to make a trust determination about Shriver prior to granting his employment?

- Motivation; Initial vetting would consider Shriver's intent of employment and question if he posed a CI risk by examining his motivators such as MICE. (correct response)

- Affiliation; Initial vetting would consider Shriver's engagement with others and his historical ties to other countries. (correct response)
- Safeguarding; Initial vetting would consider Shriver's ability and willingness to protect people, property, information, and mission. (correct response)

Feedback: *Initial vetting would consider what motivates an individual, their affiliations, and their willingness to safeguard the mission.*

Knowledge Check 4

Based on these additional details of Bishop's case, how would continuous vetting uncover a CI risk associated with Bishop?

- CI investigations would reveal that Bishop was unlawfully traveling.
- Impromptu home searches would have uncovered that Bishop was in a romantic relationship.
- Continuous vetting would take into account Bishop's travel, personal relationships, and interactions. (correct response)
- None of these describe how continuous vetting aids in detecting CI risks in Bishop's case.

Feedback: *Continuous vetting would take into account Bishop's travel, personal relationships, and suspicious activity reporting from supervisors or co-workers.*