

register for classes and, therefore, became “a non-immigrant status violator.” The INS was not aware of these violations until after September 11.

VIII. The Rising Threat and the Context of the September 11 Attacks

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A basic question before the Joint Inquiry was whether the Intelligence Community adequately recognized the threat international terrorist groups posed to the United States. The Inquiry therefore examined the evolution of the terrorist threat to this country, the Community’s response since the creation of the Counterterrorist Center (CTC) in 1986, and what the Community has or should have learned from all sources, including previous terrorist attacks, about the threat to the United States.

[Understanding the September 11 attacks requires an historical perspective broader than the details of those attacks. Consequently, the Joint Inquiry took note of major acts of terrorism directed against the United States in the 1980s and early 1990s, including:

- The 1983 bombings of the U.S. Embassy and Marine Barracks in Beirut by Islamic Jihad
- The March 1984 kidnapping and murder of William Buckley, a CIA official in Beirut, and subsequent kidnapping of other U.S. citizens in Lebanon
- The April 1984 bombing of a restaurant frequented by members of the U.S. armed forces near Torrejon Airbase in Spain by the Iranian-backed terrorist group Hizbollah
- The September 1984 bombing of the U.S. Embassy annex in Beirut
- The June 1985 hijacking of TransWorld Airways Flight 847
- The October 1985 hijacking of the cruise ship Achille Lauro