Meeting the Threat of Terrorism after September 11

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Chairman Kean, Vice Chairman Hamilton, Commissioners and Commission staff, Representatives of the victims, and survivors of the attacks, I am very grateful for this opportunity to speak before you this morning.

I am speaking today as a Professor in the Georgetown University Security Studies Program and as a non-resident Senior Fellow at the Brookings' Saban Center for Middle East Policy. My remarks are solely my own opinion: they do not reflect my past work for the intelligence community, RAND, the U.S. Congress, or other branches of the U.S. government.

According to its charter, the Commission's goal should be to explore the entirety of the disaster on September 11 in order to recommend reforms that will reduce the chances that America will ever face a repeat – or worse – of that tragic attack. This requires not only understanding what went wrong on September 11, but also how the U.S. government has changed its approach to terrorism in the months that have followed the attack.

In my remarks today, I offer suggestions for where the Commission should concentrate its efforts in the coming months. In making these suggestions, I will discuss three subjects: my assessment of why al-Qa'ida and its affiliates have proven such a difficult adversary for the United States; selected problems the Intelligence Community had in confronting al-Qa'ida and other terrorist groups before September 11; and broader weaknesses of U.S. counterterrorism policy.

Terrorist Groups Are a Hard Target … and Al-Qa'ida Is Harder

Most terrorist groups fall into the intelligence category of "hard targets." Their members are difficult to identify, their actions are difficult to anticipate, and their organizations difficult to infiltrate. Only fifty percent of terrorist groups survive a year,

and only five percent survive a decade: those that endure generally are skilled at minimizing their exposure to government law enforcement and intelligence agencies.[i]

Even within the rarified world of terrorism, al-Qa'ida is an exceptionally difficult target to counter. Indeed, in many ways al-Qa'ida is a unique adversary. Al-Qa'ida's methods and structure differ considerably from those used by other terrorist groups historically, and they also differ from those of other exceptionally dangerous terrorist groups such as the Lebanese Hezbollah or the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

Unlike many radical groups, al-Qa'ida cadres carry out many functions. We know al-Qa'ida has demonstrated a capability for exceptionally lethal terrorist attacks on a global scale. But terrorism is not its only, nor necessarily its primary, function. Much of its mission is focused on training individuals to conduct a form of r guerrilla war against regimes and their armed forces. Al-Qa'ida backs Islamist insurgencies in the Philippines, Chechnya, Indonesia, Georgia, Algeria, and elsewhere in the world. Al-Qa'ida also sees itself as a missionary organization, trying to spread its own interpretation of Islam. Thus it seeks to influence the agendas of other terrorist groups, making them more anti-American and less inclined toward any compromise with secular states.

Al-Qa'ida also has spun a web of relationships with Islamist groups that espouse similar, though not always identical, goals. Public estimates of al-Qa'ida's size range from the hundreds to the tens of thousands. Experts at both the low and high end of this range are not guilty of naïve optimism or fearful speculation. Instead, both are correct. Al-Qa'ida is at the same time a small group of individuals who have sworn loyalty to 'Usama bin Ladin and the nexus of a broader network of Islamic radicals. The small group focused on terrorism, most of whose members are highly skilled and dedicated, probably numbers in the low hundreds. Other members of the al-Qa'ida core helped the Taliban fight its enemies and are supporting guerrilla conflicts in Chechnya and elsewhere.[ii]

This core group is in turn connected with like-minded groups such as the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and literally dozens of other radical organizations. Beyond this circle of terrorist groups, Al-Qa'ida is linked to a broader worldwide *jihad* movement that includes many components that U.S. allies in the Islamic world see as legitimate. This would include those engaged in conflict on

behalf of Muslims in Bosnia and Chechnya. Many members of these groups fought and forged close ties in Afghanistan or in other guerrilla struggles. They are also linked to an even broader network that includes charities supporting relief in Chechnya, Islamic education efforts in Southeast Asia, and fundraising in Europe. Together, these like-minded groups and actively supportive individuals probably number in the tens of thousands.

Al-Qa'ida has woven all these elements together, into a broader network that while hardly unified, is capable of working together for common goals. A U.S. intelligence officer testified that al-Qa'ida and like-minded groups are tributaries in a broader river of *jihad*, but that in the last 10 years these tributaries have come together, magnifying their force.[iii]

Most extremist organizations are highly intolerant and often see other radical organizations as more dangerous than the regimes they oppose. For example, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Gamaat Islamiyya – both of which advocated Islamic government in Egypt and the violent overthrow of the Mubarak government – reserved much of their invective and overall energy to fighting each other. Many religious groups also draw entirely from one ethnic group, regarding others with suspicion. Al-Qa'ida's activities, on the other hand, are not limited to radical Sunni Arab circles. Instead, it tries to bridge gaps among like-minded groups and forge ties to revolutionaries, whether or not they share all or even most of its goals. Al-Qa'ida, for example, is reported to have worked tactically with the Lebanese Hezbollah, even though many Sunni Islamists regard Shi'a Hezbollah members as apostates.[iv] Bin Ladin's call for resistance to the U.S. attack on Iraq also reflects a willingness to support hostile secular regimes when this suits his purposes.

In addition to its multi-layered web of connections to other groups, al-Qa'ida also has a sophisticated, and varied, organizational and command structure. The multi-faceted nature of this structure makes it very resilient and resistant to permanent disruption. The attacks on *USS Cole* and the U.S. Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam appeared to follow a traditional hierarchy, with senior leaders – including Usama bin Ladin himself – being involved in their planning and junior officers or local activists carrying out the attacks. In addition, however, al-Qa'ida has worked with local groups that came to it for

assistance, acting to provide support and expertise while those groups took the lead. In Jordan, for example, local groups apparently contacted al-Qa'ida and requested support in conducting attacks during Millennium celebrations, rather than the other way around.

Al-Qa'ida also uses a third approach – sending out myriad unskilled operatives such as Richard Reid (the alleged "shoebomber") and Ahmed Ressam (who was arrested crossing into the United States to conduct attacks before Millennium celebrations) who operate with little central guidance and support. These individuals are far less competent than the operatives al-Qa'ida uses for its most important operations, but they nevertheless pose a lethal threat. Finally, as noted above, al-Qa'ida also supports insurgencies, seeking to create and nurture them so they can act on their own.[v]

Terrorists group survive or collapse in large part based upon their ability to maintain operational security. Al-Qa'ida's inner core is extremely sensitive to this issue. For example, the instructions of the "jihad manual" that al-Qa'ida has circulated focus blending in and ensuring that the overall organization is not disrupted.[vi] The September 11 attacks are painful proof of how well the organization has learned the need for secrecy. Despite the numerous arrests and detentions since the attacks, it is remarkable how few individuals interned knew details about the attacks. Similarly, the significance of the role in al-Qa'ida played by Khalid Shaykh Mohammad, the senior al-Qa'ida planner who was recently arrested, was not well-known to U.S. intelligence until after the attacks.[vii]

Al-Qa'ida has demonstrated an ability to revise its methods and structure in response to setbacks or failures. Its operatives regularly review lessons learned in order to improve the chances of success for future attacks.[viii] This gives the organization the ability to recuperate quickly from disaster or successful countermeasures.

Finally, al-Qa'ida's leadership has a strategic view of terror. In addition to using violence to shock and intimidate enemies, al-Qa'ida leaders clearly seek to use the reactions of the United States and its other adversaries against them. For example, it is now clear that Bin Ladin sought to bring a heavy U.S. military response to the September 11 attacks on Afghanistan, believing (so far, wrongly) that this would precipitate a broader clash between the West and the Islamic world. The current US military operation in Iraq may also be viewed by him in this context. Although he clearly

underestimated U.S. resolve, power and skill, in both his small and large actions he has attempted to manipulate and use the American response to suit his ends.

The Intelligence Community and al-Qa'ida before September 11

A range of critics have excoriated the CIA and other intelligence agencies for their performance in counterterrorism, faulting them for not stopping the attacks of September 11. A closer scrutiny of the factual background, however, reveals a complex story regarding how the attackers escaped detection and arrest. The Intelligence Community missed opportunities to place several of the 19 terrorists on watch lists. More important, several suggestive leads were not pursued. But, even 18 months later, the trail on the 19 hijackers is surprisingly bare. The attackers and their masters were as skilled as they were dangerous, and they managed to operate in the seams that exist in our structure of defenses. There appears to have been no single action or simple step that, had it been taken, would have stopped the attack.

More broadly, the Intelligence Community – particularly the CIA – did well in providing strategic warning of al-Qa'ida threat. The identity of the foe, the scale of its ambitions, and its lethality were known and communicated in a timely manner. Senior policy makers from both the Clinton and Bush administration have testified that Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) George Tenet and other CIA officials warned that al-Qa'ida was planning lethal "spectaculars" against Americans. Indeed, a constant post-September 11 refrain heard from those who tracked al-Qa'ida before September 11 was that the attacks shocked them, but did not surprise them. As someone who was working with the CIA's Counterterrorist Center before September 11, I can testify personally to the concern and dedication of the individuals who were following al-Qa'ida. No one was sleeping on the job.

Indeed, as organizations, components of the Intelligence Community took important steps to bolster their counterterrorism capabilities before the September 11 attacks. These steps include increasing the number of personnel dedicated to counterterrorism in general; augmenting the particular effort against al-Qa'ida; aggressively using renditions to deliver suspected terrorists to authorities in other

countries; improved coordination with foreign liaison services; an increased FBI role overseas; and better (though still inadequate) information sharing among agencies.[ix] In hindsight, these steps look paltry and inadequate given the growing threat. But we must recognize that they were controversial and even deemed bold before September 11.

Nevertheless, it is clear the Intelligence Community could do better. In my judgment, many of the problems that the Intelligence Community faced in meeting the challenge of al-Qa'ida stemmed from broader organizational and analytic weaknesses.

Poor Organization for Counterterrorism

The Intelligence Community's organization is a hybrid, based in part on the type of intelligence gathered (signals intelligence, human intelligence, etc.) and, in companion part, on the ultimate consumer of that information (the White House, the Defense Department, the military, and so on.) As a result, there is a multiplicity of structures doing similar work (i.e. the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, the CIA, and the Defense Intelligence Agency all in essence do "all source" analysis) with curious gaps remaining. A particularly important gap exists between the gathering of intelligence domestically by the FBI, and the overseas focus of the rest of the Intelligence Community, with another between domestic law enforcement and intelligence functions.

This structure may work well for gathering intelligence on Iraq's military or on China's political leadership, but it works poorly for counterterrorism. The Congressional 9/11 Joint Inquiry found that, "Prior to September 11, the Intelligence Community was neither well organized nor equipped, and did not adequately adapt, to meet the challenge posed by global terrorists focused on targets within the domestic United States."[x] Particularly troubling was a lack of sharing between those tracking radicals at home and those tracking radicals overseas. At the working level, analysts and operators often did not know what information was available, let alone its content.

This lack of a proper organization structure had severe implications for counterterrorism. Information often was not shared among Intelligence Community agencies, not only because of bureaucratic jurisdictional concerns, but also due to ignorance of other agencies' needs. Collaboration often suffered. The FBI and the NSA,

for example, did not have a plan or clear division of labor for tracking the communications of suspected radicals.[xi] As a result, policy makers were not properly informed with all the necessary information.

Outside the realm of any particular agency, there was little sense of an integrated effort across the entire Intelligence Community. Although several members of the Community took the al-Qa'ida threat exceptionally seriously, they often did not collaborate. The Congressional 9/11 Inquiry, for example, found that the Community lacked a "comprehensive counterterrorist strategy for combating the threat posed by Usama bin Ladin."[xii] As an example of this lack of collaboration, the Inquiry found that there was little technological cooperation, despite the obvious benefits this would bring.

Because there was no firm central control, prioritization was difficult. The CIA had responsibilities for supporting war-fighting in Iraq and the Balkans, monitoring China and other potential rivals, providing economic analyses, and so on. For the FBI, deadbeat dads, drug running and infrastructure protection competed for resources with counterterrorism. There was no single plan they everyone followed.

The Director of Central Intelligence's lack of budget authority contributes to this problem. Because the DCI only controlled perhaps 15 percent of the pre-September 11 intelligence budget, much of the Community outside the CIA did not see him as their leader – or at least felt no compulsion to observe the DCI's directives if they ran counter to their own bureaucratic imperatives. Consequently, even though after the 1998 Embassy attacks the DCI "declared war" on al-Qa'ida, few agencies outside the CIA got the message and dramatically changed their priorities in any meaningful way.

A Gap at Home

This lack of a Community response contributed to perhaps the gravest weakness of the Intelligence Community: the overall lack of focus on the threat to the American homeland. The FBI lacked the capacity to assess the risk to the U.S. homeland, while the CIA, the NSA, and other agencies were focused overseas. There was little attempt to marry up privileged information that only the FBI held with broader CIA information, and vice versa.

Before September 11, the Federal Bureau of Investigation was not properly structured or oriented for counterterrorism or, more broadly, for intelligence work. The list of FBI shortcomings revealed after September 11 is long. The Bureau often failed to collect relevant information. For example, when Abdul Hakim Murad was interviewed in connection with his participation in a plot to bomb as many as 12 airplanes over the Pacific in 1995, the FBI did not devote enough attention to his possible plans to crash an airplane into CIA Headquarters. More generally, the FBI did not place opportunities for collection in context, failing to link suspicious flight-training activity in Arizona to the heightened national threat level.

The information collected was often not disseminated, either within or outside of the FBI. The FBI's antediluvian computer system, and case-file approach to holding information, meant that information was not regularly passed from the field to headquarters, to other FBI agents and analysts who might be working on similar problems, or to agencies and analysts outside the FBI. Two former White House officials working on counterterrorism wrote about learning FBI information from trial transcripts of al-Qa'ida suspects, noting, "In many instances, we discovered information so critical that we were amazed that the relevant agencies did not inform us of it while we were at the NSC."[xiii]

Nor did the FBI conduct strategic analysis. The FBI did not prepare a National Intelligence Estimate-like document that provided an assessment of the al-Qa'ida threat to the United States or the radical presence in this country. Few people working in the FBI with counterterrorism responsibilities knew about al-Qa'ida. What knowledge existed was largely limited to the New York Field Office only.

The FBI culture and organization fostered these problems. Before September 11, the FBI was primarily a law enforcement agency, and it was probably the world's best. But law enforcement focuses on prosecuting a case, not on understanding a broader network. Law enforcement emphasizes gathering specific evidence, not collecting and sharing possibly relevant information. At the same time, the decentralized FBI field office structure allowed offices to set their own priorities, few of which focused on terrorism or al-Qa'ida.

The result was not only that the FBI was not conscious of the al-Qa'ida activities in the United States, but also that it did not know the depth of its ignorance. Former National Security Advisor Samuel ("Sandy") Berger testified that the FBI informed him that there was little al-Qa'ida-related activity in the United States and that this activity was fully covered. Press reports after September 11 suggest that several of the 19 hijackers had extensive links to radicals in America itself, relying on them for logistical assistance.[xiv]

Was 9/11 a Policy Failure?

Concentrating attention solely on the Intelligence Community's deficiencies, however, misses the context of counterterrorism. A broader review of the U.S. government's performance – in both the Clinton and the Bush administrations before September 11 – suggests that counterterrorism policy was flawed or inadequate. As a result, the Intelligence Community's successful strategic warning of the growing al-Qa'ida threat was not met with a proper response, and lapses in intelligence were not vigorously identified and sought to be remedied by a watchful policy community. Nor were defenses increased sufficiently.

Particular problems that merit attention include the following: 1. a limited response to past attacks; 2. too much emphasis on law enforcement; 3. an unwillingness to stop terrorist support networks; 4. continued terrorist sanctuary and permissive environments; 5. unclear prioritization; 6. few defensive measures at home; and 7. an unclear Congressional role.

Limited Response to Past Attacks

The United States did not have a strong and well-considered policy regarding how it would respond to terrorist attacks before September 11. The U.S. response to the 1996 attack on Khobar Towers, in which 19 Americans died, and the 2000 attack on *USS Cole,* where 17 Americans died, was limited to rhetoric only. The 1998 attacks on the U.S. embassies led to missile strikes on a Sudanese pharmaceutical plant that was deemed to

be to chemical weapons and on terrorist camps on Afghanistan. Although more aggressive by the standards of Khobar and the *Cole,* the response was still paltry. Indeed, al-Qa'ida and its allies exploited these U.S. strikes to bolster recruitment, demonstrating to potential supporters that they were challenging the United States and that the United States was too weak to respond.

Too Much Emphasis on Law Enforcement

One of the biggest problems was that the United States relied too heavily on law enforcement tools such as trials and arrests to fight terrorism before September 11. The result was a neglect of other instruments of national power, including the U.S. military. In addition, there was an emphasis on finding the perpetrators of the last attack rather than stopping the next one. For example, senior FBI officials have testified that the FBI focused more on convicting than disrupting before September 11.[xv] In addition, support for trials is often highly resource intensive, placing considerable demands on the Intelligence Community that might otherwise be spent disrupting future attacks. The Congressional 9/11 Inquiry found this reliance was really a default decision rather than a strategic one, with many law enforcement officials themselves seeing their role as an adjunct to other measures such as military action.[xvi]

Even successful law enforcement measures also often fail to stop the terrorist masterminds. Arrests of individuals linked to the attacks during the Millennium or the 1998 Embassy bombings, for example, often involved low-level "foot soldiers" rather than key planners or operatives.

An Unwillingness to Stop Terrorist Support Networks

The United States did not focus on stopping recruitment, fundraising, and other logistical efforts before September 11 – even when these actions occurred on U.S. territory. A host of radical groups came to the United States to raise money, develop propaganda, and otherwise advance their cause. Although laws such as the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act enable the prosecution of terrorist fundraising,

in general this was not employed before September 11. Fundraising and recruiting were often deemed too difficult to prosecute, or too paltry in their penalties, to be worth the time of prosecutors.[xvii] This neglect of the logistics aspect of terrorism was a blunder, as the experience of other countries suggests that attacking logistical cells is a vital part of going on the offensive against terrorist groups.[xviii]

Continued Terrorist Sanctuary and Permissive Environments

U.S. policy left the issue of terrorist sanctuary unresolved. Al-Qa'ida was allowed to build an army of like-minded radicals outside the reach of the United States and its allies. This army later spread throughout the Middle East, Asia, Europe, and elsewhere, and ultimately into the United States. Arrests and trials did little against the army being built in this haven. One FBI agent mocked the idea of using law enforcement in response to al-Qa'ida's activities in Afghanistan: "[it] is like telling the FBI after Pearl Harbor, 'go to Tokyo and arrest the Emperor.'"[xix]

Policy makers were aware of the problem and responded to it, but in hindsight it is clear that they did not do enough. Bush administration officials have testified that they were undertaking a policy review in 2001 that proposed more aggressive actions against Afghanistan. National Security Adviser Berger testified that the Clinton administration was doing both covert and overt actions as well. But these efforts appear to have had little impact on al-Qa'ida before September 11.[xx]

Even more troubling, al-Qa'ida enjoyed a permissive environment in the West, including the United States. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz has testified that even more damaging than the training in Afghanistan was "the training that took place here in the United States and the planning that took place in Germany."[xxi] As with Afghanistan, this problem was not occurring without the knowledge of policy makers. The National Commission on Terrorism (the "Bremer Commission") warned in 2000 that the United States required a more nuanced view of state sponsorship because many supposed allies were tacitly or deliberately aiding radical groups.

Unclear Priorities

In general, it is not clear where terrorism was on the overall U.S. priority list. Many former and current U.S. officials claim that terrorism was "a top" priority well before September 11. But so too were Iraq, China, the Balkans, and other foreign policy issues. The lack of prioritization appears particularly acute with regard to coordination with foreign governments. At times this was justified. The possibility of an Indo-Pakistan nuclear war or the need to support U.S. forces fighting overseas is examples of issues that rightly demand senior attention. But all too often counterterrorism was lost due to a lack of coordination by the Executive branch. Although the U.S. Ambassador has responsibility for the overall management of the bilateral relationship, he or she often lacks the ability to enforce a set of priorities because control over Embassy personnel rests primarily with home agencies. Nor is it clear that counterterrorism was consistently declared a priority throughout the U.S. government, particularly when force protection concerns are excluded.

Few Defensive Measures at Home

Another policy flaw was the limited attention given to defensive measures against terrorism, particularly in the United States itself. In 1985, the "Report of the Secretary of State's Advisory Panel on Overseas Security" (the "Inman Report") examined the bombings of the U.S. Embassy and Marine Barracks in Lebanon and concluded, "If determined, well-trained and funded teams are seeking to do damage, they will eventually succeed."[xxii] Over 10 years later, in 1999, the "Report of the Accountability Review Boards on the Embassy Bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam" (better known as the "Crowe Commission") contended that "[W]e cannot count on having such intelligence to warn us of such attacks."[xxiii] Yet despite this finding that intelligence is *likely* to be lacking when facing a skilled adversary – and the Intelligence Community's warning that al-Qa'ida was planning lethal attacks – few defensive measures were initiated in the United States.

An Uncertain Congressional Role

Although the lion's share of scrutiny regarding the September 11 attacks has focused on the Intelligence Community and the Clinton and Bush administrations, Congress' role also needs to be examined. Congress, of course, provides the financial resources for intelligence, enacts the laws that limit or enable counterterrorism, scrutinizes the Executive branch's performance, and otherwise is a major player in the overall effort against counterterrorism.

It appears that the FBI's intelligence function did not receive the same level of oversight scrutiny as its law enforcement functions. The Judiciary Committee is intensely focused on the FBI's law enforcement role, but the Intelligence Committees have historically paid much less attention to the FBI's intelligence role.

In addition to its legislative and fiscal responsibilities, Congress is one of many contributors to a culture of risk aversion that many argue exists in the CIA and the FBI, making line agents feel that any mistakes would be treated harshly. The FBI in particular was battered by Congressional and internal investigations of Waco, Ruby Ridge, Los Alamos, and other problems. This can only have made the Bureau extremely cautious with regard to investigations.

Next Steps for the Commission

Since the September 11 attacks, funding for intelligence – and for counterterrorism in particular – has increased dramatically. Both policy makers and the intelligence community are focused on the threat of terrorism and alert to how it may change in the future.

The FBI in particular is in the midst of considerable change. These changes include not only personnel shifts and measures to improve its dilapidated information systems, but also an attempt to reform the organizational structure of the Bureau and to emphasize its intelligence functions over its law enforcement role. Although I commend FBI Director Mueller for his efforts to reform the Bureau, whether the FBI is able to change its culture, procedures, and organization in the dramatic ways necessary to fight terrorism effectively remains an open question.

Some changes may also create coordination problems in the future. The Department of Defense has taken a sensible step in creating the position of Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence to coordinate the myriad defense and military intelligence functions at the Department – functions that before September 11 were seldom coordinated within the Defense establishment, let alone the broader Intelligence Community. U.S. special operations forces also appear to be developing capabilities that may mirror those of the CIA. Although these measures will increase overall counterterrorism capabilities, without an integrated Intelligence Community, they appear to be leading to parallel rather than integrated measures to fight terrorism. This may lead to waste, turf battles, and other distractions from the real war we are fighting.

In evaluating changes since September 11, I also recommend that you and the other Commissioners evaluate U.S. counterterrorism policy in a comprehensive way. Although the United States has made truly impressive progress in disrupting and arresting senior al-Qa'ida leaders, successfully stopping al-Qa'ida or its next incarnation also requires hindering the recruitment of the next generation of radicals. For the United States to be victorious, the radical cause must be delegitimated.

Unfortunately, Al-Qa'ida continues to draw numerous recruits throughout the Middle East and the Islamic world more broadly. The September 11 attacks built on al-Qa'ida's past successes, making it clearly the leading anti-American movement in the world. Although it is difficult to get more than an anecdotal sense of the extent of al-Qa'ida's recruitment, Bin Ladin himself gloated about their successes in a videotape shot before the overthrow of the Taliban. A UN report released in December 2002 also noted that al-Qa'ida continued to attract recruits and raise money successfully.[xxiv]

Successfully assessing how well the United States is postured to fight terrorism depends on going beyond a narrow "body count" approach to counterterrorism and recognizing the many dimensions of the challenge. I urge the Commission to evaluate overall counterterrorism policy, not just whether particular individuals from al-Qa'ida itself are being arrested.

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Mr. Chairman, the work you and your fellow Commissioners are doing is essential if we are to ensure the security of Americans and triumph over the threat of terrorism. I am confident the Commission's work will enable our country to better meet future challenges and prevent a recurrence of the nightmare of September 11.

Any criticism of our government's performance must recognize that al-Qa'ida is simply too skilled an adversary to expect uninterrupted success. The United States and every other nation should recognize that the tremendous improvements that have occurred so far will reduce the frequency and lethality of attacks, but will not end them.

I am hopeful that we are turning the corner on al-Qa'ida and that the threat from this organization will decline in the coming months and years. But my hope is tinged with concern. I fear that our recent successes may be short-lived or that a new threat will emerge to replace al-Qa'ida. I also am concerned that much of the energy that went into counterterrorism is dissipating, and that only another horrific attack will remind us that the danger remains grave.

Endnotes

[i] Bruce Hoffman, "The Modern Terrorist Mindset," in Russell D. Howard and Reid L. Sawyer (eds.), *Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Understanding the New Security Environment* (Guilford, CT: McGraw Hill, 2002). p. 84.

[ii] Statement of Mr. Thomas Wilshere before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, December 18, 2001, p. 9.

[iii] Statement of Mr. Thomas Wilshere before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, December 18, 2001, p. 7.

[iv] Anonymous, *Through Our Enemies; Eyes: Osama Bin Ladin and the Future of America* (Brassey's, 2002), p. 85.

[v] Bruce Hoffman, "Rethinking Terrorism and Counterterrorism Since 9/11," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism,* 25, pp. 303-316 (2002), pp. 309-310.

[vi] See *The Al Qaeda Manual* (n.d).

[vii] *Final Report of the Joint Inquiry: Findings and Conclusions,* December 10, 2002, p. 5. Available at http://intelligence.senate.gov/findings.pdf

[viii] Hoffman, "Rethinking Terrorism and Counterterrorism," p. 307.

[ix] Joint Inquiry Staff Statement, "Hearings on the Intelligence Community's Response to Past Terrorist Attacks against the United States from February 1993 to September 2001," October 8, 2002. Available at: http://intelligence.senate.gov/0210hrg/021008/hill.pdf.

[x] *Final Report of the Joint Inquiry,* p. 6.

[xi] Joint Inquiry Staff Statement, "Hearings on the Intelligence Community's Response to Past Terrorist Attacks against the United States from February 1993 to September 2001," October 8, 2002. Available at: http://intelligence.senate.gov/0210hrg/021008/hill.pdf.

[xii] *Final Report of the Joint Inquiry,* p. 6.

[xiii] Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror* (New York: Random House, 2002), pp. xii-xiii.

[xiv] See, for example, Sarah Downey and Michael Hirsh, "A Safe Haven," *Newsweek,* September 30, 2002. See also, *Final Report of the Joint Inquiry,* p. 4.

[xv] See in particular the testimony of Dale Watson, the former Executive Assistant Director for Counterterrorism and Counterintelligence, before the House and Senate Intelligence Committees, September 26, 2002. Available at http://intelligence.senate.gov/0209hrg/020926/watson.pdf

[xvi] Joint Inquiry Staff Statement, "Hearings on the Intelligence Community's Response."

[xvii] The commendable actions of Mary Jo White, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, and her staff are notable exception to this general pattern of neglect.

[xviii] See Jeremy Shapiro and Benedicte Suzan, "The French Experience with Counterterrorism," *Survival* (Spring 2003.)

[xix] Joint Inquiry Staff Statement, "Hearings on the Intelligence Community's Response."

[xx] Joint Inquiry Staff Statement, "Hearings on the Intelligence Community's Response."

[xxi] Joint Inquiry Staff Statement, "Hearings on the Intelligence Community's Response."
[xxii] "Report of the Secretary of State's Advisory Panel on Overseas Security." Available at http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/inman/index.html.
[xxiii] "Report of the Accountability Review Boards on the Embassy Bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam." Available at
http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/arb/accountability_report.html.
[xxiv] Lynch, "Al Qaeda is Reviving, U.N. Report Says," *Washington Post,* December 18, 2002.