

foreign countries, because it believed that this was an FBI role. It also did not want to be viewed as targeting persons in the United States and possibly violating laws that governed NSA's collection of foreign intelligence.⁶⁸

An almost obsessive protection of sources and methods by the NSA, and its focus on foreign intelligence, and its avoidance of anything domestic would, as will be seen, be important elements in the story of 9/11.

Technology as an Intelligence Asset and Liability

The application of newly developed scientific technology to the mission of U.S. war fighters and national security decisionmakers is one of the great success stories of the twentieth century. It did not happen by accident. Recent wars have been waged and won decisively by brave men and women using advanced technology that was developed, authorized, and paid for by conscientious and diligent executive and legislative branch leaders many years earlier.

The challenge of technology, however, is a daunting one. It is expensive, sometimes fails, and often can create problems as well as solve them. Some of the advanced technologies that gave us insight into the closed-off territories of the Soviet Union during the Cold War are of limited use in identifying and tracking individual terrorists.

Terrorists, in turn, have benefited from this same rapid development of communication technologies. They simply could buy off the shelf and harvest the products of a \$3 trillion a year telecommunications industry. They could acquire without great expense communication devices that were varied, global, instantaneous, complex, and encrypted.

The emergence of the World Wide Web has given terrorists a much easier means of acquiring information and exercising command and control over their operations. The operational leader of the 9/11 conspiracy, Mohamed Atta, went online from Hamburg, Germany, to research U.S. flight schools. Targets of intelligence collection have become more sophisticated. These changes have made surveillance and threat warning more difficult.

Despite the problems that technology creates, Americans' love affair with it leads them to also regard it as the solution. But technology produces its best results when an organization has the doctrine, structure, and incentives to exploit it. For example, even the best information technology will not improve information sharing so long as the intelligence agencies' personnel and security systems reward protecting information rather than disseminating it.

The CIA

The CIA is a descendant of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), which President Roosevelt created early in World War II after having first thought the FBI might take that role. The father of the OSS was William J. "Wild Bill" Donovan, a Wall Street lawyer. He recruited into the OSS others like himself—well traveled, well connected, well-to-do professional men and women.⁶⁹