

The magnitude of the CIA's watchlisting failures and the potential impact of this information-hoarding upon our country's preparedness for terrorist attack may be seen in the contrast between the CIA's pre-September 11 performance in this respect and its performance after the attacks. Within a month after September 11, the CIA provided more than 1,500 CIRs to TIPOFF that had it had previously withheld. The State Department reported a 455 percent increase in the number of names CIA provided during the months after the attacks – with the total provided rising from 1,761 during the three months before September 11 to 4,251 in the three months afterwards.³¹ But for the shock of September 11, these *thousands* of potential terrorists would presumably still be free to obtain visas and enter the United States without anyone asking any questions, thanks to the CIA's apparent belief that only *it* can be trusted with its information. As it turns out, two of the September 11 hijackers did precisely this.

(2) *The al-Mihdhar and al-Hazmi Story*

What such watchlisting problems can mean in practice is illustrated by the failures of the CIA and FBI in dealing with Al-Qa'ida-affiliated terrorists Khalid al-Mihdhar and Nawaf al-Hazmi. Their story is ably recounted by in the body of the JIS report, but its highlights are worth repeating here. Al-Mihdhar and al-Hazmi attended a terrorist meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in early January 2000.³² This meeting was known to – and surveiled by – the CIA, which already knew that al-Mihdhar possessed a multiple-entry visa permitting him to travel to the United States. The National Security Agency (NSA) also independently possessed information linking al-Hazmi to Al-Qa'ida. Neither the CIA nor NSA, however, saw fit to

³¹ JIS, written statement presented to SSCI/HPSCI joint hearing (September 20, 2002), at 15.

³² JIS, written statement presented to SSCI/HPSCI joint hearing (September 20, 2002), at 5.