

9/11 report slams CIA chiefs

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The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) failed to take effective action against Al Qaeda before the September 11th attacks on New York, according to the agency's own watchdog.

Completed in June 2005, and kept classified until now, the 19-page executive summary blames senior CIA leaders for "not discharging their responsibilities in a satisfactory manner".

The long-awaited government report is not the first time the CIA has been accused of mishandling the Al Qaeda threat, but this assessment was produced by the agency itself.

What is new about this report is that it actually holds individuals accountable and asks for more accountability, for a review accountability and it speaks about specific failures of individuals,

Caroline Wadhams, a Senior National Security AnalystThe CIA's failure to fully prepare for the Al Qaeda threat ahead of the September 11th attacks was assigned to former CIA chief George Tenet. The agency's own watchdog found extensive mishandlings by the senior staff during Tenet's tenure. Observers say Tenet failed to counter Osama bin Laden's terror organisation.

"He failed to create a comprehensive strategy for defeating Al Qaeda, this is despite the fact that in 1998 he actually declared war against Al Qaeda; he failed to have followed through," Caroline Wadhams noted.

Perhaps the most damaging, according to the report, is that as many as 60 CIA employees knew 18 months ahead of the 9/11 attacks about two Al Qaeda operatives who later became hijackers of the flight that crashed into the Pentagon.

The two men lived in San Diego, California, but the CIA only notified the FBI in late August, 2001.

"What this demonstrates is how large the problem was in terms of information-sharing and the willingness to overcome the culture of secrecy," said Rand Beers, a Former National Security Council official.

Nonetheless, the report concludes that no silver bullet would have prevented the 9/11 attacks. Former CIA director George Tenet dismissed the reports' criticism labelling it "flat wrong" and full of inaccuracies.

"No one broke the law, George Tenet did not break the law, and other senior officials did not break the law, but they failed to perform their jobs in a satisfactory manner, and I think that

some criticism is deserved," Caroline Wadhams added.

The CIA's internal investigation calls for disciplinary action against a number of the agency's officials. In a statement, the current CIA director, Michael Hayden, says he was reluctant to release the report, fearing its effects on current operations and that he has no plans to punish any CIA employees.

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