

. . . a specific aspect of the concept of operations was its provisions for a highly-protected merged data base containing all U.S. intelligence on terrorism, regardless of sensitivity, sourcing or collection methods. This was a Director of DIA initiative to overcome the evident vulnerabilities posed by insufficient intelligence sharing within the U.S. Intelligence Community. Although Intelligence Community principals endorsed the idea at the time and since, it has so far not been implemented. . . . Legacy rules, policies, interpretation of regulations, and agency cultures continue to impede information and data sharing. As a result, we cannot bring our full analytical power to bear on the terrorist threat, nor can we provide the best possible support to military planners, operators, decision makers or to other consumers of intelligence. . . . [P]rogress is being made and there are positive developments under way. But so far remedies remain insufficient to the magnitude of the problem.

Witnesses also described a lack of collaboration among analysts within the Intelligence Community. Terrorist-related intelligence often consists of small fragments of seemingly disparate information. Information that may seem unimportant to one agency may be critical to another. Capitalizing on the analytical strengths of each intelligence agency to understand the terrorist target from different angles should be paramount. Unfortunately, there was no mechanism in place to enable inter-agency collaboration. A former CTC Director of Terrorism Analysis described the problem:

I think the only way to overcome the various cultures of the various agencies is to force the interaction . . . where you're putting people together and getting the understanding. You do find out there are real concerns. People aren't trying to be jerks on purpose. They have problems and you start finding out about those and learning how to work with those.

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Although it was established with the intention that it would be the Intelligence Community's hub for counterterrorism activities, some suggested that CTC's operational focus significantly overshadowed collaborative strategic analysis. In interviews, NSA analysts, for example, said that CTC viewed them as subordinate, despite the value of their products. Constructive CTC feedback on their reports was rare. A positive step was taken in early 2001 when NSA and CTC analysts began holding bi-weekly video teleconferences, but these were suspended following September 11 due to workload demands.

DIA analysts reported that their efforts are not fully appreciated by CIA. According to a senior DIA official, a lack of trust on the part of collectors and all-source analysts underlay the failure of the CIA to share information with the rest of the Intelligence Community concerning the January 2000 Malaysia meeting that involved at least two of the September 11 hijackers.