

Another CIA official indicated, post-September 11: "The second thing that was clear, as I showed [CTC personnel] the cable from March 5, [2000] -- just the look on their face told me everything I needed to know. They just hadn't seen it. It passed them by." The former CTC Chief added:

We have asked everyone have you seen this and what action was taken. It did not attract appropriate attention so that they could have been watchlisted. I think the Director has already mentioned that that was not done at the time. I think that it was reasonable by certainly March 5 that we would have been in the position, we should have been in a position to firmly watchlist this. I just have to underscore that we do this hundreds of times a month. It should have been done. It was not. We have very good people working this issue. It was not done, and it was not done because of the press of lots of other work. We probably should have picked up on this in early March, but we'd gone by for two months. The delay in that, sir, was the [], took about six weeks to get that information to us, and in March we should have picked up on it. All things being equal, they should have been watchlisted; I think that month we watchlisted about 150 people. It should have been done. It wasn't. It was a fact of life. And I think what contributed to that was these same officers watching this operation were also doing a lot of other things. So it's like balls in the air. There gets to a point where you don't treat each one with the attention that it deserves.

There was also a March 6, 2001 cable from the field that called attention to the portion of the March 5 cable regarding al-Hazmi's travel to the United States, but CTC personnel also did not read that cable at the time.

Senior NSA and CIA officials have acknowledged that, in hindsight, they would have devoted many more personnel resources to the al-Qa'ida target and expedited the development of certain collection capabilities. However, they testified that the operating environment prior to September 11 – a combination of escalating requirements and limited resources – limited their ability to respond to the growing terrorist threat.

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Those problems were aggravated by shortcomings that existed in the Intelligence Community's budgeting practices. The President annually submits to Congress an Intelligence Community budget for the coming fiscal year. Included in that request are both ongoing and new programs that are subject to long established, well understood oversight and accountability procedures. Supplemental appropriations usually are granted in reaction to unforeseen events that are not part of the President's budget