

cooperation.” He also added that he “would not be surprised if someday the closeness of this relationship would require organizational changes.”

**8. Finding: The continuing erosion of NSA’s program management expertise and experience has hindered its contribution to the fight against terrorism. NSA continues to have mixed results in providing timely technical solutions to modern intelligence collection, analysis, and information sharing problems.**

Discussion: One of the side effects of NSA’s downsizing, outsourcing, and transformation has been the loss of critical program management expertise, systems engineering, and requirements definition skills. These skills were devalued by NSA during the 1990s when most technical development was done within the agency, and the impact of their loss was evident in NSA’s response to the Joint Inquiry’s attempts to gather information concerning NSA’s plans for developing solutions to its current technology gaps in areas of particular importance to counterterrorism. [—————  
—————  
—————]. NSA was able to provide little more than very high-level and general vision statements.

The impact of this lack of program management was evident during interviews with analysts who expressed frustration regarding their current working environment. [page 81] For example, they must now write three versions of reports in order to accommodate the demands of various customers and uses. The TRAILBLAZER program, which the NSA Director has described as NSA’s “effort to revolutionize how we produce SIGINT in a digital age,” is now not expected to produce such results until 2004 at the earliest and confusion still exists as to what those results will actually be. In the meantime, none of the analysts were aware of any near term efforts to alleviate their current system’s technical limitations.

NSA personnel also stated that NSA’s efforts to collect [—————  
—————], reveals a critical deficiency in its capabilities. The solution to this deficiency is well understood and estimated to cost less than \$1 million to implement. However, the project manager is still struggling for funds to pay for an upgrade that would not be completed until 2004.