

- Attention to the threat to and vulnerabilities of the U.S. homeland; and
- Discussion of FBI involvement in the plan.

The Assistant Director of the FBI's Counterterrorism Division testified to the Joint Inquiry that the FBI had no war plan against Bin Ladin: "Absolutely, we did not [have a plan] at that time." When asked how the FBI's counterterrorism program fit into the overall Community program, the Assistant Director replied:

I am not sure if I know the answer to that. I talked to [the DCI] briefly about this. I have talked to [the CTC Chief] before -- the answer to your question is, I don't know the answer.

The lack of involvement by agencies other than the CIA is particularly troubling, given gaps in efforts by those agencies to address the threat. For example, while the CIA devoted resources to Bin Ladin, covert action, and Afghanistan, the FBI focused on investigating funding for terrorist groups other than al-Qa'ida, even though FBI leadership recognized after the embassy bombings in August 1998 that al-Qa'ida posed an increasing threat. In some FBI field offices, there was little appreciation for Bin Ladin and al-Qa'ida, including the San Diego office where FBI agents would discover after September 11 connections between terrorist sympathizers and at least two hijackers.

Consistent with this evidence of the absence of a comprehensive strategy is a recent finding by the Inspector General for the Department of Justice that "[t]he FBI has never performed a comprehensive written assessment of the risk of the terrorist threat facing the United States": [page 250]

Such an assessment would be useful not only to define the nature, likelihood, and severity of the threat but also [to] identify intelligence gaps that need to be addressed. Moreover, . . . comprehensive threat and risk assessments would be useful in determining where to allocate attention and resources . . . on programs and initiatives to combat terrorism.

This assessment still had not been completed as recently as FBI Director Mueller's Joint Inquiry testimony on October 17, 2002. Likewise, the DCI's National Intelligence Council never produced a National Intelligence Estimate on the threat al-Qa'ida and Bin Ladin posed to the United States.