

The Joint Inquiry also found a high level of frustration among contractors who do business with the NSA. Common themes repeated to the Joint Inquiry concern the extremely poor quality of solicitation packages and acquisition expertise on the part of NSA employees and the inability of program managers to speak with consistency and authority on future contract opportunities. NSA also lacks a formal Contracting Officer Technical Representative certification program. This is of special concern as NSA continues to increase its reliance on contractors. In testimony to the Joint Inquiry in October 2002, the NSA Director stated that NSA “spent about a third of our SIGINT development money this year making things ourselves. Next year the number will be [dropping to] 17%.”

The Chief of Staff for NSA’s Signals Intelligence Directorate (SID) told the Joint Inquiry he fears that “SID has lost its business acumen...and [he] worries greatly about the lack of acquisition experience and program planning, especially in light of NSA’s huge budget increase.” He also told the Joint Inquiry that he has worked actively on this issue, especially in providing program management training to frontline workers.

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9. Finding: The U.S. Government does not presently bring together in one place all terrorism-related information from all sources. While CTC does manage overseas operations and has access to most Intelligence Community information, it does not collect terrorism-related information from all sources, domestic and foreign. Within the Intelligence Community, agencies did not adequately share relevant counterterrorism information, prior to September 11. This breakdown in communications was the result of a number of factors, including differences in the agencies’ missions, legal authorities and cultures. Information was not sufficiently shared, not only between different Intelligence Community agencies, but also within individual agencies, and between the intelligence and the law enforcement agencies.

Discussion: Counterterrorism, like other transnational threats such as drug trafficking, requires close coordination and information sharing among and within the Intelligence Community agencies. Despite some improvement, significant problems remained in the sharing of information within the Intelligence Community, prior to September 11. As a result, the Community was unable to exploit the full range of capabilities and expertise in the counterterrorist effort.