

This failure is attributable not only to the factors discussed above, but also to a basic lack of creativity and imagination in evaluating the intelligence that was at hand. Ironically, the best example of the creative, imaginative and aggressive analysis of relevant [page 74] intelligence that this review has found was not a product of Intelligence Community analysts, but, instead, of an FBI field agent in Phoenix. The Phoenix agent, in reviewing his office's case files, went beyond the facts of those individual cases to focus on a larger, and far more serious, picture of the potential, long-term threat. By putting together various pieces of information, he became convinced that Usama Bin Ladin was sending individuals to aviation-related training in order to put al-Qa'ida in a position to target civil aviation. His July 2001 Electronic Communication to FBI Headquarters was a strategic analytic product that correctly identified at least one critical element that was to be used in the plot that unfolded on September 11, an element that apparently eluded far more seasoned analysts elsewhere in the Intelligence Community.

6. Finding: Prior to September 11, The Intelligence Community was not prepared to handle the challenge it faced in translating the volumes of foreign language counterterrorism intelligence it collected. Agencies within the Intelligence Community experienced backlogs in material awaiting translation, a shortage of language specialists and language-qualified field officers, and a readiness level of only 30% in the most critical terrorism-related languages.

Discussion: The language problem has been one of the Intelligence Community's perennial shortfalls. Prior to September 11, the shortage of language specialists who would be qualified to process large amounts of foreign language data in general, and Arabic in particular, was one of the most serious issues limiting the Intelligence Community's ability to analyze, discern, and report on terrorist activities in a timely fashion. According to a senior NSA official, [_____] [_____] These are promptly scanned for intelligence value, and only the most important -- [_____] -- are then translated into English. Yet, prior to September 11, NSA had [_____] personnel assigned to this task.

[Analyzing, processing, translating, and reporting al-Qa'ida-related [_____] [_____] communications requires the highest levels of language and target knowledge expertise that exist at the National Security Agency. The large number of