

_____]. The Plan was the Intelligence Community's strongest response before September 11, 2001 to the Bin Ladin threat and the DCI's declaration. The Plan is examined in greater depth in the chapter on covert action].

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M. Shortcomings in the Intelligence Community's Response

The Joint Inquiry has determined that the Intelligence Community as a whole was not on a war footing before September 11. For example, knowledge of the DCI's declaration appears to have been limited. Some senior managers at NSA and DIA were aware of the statement, but many in the FBI had not heard of it. For example, the Assistant Director of the FBI's Counterterrorism Division testified to the Joint Inquiry that he "was not specifically aware of that declaration of war." Senior officers in other components of the government, including the Defense Department and the U.S. military, apparently were also unaware of the declaration. When asked whether he knew that the United States had been at war with Bin Ladin, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage responded:

I was briefed in January and February [2001], leading to my hearings in March before the U.S. Senate. The term "at war" was, to my knowledge, not used. There was no question, though, that we were in a struggle with al-Qa'ida, and al-Qa'ida was the very first thing that the administration took on at the deputies level.

[The Joint Inquiry also reviewed whether the DCI's declaration of war had any real effect in the covert action area prior to September 11, 2001. Cofer Black, former CTC Chief, explained in a statement to the Joint Inquiry: "[A]fter 9/11, the gloves came off]."

[Resources dedicated to counterterrorism generally increased during the 1990s. Notwithstanding the DCI's December 1998 exhortation to spare no resources, however, counterterrorism had to compete with other intelligence priorities. Senior CIA officers pointed to, for example, a variety of regional and global issues as intelligence priorities that required resource allocations. In testimony before the Joint Inquiry, the DCI took note of those competing intelligence requirements]:

As I "declared war" against al-Qa'ida in 1998 – in the aftermath of the East Africa embassy bombings – we were in our fifth year of round-the-clock support to Operation Southern Watch in Iraq. Just three months earlier, we were embroiled in answering questions on the India and [page 244] Pakistan nuclear tests and trying to determine how we could surge more people to understanding