

**THE MISGUIDED REACTION:
RECONSIDERING INTELLIGENCE FLOW BEFORE
11 SEPTEMBER 2001**

A Thesis

by

JOHN SAMUEL PROTHRO

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

August 2004

Major Subject: Speech Communication

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ABSTRACT

The Misguided Reaction: Reconsidering Intelligence Flow

Before 11 September 2001. (August 2004)

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This research examines the story of 11 September 2001 from an organizational communication perspective. Discourse after the event pointed to "communication difficulties" as a scapegoat for the intelligence community's failure. These analyses are misguided. Therefore, I examine our government's answer to communication difficulties--more bureaucracy. The many communication hindrances associated with bureaucracy are discussed as reasons to rethink our government's reaction. Finally, further research and recommendations are discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A popular child's toy features soccer ball-style hollow plastic with differently shaped holes and several corresponding molds that must be matched and slid into the spaces. Playing the game teaches a child to notice similarities and recognize associations. Oftentimes, a young child will try to force a star into a square or even a circle into a triangle, but always without success. Likewise, if one would have entered my office while I was typing my first two chapters, he or she might have envisioned a child bent-backed, straining, and frustrated, trying to burrow a star so my triangle would fit. At least I gave up.

My straining is precisely why the reader needs a reading guide, so here goes: The first two chapters, and especially the second, are the result of trying to force preconceived notions about 9-11 and organizational communication into a space that agreed with neither. In the first, I present a justification for the study (a study I envisioned would fit the star). The second is a useful exercise in academic processing and can be used as a handy information flow encyclopedia. Therefore, the attuned reader will read the first chapter with a sense of irony, and the second will be viewed on its individual worth. The final three are the meat in the stew, so they may be chewed and hopefully appreciated.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE CASE FOR A DIFFERENT OUTLOOK

On the tragic day of 11 September 2001, thousands of American lives were lost in the worst terrorist attack in U.S. history. Appropriately, in the nearly two years following the calamity, concerned citizens of all sorts have sought to improve their knowledge of September 11 and apply their newfound discernment in order to advance some aspect of American interaction. This thesis is a new angle on that process. Much discourse after the incident has studied communication “breakdowns” within the intelligence community (IC). However, little examination has occurred using the framework of organizational communication theory to understand those “breakdowns.” My goal is not to assess blame or even necessarily fix all intelligence communication problems; but rather, to apply the unique knowledge of organizational communication research to the study of this particular calamity. In the end, I sincerely hope to have presented a distinct and useful insight that can help improve how the American government reacts to intelligence failures.

This thesis follows the style and format of *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*.

Justification

Before going any further, I must present a disclaimer. First, due to the sensitive nature of the material, the foundation of this research is limited to that which has been cleared for public use. As one academic insightfully recognized following the Cuban Missile Crisis:

The social science literature on problems of foreign intelligence is nevertheless extremely small. This is regrettable because historians and social scientists have developed and are developing skills that should permit substantial contributions to the theory and even to the practice of intelligence. However, since the work of the intelligence services is necessarily classified, very little material appears in the public domain and academic scholars are deprived of the information on which to base relevant researches.¹

Fortunately, in this case some valuable texts (Congressional reports, hearings, intelligence leaks, etc.) regarding terrorism, the September 11 attacks, and intelligence organizations are in the public domain. But while there is enough material accessible to draw functional conclusions, applicable documents are not released with regard to my schedule. Consequently, this topic requires that I

continue to revise—and even correct—my conclusions as more information is released for public evaluation.

Another obstacle with this research is the problematic nature of the situation. It should be noted that highly unlikely events, by definition, cannot always be anticipated or prevented, and persistent finger-pointing only serves to divide the country and further damage the society. Recognizing the misgivings of hindsight, it is exigent to point to a mishap and call it a “failure,” and, given the frequency of surprise attacks,² one is properly reluctant to chastise particular persons or groups for alleged errors. It is careless to only identify mistakes “after the fact” in order to suggest someone or some organization is to blame.

Admittedly, the natural, emotional reaction to tragic events is to find a scapegoat, but I have done my best to avoid this temptation. Instead, I have replaced finger-pointing with a concerted effort to provide a better understanding of the situation in the hopes that my research may one day assist in terrorism prevention.

The study of the Pearl Harbor attacks is a relevant comparison. Immediately following the Second World War, researchers passionately focused their attention towards the subject of Japan’s surprise attack. As Alvin D. Coox recognized, “The smoke had barely lifted from the blazing hulks at Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, when the first American critics began to point accusing fingers at those held responsible for the disaster in Hawaii.”³ Many writings accused officials of negligence while the conspiracy theorists even charged that President Franklin D. Roosevelt colluded with other high-ranking officials to

secretly lure the Japanese into attacking Pearl Harbor; thus, granting the Roosevelt Administration justification for war.⁴ “Put simply,” explains Coox, “the highest American officials, from the President down, were allegedly implicated in a deliberate plot and a massive cover-up designed to drag the reluctant, isolationist United States through the back door to war, by enticing the Japanese into launching a pre-emptive, surprise operation that would be sufficient to enrage the American people but insufficient to damage American prospects for ultimate victory.”⁵

Fortunately, research has produced at least two plausible Pearl Harbor theories.⁶ The first attributes the breakdowns to the introduction of “noise” into intelligence gathering and the lack of an analytical frame needed to classify the data. This theory states that the excessive intelligence information the U.S. obtained was categorized and misperceived simply because an effective system did not exist that could process it. The intelligence that could have prepared the U.S. for the attacks at Pearl Harbor was available, but the amount of data was so enormous, it was impossible to fully evaluate. The United States had been negotiating with Japan, and American intelligence had recently cracked the Japanese code (code named MAGIC) used to advise diplomatic efforts and command ship movements. Combined with field intelligence gathering, all these efforts proved to be too much data for the American intelligence system to handle.⁷ “In short,” as Roberta Wohlstetter writes, “we failed to anticipate Pearl Harbor not for want of the relevant materials, but because of the plethora of irrelevant ones.”⁸

Without an effective process to separate the “noise” from the valuable material, the important data was lost in the information overload.

The second theory was outlined by Abraham Ben-Zvi’s study of surprise attacks. He acknowledged that many researchers recognized intelligence failures stemmed from misconceptions about the enemy. In other words, the tactical information was flowing into Washington, but the imperative data was disregarded because it did not fit the strategic assumptions of those in power.⁹ For example, many high-ranking American officials such as Secretaries Stimson and Morgenthau believed that “so long as the United States maintained an overall military advantage over Japan, war was unlikely to break out.”¹⁰ The Japanese, they reasoned, would not want to challenge or provoke the United States with a preemptive attack.

These types of preconceptions possibly distorted the information coming from the field¹¹ because, inevitably in organizations, superiors knowingly or unknowingly communicate their assumptions and beliefs to their employees. Consequently, those employees are more likely to collect, assess, and “send up” information they believe the power holders will deem credible. As one researcher James P. Walsh stated, “While the benefits of employing...top down information processing theory... structures are widely noted, there is a growing concern that they can limit decision makers’ abilities to understand their information environments and thus, compromise their decision making.”¹² Before Pearl Harbor, it is possible the high-ranking officials distorted the interpretation of the

information they were provided—leaving the U.S. blind to the subsequent attacks. Concerning the American leadership one cryptoanalyst supposedly pronounced, “But they knew, they knew, they knew.”¹³

Still, partly because of the blame game, most of the research regarding Pearl Harbor provided little pragmatic knowledge. As Ben-Zvi rightly pointed out: “The need still remains to convert ‘post-mortems of past intelligence performances’ into an operational theory of intelligence, a theory which will categorize the key variables associated with the past cases of surprise and develop a cluster of ‘sophisticated expectations about surprises.’¹⁴ It is impractical, therefore, to simply underline mistakes made by intelligence organizations. In *Analysis, War, and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures are Inevitable*, Richard Betts agrees:

Negative or descriptive theory—the empirical understanding of how intelligence systems make mistakes—is well developed. The distinction is significant because there is little evidence that either scholars or practitioners have succeeded in translating such knowledge into reforms that measurably reduce failure.¹⁵

He later outlines several basic barriers recognized by the negative theorists to be inherent to intelligence undertakings. He states, “Beyond the barriers that authority, organization, and scarcity pose to intelligence lie more fundamental and

less remediable intellectual sources of error.” These include the “basic barriers to analytic accuracy,” or, in other words, well-intentioned but ineffective repairs used after tragic intelligence failures. They are:

- I. Ambiguity of Evidence—‘It is the role of intelligence to extract certainty from uncertainty.’
- II. Ambivalence of Judgment—‘Where there are ambiguous and conflicting indicators (the context of most failures of intelligence), the imperatives of honesty and accuracy leave a careful analyst no alternative but ambivalence.’
- III. Atrophy of Reforms—‘Disasters always stimulate organizational changes designed to avert the same failures in the future. In some cases these changes work. In many instances, however, the changes persist formally but erode substantively.’

These repairs, while well meaning, are also modeled after low-probability past events—making them oftentimes irrelevant in the future. Afterwards, Betts summarizes other research that addresses the frequent responses to tragedy that contribute to the “elusiveness of solutions”:

- I. Assume the Worst—‘A common reaction to traumatic surprise is the recommendation to cope with ambiguity and

ambivalence by acting on the most threatening possible interpretations. If there is any evidence of threat, assume it is valid, even if the apparent weight of contrary indicators is greater.’

- II. Multiple Advocacy—‘Blunders are often attributed to decision makers’ inattention to unpopular viewpoints (those that contradict upper management assumptions) or to a lack of access to higher levels of authority by dissident analysts. To reduce the chances of such mistakes . . . one might propose . . . institutionalizing a balanced, open, and managed process of debate . . . Confidence that it will help systematically and substantially should be tentative.
- III. Consolidation—‘According to the logic of estimative redundancy, more analysis is better than less . . . On the other hand, according to the logic of those who focus on the time constraints of leaders and the confusion that results from innumerable publications, quantity counteracts quality.’
- IV. Devil’s Advocacy—‘Multiple advocacy ensures that all views held by individuals within the analytic system will be granted serious attention. Some views that should receive attention, however, may not be held by anyone within the system.’

V. Sanctions and Incentives—‘Some critics attribute intelligence failures to dishonest reporting or the intellectual mediocrity of analysts. Suggested remedies include threats of punishment for the former, and inducements to attract talent to replace the latter. Other critics emphasize that, will or ability aside, analytic integrity is often submerged by the policy makers’ demands for intelligence that suits them.¹⁶

Instead of creating similar negative theory that does little to improve the organizations, a practical understanding of the 9-11 situation should be developed. Negative theory tends to assess blame without a pragmatic framework for improvement. This type of scrutiny can, in fact, inhibit the formation of much-needed descriptive theory and analysis and limit the means for progress. In addition, it can encourage cover-ups, which further short-circuits the "learning" process.

It is difficult to determine an “intelligence failure” and assess blame after a surprise attack for two main reasons. First, surprise attacks, by definition, are hard to predict given the precautions taken by those who plan them. Though it is impossible to prevent “well-planned” terrorism, the political reaction is to attempt to predict or control every terrorist occurrence. This recognition is why some “risk-management” literature says planners should focus their attention on preventing the most likely sources of danger while ignoring the least likely ones.

Second, as we see very often in terrorism situations, intelligence organizations are trying to rationally understand those who, from their point of view seem “irrational.” “The behavior of people within a culture different from one’s own often appears irrational when in fact they act rationally (from their own perspective),”¹⁷ explains Klaus Knorr. Determining how someone from a dissimilar background will behave is a difficult undertaking, especially since, if they are “rational,” they will most likely plan something their enemy least expects.

Furthermore, Richard Betts essentially believes intelligence failures are unavoidable. Here, while outlining a good example, he analyzes the inherent paradoxical entanglements involved in intelligence gathering and reporting:

Again, there are two fundamental points. First, within the context of a glut of ambiguous data, intelligence officials linked to operational agencies (primarily military) tend to indulge a propensity for justifying service performance by issuing optimistic assessments, while analysts in autonomous non-operational units . . . tend to produce more pessimistic evaluations. Second, in contrast to cases of attack warning, fragmentary tactical indicators of success tend to override more general and cautious strategic estimates. Confronted by differing analyses, a leader mortgaged to his policy tends to resent or dismiss the critical ones, even when they represent the majority

view of the intelligence community, and to cling to the data that support continued commitment.¹⁸

After delineating several of these intrinsic obstacles associated with intelligence, Betts summarizes that intelligence failures are to be expected, and researchers can only hope to alter the IC slowly and delicately. Given these complications, I have attempted to distinguish between mere hindsight and that which could be considered workable, reasonable expectations regarding the American IC.

It is important to note that there is a potential use for hindsight in research. Retrospection does allow researchers to reexamine and improve conclusions. In my observations, hopefully I can provide a new perspective through which to understand the events before 9-11. Intelligence must not only be gathered, it must be presented and unraveled. Fittingly, this thesis will look at the 9-11 situation from a new and distinct organizational communication angle. By examining the communicative dynamics involved in intelligence gathering and reporting, I will illuminate the learning process from a unique and practical organizational perspective.

Theoretical Method

The study of organizational communication is an expanding arena. More and more people are recognizing the need to understand the direct influence of

communication variables in the workplace. This is not a new enterprise, however. “Since the beginning of recorded history, organizational employees have recognized the crucial role that communication plays in their success.”¹⁹ Around 2000 B.C., Pharaoh Ptah-hotep advised his sons in the “importance of listening skills, the need to seek advice and information from their subordinates, the importance of staying informed about what was taking place around them, and the necessity of clearly explaining each worker’s tasks and documenting these instructions in writing.”²⁰ What we term as “modern” studies in organizational communication began in the late 1930’s to early 1940’s, and, since then, the field has expanded its influence in a broad range of theoretical directions.²¹ Accordingly, organizational communication theory can also provide us a lens through which to assess intelligence organizational practices. By taking a communication approach, this thesis provides a unique yet advantageous point from which to understand the intelligence situation pre-911.

There are innumerable organizational research applications that are pertinent to this study. I recognize the limitations of time and even paper associated with trying to incorporate every topic available. Given these restraints, I have in Chapter II examined some of the barriers to information flow intrinsic to organizations.

There are multiple conceptualizations regarding why intelligence failures happen. One in particular, pathologies of communication, may be a useful conceptualization for this study. It is described in this way:

The most frequently noted sources of breakdowns in intelligence lie in the process of amassing timely data, communicating them to decision makers, and impressing the latter with the validity or relevance of the information. This view of the problem leaves room for optimism because it implies that procedural curatives can eliminate the dynamics of error. For this reason, official post mortems of intelligence blunders inevitably produce recommendations for reorganization and changes in operating norms.²²

There is some research suggesting that reorganization is a rhetorical act--that is, it does little to improve the effectiveness of the organization, but instead satisfies the desires of external constituents. The organizational actors may or may not believe the actions actually make a difference, but the outcome is the same.

There are also debatable assumptions regarding organizational learning. One theoretical camp believes that, "Theories of organizational learning," as Barbara Levitt and James G. March accept, "can be distinguished from theories of analysis and choice which emphasize anticipatory calculation and intention."²³ In other words, practices, rituals, and other "normal" behavior are what organization members "learn." From this theoretical perspective, people do not purposely learn from "calculation and intention;" they instead learn from norms that become

ingrained action. This thinking is incomplete, however. Recognizing the situational challenges involved (complexity of situation, density of problems, etc.), organizational members can purposely learn from their mistakes, apply newfound knowledge to their behavior, and better their surroundings through what they have learned. A more inclusive interpretation of organizational learning, therefore, is helpful to this study. As Stuart Macdonald of the Warwick Business School in England points out, deliberative change can be part of organizational learning:

Without learning there can be no change, at least none that is not speculative or accidental...The organization must seek most of the new information required for change in the outside world. It must bring home this new information to be mixed with resident information to shape a novel pattern of knowledge into a package that can be used.²⁴

This thesis recognizes that “the essence of change in the organization is the external information required for learning.”²⁵ And without learning, intentional change is impossible. Not that intentional learning is necessarily more useful than unintentional, but it is certainly the only process this writing can hope to advance. This research should, therefore, attempt to understand organizational behavior before 9-11 so organizations can use that insight to one day enhance some aspect of interaction. Understandably, this writing is a minute part of the whole process

of bettering our IC, but it can be a small contribution toward the understanding of surprise attacks and organizational learning.

Still, as we will see in this study, change in organizations is not simple. Management research has considered the problems associated with change and determined that it is risky, difficult, and constrained by organizational structure and politics. For instance, Nicole Woolsey Biggart studied the reorganization of the United States Postal Service and determined that change can be destructive. She found that when it occurs, those associated with the organization (both internal and external members) disrupt the workings of the organization by scrambling for available power and resources. This competition leads to the formation of alliances and coups that seek to “overthrow” the existing powers instead of working with them. Attempting to pacify the revolutionaries and remain in power, the present leadership can attack the goals and ideologies that existed before the transformations.²⁶ Other researchers have found additional problems. Robert A. Rothman, et al. found that employees whose lives will be disrupted because of certain changes tend to resist those changes,²⁷ and Michael T. Hannan and John Freeman acknowledged that organization reconfiguration creates what they call “structural inertia.”²⁸ That is, when members continually resist architectural change—prohibiting favorable outcomes.

Though literature suggests the improbability of organizational change, some structural researchers acknowledge there are exceptions: “To claim that organizational structures are subject to strong inertial forces is not the same as

claiming that organizations never change.”²⁹ Likewise, Heather A. Haven found, “When environmental conditions undergo a sudden (punctuational) transformation, change in organizational structures and activities will prove beneficial to short-run performance and long-run survival chances.”³⁰ It can be concluded that, although slow, difficult, and painstaking, organizational change is possible. Therefore, since organizations can enact beneficial change, adjustments should be considered only with the realization that modifications guarantee a certain number of growing pains. In short, change is not always necessary and can be harmful, and those in power should resist unnecessary adjustments to their organizational system.

It can be argued, regardless of the problems inherent to the installment of organizational change, a necessary step in that process is assessing communication breakdowns. I understand this thesis is most likely not going to immediately encourage change in intelligence organizations. Instead, I will present a distinctive and beneficial framework through which to understand a portion of 9-11. In doing so, I desire that this writing will prove to be a “step in the right direction,” and when combined with other strides, the United States can one day walk down the path toward a more efficient, effective, and successful IC.

Historical Precedents

Intelligence organizations have for a long time understood the importance of organizational adjustments in the fight against terror. In 1982, Westview Special Studies in International Terrorism outlined the importance of

organizational structure changes in the IC. Recognizing “the concern with organizations is relevant to the study of our governmental response to transnational terrorism,”³¹ the book detailed federal action pertaining to organizational changes after various terrorist attacks. In September of 1972, for example, President Nixon responded to the massacre at Lod Airport and the Munich Olympics slayings by establishing the Cabinet Committee to Combat Terrorism. The committee’s functions were to, among other things:

Coordinate, among the government agencies, ongoing activity for the prevention of terrorism. This will include such activities as the collection of intelligence worldwide and the physical protection of U.S. personnel and installations abroad and foreign diplomats and diplomatic installations in the United States.³²

Even though the committee was abolished in 1977 due in large part to inaction, the Federal government continued to review and amend organizational strategy in order to prevent terrorist attacks.

President Jimmy Carter not only created the National Security Council [an organization which purpose was to deal with intelligence information requiring presidential consideration], but he also used his time in office to revise the way various security organizational hierarchies function and precisely underline the

goals of the separate intelligence groups. The purpose of his efforts was to more effectively combat terrorism.³³

After Carter, the Reagan Administration also had to develop strategies to contest the rise of terrorism:

By early 1986, terrorism had become a “growth industry.” The number of terrorist incidents was up 30 percent, the number of injuries about 80 percent, and the death toll almost 300 percent. Moreover, Americans were increasingly being targeted: a navy seal man killed during the June 1985 TWA hijacking, the elderly crippled Leon Klinghoffer thrown overboard the Achille Lauro, an eleven-year-old girl killed during the Christmas 1985 attacks in the Rome and Vienna airports, and then in April 1986 the bombing of a West Berlin discoteque injuring 230 and killing two people, including an American soldier.³⁴

The Administration responded with a unique strategy termed “coercive diplomacy”—a new military approach to foreign policy that used strategic bombings and military strikes to deter and undermine suspected terrorists. Instead of simply replacing foreign leaders, Reagan’s foreign policy team refocused their diplomatic efforts to control, upset, and restrain terrorist activities through tactical military strikes.³⁵

Organizational adjustments have also been used by George W. Bush's administration to deal with the terror attacks of 9-11. The White House announced the new Terrorist Threat Integration Center (TTIC) to "create a structure that ensures information sharing across agency lines" as well as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) with a new cabinet office "to add critical new capabilities in the area of information analysis and infrastructure protection." The President also announced organizational changes to be made in the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The President motivated the FBI to establish and communicate that the prevention of terrorism is their primary goal, and they responded by developing a revolutionary data management system that benefits counter terrorism intelligence sharing. The CIA Director was encouraged to institute a new Associate Director of Central Intelligence for Homeland Security to "ensure timely, effective and secure flow of intelligence to agencies engaged in Homeland Security."³⁶

Throughout the history of the IC, those in charge have altered and fine-tuned the efforts and structures of their organizational interactions. However, without first analyzing the communicative processes of intelligence organizations and understanding the dynamics involved, it may be impossible to know if any of this reorganization is liable to enhance the security of the United States.

CHAPTER II

ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION FLOW

This chapter is a brief glossary of information flow. The point here is not to present in-depth analysis of each, but rather to indicate the challenges faced in organizational communication and furnish a framework through which we can examine the actual case.

Introduction

In order to understand the events preceding 9-11, one must first comprehend research regarding information processing in organizations. A host of organizations compose the mammoth organization calmly titled the Intelligence Community (IC). The most prevalent and most important agencies in our story are the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the National Security Agency (NSA), and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Because each agency is in some sense attached, we should first consider what we know about information flow in a general organizational sense. Afterwards, we can apply those processes to the Intelligence Community (IC).

There is a tremendous amount of information, messages, and ideas generated within the IC, and, as we will see, it behooves organizations in general to determine the amount, quality, and clarity of messages generated. Proficient information flow has been linked to increased worker production and efficiency while mistakes made with message processing leads to harmful outcomes.³⁷ In order for information to be used

then, it must be processed effectively, quickly, and proficiently. If messages are dots, and if we consider the goal of intelligence officials to be a “connecting of the dots;” this chapter will focus on the dots themselves—i.e. how they get developed, why some get ignored, why some disappear, and what micro-processes tend to spoil their progression.

The previous considerations could take this study in several directions. Given that organizations are information-processing bodies and messages are “chunks” of information,³⁸ it is fitting for organizational communication scholars to determine how messages travel or “flow” throughout organizations as well as what factors help determine how those messages are received. This chapter will narrow its focus away from information processing or decision-making research and center on information exchange within organizations. In doing so, it will differ from the communication theory that focuses on outcomes and concentrate on the processes that produce those outcomes and the breakdowns that occur in those processes.

Researchers are recognizing that formal organizational structures do not promote efficient and effective communication,³⁹ and some barriers of information flow are directly unique to the flow’s direction. Messages that flow upward—that is, from lower to higher members in the hierarchy—have many inherent problems. Information “created” at the bottom of the pyramid must be passed upward to those in command—all the while being reinterpreted, reevaluated, and reprocessed. Likewise, the “downward” or “top-down” communication in organizations has many barriers associated with it. Superiors must communicate the organization’s goals, systems, rules, and techniques while at the same time conveying a message of trust, leadership and clarity.

Recognizing these inhibitors to communication flow, researchers are recognizing the need to study communication obstacles within organizations. The research in this area can be categorized into eleven areas: trust, influence, mobility, structure, networks, rivalry, message overload, ambiguity, status, bureaucracy, and styles of leadership. What follows is virtually an organizational communication glossary of these terms.

Trust

The first one, trust, is especially important in member communication and relationships. For instance, in superior/subordinate relationships, low trust—the belief that the accuracy of the information from the superior is questionable—can be associated with “the subordinate’s disclosed tendency to block or withhold information.”⁴⁰ This attitude can obviously be detrimental to the information exchange process because if the subordinate feels his/her superior is untrustworthy, he/she will likely believe the superior to also be ineffective and incapable of acting on the information (and vice-versa--what' been called the “Pelz effect”. But trust is an essential factor throughout organizations. As Karlene H. Roberts admits, “Insofar as group accomplishment is related to the accurate and open exchange of information, a lack of trust may impede data flow and reduce performance.”⁴¹

Influence

The second factor implicates influence and its effects on upward communication. The supervisor's perceived *amount* of influence or power can be important to the amount

of information provided by his/her subordinates but not on the *quality* of information given:

Intuitively, the idea that a superior perceived as having high influence might be one to whom communication is guarded seems reasonable . . . subordinates with high influence superiors desire interaction and believe that accurate information is received from them. Interestingly, however, influence does not exhibit any consistent relationship with the variables which might be precursors to inaccurate communications, i.e., distorting pressures or tendencies to withhold information. It is related, however, to trust, mobility, and satisfaction with communication in general.⁴²

Therefore, a subordinate who perceives his leader to be a person of high influence may decrease the amount of information presented. This is especially true if the information is negative or could be perceived as a negative comment regarding the subordinate's job.

Mobility

Research suggests that members in organizations are sometimes egocentric; i.e. they desire their goals over the goals of the organization. Therefore, the motives of the individual may hinder the progress of the organization. That is, he/she will only send

messages that promote his/her development and not the development of the organization.⁴³ If a person is after his/her own advancement, or if the person feels he/she has not been properly rewarded by the organization, he/she may have the tendency to withhold or distort information that may be unhelpful to his/her cause. Several factors, including the hierarchical structure of traditional organizations, lend themselves to these types of problems. The pyramid chart obviously makes advancement a more difficult process the further one moves up the hierarchy. Therefore, organizational members tend to become frustrated as their progression becomes more and more difficult, and their resentment translates into an egocentric behavior that is oppositional to the organization's goals.

Structure

The structure of an organization has a profound influence on the efficiency of the information flow. Traditional hierarchical organizational charts seem to display a certain amount of uniformity and clarity. However, the structure of an organization is more than its exposed diagram, and the organizational chart certainly does not govern message flow. Although the operational networks usually do roughly approximate the organizational chart, members develop unrecorded networks, behave egotistically, withhold information from superiors, perform unpredictably, and even compensate for weaknesses in the formal system. Still, the understanding of the organizational structure and how it affects information flow is an important undertaking, and there does "exist a

close relationship between the structure and the information efficiency in organizations.”⁴⁴

Message communication is sometimes structurally hindered because all information gets distorted when it is passed around. The problem is most apparent when one message is passed vertically among organizational actors, but it exists generally in an organization’s everyday communication, regardless of the flow’s direction. This paradox can be termed “structural distortion.” A message is structurally distorted because “when one person communicates a message to another, each of them interprets it.”⁴⁵ One can draw an analogy from a traditional parlor game. The game is performed this way: The members of the party sit around the room in a circle. When called upon, one person will create a sentence that he or she whispers to the person sitting on the right. Each person then whispers the message to his or her neighbor until the last person has heard the message. The humor is exposed when the person on the end reveals the incoherent or ridiculous message that has little to do with the original line. In this “serial transmission” as Cynthia Stohl and W. Charles Redding term it, “messages may get modified or distorted because (1) the goal of one or more of the players is to change intentionally the message, (2) the mere number of people in the game makes it likely that the message will be transformed through subtle changes in each transmission, and (3) a sender or receiver may be unable to reproduce the identical message because of cognitive, physical, or social limitations.”⁴⁶

Likewise, Conrad offers five structural barriers that alter messages:

- I. Condensed—messages sent are shorter and simpler than messages received.
- II. Accented—messages are simplified into good or bad, all or none, or other extreme terms
- III. Assimilated—messages are transformed so that they are similar to information the person received in the past and/or expects in the future.
- IV. Whitewashed—messages can be made to fit the interpreter’s frame of reference.
- V. Reductively coded—messages can be combined with other information to form a sensible overall picture, especially when the message is complex or ambiguous.⁴⁷

In an organizational hierarchy, those at the top rarely are in direct contact with the people who are actually generating the messages. Before the decision makers in an organization actually receive a message, it has been through interpretation and reinterpretation several times and has in some ways changed its meaning. This “filtering” process creates what Conrad recognizes as “a serious paradox for hierarchical organizations.”⁴⁸

Networks

There are still other factors that have little to do with the supposed organizational hierarchy and more to do with general human interaction. Research suggests that when members of an organization come together, they tend to form communication networks that determine who they talk to, who they listen to, and who they trust. These “cliques” can be developed because of similar backgrounds, behaviors, interests, or, more likely, task requirements; and they can have a profound influence on the flow of information within the organization. While some research acknowledges there are benefits to these networks, it has been shown they can harm the flow of information by perpetrating harmful attitudes, promoting member uncertainty, and withholding information.⁴⁹ These “informal” networks sometimes develop because there is a breakdown somewhere within the information flow system, and they compensate for breakdowns in information flow within the formal networks. Consequently, some who should be “in the loop” of information get left out because for some reason they were not allowed in the informal network.

Rivalry

Rivalries and competitive behavior sometime develop between different groups, and message flow can in turn be disrupted. Research regarding these rivalries is largely undeveloped, but this topic can be especially useful in the study of information flow. As Kathleen Sutcliffe admits, “Research investigating the development of collaborative versus competitive interorganizational relations also may provide useful insights about

flows of information across organizational boundaries.”⁵⁰ Therefore, understanding the competitive motivations of groups within organizations can help us comprehend the disruptions within message flow.

Message Overload

After messages reach their destination, they still may be difficult to process. Stohl and Redding define “message overload” as “the transmission of new information at a rate that far exceeds the input-processing and output-capabilities of organizational actors.”⁵¹ In simpler terms, the amount of information coming in is too much for the member to “handle.” Information overload has been shown to impede the overall decision-making process, and in hierarchical systems, “the excessive information load (has) caused a reduction in the productivity of individual employees as well as the entire organization.”⁵²

The topic of information overload has received much attention in the academic world. Promoting the belief that organizations are information-processing systems, Charles A. O’Reilly found that information overload among managers is associated with poor performance, and the frequency of irrelevant information impeded the ability of individuals in the organization to work efficiently. Therefore, he concluded organizations should determine the information-processing capacities of their members and match them with the information load encountered.⁵³ A study conducted by Norman L. Chervany and Gary W. Dickson found that the most efficient business information systems reduce the amount of irrelevant information, which will develop confident and

superior decision-makers.⁵⁴ There have even been studies on the overload of information in mechanical processes. William V. Gehrlein and Peter C. Fishburn offered a more bewildering view of information overload. Using the assumption that information overload is bad in human business interaction, they measured its influence on computer programs and other mechanical processes. They determined the harmful effects of too much information apply to humans as well as problem-solving machines.⁵⁵ Given this information, the research suggests in most cases organizations should seek to reduce the amount of irrelevant information in order to better organizational efficiency (a difficult task in high ambiguity cases). However, it is often unclear how much information is too much, and managers have a difficult time understanding the processing capacity of their workers. Furthermore, as we learned earlier, exorbitant amounts of information must be filtered throughout the structure of the organization, leaving some information “untouched” by the decision-makers.

Ambiguity

There is also much discussion on the topic of ambiguity in message flow. While the use of “strategic ambiguity” has been recognized as an advantageous behavior, there are some who point out it is hard to sometimes draw the line between strategic ambiguity and the subtly deceptive and harmful behavior researchers term “double talk.”⁵⁶ This can certainly be a barrier to information flow because the message sender holds back information that may be useful to the receiver in an effort to distort information.

Status

The emphasis on the status of a member can harm the information he or she receives. When status is accented, Conrad points out that messages tend to be more formal, written, and business oriented; when de-emphasized, organizations become more efficient, the employees trust their superiors more, and communication increases. Status emphasis can also influence the accuracy of the information given because “information is distorted even more when there are sizable differences in power or status between two people...”⁵⁷

Bureaucracy

Other factors that negatively influence information flow are inherent in bureaucratic organizations. Conrad recognizes three ways bureaucracies tend to frustrate their members: (1) they transmit information slowly, (2) there is limited space available for advancement, and (3) supervisors that enforce rules emphasize status difference. The organizational members will oftentimes respond to their aggravation by withholding or distorting information.⁵⁸ In Chapter IV, this information flow barrier will be discussed in greater detail.

Styles of Leadership

One line of research has examined the communication barriers associated with the different leadership styles. Norman R. F. Maier looked at supervisors in a human relations program and underscored interpersonal barriers to downward communication.

The most interesting focus of his paper regards the way information barriers get created when leaders have a democratic technique. The authority of the superior is subject to the wishes of the group as well as the expectations of the job, and the supervisor sometimes cannot divulge information such as company policies or practices, given the restraints inherent to the leadership style. Otherwise vital information may be disregarded and unspoken because of the job's boundaries.⁵⁹

Conclusion

This chapter has briefly rehashed several influencers that can harm message flow in organizations. An organization that produces tremendous amounts of information must also have a communication system that promotes efficient flow of information throughout the hierarchy.⁶⁰ Intelligence organizations by nature produce massive amounts of information. That information must be transmitted throughout the organization while weaving through the aforementioned barriers to message flow. Recognizing the inherent obstacles to information flow in organizations is the logical first step towards bettering intelligence organizations' communication. There is little doubt these problems will continue to exist regardless of the research done to curtail them, but people can take heart that communicative processes in organizations can be improved.

CHAPTER III

PURE COMMUNICATION

The next step to understanding 9-11 through an organizational communication lens is examining the story. To recreate what happened before the events, I researched nearly every form of published material regarding intelligence pre 9-11. The literature was limited to publicly released information, and, since the first inception, this chapter has been continually revised to accommodate changes. Nevertheless, I hope to have pieced together a helpful outline of the foreknowledge of the American Intelligence Community (IC) and information flow breakdowns in the system.

Research regarding 9-11 has sought to determine “what we knew” before the attacks. More specifically, critics have speculated whether there was information regarding the hijackers or al-Qaeda that could have prevented the catastrophe. Reports have found some details. For instance, researchers discovered a 1998 intelligence meeting where officials warned only substantial improvements in counterterrorism data collection would prevent a “catastrophic” attack. They also exposed a classified document that contended Osama bin Laden would likely pose a long-term threat to the United States. Almost immediately, these types of reports had reports blaming 9-11 failures on communication. Before we accept the default explanation of “poor communication,” however, it seems fitting to completely separate purely communicative mishaps from the rest of the story. Consequently, I have tried in this chapter to present a clean look at communication—an uncontaminated version specifically identifying

communication instances that injured the goal of counterterrorism. My challenge, though, is to recreate selected events intertwined with a massive amount of occurrences. As former Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director, Louis Freeh put it, “Analyzing intelligence information can be like trying to take a sip of water coming out of a fire hydrant.”⁶¹ Nevertheless, I have researched the reports simply from a communication perspective, and I have done my best to offer here a few tastes from my theoretical cup.

Three Hijackers

To begin, intelligence and law enforcement officials knew very little about the September 11 perpetrators. Congressional research⁶² indicates that 16 of the 19 hijackers were virtually unknown to the IC before the attacks. Concrete knowledge of the hijackers, therefore, was limited to the three remaining terrorists—Khalid al-Midhar, Nawaf al-Hazmi, and Nawaf’s brother Salim al-Hazmi—all of which were involved with Pan Am Flight 77 that crashed into the Pentagon. Here briefly is their story:

In 1999, the IC began a nationwide effort to thwart terrorist activity. Given the upcoming millennium, United States intelligence members were sensitive to terrorist activity—more specifically, al-Qaeda and the confidants of Osama bin Laden. During the heightened alert, intelligence services heard of a planned meeting scheduled January 5-8 in Malaysia. Khalid al-Midhar and Nawaf al-Hazmi—two individuals possibly linked to a support network of the East Africa embassy bombers—were scheduled to meet with several people whom the CIA suspected to be terrorist operatives and al-

Qaeda associates. The Intelligence Services also knew a man named “Salem” (who one analyst reported may in fact be Nawaf’s brother) would be attending the meeting. While the details of the Malaysia happenings are either unknown or undisclosed, it is clear intelligence personnel began watching the individual group members to determine their identities and plans.

As a result of the meetings, CIA discovered Khalid al-Midhar’s full name, his passport number, and his birth information, and it learned he had obtained from Saudi Arabia a multiple-entry visa that would not expire until April 2002. In addition, the CIA determined Nawaf was on the departing plane next to someone with the name of al-Hazmi. This discovery clued the Agency that Nawaf’s last name might actually be al-Hazmi; but the detection was seemingly small news at the time, and the CIA did not distribute the new information throughout the rest of The Community.

To not share the full name of Nawaf al-Hazmi, in hindsight, was unfortunate because the National Security Agency (NSA) database contained a man named Nawaf al-Hazmi whom it had determined had direct links to the Osama bin Laden network. Because the information did not meet either agency’s reporting thresholds, the NSA did not circulate its records throughout The Community (although it was available on their database), and the CIA did not disclose it had uncovered the full name. One CIA officer did, however, email an FBI official regarding the activities of al-Hazmi, but the email failed to mention his multiple-entry visa and the possibility of his entrance into the U.S. Another CIA employee, who had been assigned to develop better communication between the FBI and CIA, sent an email to his Agency colleagues detailing the briefings

given the FBI. In those consultations, according to the CIA official, he stated his position was simply that nothing illegal or threatening had occurred, and if it did he would notify the FBI immediately.

Not long after the Kuala Lumpur meetings, an overseas CIA office alerted headquarters and the special unit assigned to bin Laden that al-Hazmi (and later discovered, Khalid al-Midhar) had in fact entered the U.S. through Los Angeles International Airport. According to the Joint Inquiry, a CIA member assigned specifically to track the movements of the Kuala Lumpur people did not recall receiving the transmission. In fact, Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) George Tenet, testified: “(no)body read that cable in the March time frame.”⁶³ Perhaps the most troubling issue is the FBI was not alerted. The Bureau was told nothing of the terrorist entering America and was unable, if it had desired, to track him after his arrival. Still, the importance of this transmission is unclear. While it did state that al-Hazmi was in the country, it essentially recommended inaction⁶⁴—suggesting his arrival was considered insignificant. Even if the cable had been entirely dispersed, it would perhaps not have sparked any additional intelligence operations on Khalid’s behalf.

Unfortunately, there was another missed opportunity to better understand the al-Qaeda threat. Although FBI headquarters had information connecting al-Midhar and al-Hazmi to al-Qaeda, it did not disclose to their local offices the names or whereabouts of the men. One office in particular, the San Diego Bureau, was in contact with an informant who had direct communication with both men during their stay in California. Had the San Diego office knew of the al-Qaeda connection, it could have urged a

particular informant to gain information regarding the men and their plans. After 9-11, when the informant was questioned, he first expressed disbelief the men were involved and then described them as religious and unsuspecting. Since then, doubts have been raised about the informant's credibility and awareness.

Given the eventual outcome of the terrorist meetings, the CIA and NSA missed a chance, albeit a diminutive one, to recognize the full names of the terrorists and, more importantly, their significance. The IC could have used that information to place the three men on the State Department watchlist designed to register the names of certain people who may pose a threat to the United States. If they had shown up on the watchlist trying to come into the United States, they could have been prohibited from entering. Still, as NSA director Hayden testified to the Joint Inquiry, the intelligence response to the gathering at Kuala Lumpur, while noticeable in hindsight, was not a colossal error:

At the time of the meeting in Kuala Lumpur, we had the al-Hazmi brothers, Nawaf and Salem, as well as Khalid al-Midhar, in our sights. We knew of their association with al-Qa'ida, and we shared this information with the Community. I've looked at this closely. If we had handled all of the above perfectly, the only new fact that we could have contributed at the time of Kuala Lumpur was that Nawaf's surname (and perhaps that of Salem, who appeared to be Nawaf's brother) was al-Hazmi.⁶⁵

During the investigation of the October 2000 USS Cole terrorist attack, CIA uncovered another connection linking al-Qaeda to the Malaysia meeting. Tawfiq Mohamed Saleh Atash also known as Khallad, a principle planner of the strike, was recognized in surveillance photos taken at the meetings. In January 2001, after FBI informed CIA that Khallad had received money in Malaysia from two participants at the meeting, the CIA was able to solidly connect the Malaysia group, including al-Midhar and al-Hazmi, with the terrorist faction al-Qaeda. But while this was an example of information sharing, there were times CIA did not completely disclose.

During the Cole investigation, a CIA analyst contacted an Intelligence Operations Specialist (IOS) at FBI headquarters. He wanted to know if a person in custody, related to the Cole attacks and known to have carried money for Khallad, could be identified in the Malaysia surveillance photos. The IOS testified to the Joint Inquiry that she was not told during their meeting of al-Midhar's (the identified man) potential travel to the United States, nor was she told Khallad was at the Malaysia gathering. The same occurred when the CIA analyst flew with the IOS to meet with FBI officials in New York. When asked by FBI officials why CIA was following Khalid al-Midhar, the analyst did not disclose. In his testimony, he stated that the information was operational in nature, and it would not have been disclosed without permission.⁶⁶

Shortly thereafter, the organizations finally pieced together the situation. On 30 August 2001, FBI was informed regarding al-Midhar's identification and travel to the United States. Armed with the information that al-Midhar was connected to al-Qaeda,

the INS, FBI and CIA investigated and determined al-Midhar had entered the United States on 15 January 2000, left on 10 June 2000, and returned 4 June 2001 with a visa that would allow him to stay until August 22. This information led to both the watchlisting of al-Midhar, al-Hazmi, Khallad, and one other person at the Malaysia meeting. Accordingly, investigations were begun to determine if the terrorists were in the U.S.

The Phoenix Memo

They were in America. More specifically, they were working to develop piloting skills to guide the planes they would eventually hijack. This preparation did not go unnoticed, however. On alert for al-Qaeda's next attack and aware of terrorist Ramzi Yousef's disrupted plan to fly a small plane full of explosives into CIA headquarters, one Phoenix FBI field agent noticed an alarming pattern. Many of the Islamic terrorist suspects he had been following were enrolling in a local flight school. Consequently, he sent a letter to FBI headquarters. In the letter he identified eight suspicious flight school applicants and recommended the FBI conduct a major investigation into the flight schools across the country:

The purpose of this communication is to advise the Bureau and New York of the possibility of a coordinated effort of Usama bin Laden (UBL) to send students to the United States to attend civil aviation universities and colleges. Phoenix has observed an inordinate number

of individuals of investigative interests who are attending or who have attended civil aviation universities and colleges in the state of Arizona. The inordinate number of these individuals attending these types of schools and fatwas (deleted from original) gives reasons to believe that a coordinated effort is underway to establish a cadre of individuals who will one day be working in the civil aviation community around the world. These individuals will be in a position in the future to conduct terror activity against civil aviation targets.⁶⁷

The Bureau ignored and failed to disseminate the memo for two main reasons. The first regards resources. As FBI officials testified to the Joint Inquiry, they had too many agents tied up in the USS Cole investigation and did not have the manpower to investigate all the flight schools across the country. The second reason stems from what is termed the bureau's "politically correct" mentality at the time. Investigating Middle Eastern men would have constituted racial profiling and risked litigation and/or Congressional criticism. The risks, it seemed, were too large. Regardless of the reasons, the memo was never even forwarded to the CIA or even the FAA, and the matter was essentially overlooked. In fact, the message was blocked before it even reached the top people in the FBI's bureaucracy.⁶⁸

Zacharias Moussaoui

One terrorist interested in flight training was a French-Moroccan from London named Zacharias Moussaoui. Moussaoui unsuccessfully attended a Norman, Oklahoma flight school where he failed out after two months of training. He was not discouraged, however, and began making plans to gain hours in flight simulator instruction. In July of 2001, Moussaoui began simulator training in Eagan, Minnesota at the Pan Am International Academy; but suspicious questions and the fact he did not care to learn to take off or land prompted one instructor to phone a friend at the local FBI office. That night, Moussaoui was arrested on charges of visa violations. Of course, the charges were constructed only to hold and investigate him, but after he denied agents the right to view the contents of his laptop, they became suspicious. Their suspicion was confirmed when French intelligence officials reported that Moussaoui had radical fundamentalist connections.

Even after the French issued a second report directly linking him to al-Qaeda and terrorist activities, requests were denied, however, for search warrants to examine Moussaoui's computer. The reason behind the denial is shocking. In a memo written by Colleen Rowley, the Special Agent and the Minneapolis Office general counsel, she complained the Washington supervisor who presented the case for the search warrant to the national security court omitted French intelligence reports. Even more disturbing, though, is the FBI's failure to transmit to other intelligence agencies the information regarding Moussaoui's arrest. When the Minneapolis FBI agents finally informed the CTC in late August, their superiors in Washington reprimanded them. After September

11, U.S. officials suspected Moussaoui was supposed to be the missing fifth hijacker on United Airlines flight 93 that crashed in Pennsylvania without reaching its target.⁶⁹

CHAPTER IV

THE OVERREACTION

The last chapter was only nine pages. After breaking down the story into pure communication mishap and recognizing the scarcity of material, I am left with the unlikely conclusion that inter-agency communication, while imperfect, was not the obvious culprit I had assumed. Therefore, the logical next step is to examine what additional bureaucracies, i.e. the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) means to the system. Likely, new bureaucracy translates into additional communication obstacles.

As discussed in Chapter II, there are many disadvantages associated with bureaucracies. Still, despite the recent terrorist attacks, the enormous bureaucracy that is the Intelligence Community (IC) performs quite well. As Richard K. Betts acknowledged:

Paradoxically, the news is worse than the angriest critics think, because the intelligence community has worked much better than they assume. Contrary to the image left by the destruction of September 11, U.S. intelligence and associated services have generally done very well at protecting the country. In the aftermath of a catastrophe, great successes in thwarting previous terrorist attacks are too easily forgotten—successes such as the foiling of plots to bomb New York City’s Lincoln and Holland tunnels in 1993, to bring down eleven

American airliners in Asia in 1995, to mount attacks on the West Coast and in Jordan around the millennium and to strike U.S. forces in the Middle East in the summer of 2001.⁷⁰

Given the complications associated with bureaucracy and the understanding that the IC has performed relatively well, it is reasonable to question one of our government's answers to the attacks. In the government's rush to reorganize and "fix," among other things, the IC's communication problems, Congress authorized the Bush Administration to create a new Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Its goal is to merge the various intelligence agencies "under one roof" by adding thousands of new personnel to IC payrolls and increasing the amount of persons who hear, interpret, reinterpret, and disclose information—all in the name of "increased cooperation." Since our government has answered the new terrorist threat with another bureaucracy, it is important to understand what organizational research says about bureaucracies.

Weber's Organizational Form

Those who have looked at intelligence organizations before 9-11 often refer to "bureaucratic difficulties," but it is evident that researchers have presented no clear definition of bureaucracy. Instead, they attribute certain organizational traits to bureaucracy such as complexity/size issues or organizational rules and control factors. Fortunately, most of these ideas coincide with Max Weber's thoughts on bureaucracy.

Weber argued that bureaucracy was the universal organizational form, and the elements that shaped it were threefold: rationalization, differentiation, and integration.⁷¹

Very few concepts have received as much attention as rationalization. Robert A. Brady's article on the meaning of rationalization determined it is "attached more or less at random to any and every technique, program, or plan of organization which promised to promote the technical or commercial 'efficiency' of individual enterprises, entire industries, or even the total of economic processes nationally or internationally considered."⁷² Simply, rationalization occurs when the organization applies behavioral rules in order to carry out its goals efficiently. For our purposes, we will assume as Weber did, that rationalization occurs when operating procedures are specified, and those instructions become behavioral norms. Unfortunately, when this process occurs, members of the organization can become constrained by what the organization determines most effective; thus individual thought and autonomy may become difficult. But while rationalization is not always positive, organizations often increase productivity because this process causes tasks to become routine, making challenges preventable and anticipatory.

Differentiation refers to "the process of breaking work up into its various components."⁷³ As organizations grow in size, managers can become pressured to counter the challenges through bureaucratization. In order to function as a productive organization, the newly-created work groups must then be integrated into one system that manages their efforts. "The objective of division of work," according to Henri Fayol,

is to produce more and better work with the same effort. The worker who always makes the same part, or the manager who is always concerned with the same matters, acquires an ability, sureness, and accuracy which...usually lead to increased output.⁷⁴

This increased output has its drawbacks. The paradox, according to Weber, is that organizational members become specialized and consequently too concerned with their own determined role in the hierarchy. Their function becomes so specific their autonomy gets reduced, and they are unable to, in essence, “think outside the box.”

Furthermore, Fred Dansreau and Steven E. Markham’s study of superior-subordinate communication added that “complexity” represents the number of separate “parts” within an organization as reflected by the division of labor and by the number of both hierarchical levels and departments.⁷⁵ Given what we know about the structure of the IC, we can safely assume it to be a complex organization. In order to remain efficient, its members have detailed roles they must fulfill.

Also, the fact the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) are not included under the DHS develops other problems. Weber does assume that organizations, with the help of a guiding principle, do eventually become rationalized in a way that ensures their pieces fit (that is in fact what makes them efficient). But these processes are distinctive in different organizations, possibly magnifying the potential for communication breakdowns across boundaries.

Complexity

As an organizational structure becomes more complex, message flow becomes more difficult. The more levels of the hierarchy that must be informed, the less time the organizations have to transmit messages to those who can deploy action.⁷⁶ For example, in 1993 the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), through operation TERRSTOP, foiled the so-called "Day of Terror" plot to attack various New York City landmarks. The Cell details the Force's Neil Herman and his later frustration with the growing complexity of JTTF:

JTTF was growing to meet its expanded mission, not just in manpower, but also in complexity. The small, supple, close-knit unit that Herman had grown up with in the 1980s was now saddled with layers of bureaucracy, liaisons to other agencies, public relations. "You could not do another TERRSTOP investigation (by 1997)," Herman says. "You could not penetrate a group, do physical and electronic surveillance and translate the information over a long period of time the way it was done. You couldn't hold on to the information. There were too many leaks, too much potential access, too many agencies, too many politicians who wanted to be briefed."⁷⁷

It is not that message flow always becomes “blocked” in a complex system. In fact, the overall volume of messages may increase (possibly resulting in overload).⁷⁸ In a complex organizational structure, though, messages must “change hands” so often that the initial information may become distorted, stopped or at least sluggish. Fittingly, while studying complexity (that is, in relation to number of departments) in government bureaucracies, Bacharach and Aiken found a significant correlation between the frequency of upward communication and complexity of the organization. Subordinate members in more complex organizations, they found, are less likely to communicate with their superiors. Therefore, what we can safely determine is that complexity can harm information flow in two noticeable ways: (1) Messages may be unduly and destructively increased or (2) they may be inhibited altogether. In summary, complexity, an inherent byproduct of bureaucracy, is bad for communication.

Divisions

We can use what we know about the conceptualization of bureaucracy to theorize about the events leading up to September 11 and the subsequent creation of bureaucracy. To begin, if we consider the FBI as a separate box within the entire IC organizational chart, it is evident the Bureau has specific functions that are separate from the other agencies. The development of division of labor can be tracked historically. After World War II it was proposed the wartime Office of Secret Service (OSS) would be continued under the name of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). J. Edgar Hoover, the then head of the FBI, fought the proposal on the grounds that two intelligence agencies were

unnecessary and would create overlapping job distinctions. He eventually lost his argument, and the CIA was created with a mandate to handle overseas intelligence operations with the FBI separately dealing with domestic intelligence.

As the FBI further developed, its understood function started to become that of prosecution of criminals instead of investigation and prevention of crimes. Perhaps the 1984 trial of eight members of the New Afrikan Freedom Fighters (NAFF) helped create this disposition. After the JTTF broke up an NAFF armored-car robbery plan, the Bureau learned the NAFF was planning a terrorism wave aimed at New York City. The good news was they caught the terrorists before they could enact their plans; the bad news was the jury eventually acquitted the JTTF members from all serious charges.

The outcome of this trial may be one reason why counterterrorism efforts became secondary to the Bureau and why the FBI's focus shifted mainly to prosecution. "Legally, the case presented by prosecutors was built on solid ground," explained one researcher, "But the jury had delivered a very different message: If it hasn't happened yet, it's not a crime. That message reverberated through the Bureau for years..."⁷⁹ Huge amounts of money and resources were dedicated to this trial, and the Bureau's investment was enormous. In the end, its efforts proved almost futile. After the trial, it was clear that preventative efforts were not efficient, and the most economical and resourceful undertakings were those based on building court cases against those who had already broken the law. The FBI then began focusing its resources toward building successful court cases, and that meant an inclination toward prosecution—not prevention. The same division was prevalent before September 11. In fact, the

Subcommittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security found the, “FBI focus has been investigating terrorist acts, but it has placed less emphasis on preventing such acts.”⁸⁰

This strategy may have been a reason the FBI did not readily share information with the other intelligence organizations. Considering the unimportance placed on preventative information, it would seem reasonable to suggest they simply underestimated the value of the information and disregarded that which was most useful to those dedicated to prevention. For example, as an outside observer, it may seem unreasonable that at least one FBI agent did not forward the Phoenix memo to the other intelligence agencies. However, since rationalization inhibits autonomy, each agent that saw the memo, may have viewed it with concern but only through the understood rationale of the organization. That is, since the memo was advocating preventative measures, it was deemed relatively unimportant. Preventing terrorism was not their ultimate concern, so they failed to place importance on the distribution of important data to other agencies. Where we see rationalization occurring is when the members mold their behavior to fit the organization’s tendencies, and the Phoenix memo may be a good example.

While looking at the CIA’s behavior before 9-11, we can also determine that bureaucratic elements could have created information sharing problems. When rationalization creates standard operating procedures, it also determines who can say what to whom and through what media and what channels.⁸¹ The understood role of the CIA is a largely secretive one. Its operations are classified, its behavior reticent, and its communication limited. The information sharing that should have been exhibited

between the organizations was stifled possibly because CIA members are normally secretive about their sources, their information, and their ideas.

The CIA is understandably uncomfortable discussing every piece of information it obtains—especially since it may compromise its espionage efforts, and because it is often unsure what is important and what is not. This may explain why the CIA tracked two of the 9-11 hijackers months before it ever alerted the FBI, why it waited too late to share Midhar’s full name, his passport number, and his birth information, and why it failed to tell the NSA the real name of Nawaf al-Hazmi noticed at the Malaysian meetings.

In short, the operational actions within both organizations created two objectives in the CIA and the FBI that, because they were distinct, prevented them from completely cooperating. The members of the CIA understood their job was to prevent terrorist acts, and the FBI was expected to prosecute those acts if they did in fact happen. Messages related to prevention, then, were somewhat disregarded and not passed on. The CIA, on the other hand, was rationalized to be as secretive as possible. The Agency’s members, therefore, did not readily exchange information with the FBI. When they finally got around to exchanging data, it was too late.

In hindsight these specializations may seem like a shocking element of the situation, but they are certainly needed in order for the agencies to perform their tasks in the most efficient manner. We need to ask ourselves at this point how much that is commonly referred to as “failures” in the intelligence organization before 9-11 can simply be attributed to the extremely important understood communicative and work

roles of the organizations. By understanding why clearly defined barriers are important, we may better understand how “increased cooperation” may in fact harm the overall goal of the IC.

On 14 October 2003 former CIA directors John Deutch and James Schlesinger presented a parallel argument before the 9-11 Independent Commission. Deutch, who favors radical realignment,⁸² believes “catastrophic terrorism and advanced information technologies . . . invalidate” traditional IC divisions. To combat the emergent threat, he recommended, the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) should be given executive power over a new Domestic Intelligence Service (DIS). The DIS would broaden the role of the DCI to defeat the problems associated with the growing combination of foreign and domestic threats.

Adversely, Schlesinger cautioned that reorganization is risky: “It takes a while to settle down after surgery—and the disruptions that are inevitable are likely to distract us from the main goal—the improvement of the intelligence product.” If intelligence is centralized and boundaries weakened, he stated, “Intelligence activities would be recreated in departments, agencies, and the several commands.”⁸³ Broadening the scope of the DCI would add ambiguity to the role of the Agency. And, if the Agency’s traditional role (that is, handling international threats) is distorted, the result may be confusion, redundancy, and inefficiency. Recognizing that drastic reorganization can create uncertain roles and possible redundancy, the IC should resist immediate restructuring and preserve traditional divisions of labor. Certainly the atypical terrorist threat requires adjustments, but alterations should be enacted delicately. Efficiency

should not be compromised for reconfiguration; the U.S. does not have enough intelligence personnel to chance redundancy. Reorganization may disrupt an already well-defined and able system—when effective and proficient components are most important.

Conflict

The inherent nature of bureaucracies to specialize can cause conflict across agency borders, especially when specific roles are ambiguous and tensions arise because of that uncertainty. The December 2002 Congressional report on September 11 determined that role confusion was a noteworthy hindrance to the sharing of information. For example, the Inquiry noted one instance between the CIA and the National Security Agency (NSA), the extremely secretive agency responsible for intelligence cryptology efforts. The account follows:

[NSA and CIA officers often worked closely together in [] collection efforts against al-Qa'ida. The two agencies conducted [] operations, And these operations often met with some success. However, one type of these operations – [] – caused much friction between NSA and CIA. This was especially true at the mid- and upper-management levels where struggles developed regarding which agency was in charge of developing and using such technology when human intelligence and signals intelligence targets overlapped. CIA perceived NSA as wanting

to control technology deployment and development, while [page 80]

NSA was concerned that CIA was conducting NSA-type operations.

The NSA Chief of Data Acquisition noted to the Inquiry that this has been an issue during his entire tour of almost three years. These frictions persisted even after the September 11 attacks. In the first six months of 2002, for example, no less than seven executive-level memoranda (including one from the President) were issued in attempts to delineate CIA and NSA responsibilities and authorities in this collection area].⁸⁴ (emphasis added)

This description notes how conflicts can stem from the “divisions of labor,” and not what some researchers may determine as “rivalry” between the different agencies.

These instances can better be described as disagreements regarding the various roles.

Consequently, in this particular situation, they were not competing against each other in the sense they were struggling for different goals, but they were arguing over whose responsibility it was to perform certain duties. Just as an offense and defense on a football team may both desire to be on the punting squad, they are not in rivalry with one another—just puzzled by the fact the coach did not explain their duties to a clear extent. Likewise, the FBI and CIA were on the same team, but the IC did not have a clear policy regarding the different roles in this sort of situation.

While organizations must specialize in order to be efficient, the paradox is there are inherent problems associated with that process. The “root” of this problem in the IC

was not a limit on communication. The hindrance lay in that the members did not clearly understand what their duties entailed—an organizational problem and not necessarily a communication problem.

Solving the “Cooperation Problem”

To fix the troubles with information sharing and role confusion, many of the 9-11 researchers argue the IC should cooperate more fully with each other; but the devil is in the details. While “more cooperation” sounds like an admirable goal, the IC should be careful it does not overreact. If the barriers between the divisions of labor become blurry between the agencies, it is possible their duties may overlap—causing valuable resources to be used inefficiently. Likewise, if the agencies confuse their roles and begin sharing too much information, it will possibly result in just that—too much information. So the answer here, while not simple, is certainly not more bureaucracy.

Homeland Security

There are several instances in the research that suggest some elements in the IC were communicating quite well. It was reported that during the infamous Malaysia meeting, a CIA employee actually emailed an FBI agent the following:

This continues to be an (intelligence) operation. Thus far, a lot of suspicious activity has been observed but nothing that would indicate evidence of an impending attack or criminal enterprise.

Told (the first FBI agent) that as soon as something concrete is developed leading us to the criminal arena or to known FBI cases, we will immediately bring FBI into the loop. Like (the first FBI agent) yesterday, (the second FBI agent) stated that this was a fine approach and thanked me for keeping him in the loop.⁸⁵

While Congress has chastised this round of communication regarding the Malaysia meetings because there was no mention of al-Midhar's visa information, this email does not suggest there were communication problems. It actually acknowledges that the agencies were committed to cooperating in this scenario. It is entirely possible the parties in this case understandably made calculations about the data they were obtaining, recognized their specific roles, and made judgments as to the importance of sharing data. These evaluations can and should be expected given the extreme amount of messages acquired by the IC. The members cannot be expected to share every piece of information. In this case, the organizational members may have been wrong to deem this information unimportant, but in order to remain efficient, members must draw conclusions about the relevance and worthiness of material before they pass it on. Otherwise, too much information will be generated, and we could get some of the problems associated with the Pearl Harbor catastrophe.

Conclusion

The assumption of most research on 9-11 is that new intelligence bureaucracies should be formed in the name of “cooperation,” but given the drawbacks associated with bureaucracies, it makes sense the United States government should reconsider their creation. Since all the investigators can assuredly say is that some information, in retrospect, may have been “potentially important,”⁸⁶ we might ask: are new bureaucracies going to help?

Furthermore, the boundaries between the divisions of duties should not be blurred in the name of “cooperation.” Instead, the roles should be more clearly defined—leading to less confusion and overlapping of work procedures. Increased cooperation should be replaced with smart cooperation. Messages that are deemed irrelevant should still be inhibited, and we should avoid the temptation to completely cooperate—the efficiency and effectiveness of our IC depend on it.

In our search to repair the IC and prevent future attacks, we have, in some sense, overreacted and focused too much on one extreme of the situation—communication. To fix these minute communication problems, we are increasing bureaucracy, and in doing so, our government may have responded to a problem that was insignificant with a source of more challenging communication difficulties.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

This chapter will review what we have learned and contend that our government, in its ambition to “fix” communication problems, is discounting beneficial changes and considering harmful alterations to the intelligence system. Afterwards, an attempt is made to understand the hasty scapegoating of communication. I lastly present a brief discussion of possible future research.

Qualitative research can remind a writer he is fallible. When I started researching, I was convinced the Intelligence Community’s (IC) problems were communicative. I was sure that, after reading the reports about communication flow and information sharing before 9-11, I could apply organizational communication theory to the numerous communication breakdowns and save the world. What I found was not that simple. Communication, while a handy and effective scapegoat, was not the significant problem I had imagined.

“Communication breakdowns” have been widely accepted as a major culprit in intelligence problems before 9-11. After the Joint Congressional Inquiry on 9-11⁸⁷ was released, that conclusion became official. Below are only a few headlines that followed the report:

Congressional report on 9/11 rips FBI, CIA; Investigators say clues were abundant, agencies failed to see connections; *Better communication* might have prevented attacks, joint panel says⁸⁸

FBI lost plot in the run-up to 9-11 attacks; *Communications breakdowns* blamed⁸⁹

9/11 report cites CIA, FBI lapses; Damning congressional inquiry says failures and *poor communication* in trailing San Diego-based hijackers hurt the 'best chance' to foil the plot⁹⁰ (emphasis added)

It seems quite obvious to decision-makers in Washington D.C. and the general public that proper communication could have prevented the attacks. However, I have discovered communication was not the substantial problem projected.

Review

This study's justification was fairly simple. Because the United States should try to understand 9-11 through various angles, it made sense to uniquely study the story through an organizational communication lens. Throughout the history of our country, we have used our intellects to determine lessons from attacks on our soil. The most relevant example was Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. Research on the event enlightened the U.S. government about serious weaknesses in the intelligence system. The investigations discovered the existence of "noise" in the system, and the government realized that irrelevant material could possibly suffocate relevant data. More communication, researchers realized, did not necessarily produce better results.

In Chapter I, we also learned intelligence failures are inevitable. Fittingly, Richard K. Betts presented several improper reactions to breakdowns. To correct communication problems, governments poorly respond by (1) focusing on every analyst's opinion (no matter how outlandish), (2) assuming the worst in each situation, and (3) producing more (not better) analysis. These behaviors clog the system and divert attention from sound practices and wise determinations. Thus, Betts believes governments should realize the "lessons of hindsight do not guaranty improvement in foresight."⁹¹ Instead, adjustments in the system should be considered with a fatalist approach and an understanding that even "rationalized information systems cannot fully compensate for the predisposition, perceptual idiosyncrasies, and time constraints of political consumers."⁹² Therefore, another common governmental response, reorganization, to Betts, "is an alluring but illusory quick fix."⁹³

Although Betts warned me my research could prove futile, I sought in Chapter II simply to understand how messages could be disrupted, distorted, or blocked entirely by certain traits inherent in organizations. If I could understand the innate communication problems, I reasoned, I could surely use my thesis to apply that knowledge to the IC. Frankly, after determining that message breakdowns can occur at various levels for abundant reasons, I was even more confident—surely I could fill a thesis with a substantial amount of examples.

In Chapter III, I sought those examples by laying out the purely communicative problems the IC exhibited before 9-11. After reviewing and rehashing the story focusing only on genuine communication breakdowns, I found very little information. In short, in the enormous amount of data, I could not find enough instances of authentic, pure

communication mishaps to suggest a substantial breakdown had occurred—a result I was unprepared to find.

Since I could uncover little evidence to suggest communication was a significant factor, I have concluded that while there were distinct instances where information might have been shared across boundaries, they were not enough to suggest the system should be significantly overhauled. Still, our government has overhauled the system. The creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) added thousands of people to the latest and greatest government bureaucracy. An understanding of the nature of bureaucracies, found in Chapter IV, helped us conclude the DHS could, in fact, further the problems it is designed to solve. Bureaucracies are naturally susceptible to inherent and often untreatable communication faults, so it made sense to mention the additional communication baggage almost certain to arrive with a new organization.

Like most bureaucracies, many of the communication “breakdowns” before 9-11 can be traced to reasonable organizational practices—division of labor development, barriers to information flow, and reasoned information sharing. The IC should not completely dismiss these characteristics simply in the name of “cooperation.” If anything, they should more clearly define barriers of labor, communication, and data sharing.

To encourage reorganization, critics have commented that rivalries between the agencies (especially the CIA and FBI) had a sizeable influence on the sharing of data. This is similarly misinformed. What some have determined to be linked to conflict between the parts of the organization may simply be a result of labor boundaries. Again, large

organizations, in order to be efficient, must adhere to divisions of labor. In many instances, CIA and FBI members did not share information as a result of their understood roles and reasonable decisions regarding what should be communicated. Many skeptics still claim that intra-agency rivalry caused some members to deny vital information to the other agencies. But there is little to no evidence to suggest this is the case. As one retired CIA officer told me, “After the critics present the accepted analysis of insufficient coordination, their next step is always to assume some scheme or ulterior motive on behalf of intelligence personnel. But that is so far from the truth.”⁹⁴ He continued to say that the historical tension between the FBI and CIA, most prevalent during the Hoover years, is rarely exhibited today.

A Final Word on the Structure of the DHS

Right now our government is debating the structure of the new DHS. As we saw in Chapter IV, the creation of an extra bureaucracy may serve to increase communication problems where only minimal ones existed. Additional “mouths to feed” may result in information overload and lead to the kind of problems that resulted in the Pearl Harbor tragedy. Even if one accepts the idea that communication problems played a large role in the September 11 failures, the United States should take a hard look at the inherent communicative problems associated with bureaucracies. To combat communication difficulties, we may only compound them. While the goal of “increased cooperation” sounds important, that cooperation will lead to overlapping duties and

more “noise” in the information flow. This will lead to ineffective, slow, and inefficient organizational practices.

Advocates of the new department have said it is simply a reorganization of the system “under one roof.” At the moment, the exact form of this reorganization is unclear, but information flow research suggests there are many challenges ahead. Even if this is just an IC merger, it is the largest, most profound blend of organizations this country has ever seen. As the director of the White House’s Office of Management and Budget, Mitchell E. Daniels Jr. analogized it, “In some respects, this isn’t AOL Time Warner. It’s AOL-TimeWarner-Microsoft-FedEX-hyphen-hyphen-hyphen.”⁹⁵ The IC might be better served avoiding the bog of this proposed merger and leaving the different agencies to perform their tasks without the weighty burden of additional bureaucracy. Ivan Elan of the Cato Institute agrees:

...the new department may actually reduce U.S. security by adding bureaucracy rather than reducing it. More bureaucracy means more coordination problems of the kind that seem to have been prevalent in the intelligence community prior to September 11... the reorganization will make the government even less likely to put the jigsaw puzzle together and even more ungainly and sluggish in combating terrorists.⁹⁶

As most recognize, al Qaeda is a nimble organization able to make quick adjustments to their organization and strategy. In combating this new type of threat, the U.S. government should do everything it can to streamline the IC to make it quicker and more adapt to fighting. We need an agile, liberated workforce that can think and act quickly. The more bureaucracy, the slower we will become, and the terrorists may exploit that weakness. As we saw in the Congressional report, the most prevalent communication problem was simply that the right decisions were too late.

Instead of increasing the levels of the intelligence bureaucracy, perhaps we should look to eliminate some levels in the system. As the same Cato Institute researcher remarked, “Cutting...[should]...come before pasting.”⁹⁷ That is, our government should look into what levels could be removed to make our intelligence actions quicker and more capable of adjustments. For instance, some suggest that dismantling several management positions within the FBI would simplify their organization and increase productivity.

There are certain reasonable reforms advocated by Congress and other research entities. The practice of watchlisting dangerous individuals to keep them from entering the United States can be an effective tool in information sharing. Both watchlisting and a national terrorist database can serve to improve the power of the IC. At the very least, it can alert officials that other agencies consider certain persons to be “of interest.” These improvements do not necessitate the manpower or the massive bureaucratic structure the DHS requires.

The Misguided Academic Focus

Communications scholars habitually reduce bureaucratic problems to some sort of communication difficulties—we find ourselves paying too much attention to communications aspects without clearly reviewing their significance. This may be because we are self-serving, or we may sincerely believe most problems are caused by communication shortcomings. For whatever reason, qualitative research has given the academic world a useful outlook. That is, a researcher should be open to discovering the unexpected. Admittedly, I anticipated the failure was due to communication problems, but 9-11 was more of an intelligence-gathering problem than a communication one.

Still, the Congressional Inquiry seems overly willing to blame 9-11 failures on a lack of communication and cooperation--claiming that when bits and piece of information are considered for their “collective significance”⁹⁸ they point to a 9-11 style attack. Given the massive amounts of information in the intelligence system, is this a fair estimate? Could it be that we would be better served to determine why we had so little information to share? Perhaps it is easier to spotlight information that was lost, misinterpreted, or altered than to decry the lack of intelligence in the first place. Recall, the United States only had information regarding 3 of the 19 hijackers, and even those facts were scarce.

Suggested Research

The possibilities for research in this area are numerous. The enormous amount of data has produced several angles by which scholars can study the IC. It is helpful to our study to mention a few.

First, there is sufficient research to suggest the IC should focus more on speeding up the decision-making process. As mentioned earlier, some suggest it should remove department levels in an effort to streamline the procedures. Researchers may want to look at the information sharing within the intelligence organizations, determine the path of relevant information, and discuss why it did not reach superiors in a timely manner. A level-by-level analysis of information flow could uncover some useful suggestions regarding the dismantling of certain positions that are unnecessary to the agencies.

Second, future research may focus on organizational rhetoric in the “selling” of the DHS. The implications of the politicization of intelligence decisions should be carefully examined, and determining a successful way to admit failure without making drastic changes could prove useful to future heads of state. How can Congress and the President convince the American people that a change-little approach is warranted when an attack of this sort causes the public to inevitably call for extreme measures?

Lastly, if we can get over the idea that “communication is everything,” more research can be done to determine practical adjustments we can make in our fight against terrorism. Right now we have no way to effectively track foreigners within our borders, and watchlisting and tracing them is oftentimes considered un-American. Given the recent challenges, some suggest the U.S. require a visitor identification card for all those who obtain visas to travel to America. The card would be used to determine where visitors are, what they are doing, and, more importantly, when they leave the States. While we are welcoming strangers into our land, we should be more careful to watch their activities, being sure they leave when their stay is complete. This type of measure, like the Patriot Act, can

be politically unpopular, but it may be necessary if we are serious about the protection of our country.

Conclusion

In summary, 9-11 research has paid too much attention to one extreme of the situation. The communication breakdowns that did occur were relatively insignificant. Only when we achieve that realization can we focus on the noteworthy issues. For instance, did the CIA have enough manpower for human intelligence gathering within al-Qaeda? Did the FBI have enough funds to send agents around to check every flight school in the country? These seem to be legitimate grievances. My research does suggest resource problems were almost certainly more important than alleged communication breakdowns.

Conceivably, the answer lies in the inevitability of terrorism intelligence failures. It is impossible to completely predict and/or thwart terrorist activities, but it may be more difficult to admit that we will lose various battles. According to Richard Betts,

The underlying cause of mistakes in performance does not lie in the structure and process of the intelligence system. It is intrinsic to the issues and targets with which intelligence has to cope: the crafty opponents who strategize against it and the alien cultures that are not transparent to American minds.⁹⁹

This opinion suggests we simply had a misguided strategy and lost a fight. Our intelligence is first-class; its victories far outnumber its losses. But, fatalistic as it sounds, the terrorists should be expected to win every once in a while. As heinous and as gut-wrenching as their behavior certainly was; it was well planned; it was well executed, and nearly every detail was performed accurately. On the other hand, the IC failed to recognize the significance of the threat posed by al-Qaeda and did not focus resources enough to thwart the terror ambitions. In short, they beat us.

This thesis may seem overly pessimistic and critical, but I would like to acknowledge that, even though I have reservations about our reactions to the assault, I still have extreme confidence in the IC, the Bush Administration, and Congress. This confidence is certainly not undeserved. Since the attacks, we have realigned our sights to focus clearly on al-Qaeda. And though some may question the methods of our government, the safe-haven that was the Taliban regime has been overthrown, terrorist money assets have been frozen, and a large percentage of al-Qaeda members have been captured or killed. On September 11, the U.S. lost a battle in the war against terrorism. That is sure. But in the end, history will recognize the swift, severe, and victorious response of the United States of America.

NOTES

¹ Klaus Knorr “Failures in National Intelligence Estimates: The Case of the Cuban Missile Crisis” *World Politics* 16 (1964): 455. While this writing is relatively old, the basic premise is arguably true today. It is interesting to note that Klaus did remark that, “occasionally an interesting document reaches the public.” (455) Fortunately, in this, the public has been privileged to have access to several “interesting documents” that we will expound upon.

² The regularity of surprise attacks is mentioned in several academic works. The most frequently cited are the Nazi invasion of Russia, and the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor. A thorough discussion of this can be found in Richard K. Betts “Analysis, War, and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures are Inevitable” *World Politics* 31 (1978): 61-89.

³ Alvin D. Coox “Repulsing the Pearl Harbor Revisionists: The State of Present Literature on the Debacle” *Military Affairs* 50 (1986): 29.

⁴ This discussion and a more complete list of scapegoats can be found in “Repulsing”: 29-31.

⁵ Alvin D. Coox “Repulsing the Pearl Harbor Revisionists,” 29.

⁶ I want to acknowledge there are several random and uncontrollable factors that remain unmentioned in the main text of this paper. Among these are the reported B-17s coming in on the morning of the attacks. Regrettably, I admit the lack of in-depth analysis needed to present all the recognized factors involved in the tragedy.

⁷ The code cracking narrative can be found in George Morgenstern, *Pearl Harbor: The Story of the Secret War* (New York: The Devin-Air Company, 1947), 168.

⁸ Roberta Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), 387.

⁹ Wohlstetter in *Pearl Harbor* also makes this point.

¹⁰ Abraham Ben-Zvi, “Hindsight and Foresight: A Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of Surprise Attacks,” *World Politics* 28 (1976): 384.

¹¹ There is some evidence intelligence gatherers failed to report information that did not mesh with the understood position of higher officials. Some questionable writings suggest the Navy intelligence ignored radar detections of the Japanese carrier fleet possibly because it did not fit with the understood assumption of higher officials that

Japan would not pre-emptively attack the U.S. Since then, Navy research has essentially undermined and disproved that particular assumption.

¹² James P. Walsh “Managerial and Organizational Cognition: Notes from a Trip Down Memory Lane” *Organization Science* 6 (1995): 280.

¹³ Alvin D. Coox “Repulsing the Pearl Harbor Revisionists,” 29.

¹⁴ Ben Zvi, “Hindsight and Foresight,” 383.

¹⁵ See Betts, “Analysis, War and Decision,” 62.

¹⁶ Richard K. Betts “Analysis, War and Decision.”

¹⁷ A more thorough discussion of these ideas can be found in Klaus Knorr’s *Failure*, 458. He determines, “In rational behavior, means-end calculations intervene between the impulse to act and the act itself. The calculating person or organization obtains and interprets information, identifies and evaluates alternative courses of action and their probable consequences, and chooses the action likely to maximize his values.” Using this reasoning, the 9-11 terrorists were, while despicable, rational actors.

¹⁸ Betts, “Analysis, War and Decision,” 64.

¹⁹ The history of organizational communication is outlined in Dr. Charles Conrad’s *Strategic Organizational Communication: Toward the Twenty-First Century* (Harcourt Brace Publishers, Orlando: 1994).

²⁰ Conrad *Strategic Organizational Communication*, 137.

²¹ A comprehensive review of the history of organizational communication theory and research can be found in Phillip K. Tompkins and Maryanne Wanca-Thibault’s “Organizational Communication” *New Handbook of Organizational Communication* Edited by Fredric M. Jablin and Linda L. Putnam (California: Sage Publications, 2001) prelude.

²² Betts, “Analysis, War and Decision,” 63.

²³ Barbara Levitt and James G. Marsh provide a broad review of organizational learning literature in “Organizational Learning” *Annual Review of Sociology* 14 (1988): 419-340. This particular passage was taken from p. 319.

²⁴ Stuart Macdonald “Learning to Change: An Information Perspective on Learning in the Organization” *Organization Science* 6 (1995): 562.

- ²⁵ Macdonald *Organization Science*, 558.
- ²⁶ Nicole Woolsey Biggart “The Creative-Destructive Process of Organizational Change: The Case of the Post Office” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 22 (1997): 410-426.
- ²⁷ Robert A. Rothman, Allen M. Schwartzbaum and John H. McGrath, III “Physicians and a Hospital Merger: Patterns of Resistance to Organizational Change” *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 12 (1971): 46-55.
- ²⁸ Michael T. Hannan and John Freeman “Structural Inertia and Organizational Change” *American Sociological Review* 49 (1984): 149-164.
- ²⁹ Michael T. Hannan “Structural Inertia and Organizational Change,” 151.
- ³⁰ This excerpt is from an excellent analysis of organizational change research by Heather A. Haven in “Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Organizational Change and Performance Under Conditions of Fundamental Environmental Transformation” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 37 (1992): 52.
- ³¹ William Regis Farrell *The U.S. Government Response to Terrorism: In Search of an Effective Strategy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982), 21.
- ³² William Regis Farrell *The U.S. Government Response to Terrorism*, 33.
- ³³ William Regis Farrell *The U.S. Government Response to Terrorism*, 35.
- ³⁴ Bruce W. Jentleson “The Reagan Administration and Coercive Diplomacy: Restraining More than Remaking Governments” *Political Science Quarterly* 106 (1991): 63.
- ³⁵ This is the essential point made by Jentleson in “The Reagan Administration and Coercive Diplomacy.”
- ³⁶ From a White House press release fact sheet that can be more easily obtained online at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030128-12.html>.
- ³⁷ See Alan S. Goldman “Information Flow and Worker Productivity” *Management Science* 5 (1959): 270-278 or David Ben-Arieh and Moshe A. Pollatscheck “Analysis of Information Flow in Hierarchical Organizations” *International Journal of Production Research* 40 (2002)

³⁸Karlene H. Roberts, Charles A. O'Reilly, III "Failures in Upward Communication in Organizations: Three Possible Culprits" *The Academy of Management Journal* 17 (1974): 205-215.

³⁹Charles Conrad *Strategic Organizational Communication: Toward the Twenty-First Century* (Orlando: Harcourt Brace Publishers, 1994), 172.

⁴⁰ Karlene H. Roberts "Failures in Upward Communication in Organizations," 208.

⁴¹ Karlene H. Roberts "Failures in Upward Communication in Organizations," 213.

⁴² Karlene H. Roberts "Failures in Upward Communication in Organizations," 213.

⁴³ Karlene H. Roberts "Failures in Upward Communication in Organizations," 205-215

⁴⁴ Luis Lopez, Jose F. F. Mendes, and Miguel A. F. Sanjuan "Hierarchical Social Networks and Information Flow" *Physics A: Statistical Mechanics and its Applications* 316 (2002): 696.

⁴⁵ Charles Conrad *Strategic Organizational Communication*: 173.

⁴⁶ See Cynthia Stohl and W. Charles Redding "Messages and Message Exchange Processes" in *Handbook of Organizational Communication: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* Edited by Fredric M. Jablin, Linda L. Putnam, Karlene H. Roberts, and Lyman W. Porter (California: Sage Publications, 1987), 479.

⁴⁷ Charles Conrad *Strategic Organizational Communication*: 173.

⁴⁸ Charles Conrad *Strategic Organizational Communication*: 172.

⁴⁹ This is essentially the point made by Peter R. Monge and Eric M. Eisenberg in "Emergent Communication Networks" found in *Handbook of Organizational Communication: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* Edited by Fredric M. Jablin, Linda L. Putnam, Karlene H. Roberts, and Lyman W. Porter (California: Sage Publications, 1987), 304-342. They spend a good portion of the article examining the specific causes and consequences associated with the development of communication networks.

⁵⁰ Kathleen M. Sutcliffe "Organizational Environments and Organizational Information Processing" *Handbook of Organizational Communication: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* Edited by Fredric M. Jablin, Linda L. Putnam, Karlene H. Roberts, and Lyman W. Porter (California: Sage Publications, 1987), 225.

⁵¹ Cynthia Stohl and W. Charles Redding “Messages and Message Exchange Processes,” 475.

⁵² David Ben-Arieh and Moshe A. Pollatscheck “Analysis of Information Flow in Hierarchical Organizations” 3572.

⁵³ Charles A. O’Reilly, III “Individuals and Information Overload in Organizations: Is More Necessarily Better?” *The Academy of Management Journal* 23 (1980): 684-696.

⁵⁴ Norman L. Chervany and Gary W. Dickson “An Experimental Evaluation of Information Overload in a Production Environment” *Management Science* 20 (1974): 1335-1344.

⁵⁵ William V. Gehrlein and Peter C. Fishburn “Information Overload in Mechanical Processes” *Management Science* 23 (1976): 391-398.

⁵⁶ Cynthia Stohl and W. Charles Redding “Messages and Message Exchange Processes,” 489.

⁵⁷ Charles Conrad *Strategic Organizational Communication*: 176.

⁵⁸ Charles Conrad *Strategic Organizational Communication*: 177.

⁵⁹ For a more complete review see Norman R. F. Maier “A Human Relations Program for Supervision” *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 1 (1948): 443-464.

⁶⁰ Charles Conrad *Strategic Organizational Communication*: 177.

⁶¹ Mark Helm “Former Director Defends FBI” *Houston Chronicle*, October 9, 2002 sec A07.

⁶² A comprehensive review of Congressional research and the foundation of this chapter can be found in the Eleanor Hill, Staff Director, Joint Inquiry Staff *The Intelligence Community’s Knowledge of the September 11 Hijackers Prior to September 11, 2001* (Washington: Government Printing Office, September 2002) p. 1-18 as well as the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and U.S. House Select Committee on Intelligence *Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities Before and After the Terrorist Attacks on September 11, 2001* (S. Rpt. 107-351, H. Rpt. 107-792) Washington: Government Printing Office, 2003.

⁶³ *Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community*, 148.

- ⁶⁴ The conclusion of the cable stated “Action Required: None, FYI (For your information) *Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community*, 147.
- ⁶⁵ *Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community*, 145.
- ⁶⁶ *Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community*, 151.
- ⁶⁷ *Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community*, appendices, file 2.
- ⁶⁸ John Miller and Michael Stone with Chris Mitchell *The Cell* (Hyperion, New York: 2002) pp. 288-290.
- ⁶⁹ See Richard K. Betts “Intelligence Test: The Limits on Prevention” in *How did this Happen: Terrorism and the New War* edited by James F. Hoge, Jr. and Gideon Rose (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2001), 145-161.
- ⁷⁰ See Richard K. Betts “Intelligence Test: The Limits of Prevention” in *How Did This Happen? Terrorism and the New War* Edited by James F. Hoge, Jr. and Gideon Rose (Council on Foreign Relations, Inc., New York: 2001), 145.
- ⁷¹ Max Weber *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (Free Press, Illinois: 1947)
- ⁷² Peter R. Monge and Noshir S. Contractor “Emergence of Communication Networks” *Handbook of Organizational Communication: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* Edited by Fredric M. Jablin, Linda L. Putnam, Karlene H. Roberts, and Lyman W. Porter (California: Sage Publications, 1987), 447.
- ⁷³ Peter R. Monge and Noshir S. Contractor “Emergence of Communication Networks”, 447.
- ⁷⁴ Henri Fayol’s *General and Industrial Management* (New York: The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, 1984), 62.
- ⁷⁵ Fred Dansereau and Steven E. Markham “Superior-Subordinate Communication: Multiple Levels of Analysis” *Handbook of Organizational Communication: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* Edited by Fredric M. Jablin, Linda L. Putnam, Karlene H. Roberts, and Lyman W. Porter (California: Sage Publications, 1987), 402.
- ⁷⁶ The “slowing down” of information in a complex hierarchal system is detailed in Henri Fayol’s *General and Industrial Management*.
- ⁷⁷ John Miller and Michael Stone with Chris Mitchell *The Cell*, 173.

⁷⁸ Fred Dansereau and Steven E. Markham *Superior-Subordinate Communication*, 402.

⁷⁹ John Miller and Michael Stone with Chris Mitchell *The Cell* (New York: Hyperion, 2002), 35.

⁸⁰ Subcommittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security *Counterterrorism Intelligence Capabilities and Performance Prior to 9-11* (July 2002) p. iv.

⁸¹ *Emergence of Communication Networks*, 447.

⁸² This alignment would include a new domestic intelligence service modeled after the British MI5 organization. A comprehensive look at MI5 is available at their website (www.mi5.gov.uk).

⁸³ The arguments can be better understood by reading the entire hearing at www.9-11commission.gov/hearings/hearing4.htm A chart outlining the proposed reconstruction is also available there.

⁸⁴ U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and U.S. House Select Committee on Intelligence *Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities Before and After the Terrorist Attacks on September 11, 2001* (S. Rpt. 107-351, H. Rpt. 107-792) Washington: Government Printing Office, 2003.

⁸⁵ *Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community*, 146.

⁸⁶ *Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community*, Factual Findings, xi.

⁸⁷ U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and U.S. House Select Committee on Intelligence *Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities Before and After the Terrorist Attacks on September 11, 2001* (S. Rpt. 107-351, H. Rpt. 107-792) Washington: Government Printing Office, 2003. p. 7.

⁸⁸ Laura Sullivan *The Baltimore Sun*, July 25, 2003 Friday, Pg. 1A.

⁸⁹ Stephen Stewart *The Herald (Glasgow)*, July 25, 2003, Pg. 15.

⁹⁰ Greg Miller *Los Angeles Times*, July 25, 2003 Friday, Home Edition, Page 1

⁹¹ Richard K. Betts "Analysis, War, and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures are Inevitable" *World Politics* 31, no. 1 (1978): 62.

⁹² *Analysis, War, and Decision*, 85.

⁹³ Richard K. Betts “Intelligence Test” *How Did This Happen? Terrorism and the New War* Eds. James F. Hoge, Jr. and Gideon Rose (Public Affairs, New York: 2001): 160.

⁹⁴ Jim Olson *Personal Interview* 16 August 2003.

⁹⁵ Richard W. Stevenson “Breaking Up is Hard. Merging is Harder” *The New York Times* (23 June 2003)

⁹⁶ Ivan Eland *Cato Handbook for Congress: Policy Recommendations for the 108th Congress* (Cato Institute, Washington: 16 January 2003): 64, 65.

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⁹⁸ *Joint Inquiry*, 7

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