

# Assessment of the Role of The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) In the September 11 Terrorist Attacks in The United States of America (USA)

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**Abstract-** This paper presents a discussion on the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) role in the terrorist attack of September 11 in the USA, the historical modes of its development, its structural capacities, and its failure in intelligence. This paper begins its presentation of the history of the formation and the development of the CIA by giving a background of this formation and evolutionary process, giving its major attention to the manner of its evolution during the Cold War, as well as after the tragedy of 9/11. The article elaborates three research questions that address the issue of intelligence failures and interagency cooperation, as well as covert operations following 9/11. The documentary research papers provide empirical data of a synopsis of structural setbacks, bureaucratic competitions, and obscurity that disabled the right intelligence activity before 9/11. A qualitative method of documentary analysis was employed. Findings point to the significant institutional transformations in transparency efforts and diplomacy in intelligence, as well as policy realignment imminent as a result of 9/11. The additional areas covered in this research paper include further incorporation between the agencies, an increase in transparency in activities, and more empirical studies to be done on the subject matter of intelligence community reform. It gives necessary facts to the scholars, policy makers and smart practitioners regarding the adaptive capability of CIA in the international security system.

## I. INTRODUCTION

America and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), its best foreign intelligence arm, have a central place and are highly debatable with the rest of the security grid of the country. Its performance, and especially so when it comes to addressing the September 11,

2001, terrorist attacks, is a dire case study in the aspects of complexity, ability, and inherent vulnerability of a modernised intelligence organisation (Hulnick, 1999). The day of attacks was not only a simple tactical failure but a severe strategic surprise that revealed more in-depth systemic problems in the U.S. Intelligence Community (IC). This paper aims to give an extensive evaluation of the part played by the CIA in the events before and after 9/11, including the way it has grown in its history, how it was structured and how its mission and powers were changed (Fessenden, 2005). Evaluating the intelligence failures, the role of interagency rivalry, and the development of covert operations, it is possible to see how the CIA had to navigate the dynamic waters of global security in the 21st century with bitter experiences.

The history of the CIA lies in the World War II experience. The Pearl Harbour attack in 1941 came as a stark reminder to the Americans that they should organise their intelligence system in a centralised manner, to curb such tragedies in the future (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, Centre for the Study of Intelligence, Glass and Davidson, 1948). President Franklin D. Roosevelt formed the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), which General William J. Donovan led in the year 1942. The OSS became America's first organised and consolidated intelligence service, and its life was related to the wartime emergency. At the end of the war, the consequences of the action are evinced by the fact that the OSS was officially disbanded by President Harry S. Truman in September 1945, though the decision immediately led to an information vacuum and a vigorous discussion of the future form of an intelligence service among senior officers (Warner, 2013). This gave rise to the short-term formation of the Central Intelligence Group (CIG) in January 1946, which

was but a fore-runner of a more lasting solution. On July 26, 1947, the National Security Act bill was signed into law by President Truman, which officially created the Central Intelligence Agency, a permanent, non-partisan, civilian national intelligence agency (Haas, 2023).

The first key guideline of the CIA, as written in the 1947 Act, was to match up, assess and distribute foreign intelligence to national security policy makers. Yet, an explicitly vague provision in the act assigned the agency a miscellaneous responsibility of carrying out other functions and duties concerning intelligence that relate to national security as the National Security Council [NSC] might direct as time required (National Security Act of 1947, 1947). This ambiguous text formed to be the legal base of so-called covert action, the secrecy of the actions, which are aimed at changing the political, economic, or military situation in some other country so that the actions of the U.S. government could not be noticed or recognised by the states on the one hand, and they could be obtained on the other (Haas, 2023; Hulnick, 1999). This intermediate position, which included neither full diplomacy nor open military action, characterised much of the operating stance of the CIA during the Cold War (Hulnick, 1999). The agency acquired the role of a main tool of the U.S. foreign policy, and it started to act in the spheres of opposing the expansion of the Soviet Union in Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia (Updegraff et al., 2008).

The history of the CIA is characterised by several decisive and often contentious operations that formed its institutional identity and image in the eyes of the general population. The coup in Iran (Operation Ajax) in 1953 and the overthrow of Guatemala that occurred in 1954 were then interpreted as a great gain against communist influence, but are today regarded by many historians as merely temporary achievements of political growth because of regional instability and anti-Americanism (Hulnick, 1999). On the other hand, the infamous Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961, which was a failure beyond description, was a blow to the Kennedy administration, which went ahead to scrutinise the agency so much as far as planning and oversight of operations were concerned (Hulnick, 1999). The lead played by the CIA as a major actor in the war in Vietnam and their controversial

Phoenix program further cemented them as a major, clandestine actor in the military conflicts of the USA. Such activities, as well as others, prompted investigations by the Church Committee in the mid-1970s that revealed power misuse and prompted serious legislative changes, including the Hughes-Ryan Amendment in 1974 and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) in 1978 to foster more congressional oversight (Haas, 2023; Jensen, 2024).

The Cold War was over, and the CIA and the IC, more broadly, were in name only; they no longer had a clear mission, confronting a new world that did not pose a single, monolithic menace such as the Soviet Union. Between 1989 and 2001, a spate of commissions and reviews was made to respond to the necessity of change, but the bureaucratic inertia and a scarcity of political willpower made sure that little of value was finally given effect (Fessenden, 2005). But this drifting to a halt took place on September 11, 2001. The infamous 9/11 attacks were one of the most disastrous intelligence failures ever to prove the deficiency of the IC in identifying links in the chain. The attacks served as a strong incitement to the greatest rearrangement of the American intelligence system since 1947. IRTPA of 2004 established a position of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) to provide leadership of the IC and provided the National Counterterrorism Centre (NCTC) to coordinate and analyse the information on threat across government (Fessenden, 2005). Following 9/11, the CIA has had its mission fundamentally shifted toward counter terrorism, and there has been an explosive increase in its covert and paramilitary capacity. The agency has assumed the centre stage in the use of drones, targeted killings and the unpopular extraordinary rendition program.

The modern threat environment that the CIA faces is a complex and fast-changing one. It also has some continuing obstacles to deal with, such as the transparency of its operations, the ethical and legal issues associated with the covert operations, and the overwhelming task of learning how to conquer the threats that pose dangers in the realms of cyberspace and artificial intelligence. It is less effective in coordination with the domestic organisations, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Department of Homeland Security, which have been a source of friction as well as a work-in-progress

since 9/11. The intelligence agencies have lost the trust of the people due to the previous scandals and the disclosures of whistleblowers like Edward Snowden, who showed just how big surveillance had become. In the future, the CIA will be faced with the geopolitical reality of a contest with great powers such as China and Russia, the dispersion of advanced technologies, and the emergence of non-state actors who may utilise advanced technologies to present strategic threats. It is proposed that the formal inclusion of Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) integration, as part of the 2024-2026 strategy of the IC, will represent required adjustment to the situational intelligence environment, using historic sub-rosa means alongside processing of this publicly available material to draw a fuller intelligence image (Office of the Director of National Intelligence [ODNI], 2024). The sense of 9-11 changed the nature of the CIA so much that it required a paradigm shift in its purpose and tactics. Although the agency has shown remarkable successes in its operations, especially on the counterterrorism front, the challenge that has remained elusive is to institutionalise its reforms, be mindful of its ethics and have the ability to think strategically to help the nation in the present and the future complex world.

#### Research Questions

- i. To what extent did intelligence failures within the CIA contribute to the September 11 terrorist attacks?
- ii. How did intelligence rivalries between the CIA and other intelligence bodies impact the pre-9/11 threat response?
- iii. What role has the CIA played in counterterrorism and covert operations post-9/11, and how has it shaped US foreign policy?

## II. EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

### Intelligence Failures within the CIA: Beyond a Broken Cycle

The empirical research literature that examines the performance of the CIA before opening of events of 9/11 indicates squarely that what we experienced was systematic, as opposed to an isolated intelligence failure. A major conceptual weakness that has been singled out is the traditional doctrinal approach to how intelligence work should be conducted, which is the so-called Intelligence Cycle. According to Michael Warner, a historian of

intelligence (2013), this Cycle, a step-by-step, linear form of planning and direction, of collection, processing, analysis and dissemination, was a heuristic device created in the mid-20th century, probably borrowed or adapted through other psychological models of the human mind. According to Warner, in spite of being practical as a means to impart the elementary concepts, the model is inherently inappropriate to such dynamic, high-velocity, and non-linear threats as terrorism. Even one of the most famous images of information flow (a clean, closed circuit) fails to reflect the messiness of intelligence operations with its need to collect, analyse and deliver fresh information in almost real-time. Since then, the U.S. military has abandoned this rigid model, with the creation of a so-called intelligence process in which various functions are intertwined and raw data have occasionally needed to be thrust at once both to the commanders and to the analysts to assist in time-sensitive actions (Warner, 2013). The steadfastness of the CIA to this old model, which is based on the industrial age, has created a bureaucracy which was methodical yet slow to travel and which could not match the network which was decentralised and nimble as al-Qaeda.

This doctrinal shortcoming was further compounded by the age-old intelligence predicament: what is signal vs. noise? Most popularly expressed by Roberta Wohlstetter (1962) in her classic work on the Pearl Harbour attack, this concept holds that failures in intelligence are never caused by the absence of information, but that it is, in fact, a plentitude of information to the exclusion of information relevance. The pre-9/11 months and years saw the appearance of a torrent of information concerning matters of terrorist threats into the IC. The inability to recognise and combine the essential fragments of information of the loud fallacious data in the form of irrelevant, contradictory, and ambiguous information was not the absence of the warning signals, but the failure of the analysts. As the 9/11 Commission Report and follow-up studies, such as Fessenden (2005), also determined, the IC had gathered individually various fragments of the plot but had never made a coherent mosaic out of them. It was no failure simply of collection: it was also a failure of analysis and synthesis.

An important part of this analysis failure was the impossibility of drawing a bridge between foreign

intelligence and domestic threats. The most infamous one, which has been used repeatedly in investigations initiated after 9/11, was where the CIA was aware of the fact that two future hijackers, Khalid al-Mihdhar and Nawaf al-Hazmi, were known al-Qaeda operatives who had attended a terrorist summit in Malaysia. This information was also known to the agency that they possessed visas to enter the United States, and this information was not relayed to the FBI in time, which would have resulted in a domestic investigation (Fessenden, 2005). Such a gap occurred within a larger institutional and cultural firewall between foreign intelligence gathering (within the mandate of the CIA) and domestic law enforcement and counterintelligence (within the mandate of the FBI). Such a division is one aspect that Fessenden (2005) points out was the main focus of the 9/11 Commission, which has outlined the disastrous results of the absence of such communication. This failure was more organised than procedural; it was not only the knowledge of the process but also a matter of cognition, as the CIA did not quite understand the challenge that transcended international boundaries and blurred the borders between foreign and domestic security. This resulted in institutional biases that favoured the concentric threat of a state-based actor over the asymmetric threat to a non-state actor such as al-Qaeda. To overcome these weaknesses in analysis, the Intelligence Authorization Act (IAA) for the FY21 required the establishment of a CIA Office of the Ombudsman on the subject of Analytic Objectivity, charged with investigating a complaint of politicization, bias, lack of objectivity, or other issues relating to a failure of the tradecraft in analysis, a direct legislative response to these institutional cultural issues (Jensen, 2024).

#### Interagency Rivalries:

##### A "Long Fractured Community"

Intelligence failures that made 9/11 possible cannot be explained devoid of the underlying culture of interagency feuds and turf wars which marked the U.S. Intelligence Community. Fessenden (2005) explains pre-9/11 IC as a long-suffering intelligence community that was stunted by the institutional stovepipes that endeavoured to discourage information flow. The worst and most effective competition was one between the CIA and the FBI. The other two were basic differences in culture, missions, and legal jurisdiction. The CIA was

oriented towards the gathering of foreign intelligence and frequently by clandestine methods, having a culture of secrecy and compartmentalisation to safeguard sources and methods. The FBI, on the other hand, was a domestic law enforcement agency, and the purpose of its mission revolved around creating criminal cases to be prosecuted and to do this, it was necessary to follow specific rules of evidence and procedure. To the extent that such a cultural gap made the 9/11 Commission infamously refer to what it termed as the wall between intelligence and law enforcement, a wall that was not only procedural but also psychological in that it precluded any proper merging of information on foreign and domestic threats.

This breakage was intensified by the prevailing and strictly guarded status of the Department of Defence (DOD) in the IC. It is estimated that the Pentagon spends about 80 per cent of the entire intelligence budget of the country and this money is used to fund its huge collection agencies; the National Security Agency (NSA), the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) (Fessenden, 2005). This financial control resulted in a profound resistance in the DOD and its well-placed friends on Capitol Hill to the reform that would produce a potent, centralised intelligence director with the ability to cut assets not primarily under his "control" without consulting the secretary of defence (see Fessenden, 2005). The head of the entire IC before 9/11 was the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), which was more of a prestigious position and not of command, as DCI did not actually command the budgets or the workers of DOD organisations (Fessenden, 2005). It translated into the fact that the practice was that there was no authority that anyone was in charge of the intelligence community (Fessenden, 2005). This structural weakness led to priorities being disjointed and nearly impossible to attain, unifying and strategic intelligence.

The events of 9/11 generated the political strength needed to break through this inherited opposition, and we have seen the enactment in 2004 of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA). A similar act was a direct legislative reaction to recommendations of the 9/11 Commission report that had sought a strong new DNI and a national counterterrorism centre. IRTPA

left the post of IC leader to the CIA Director denying him his duties and instituted a new position of DNI who had great authority on paper with the ability to develop and execute the National Intelligence Program (NIP) budget, to transfer funds and personnel among agencies and to concur in the appointment of the head of other elements of the IC (Jensen, 2024). The purpose of the NCTC was to come in as a central point of analysis and seamless combination of all terrorism intelligence in order to break down the very stovepipes which had become so disastrous.

These reforms were, however, highly undermined by the same bureaucratic and political interests they aimed to augment. Such was the bruising fight that the legislative contest over IRTPA represented, as Fessenden (2005) puts it, when a bipartisan group of senators battled against a group of sceptical House Republicans, who had the support of the Pentagon. The result of tough negotiation and compromise was the final bill. As an illustration, the authority of the DNI was weakened by the language making certain that he would not remove the "statutory responsibilities" of other departments, the concession made by the DOD. Moreover, the CIA managed to lobby to maintain its monopoly in its jurisdiction to manage all human intelligence gathering overseas, as well as preserving its Counterterrorism Centre that was in command of interrupting terrorism plots, basically establishing a pyramidal support system beyond the supervision of DNI (Fessenden, 2005). This led to numerous people, such as Fessenden (2005) and even members of the 9/11 Commission itself, to accuse the DNI of becoming nothing more than a layer of bureaucracy and not a real intelligence czar, and that the institutional inseparability of the IC had not been overcome. The fact that the Congress still had not been able to reform the diffuse system of oversight, which allowed funding and authorisation of intelligence capabilities to be included in several committees, also damaged the purpose of having a unified intelligence establishment (Fessenden, 2005).

The CIA's Post-9/11 Role: Covert Action and the Blurring of Lines

The tempo and scope of CIA operations increased enormously after 9/11, and especially in the area of covert action. Covert action as defined by various scholars such as Hulnick (1999) and as is codified in

the FY91 IAA constitutes a set of various secret activities namely those carried out politically, psychologically, economically as well as paramilitarily to advance policy goals of the U.S without directly seeming to have the government at the immediate sponsorship of the activities (Jensen, 2024; Hulnick, 1999). This is the most controversial historical activity of the CIA, which is regulated by an intricate system of legislative and legal supervision. The Hughes-Ryan Amendment of 1974, product of the Church Committee investigation of Cold War excesses, made it so that there had to be a formal and written presidential finding (authorisation) of each operation (Haas, 2023). It was narrowed down by the Intelligence Oversight Act of 1980 that stipulated that the two membership committees of the Congress that dealt with intelligence matters were to be fully and currently informed of all substantial intelligence activities, including covert actions, that needed to be reported in a timely fashion (Jensen, 2024).

Following 9/11, the CIA had turned into the spear of the Global War on Terror. The agency was accorded wide powers to stalk, seize and assassinate al-Qaeda members in any part of the globe. This was a great change to the direction of the so-called militarisation of intelligence, whereby old distinctions between intelligence gathering and the military were obliterated. And so the Special Activities Division of the CIA (since renamed the Special Activities Centre) operated closely with the U.S. Special Operations Forces, and the CIA was at the forefront in the development and implementation of the drone program to execute targeted killings in Pakistan, Yemen, and other places. The source of this new aggressive posture was the direct reaction to Vietnam-era feelings that the intelligence and law enforcement methods pre-9/11 were not up to the task of countering the threat. Nonetheless, with this increase of covert power came enormous controversy. The use of so-called enhanced interrogation measures, criticized by detractors as torture and the practice of extraordinary rendition in which suspects sent to prisons beyond US borders or even to countries that did not necessarily want them and in which they were interrogated, also drew universal international criticism leading to significant questions concerning rule of law and democracy.

Historical precedent of covert action is mixed, to say the least, as Hulnick (1999) observes. These successful operations of taking governments down in Iran (1953) and Guatemala (1954) were long-term failures with anti-American feelings later. On the other hand, the covert action has commonly been encouraged by the people and Congress whenever their policies are popular, like the arming of the mujahideen against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s (Hulnick, 1999). Nevertheless, the same action also had its disastrous long-term effects, leading to the emergence of the Taliban and the kind of chaos that eventually gave al-Qaeda a haven. This background further highlights one of the main controversies of covert action: it is extremely hard to determine the success or failure of an operation, and in this regard, the successful operation may have been a rather poor indicator of the result of that operation as a step towards strategic victory or defeat. Since 9/11, nothing has increased the wrack of those dilemmas more than positioning the CIA in the centre of a constant debate about the efficiency, ethics of the secret wars, as well as the control of America. One thing that has been formalized is the act of assassination by U.S. government employees; one executive order on the topic Gladys Hulnick says is the first of this order and still active as of now, is executive order 12333, issued in 1981, which states that the command of assassination by a U. S. government employee was prohibited under this order (Hulnick, 1999).

### III. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative mode of the research methodology was used to undertake this research paper in a qualitative and contextual study in the evaluation of the role of the Central Intelligence Agency in the events that led to the September 11 terrorist attacks. The qualitative paradigm was chosen due to an opportunity to explore in-depth historical, political, and institutional processes which contributed to the acts of the CIA and the creation of its subsequent reforms within the U.S. Intelligence Community (IC) in a systemic manner. This methodology enables a synthesis of a wide variety of narratives, and competing narratives, emanating from the scholarship, government and institutions that gives a deeper and better understanding than would a purely quantitative analysis. The main tool of data collection was an extensive documentary review, which meant the sequential identification,

evaluation, and analysis of a broad set of authoritative documents to gain a coherent description of the events and their outcomes.

The documents were chosen according to their close links to the general questions of the proposed study, which focus on failing intelligence, interagency collaboration and development of covert activities. The choice of sources was made in order to present a multi-faceted point of view, including historical background, legal examination, operational description, and critique. The documentation consisted of: peer-reviewed academic journal articles (e.g., Fessenden, 2005; Haas, 2023; Jensen, 2024; Warner, 2013) on scholarly articles as they can provide critical analysis and theoretical frameworks; the use of official government documents (e.g. Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2024) as well as official documents of the IC (e.g., U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, Center of the Study of Intelligence, n.d.) to access the In addition, to put the situation into perspective, a national longitudinal study in psychological effects of the attacks was included in the scope of the study (Updegraff et al., 2008).

A thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the data obtained from these documents. It entailed successive rounds of selecting and marking the original literature to find the patterns, ideas and causes that became pertinent to the role of the CIA before and after 9/11. The major themes that came out of this examination were: systemic failure of intelligence, doctrinal deficiencies of the Intelligence Cycle, bureaucratic compartmentalisation and inter-agency competition, proliferation of classified power, and the constant conflict between functional efficiency and accountability of intelligence activities to a democratic constituency. This analysis of evidence into these four themes allowed the development of a narrative synthesis which can issue linkages between particular attributes of lapse and more structural failings in the IC, e.g. the failure to disseminate information about known hijackers (Fessenden, 2005).

The study used the data triangulation strategy in order to ascertain the credibility and validity of the findings. This would have the effect of preventing the possibility of bias that would arise in such a claim that is established using one particular type of

source. To take just one example, hard scholarly reports of the political bargaining that undermined the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) (Fessenden, 2005) could be cross-checked against the particular legislative history and statute text covered in congressional reports and analyses (Jensen, 2024). Likewise, the historical description of the history of its founding presented by the CIA (CIA, CSI, n.d.) was put into perspective by legal scholarship with regard to the ambiguities of the laws surrounding its conception that allowed its development of covert action (Haas, 2023). Such multi-source material offers a very strong and substantiated basis for the conclusions of the paper made about the complex and transforming role the CIA played in the American national security.

#### Analysis of the findings

Integration of the documentary evidence brings out a clear yet sweet story. The September 11 intelligence failure was not a lone episode driven by one mistake, but a system malfunction that occurred due to the collusion of bad intelligence policy, intra-government dysfunction, and a culture of secrecy that hindered teamwork. Instead, the bureaucratic process of acting upon the stagnant and linear Intelligence Cycle became too slow and brittle to meet the challenge of al-Qaeda, agile, networked threats (Warner, 2013). Such an Error of Concept was compounded by the fact that there was an incredible volume of raw intelligence, which confused the analysts in detecting the so-called signals that, in hindsight, alerted them to the impending plot (Wohlstetter, 1962).

In its turn, this analytical failure was a direct consequence of the deep fragmentation of the U.S. Intelligence Community. The nature of the competition between the CIA and the FBI (based on the difference in the missions and the culture) established a titanic wall that barred the merging of foreign and domestic intelligence (Fessenden, 2005). This was not a procedural hitch, nor was it a mere mental hurdle, but it contributed to the epic failure to communicate about the existence of identified al-Qaeda members within U.S. soil. The square organisation was also skewed by institutional dominance of the Pentagon, which ensured most of the intelligence resources were in its control, a culture of turf protection and inability to bow to any centralised authority able to question its hegemony had become the norm (Fessenden, 2005). The pre-

9/11 DCI was not really a leader as he had no financial or manpower power to impose a coherent line of action on the separate agencies.

The reforms imposed since 9/11, most prominently the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) itself, were not only a response, but also a direct and required response to this system dysfunction. It was hoped that the establishment of DNI and NCTC would help break institutional stovepipes through which a certain level of centralised coordination and accountability could be imposed on the disjointed community (U.S. Congressional Research Service [CRS], 2025). The discussion of the work of the legislative process and its result, the work of Fessenden (2005), Airlines shows, however, that these reforms have suffered gravely because of the political and bureaucratic squabbles which they were intended to end. The last law turned out to be a diluted form of the 9/11 Commission recommendations and left the DNI with unclear powers and the CIA and DOD with considerable freedom of operation. The inability of Congress to summarise its byzantine oversight system only reinforced the lack of integration, as the new DNI had to manoeuvre through a complex and disconnected set of authorising and appropriations committees (Fessenden, 2005).

Along with this structural rearrangement, there also occurred a radical redirection in the functioning of the CIA, as the CIA became the main tool of the aggressive, and frequently fatal, American counter-terrorism policy. This increase in covert action was a direct result of the 9/11 attacks, which resulted in a political edict to adopt a more bellicose and preventive stance. Such military conquest of the intelligence has, however, brought up the longstanding concerns of control, accountability, as well as the strategic long-term wisdom of maintaining secret wars. The constant conflict created by the executive branch wishing to have the freedom of action in covert action and the mandate of Congress to provide oversight a tension, enshrined in the Intelligence Authorisation Acts over the last decades, and the real dynamism at the heart of the policies of U.S. national security (Jensen, 2024; Haas, 2023).

## CONCLUSION

Summing up, the history of the clandestine services in the framework of the September 11 terrorist attacks is the complex saga of the failure of the system and its subsequent, though not complete, reconstruction. These attacks did not come as a result of one individual failing, but a chain of failures that exist due to archaic intelligence doctrines, debilitating interagency competitions, and secrecy as a way of life, that ground down collaborations that were needed to protect the country. The structural flaws, especially the abyss between foreign intelligence and domestic law enforcement agencies and the absence of a truly empowered community leader, exposed the United States to a new form of threat, which did not fit in any single category.

This has characterised the post-9/11 era, which has been marred by a determined attempt to address these gaps. The changes reflected in IRTPA and the institution of the DNI and CNTC were epic measures to unite the intelligence apparatus of the country. Nevertheless, the changes were limited by political compromise and bureaucratic obstruction, leaving its legacy to have a system that, though improved, has not quite achieved a wholly coherent system since its foundation was based on fragmentation. CIA, in its turn, has been reinvented as a more dynamic and deadly institution, a cross between the secret service and a commando. The transformation has produced inarguable successes in the struggle with terrorist networks in terms of operations, yet, it has not been without a price, and there are exceptional and critical questions that must be raised and answered concerning the issue of accountability, rule of law, and the final implications of a foreign policy that places so much emphasis on covert action.

The Intelligence Community has no option but to evolve to meet the challenge in the future. It is in view of this that the following recommendations are provided towards this process. First, the interagency coordination should be extended by the compulsory interconnection of data systems and platforms at the level of the whole IC, instead of the still-siloed networks that slow the NCTC and other fusion centres. Second, legal authority must be given to the DNI with regard to budget reprogramming, personnel-related issues, and other matters in order

that he/she be able to act as a community manager and not like another additional level of bureaucracy. Third, there is a need to streamline the congressional oversight mechanism by making it more efficient and effective in authorising and appropriating funds to the intelligence community, thus enhancing coherent oversight activities. Fourth, the ethical practice of intelligence and its training needs to be emphasised once again so that the growth of the given power of operating will be accompanied by the adherence to accountability and the rule of law. A number of new areas need to be explored in the future. The considerations of artificial intelligence and machine learning on intelligence analysis and interagency cooperation require acute investigation since these technologies are entwining the promise of colossal synthesis on the one hand and a novelty explored by adversaries on the other. Moreover, another important matter of investigation will be the changing role of the CIA in combating the threats in cyberspace, along with combating the misuse of AI by state and non-state actors. Lastly, sustained academic debate on the long-term strategic ties or implications of the post 9/11 militarisation of the U.S intelligence is a must in unravelling its implications on the American policy on foreign policy and its position among other nations in the world. The history of the CIA since 9/11 is a history of many attempts to achieve the balance between security and liberty, and it will succeed in the field in future only in case it is still able to remain adaptable, innovative, and self-critical.

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