

mandate to “lay a basis for assessing the accountability of institutions and officials of government” and despite its extensive findings documenting recurring and widespread Community shortcomings in the months and years leading up to September 11, the Joint Inquiry has not seen fit to identify *any* of the persons whose decisions left us so unprepared. Careful readers of the Joint Inquiry’s findings will be left with little doubt as to the identities of at least some of the officials responsible. It is unfortunate, however, that the Joint Inquiry has shied away from its oversight responsibilities in refusing to provide more of the accountability to which we ask the IC to subject itself. I thus urge President Bush carefully to examine the Joint Inquiry’s findings in order to determine the extent to which he has been well served by his “generals” in the Intelligence Community.

Some have argued that we should avoid this issue of accountability lest we encourage the development of a worse climate of intra-Community risk-aversion and legal timorousness than the Committees have already seen during the 1990s. I do not believe this is the case. To begin with, the failings leading up to September 11 were not ones of impetuosity, the punishment for which might indeed discourage the risk-taking inherent in and necessary to good intelligence work. The failures of September 11 were generally ones not of reckless *commission* but rather of nervous *omission*. They were failures to take the necessary steps to rise above petty parochial interests and concerns in the service of the common good. These are not failings that will be exacerbated by accountability. Quite the contrary. And, more importantly, it is clear that without real accountability, these many problems will simply remain unaddressed – leaving us terribly and needlessly vulnerable in the future.

By no means do I advocate a crusade to hold low-level employees accountable for the failures of September 11. There clearly were some individual failings, but for the most part our