

[Absent a comprehensive strategy for combating the threat Bin Ladin posed, the DCI could not be assured that the entire Intelligence Community would focus on the “war.” The record of the Joint Inquiry also establishes that the DCI was unable or unwilling to enforce priorities and marshal resources in accordance with his declaration that the Intelligence Community was “at war.” Despite the DCI’s declaration, the Joint Inquiry heard repeatedly about CIA intelligence priorities that competed with Bin Ladin for personnel and funds, including other high priority intelligence targets worldwide].

NSA Director Hayden described to the Joint Inquiry the situation at his agency before September 11:

We, like everyone else at the table, were stretched thin in September [2001]. The war against terrorism was our number one priority. We had about five number one priorities. And we had to balance what we were doing against all of them.

General Hayden also explained that he knew what NSA had to do to target Bin Ladin, but he had been unable to obtain sufficient Community support and resources:

Given all the other intelligence priorities, it would have been difficult at that time within the [Intelligence Community] or the Department of Defense to accept the kind of resource decisions that would have been necessary to make our effort against the target more robust. NSA was focused heavily on [a range of regional and global issues]. Our resources, both human and financial, were in decline. Our [page 251] efforts in 2000 to churn money internally were not accepted by the Community; its reliance on [signals intelligence] had made it reluctant to give it up.

The Joint Inquiry record establishes that, even within the CIA, the DCI did not enforce priorities or marshal resources effectively against the al-Qa’ida threat. Despite the DCI’s declaration of war against Bin Ladin, there is substantial evidence that the CIA’s Counterterrorist Center had insufficient personnel before September 11, which had a substantial impact on its ability to detect and monitor al-Qa’ida. For example, a former CTC Chief testified before the Joint Inquiry that he did not have the resources to counter the threat Bin Ladin posed:

The three concepts I would like to leave you with are people, the finances, and operational approvals or political authorities. We didn’t have enough of any of these before 9/11.

When asked why personnel were not marshaled to CTC to fight Bin Ladin’s network, the former Chief recalled the CIA’s Deputy Director of Operations explaining that there were not enough