

- Former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft testified that as a result of American freedoms and civil liberties, “the safest place in the world for a terrorist [page 256] to be is inside the United States. . . . As long as [terrorists] don’t do something that trips them up against our laws, they can do pretty much all they want.”
- Richard Clarke, former NSC Special Coordinator for Counterterrorism, contends that, with the exception of the New York office, FBI field offices around the country were “clueless” about counterterrorism and al-Qa’ida and did not make these targets priorities. Former National Security Advisor Berger testified that the FBI was not sufficiently focused on counterterrorism before September 11.
- As the Joint Inquiry record confirms, FBI officials working on terrorism faced competing priorities and the ranks of those focusing on al-Qa’ida were not sufficiently augmented. Only one FBI strategic analyst focused exclusively on al-Qa’ida before September 11. The former Chief of the FBI’s International Terrorism Section stated that he had more than one hundred fewer Special Agents working on international terrorism on September 11 than he did in August 1998.
- Interviews of FBI New York field office and FBI Headquarters personnel suggest that the New York Field Office, the office of origin for all major Bin Ladin-related investigations, focused primarily on investigating overseas attacks.
- The terrorist threat was viewed through a narrow lens because of the FBI’s case-based approach. Interviews of FBI personnel show that analysts were sent to operational units to assist in case work rather than assess data gathered by the various field offices.
- According to FBI agents, FBI counterterrorism training was extremely limited before September 11.