

As a result, significant agency resources were devoted to documenting authorities and responsibilities. For example, no less than seven executive-level memoranda (including one from the President) have been necessary to reach agreement and define the responsibilities and authorities of CIA and NSA in one counterterrorism effort. The agencies also established a Senior Partnership Advisory Group to continue to deal with these issues and CIA assigned several officers to NSA to enhance technology development.

Prior to September 11, the Director of NSA publicly acknowledged the challenge posed by Usama Bin Ladin's access to the modern communications technology developed by a three trillion dollar industry. Despite this recognition, NSA failed to focus its efforts against al-Qa'ida's use of certain forms of this technology, [—————]. NSA also had not adapted technology fully to the challenge of transnational threats such as terrorism. These present much different challenges than those posed by state actors, such as the former Soviet Union, that were NSA's primary targets in the 1980's. As a result, prior to September 11, NSA provided little counterterrorism intelligence from certain important technical sources. More critically, NSA has not been able to describe to the Joint Inquiry its plans to address this technical problem on a larger scale.

[Page 59]

Similarly, NSA could not demonstrate its current analytic tools to the Joint Inquiry and could not identify upgrades that will assist NSA analysts in identifying critical intelligence amidst the large volumes of information it collects. In the absence of such tools, NSA language analysts must still conduct the bulk of their work with pencil and paper. Many develop their own personal "databases" on index cards that cannot be made readily available to counterterrorism analysts at other agencies. NSA's highly publicized TRAILBLAZER program was often cited by NSA officials as the solution to many of these problems, but the implementation of those solutions is three to five years away and confusion still exists at NSA as to what will actually be provided by that program.

The FBI's Deputy Assistant Director for Counterterrorism Analysis testified to the Joint Inquiry that "one of the FBI's major deficiencies was that the FBI confronted a