

25 Years After 9/11—Reviewing the 9/11 Commission & Intelligence Reform Impacts

Prepared statement by

Dr. Bruce Hoffman

*Shelby Cullom and Kathryn W. Davis Senior Fellow for Counterterrorism and Homeland Security
Council on Foreign Relations*

Before the

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence

United States House of Representatives

Second Session, 119th Congress

Hearing on 25 Years After 9/11—Reviewing the 9/11 Commission & Intelligence Reform Impacts

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Himes, for the opportunity to testify before the Committee. I am immensely honored and humbled to do so. Not least since I appeared before the Committee twenty-five years ago—just two weeks after the 9/11 attacks—when I also provided testimony on the subject of counterterrorism policy and intelligence reform.¹

First, let me state the obvious. The United States has not experienced another major terrorist attack like 9/11—nor anything even close. This is a towering achievement. During the dark and fearful days following 9/11, and the early years of the war on terrorism, such a result was then a matter of faith and hope—and was far from certain. Indeed, the horrific terrorist attacks that occurred in Madrid in 2004 and London the following year; in Mumbai in 2008 and Paris in 2015; and, on Easter Sunday 2019 in Sri Lanka and Moscow in 2024 underscore how important the 9/11 Commission’s recommendations and 2004 Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act have been in keeping our country safe from another massive terrorist attack.

A FAILURE OF IMAGINATION OR OF POLICY?

Among the 9/11 Commission Report’s most significant conclusions pertained to intelligence. “We believe the 9/11 attacks revealed four kinds of failures: in imagination, policy, capabilities, and management.”² This was a devastating critique of the U.S. Intelligence Community (USIC). In their account of the Commission’s deliberations, *Without Precedent*, co-chairs Thomas Kean and Lee Hamilton, explain how

The congressional Joint Inquiry into the 9/11 attacks shed light on many pre-9/11 intelligence failures. The phrase that came up again and again was a ‘failure to connect the dots.’ Bits and pieces of the 9/11 plot were scattered throughout America’s intelligence and law enforcement agencies, but before September 11, nobody had put all of this information

together: agencies did not share information; leads were not followed aggressively enough; warning signs detected over the summer of 2001 did not help us stop the attacks.³

Then, as now, the conventional wisdom was that the 9/11 attacks were an intelligence failure.⁴ “There was a broad consensus in the country that 9/11 had revealed fundamental problems with U.S. intelligence agencies,” Kean and Hamilton, recalled. “In the Congress and in the country, there was a clear consensus and momentum for reform.”⁵ And, the 9/11 Commission moved with alacrity to fix that.

But, as the late Professor Robert Jervis explained in his 2010 book, *Intelligence Fails*, which examined the reasons behind the failures of the USIC to anticipate both the fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979 and understand that Saddam Hussein was bluffing about Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction programs prior to the 2003 invasion, “The knowledge that intelligence can be wrong is useful for shifting blame onto the assessments and convenient in rationalizing the rejection of them when they clash with desired policies.”⁶

Indeed, with terrorism, it is not always an intelligence failure that results in tragedy. Intelligence can warn and inform. It is only as good as the decisions it enables and actions taken by those responsible for governing a country. In this context, the chapter of the 9/11 Commission Report titled, “The System Was Blinking Red,” is revealing. It contains a redacted version of the analysis presented in the August 6, 2001 Presidential Daily Brief (PDB). That day, two CIA officers had traveled to President George W. Bush’s ranch in Crawford, Texas to present a briefing whose headline read: “Bin Laden Determined To Strike in US.”⁷ This was the thirty-sixth time in 2001 alone that the PDB had highlighted the rising threat from Osama bin Laden or al-Qaeda. It was also the first to call attention specifically to the danger of an attack occurring in the United States.

Lacking a specific target or date—and coming on the heels of a long succession of such threat reporting—it did not elicit a reaction that might have prevented the tragic events that duly occurred five weeks later. President Bush subsequently told the Commission that he considered this critical, new piece of information more “historical in nature” than current—much less imminent—and hence not of immediate concern.⁸

Accordingly, was 9/11 actually an intelligence failure? By posing this question, I am not attempting to re-write history, re-litigate the Commission’s conclusions and recommendations, or challenge the groundbreaking IRTA legislation. I am simply pointing out that even the best organized intelligence community with the best assets, technology, information, and analysis matters not a fig if its political masters are unwilling or unable to act in response to the receipt of such a warning.⁹

I also want to emphasize that this is not a problem unique to the United States. The October 7th terrorist attacks on Israel has also been widely decried as another intelligence failure of epic proportions.¹⁰ The evidence—as with 9/11—is similarly Gordian. Brigadier General Amit Saar, then-director of the Israel’s Military Intelligence Research Department, warned Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu twice—in March and again in July 2023—in writing, that Israel’s deep internal political divisions had convinced its most implacable enemies— Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iran—that they could attack and destroy Israel.¹¹ Moreover, Saar was not the only voice in AMAN, the Israel Defense Force’s (IDF) intelligence directorate, raising the alarm. The *tatzpitaniyot*—the Hebrew word for “lookouts”—the mostly female border surveillance unit, had repeatedly called attention to indications of an impending Hamas cross-border attack during the weeks and months preceding the October 7th onslaught.¹² “I don’t want to hear again about this nonsense,” a senior IDF area commander told one of the lookouts who confronted him with intelligence

about unusual training exercises and surveillance activities along Gaza's border with Israel. "If you all bother us again with these things, you'll be court-martialed," he said.¹³

Accordingly, simply advising any national command authority to take intelligence warnings seriously—especially regarding terrorism—is not an altogether straightforward admonition. "To the extent that good intelligence will remain open to alternative interpretations and sensitive to discrepant information," Professor Jervis cogently notes, "it will be problematic for political leaders."¹⁴

This point is reflected in the title of another book about intelligence gathering and analysis in an era of information overload. In *Best Truth: Intelligence In The Information Age*, veteran intelligence officers Bruce Berkowitz and Allan Goodman, detailed the challenges of making sense of voluminous intelligence coming from multiple sources and a variety of platforms. "We also know today that, in many cases, the truth is simply unknowable," they write, "and the future depends on 'unknown unknowns,'" in the memorable words of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. "In these cases," Berkowitz and Goodman, argue, "policy must be made in an environment of uncertainty. Decisions depend more on judgment calls than on simple facts."¹⁵

Whether the intelligence reforms enacted after 9/11—and especially the creation of the ODNI and NCTC—have endowed the USIC with the organizational structure, training, tools and wisdom to make better judgment calls is a fair question to ask as we approach the twenty-fifth anniversary of those epochal attacks. What is indisputable, as previously noted, is that the intelligence reorganization and creation of new organizations with additional authorities have kept the United States safe from foreign terrorist attack for a quarter-of-a-century.

But the superstructure of that security architecture today is either fraying, being dismantled, or falling into disrepair. We are losing the expertise, knowledge, and institutional memory assembled over the past twenty-five years.¹⁶ Last spring, for instance, the entire seven-person staff in the State Department's Bureau of Counterterrorism responsible for coordinating U.S. counterterrorism strategy on a global scale was eliminated¹⁷. Although not an "intelligence shop" per se, the nexus between good intelligence guiding sound strategy is self-evident. And, for over a year now, a steady stream of intelligence officers and others currently or previously supporting our counterterrorism mission have come to me for advice about non-government employment opportunities.

Kean and Hamilton cite the cautionary testimony of Louis Freeh, who served as FBI Director from 1993 to 2001. "Because terrorism was not a national priority before September 11," he stated, "the FBI did not get adequate resources or legal authorities to go after al Qaeda." Prior to 9/11, only 6 percent of FBI personnel were assigned to counterterrorism.¹⁸

Today, we arguably are at risk of the same diminution of terrorism and counterterrorism as a leading national security priority. Countering terrorism, for instance, was ranked as the seventh sub-bullet in a list of global priorities articulated by the Biden administration's national security strategy, released in October 2022.¹⁹ And, it did not even make it onto the list of the eight national security priority sub-bullets delineated in the Trump administration's 2025 iteration. That document in fact cites terrorism only once—and then only in passing; and, within the context of one of many trans-border threats facing the United States.²⁰

REFORM THE NCTC TO COUNTER DOMESTIC TERRORISM

Criticisms of, and concerns, about the ODNI are both longstanding and well known.²¹ On the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, Kean and Hamilton led an assessment of the status of the 9/11 Commission's recommendations. A report—of which I was one of the lead co-authors—was published by the Bipartisan Policy Center. It praised the DNI for increasing information sharing, improving inter-agency coordination, sharpening collection priorities, bringing additional expertise to intelligence analysis, and “further integrat[ing] the FBI into the overall intelligence effort.” At the same time, the report expressed dismay that the DNI was still not “the driving force for intelligence community integration” that the 9/11 Commission had envisioned. It also noted that the DNI's role over budget and personnel remained lamentably ambiguous.²²

These concerns have not abated. Weak statutory authority; duplication of capabilities already existent elsewhere in the USIC; the growth of the ODNI; continued turf battles; lack of operational authority compared to the DCIA or DIA director; the various intelligence agencies that still report to the secretary of defense; and politicization are among the criticisms of the DNI and ODNI.²³ The only question, though, that matters is does the DNI and ODNI bring added value to the USIC? Does this coordinating entity, therefore, provide the extra layer of expertise and analysis that improves the USIC's ability to make the aforementioned judgment calls that carry life or death implications?

That is something I lack the direct knowledge about to meaningful assess.

The NCTC, with its narrower remit, is perhaps more easily assessed. One of the most important lessons gleaned from the 9/11 Commission Report was that the formidable power of the entire USIC was needed to protect Americans from terrorist threats. Accordingly, shortly after the release of the report, President Bush signed Executive Order 13354 which folded the post-9/11 Terrorist Threat Integration Center (TTIC) into a new National Counterterrorism Center. The IRTA legislation subsequently codified into law and defined the NCTC's mission to “lead and integrate the national counterterrorism (CT) effort by fusing foreign and domestic CT information, providing terrorism analysis, sharing information with partners across the CT enterprise, and driving whole-of-government action to secure our national CT objectives.”²⁴

At that time, the preeminent threat to Americans came from abroad. It was posed by an existing terrorist organization—al-Qaeda, and championed by an identifiable leader, Osama bin Laden. Today, the threat is as much domestic as it also remains foreign—with the line between what were once two separate and distinct phenomena having eroded. “Travel and technology have really blurred the lines between foreign and domestic threats,” former FBI Director Christopher Wray declared in a 2022 speech at MI5's London headquarters.²⁵ Yet, the principal agency responsible for the analysis and synthesis of terrorist threats and implementation of coordinated counterterrorism strategic operations is legally barred from taking action to counter domestic terrorism. This seems a dangerous anachronism.

That the terrorist threat to Americans today has both changed and grown has been articulated by the two iterations of the National Counterterrorism Strategy released by the White House and National Security Council during the first and second Trump administrations. Unlike the previous three iterations of America's national CT strategy—which had focused almost exclusively on al-Qaeda—the 2018 document included ISIS and Iranian state-sponsorship of terrorism as signal threats. And, for the first time, the national counterterrorism strategy warned of the growth of domestic terrorist threats from both violent far-right and violent far-left extremists as well as from issue-specific militants.²⁶

The recently released 2026 iteration continues the focus on what is now described as “Legacy Islamist Terrorists”—including, al-Qaeda and ISIS—as well as on “Violent Left-Wing Extremists, including Anarchists and Anti-Fascists.” It also adds “Narcoterrorists and Transnational Gangs”—but curiously

omits violent, far-right extremists²⁷ (e.g., white supremacists, racists, antisemites, Islamophobes, xenophobes, and anti-government militants).

This is a noticeable—and perhaps politically driven—omission. A 2025 National Institute of Justice report, for instance, reported that since 1990, violent, far-right extremists were responsible for 227 incidents of violence that resulted in 520 fatalities compared to 42 by violent, far-left extremists that produced 78 deaths.²⁸ These figures generally dovetail with those of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which has tracked extremist killings in the United States since 1970. Between 2015 and 2024, right-wing extremists were responsible for 76% of extremist-related killings, according to the ADL. Left-wing extremism accounted for 4%—and domestic Islamist extremists for 18%.²⁹

Regardless, the national strategy's indisputable, ongoing highlighting of domestic terrorist threats is why consideration should be given to adjusting the NCTC's fundamental mission and remit to include these threats as well. Another principal lesson of the 9/11 attacks, about the need for the "whole-of-government action to secure our national CT objectives," cannot be brought to bear against this proliferation of cross-over threats that defy international boundaries and are at once increasingly both domestic as well as foreign.

Valid concerns over domestic monitoring and surveillance by an arm of theUSIC were behind the limits originally placed on the NCTC. Accordingly, IRTA endowed the NCTC with strategic operational planning responsibilities but deliberately stopped short of giving it any command authorities. In addition, at the time there was also unease over the NCTC's access to FBI, CIA, NSA, DHS, and other databases that had raise potentially troubling questions about the names and personal information of U.S. citizens winding up in counterterrorism files without judicial oversight or due process.

These are all matters that should again be considered by Congress and aired and debated in this new, increasingly parlous situation, where violence perpetrated by Americans against their fellow citizens; that increasingly target both appointed and elected officials; and claims more lives nowadays than that by foreign terrorists. Close legislative oversight and strictly drawn guidelines should be discussed and prudently enacted, rather than peremptorily avoided or dismissed.

This is also why it is imperative that the persons appointed as both director of national intelligence and as the director of the NCTC must be fully knowledgeable about the entire range of terrorist threats facing this country and the existing intelligence capabilities and legal authorities available to secure the homeland. Both the DNI and NCTC director must not only be persons with the skills to oversee this transformation but also have the confidence of both Congress and the American people that fundamental civil liberties will not be violated or infringed upon by this expansion of the NCTC's role.

THE FBI REVIEW COMMISSION IN RETROSPECT

More than a decade has passed since the review that I co-led which assessed the FBI's transformation from a law enforcement agency to one with enhanced intelligence and counterterrorism missions. Our basic conclusion was positive.³⁰ The FBI, our report concluded, had made measurable progress between 2004 and 2014 in developing end-to-end intelligence capabilities and significantly improving information sharing and collaboration with key partners at home and abroad. The FBI's evolution in this regard, we found, had contributed to protecting the homeland against another catastrophic terrorist attack.

But the report also identified areas of needed improvement. Foremost among these was in human intelligence (HUMINT), which the commission concluded, had not kept pace with other significant

advances in the law enforcement dimension of counterterrorism. Improvement in this critical area of the FBI's counterterrorism mission was deemed essential. Having not personally re-visited this issue in the decade since the commission's report was published, the committee will be better placed to assess the extent to which progress has since been achieved in this critical area of intelligence and counterterrorism.

Hand-in-glove with improved HUMINT capabilities, the report had argued, were related training opportunities. In this respect, the commission had cited the FBI's expansion of new agent training from sixteen weeks to twenty-one weeks per the 9/11 Commission's recommendation. We noted with approval that "New agents are [now] required to complete certain developmental tasks that cover foundational skills as well as skills needed for National Security Branch (NSB) and Intelligence functions."³¹ Recent reports that the duration of new agent training had returned to the original sixteen week time-frame³² inevitably raises questions about whether NSB and intelligence skills training was reduced or even eliminated—and how the shorter training period may have affected acquisition of this knowledge and critical accompanying skills.

The commission was especially concerned about the FBI's analytical cadre. We concluded that the FBI still needed to professionalize this key dimension of its intelligence operations and responsibilities. The effective integration of analysts with agents in the field, we found, had yet to be achieved. When the commission visited Quantico in May 2014, for instance, a Basic Field Training Course (BFTC) existed to ensure this process. Both new agents and new analysts accordingly trained together for twelve weeks—before the new agents moved on to their weapons and tactical training. From what I can discern from online, open sources, the value integrative function that the BFTC provides has continued. But I am not in a position today to assess whether the field integration of these two key FBI vocations has improved.

With respect to improving intelligence and collection, the committee had recommended that the FBI should

- establish standards for training and education (and access to it) and for periodic rotations to other agencies;
- set criteria for promotions based on the mastery of specific analytic skills
- provide appropriate incentives for subject matter experts
- convene a group of outside experts to monitor the progress of this career service
- implement changes to demonstrate its value as an intelligence workforce.
- The analysts should be further trained and incentivized to do strategic and domain analysis, supporting criminal investigation, national intelligence priorities, and the requirements from other agencies. To accomplish this, they must be empowered and equipped with cutting edge technology, desktop connectivity to the USIC, and strong local incentives that encourage special agent and analyst collaboration to produce forward-looking, integrated domain analysis and collection plans. This must be at the highest priority for FBI leadership at all levels
- improve the human intelligence (HUMINT) program with greater emphasis on the integration of analytic, technical, and national-intelligence resources; HUMINT and operational squads should collectively identify gaps and mitigation strategies; and established metrics for this program should institute career tracks and reward innovative thinking and efforts towards identifying new threats.

- The requirements for intelligence collection and analysis should be more fully reflected in consistent and clearly defined criteria for inspections at field offices and headquarters.³³

Again, I am not in a position to assess the extent to which the FBI implemented any of the above recommendations, if at all.

CONCLUSION

My testimony before this Committee on September 26, 2001 had focused on three broad priorities:

- the need for intelligence reform and reorganization;
- the need for regular foreign and domestic terrorist threat assessments; and,
- the need for a clear, comprehensive and coherent counterterrorism strategy

There is thus an entirely unintended symmetry with my testimony today—which has covered those same topics. It is perhaps appropriate, therefore, to conclude my testimony this morning with a passage from the 2001 testimony. “The struggle against terrorism is never-ending,” I had written. “Similarly, our search for solutions and new approaches must be continuous and unyielding, proportional to the threat posed by our adversaries in both innovation and determination.”³⁴ This point is as relevant today as it was twenty-five years ago.

Terrorism is constantly changing and evolving. Today, we face both different and more numerous terrorist enemies than existed on 9/11—and that, as the 2026 National Counterterrorism Strategy argues, are now both domestic as well as foreign. Terrorism may not be in the headlines to the extent it once was, but the threat has not diminished.

Among the preeminent lessons from 9/11 is that terrorism crossed a threshold from having once been regarded as a tactical challenge best handled by law enforcement to a strategic threat of the highest national security priority—necessitating the active involvement and intense focus of the USIC as well as the American military and other relevant arms of governments. On 9/11 terrorism did not pose an existential threat to the United States. But the possibility that could become a reality was articulated by Vice President Dick Cheney in his famous “1% doctrine”: that is, “If there’s a 1% chance that Pakistani scientists are helping al-Qaeda build or develop a nuclear weapon, we have to treat it as a certainty in terms of our response. It’s not about our analysis It’s about response.”³⁵

The October 7th attacks on Israel, however, were intended by Hamas to destroy Israel. It failed because Hamas’s allies—Hezbollah, the Houthis, and Iran—did not join the attack as its mastermind, Yahya Sinwar, had hoped.³⁶ But this failure does not diminish the hubris and conceit intrinsic to America’s terrorist enemies as well: that through violence they can effectively fight the United States.

More than a quarter-of-a-century has passed since nineteen terrorists hijacked four passenger aircraft and changed the course of history. The war on terrorism that act begat has lasted longer than any armed conflict in the history of the United States.³⁷ It has exceeded America’s participation in both world wars and surpassed even the period that the U.S. military was actively engaged in combat operations during the Vietnam War. It has cost the United States over \$5 trillion³⁸ and claimed the lives of more than 7,000 American military personnel.³⁹

Every U.S. president since 9/11 has declared victory. But, as General James N. Mattis, then commander of the U.S. Central Command, famously cautioned in 2013, “No war is over until the enemy says it’s over. We

may think it [is] over, we may declare it over, but in fact, the enemy gets a vote.”⁴⁰ And, America’s enemies have incontrovertibly chosen to continue this war—regardless of our declarations, proclamations, and inclinations. It is therefore imperative that our intelligence community continues to have the personnel, tools, and resources needed to keep the homeland safe.

Thank you, again, for this opportunity to share my thoughts and research with you this morning.

¹ Bruce Hoffman, *Re-Thinking Terrorism In Light Of A War On Terrorism* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, September 26, 2001), <https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/2005/CT182.pdf>

² *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report Of The National Commission On Terrorist Attacks Upon The United States—Authorized Edition* (New York: Norton, 2004), p. 339

³ Thomas H. Kean and Lee H. Hamilton, with Benjamin Rhodes, *Without Precedent: The Inside Story Of The 9/11 Commission* (New York: Knopf, 2006), pp. 190-191.

⁴ See *The 9/11 Commission Report*, pp. 339-359.

⁵ Kean and Hamilton, *Without Precedent*, pp. 190 & 311.

⁶ Robert Jervis, *Intelligence Fails: Lessons from the Iranian Revolution and the Iraq War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2010), p. 158.

⁷ *The 9/11 Commission Report*, pp. 254-277.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 2p. 60.

⁹ See the broader discussion of this pathology in Bruce Hoffman, “Intelligence and Terrorism: Emerging Threats and New Security Challenges in the Post-Cold War Era,” *Intelligence And National Security*, vol. 11, no. 2, April 1996, p. 209.

¹⁰ See Haleigh Bartos and John Chin, “What Went Wrong? Three Hypotheses On Israel’s Massive Intelligence Failure,” Modern Warfare Institute at West Point, October 31, 2023, <https://mwi.westpoint.edu/what-went-wrong-three-hypotheses-on-israels-massive-intelligence-failure/>; Daniel Byman, “An Intelligence Failure in Israel, but What Kind?” *Lawfare*, October 10, 2023, <https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/an-intelligence-failure-in-israel-but-what-kind>; and, Ronen Bergman and Patrick Kingsley, “How Israel’s Feared Feared Security Services Failed to Stop Hamas’s Attack,” *New York Times*, October 10, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/10/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-security-failure.html>.

¹¹ See text of the letters in Chaim Levinson, “Israeli Military Intelligence Warned Netanyahu: ‘Iran, Hezbollah, Hamas See Opportunity for Perfect Storm,’” *Haaretz*, November 21, 2023, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-11-21/ty-article/.premium/israeli-army-warned-netanyahu-iran-hezbollah-hamas-see-opportunity-for-perfect-storm/0000018b-f18c-d36e-a3cb-f1dfa34d0000>; and, “Top intel official said to have twice warned PM of security risks posed by overhaul tensions,” *Times of Israel*, November 21, 2023, https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/top-intel-official-said-to-have-twice-warned-pm-of-security-risks-posed-by-overhaul-tensions/.

¹² See Jamie Dettmer, “Our warnings on Hamas were ignored, Israel’s women border troops say,” *Politico*, November 21, 2023, <https://www.politico.eu/article/israel-border-troops-women-hamas-warnings-war-october-7-benjamin-netanyahu/>; Shifra Epstein and Clare Kinberg, “The enormous weight of our history: Nahal Oz on my mind,” *Washtenaw Jewish News*, November 26, 2023, <https://washtenawjewishnews.org/the-enormous-weight-of-our-history-nahal-oz-on-my-mind/>; Amos Harel, “Over a Year Before October 7, Israel’s Army Had Insight Into Hamas’ Plan to Attack Israeli Towns, IDF Bases,” *Haaretz*,

November 24, 2023, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-11-24/ty-article-magazine/.premium/over-a-year-before-october-7-israels-army-had-insight-into-hamas-attack-plan/0000018c-02a2-de3d-af9e-0bf7901b0000>; idem, “We Have Completed the Murder of All Residents of the Kibbuz’: Chilling Warnings Picked Up by Israeli Intelligence Months Before October 7 Massacre,” *Haaretz*, November 27, 2023, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-11-27/ty-article/.premium/chilling-warnings-picked-up-by-israeli-intelligence-months-before-october-7-massacre/0000018c-1261-dd2e-a5ae-d36ba6240000>; and, Yaniv Kubovich, “The Women Soldiers Who Warned of a Pending Hamas Attack—And Were Ignored,” *Haaretz*, November 20, 2023, <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2023-11-20/ty-article-magazine/.premium/the-women-soldiers-who-warned-of-a-pending-hamas-attack-and-were-ignored/0000018b-ed76-d4f0-affb-eff740150000>.

¹³ Quoted in Jerusalem Post Staff, “IDF commanders ignored lookouts’ warnings over Hamas massacre—report,” *Jerusalem Post*, November 19, 2023, <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-773974>.

¹⁴ Jervis, *Intelligence Fails*, p. 163.

¹⁵ Bruce D. Berkowitz and Allan E. Goodman, *Best Truth: Intelligence In The Information Age* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2000), xi.

¹⁶ Written Testimony of Christopher J. O’Leary, U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Federal Courts, Oversight, Agency Action, and Federal Rights, March 24, 2026, https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/e1cffedb-0b60-1a17-1c04-9c7b647eb4c0/2026-03-24_Testimony_OLeary.pdf. See also, Don Rassler, Kristina Hummel, Brian Dodwell, & Ned Curry, “The Changing Character of Terrorism and U.S. Counterterrorism.” *CTC Sentinel*, Vol. 18, no. 11, November/December 2025, <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/the-changing-character-of-terrorism-and-u-s-counterterrorism/>; Emily Bazelon and Rachel Poser, “A Year Inside Kash Patel’s F.B.I.,” *New York Times Magazine*, January 22, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2026/01/22/magazine/trump-kash-patel-fbi-agents.html?searchResultPosition=1>; and Jacqueline Maguire, “I Was an F.B.I. Agent for 25 Years. Kash Patel Is Playing a Dangerous Game,” *New York Times*, March 15, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/16/opinion/kash-patel-fbi-iran.html>

¹⁷ Meeting with former U.S. State Department senior counterterrorism strategist, December 2025.

¹⁸ Kean and Hamilton, *Without Precedent*, p. 192.

¹⁹ “National Security Strategy,” The White House, October 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Biden-Harris-Administrations-National-Security-Strategy-10.2022.pdf>, accessed March 29, 2026.

²⁰ “National Security Strategy of the United States of America,” The White House, November 2025, pp. 11-15, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2025-National-Security-Strategy.pdf>.

²¹ See, for instance, *9/11 Public Discourse Project: Advancing National Security Awareness*, 9-11pdp.org (no date), <https://www.9-11pdp.org/>; Richard Falkenrath, “9/11 Commission: A Review of the Second Act, Brookings, December 6, 2005, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/911-commission-a-review-of-the-second-act/>; and, National Security Preparedness Group, *Tenth Anniversary Report Card: The Status of the 9/11 Commission Recommendations* (Washington, DC: Bi-Partisan Policy Center, September 2011), <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/CommissionRecommendations.pdf> (I was one the lead authors of this report).

²² National Security Preparedness Group, *Tenth Anniversary Report Card*, p. 17.

²³ See, for instance, Kevin R. Brock, “Is it even worth having a director of national intelligence?” *The Hill*, March 3, 2020, <https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/485416-is-it-even-worth-having-a-director-of-national-intelligence/>; Mieke Eoyang & Aki Peritz, “Fix—Not Nix—The ODNI,” *Third Wary Memo*, October 6, 2011, <https://www.thirdway.org/memo/fix-not-nix-the-odni>; and Charles Stimson and Mary Habeck, “Reforming Intelligence: A Proposal for Reorganizing the Intelligence Community and Improving Analysis,” *Heritage Foundation*, August 29, 2016, <https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/reforming-intelligence-proposal-reorganizing-the-intelligence-community-and>.

²⁴ Office of the Director of National Intelligence, The National Counterterrorism Center homepage (no date), <https://www.dni.gov/index.php/nctc-home>.

²⁵ Quoted in Shawna Chen, “FBI director: Domestic terrorists increasingly inspired by international attacks,” *Axios*, July 8, 2022, <https://www.axios.com/2022/07/08/fbi-domestic-terrorism-inspired-international-attacks>. See also, Gregory Daniel Miller, “Blurred Lines: The New ‘Domestic’ Terrorism,” *Perspectives on Terrorism*, vol. 13, no. 3, June 2019, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333676937_Blurred_Lines_The_New_Domestic_Terrorism; and, Nick Harper, “FISA’s Fuzzy Line between Domestic and International Terrorism,” *University of Chicago Law Review*, December 18, 2017, <https://lawreview.uchicago.edu/print-archive/fisas-fuzzy-line-between-domestic-and-international-terrorism>

²⁶ White House, *National Strategy for Counterterrorism of the United States of America*, October 2018, pp. 7-9, <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/NSCT.pdf>

²⁷ White House, *United States Counterterrorism Strategy*, May 2026, p. 5, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/2026-USCT-Strategy-1.pdf>.

²⁸ Steven Chermak, Matthew DeMichele, Jeff Gruenewald, Michael Jensen, Raven Lewis, & Basia E. Lopez, *What NIJ Research Tells Us About Domestic Terrorism*, (Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, September 11, 2025, <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/306123.pdf>. See also, Rebecca Beitsch, “DOJ quietly removes study showing right wing attacks ‘outpace’ those by left,” *The Hill*, September 17, 2025, <https://www.congress.gov/119/meeting/house/118612/documents/HHRG-119-JU00-20250917-SD057-U57.pdf>.

²⁹ ADL, *Murder and Extremism in the United States in 2024*, February 2, 2024, <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/murder-and-extremism-united-states-2024>.

³⁰ Bruce Hoffman, Edwin Meese III, & Timothy J. Roemer, *The FBI: Protecting the Homeland in the 21st Century: Report of the Congressionally-directed 9/11 Review Commission to The Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation* (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, March 25, 2015),

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³² New Employee Program, FBI Quantico, *FBI Jobs* (no date), <https://fbijobs.gov/locations/quantico>; and FBI-Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Post, April 22, 2025, <https://www.facebook.com/FBI/posts/the-fbis-basic-field-training-course-turns-10-this-intensive-18-week-program-at-/1081769310663301/>

³³ Hoffman, Meese, & Roemer, *The FBI: Protecting the Homeland in the 21st Century*, pp. 109-110.

³⁴ Hoffman, *Re-Thinking Terrorism In Light Of A War On Terrorism*, p. 9.

³⁵ Quoted in Ron Suskind, *The One Percent Doctrine* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), p. 62.

³⁶ See, for instance, Ronen Bergman, Admam Rasgon, & Patrick Kingsley, “Secret Documents Show Hamas Tried to Persuade Iran to Join Its Oct. 7 Attack,” *New York Times*, October 12, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/12/world/middleeast/hamas-israel-war.html>; Stav Levaton, “Captured Gaza records

show that Iran, Hezbollah plotted with Hamas to destroy Israel," *Times of Israel*, March 18, 2025, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/captured-gaza-records-show-that-iran-hezbollah-plotted-with-hamas-to-destroy-israel/>; and, Joby Warwick, Souad Mekhennet & Loveday Morris, "Captured documents reveal Hamas's broader ambition to wreak havoc on Israel," *Washington Post*, October 12, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2024/10/12/exclusive-hamas-documents-sinwar-planning-iran/>.

³⁷ Associated Press, "U.S. Participation in Major Wars," *Fox News.com*, November 25, 2006, https://www.foxnews.com/printer_friendly_wires/2006Nov25/0,4675,USWarsHowLong,00.html,%20accessed%20February%2012,%202021

³⁸ "Total budgetary cost to the United States of the global war on terror between FY 2001 and FY 2025, by category," Statista (NO DATE) <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1009819/total-us-military-fatalities-in-american-wars-1775-present/>.

³⁹ "Number of military fatalities in all major wars involving the United States from 1775 to January 2025," *Statista* (no date), <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1009819/total-us-military-fatalities-in-american-wars-1775-present/>.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Jonah Goldberg, "Our Enemies Get a Vote," *National Review*, May 29, 2013, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2013/05/our-enemies-get-vote-jonah-goldberg/>