

In addition, because of the limitations of ACS, a number of addressees on the Phoenix communication, including the Chief of the FBI Headquarters Radical Fundamentalist Unit, were not aware of the communication before September 11. Further, even though that Unit handled both the Phoenix communication and the exchanges with the Minneapolis FBI field office in connection with the Moussaoui investigation, no one connected the two matters. Likewise, the Minneapolis FBI field office agents investigating Moussaoui had no reliable way of determining whether there was information in FBI files about threats to aviation or terrorist plots to hijack planes and, therefore, did not know about the Phoenix communication and other concerns about Middle Eastern men taking flight lessons.

While ACS and most other FBI databases are classified at the Secret level, a large percentage of the information disseminated throughout the Intelligence Community is classified Top Secret and, therefore, cannot be maintained on ACS. The information is instead maintained on a separate database to which FBI counterterrorism personnel do [page 62] not have access at their desks. Further, the CIA places human intelligence information in a special compartment at the Secret level and that information also cannot be shared within the FBI's databases.

The Chief of the FBI's Radical Fundamentalist Unit described the FBI's situation in September 24, 2002 testimony to the Joint Inquiry:

. . . [C]ommunications coming into our building from NSA, from CIA cannot be integrated into our existing databases. So if an analyst is working, say, on a subject in Phoenix division and they run that person's name through our databases, they will not retrieve information on that person that other agencies may also have. It is required of them to get up, walk over to a different set of--or a different computer that has access to a different database and search that name in that database; and the two databases will never come together and be integrated. So it is a setup for failure in terms of keeping a strategic picture of what we are up against.

Although some FBI personnel have access to separate Top Secret Intelligence Community networks, the FBI's computer systems are not linked to Intelligence Community systems or even to the Department of Justice.