

Each of the principal collectors and analyzers of counterterrorism intelligence -- the FBI, CIA, NSA, and DIA -- has its own distinct missions, sets of legal authorities and restraints, and cultures. Unfortunately, these factors, while serving many other legitimate purposes, often hinder collaboration and willingness to share information. In his testimony, former Congressman and House Intelligence Committee Chairman Lee Hamilton described the problem:

The very phrase "Intelligence Community" is intriguing. It demonstrates how decentralized and fragmented our intelligence capabilities are. . . . The Intelligence Community is a very loose confederation. There is a redundancy of effort, an imbalance between collection and analysis, and problems, as we have repeatedly heard in recent weeks, of coordination and sharing.

While DCI George Tenet and former FBI Director Louis Freeh testified that collaboration and information sharing in the Intelligence Community have markedly improved in recent years, this Inquiry found that the agencies still act too often and at too many levels as a loose collection of entities. The Joint Inquiry heard testimony that confirmed problems in sharing information between different Intelligence Community agencies, within individual Intelligence Community agencies, and between law [page 83] enforcement and intelligence agencies.

For example, the former FBI agent who had handled the San Diego informant testified about his personal experience with information sharing between the FBI and the CIA:

Ms. Hill: You also [said] that, in your opinion, information sharing between the FBI and the CIA prior to 9/11 was almost nonexistent.

Former FBI Agent: It was bad. Well, it's not nonexistent, but . . . if you have a case that has a common mission and everybody can benefit from it, you're going to get their assistance. But if you don't have that, asking them for something, it's very, very difficult.

. . . .

Former FBI Agent: If I had to rate it on a ten-point scale, I'd give them about a 2 or a 1.5 in terms of sharing information.

Ms. Hill: Well, could you tell us what your experience was? Why do you say that?

Former FBI Agent: [P]art of the problem here, I think, is being able to communicate with them. . . .