

[Redacted]

MER 04019902

Event: Briefing/Interview, NSA

Type of Event: Briefing on NSA Collection and NSA/CIA Interactions

Date: May 19, 2004

Special Access Issues: Letter from Staff Director, "Need to Know"

Prepared by: Lorry Fenner and Lloyd Salvetti

Team Number: 2

Location: NSAW, Ft Meade, MD

Participants – non-Commission [Redacted] 9/11 Closed by Statute
[Redacted] 9/11 Closed by Statute (all from SID) [Redacted]
(Commission Response Team) plus two NSA staff personnel [Redacted] NSA/OGC.

Participants – Commission: Lorry Fenner, Lloyd Salvetti

[Redacted] This set of NSA SIGINT Collection meetings covered the following topics:

[Redacted]
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[Redacted] 9/11 Classified Information **NSA CT Product Line.**

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

As

[Redacted]

remembers it, the issue with CIA was a funding issue.

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[Redacted]

In addition, the IC (and NSA's) priority for terrorism was on

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] did not remember the all CIA players involved in these discussions, but did remember that [Redacted] was present at many of the meetings. He remembered that [Redacted] was not very involved; he didn't say that much.

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[Redacted] did say NSA sometimes ran into "roles and missions" issues with other agencies, but he felt they had a healthy NSA and CIA relationship on transnational issues. Still, demands were increasing on both sides which added to tensions. [Redacted] said there is definitely less tension now since there are clear, shared priorities and more CT money all around. Congress has stopped cutting and even reversed some older cuts. But in 1997 and early 1998 resources were diminishing and operations tempo was increasing; the squeeze was on modernization funding. Ongoing operations received the most funding with a little left for "transformation"

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[Redacted] NSA is much healthier on modernization now. But linguists are still an issue. NSA has been able to hire [Redacted] and get them clearances.

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]
[Redacted] NSA uses the National Intelligence Priorities Framework (NIPF) now and DCI guidance on where to put their effort. They alert their customers where they have to cut and reduce coverage. [Redacted] is the Senior Executive Account Manager for the State Department where they have taken the cutbacks very hard. All he can do is keep them informed.

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However, since terrorists use the commercial telecommunications industry they can tap into any service offered in the world. [Redacted] 9/11 Classified Information

[Redacted] - so in effect, the CT supplementals offer more benefits than just against one adversary.

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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When her tour was over they did not get another integree and the computer link was taken out. They were told CTC was short of resources and no one would volunteer to travel to NSA. Some other offices at NSA do have CIA integrees.

[Redacted] Both [Redacted] and [Redacted] felt that the ideal relationship between agencies entails detailing officers between them, working joint sites and activities at least virtually, and training together. But they emphasized that "one size does not fit all; each operation has its own needs." They also emphasized that CIA needs to be aware of what is available to them at NSA. NSA does know the benefits of sending people to CIA. They wish CIA would remembered that as well. NSA/CT very much appreciated one of the CIA annuitants they had assigned to them for a while.

[Redacted] and [Redacted] confirmed that [Redacted] had a problematic relationship with NSA when he was at [Redacted]. They said they understood he was passionate about his mission, but he didn't seem to understand that while he was very focused on one thing [Redacted] they had a global CT mission and NSA had many competing priorities from the rest of the IC and USG.

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[Redacted] the second party issue, and the funding issue. But linguistic capability was still a problem. [Redacted]

[Redacted] (This is an analog to the Army retaining some capability for Close Air Support - helicopters - while the Air Force still has the primary mission for CAS). There was not really a conflict, or unwarranted redundancy, because NSA still had to concentrate on Threat Warning [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Both [Redacted] and [Redacted] agreed there were "hiccups" from time to time. [Redacted]

other times they worked better together. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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[Redacted] By August 1998, there was definitely a sense of urgency in the whole IC, but especially for [Redacted] CTC was getting a lot of high level pressure. NSA had the same sense of urgency. [Redacted] joined NSA/W9B (CT) in September 1998. This was after the East Africa bombings but before the December 1998 declaration of war and before the January 1999 Charlie Allen collectors' meetings.

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[Redacted]

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[Redacted] Mr. Salvetti asked about how to construct the best SIGINT/HUMINT framework relationship. [Redacted] and [Redacted] said that the more focus the customers can give to NSA through knowledge of general operational approaches the better; NSA also needs feedback on their reporting for it to be the best it can be. The customer can help by narrowing the priorities because GWOT is opportunity driven. NSA's new program of [Redacted]

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[Redacted] specific needs and distributing products and services in the form the customer needs them. They said the most important thing is establishing face to face trust, and therefore officer exchanges are most beneficial.

[Redacted] NSA Counterintelligence and [Redacted]

(U) In 1998 [Redacted] was working on IC/NSA Transformation and writing the concept of operations. On 12 September 2001 she became the Chief of NSA's [Redacted] Division.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted]

She also had people doing SIGINT Research and Target Development (SRTD) for both. The SRTD analysts are no longer in her division; they have the same responsibility but are matrixed in elsewhere.

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[Redacted] She has no CIA integrees, but it would be very helpful to have them. She has no integrees from FBI either. NSA does have two integrees at FBI.

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[Redacted] Her office works more with CTC than area divisions at CIA, but she does get requirements from other divisions.

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[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

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[Redacted] believes it would be useful to have a CIA [Redacted] person in her shop, but she does not have one now. She said she and her CIA counterparts visit often and talk on the phone even more.

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(U) CT PRODUCT LINE - [Redacted] and [Redacted] on Analysis and Collection Management

[Redacted] has been working in CT (previously NSA/W9B) since 1992; he progressed to be a senior analyst and then to collection manager; he would talk directly to G Group collectors. NSA reorganized in 1996 and created a collection liaison in W9T who [Redacted] goes to now. CT does not work directly with data acquisition (collection engineers) or the customers usually (but they get calls from customers), however through the [Redacted] automated tasking system analysts in the product line could work directly with collectors in data acquisition.

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[Redacted]

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Still NSA/CT would do whatever CTC and Charlie Allen tasked. They agreed, when Charlie called they had to do what he said. If [Redacted] or CTC wanted something they knew they could elevate the request to him or the DCI and get it. [Redacted] and [Redacted] complained that their NSA leadership never explained to the DCI or CIA leadership that some of their requests were counterproductive to their own priorities; so NSA/CT was faced with doing the tasking anyway. There was no internal NSA debate – they just did what Charlie and CTC told them to do. The CT analysts could not really do anything [Redacted]

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Miscellaneous: [Redacted]

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(2) There are numerous policy issues still being debated such as what do agencies report as to sources and methods. [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[REDACTED]

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(4) NSA CT was also affected by the NSA M Group and W Group merger/reorganization. In March of 2000, there was a further reorganization to emphasize Production Line Manager authority and accountability which has probably been useful. (5) NAS/CT has a new strategic effort underway but their reporting has DCI restricted distribution. Since [REDACTED] also need this information, the DIRNSA is working through the NSA representative at CIA to make it happen, rather than through [REDACTED] or through CMS or the DCI or ADCI.

[REDACTED] biggest challenge is that too many people who do not know how the SIGINT system works are telling them what to do. CTC really wants everything. So her office has to work with the customer to figure out what they really want/need so they can maximize their limited resources against CTC's true highest priorities. [REDACTED] believes there is still not enough consultation at the analyst level to know the issues before it is too late to correct them. Managers on both sides have to stop trying to be analysts themselves. When asked if having NSA integrees at CTC helps, she responded that it does not as long as they are treated as servants rather than partners. NSA integrees cannot help if they do not know the real tasking. When asked about Joint Training, she said she doubted that would help as long as the cultural issue of an unequal partnership remained. The NSA CT management has asked for another CIA CT integree and computer hook-ups and NSA has plussed up its numbers at CTC, but CIA has not sent anyone yet. [REDACTED] indicated that the resources are finite and they are cutting military requirements.

[REDACTED] When asked who they get phone calls from with immediate taskers, she responded Charlie Allen, the CTC representative and many others at CTC, General Fast ([REDACTED] CENTCOM), etc. The NSA personnel saw this as a management problem. Their view was that their NSA management is not protecting them from this spot tasking; the managers have to insure more discipline in the tasking and priority system. The calls should not be coming to the analysts, but from managers to managers for them to work it out and then do the tasking in their own chains. They said NSA CT management had tried an initiative on prioritization with a mathematical algorithm but the first run through only gave a .45 separation between all the taskings making them all basically equally as important. So they are trying again to get more separation to really determine what they should be concentrating their resources on. They have not yet attached this exercise in prioritization to a resource tail.

[REDACTED] believes relations have worsened since 9/11. CIA is much more close hold with their information. She believes that CIA always has access to the DCI and can always get his signature on anything without NSA input. Her view is that CIA sees NSA as competitors in the intelligence market. As an example [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] These NSA personnel believe the DCI must be separated from CIA. The CMS staff has not helped the situation.

[Redacted]

(U) COLLECTION: [Redacted] **Deputy Chief of CT Signals Development**

[Redacted]

[Redacted] She joined CT in 1999 and has always been more technical than just a linguist. Just prior to her current position she was working

[Redacted]

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[Redacted] Some of this is part of educating the customer to give better leads especially with changes in telecommunications. NSA detailees to CTC help since cross-assignments build trust. She usually had daily contact with CTC, both formal and informal.

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[Redacted] CTC had a very good thing going. But the question was how could you use these resources (CIA and NSA) better together. It got better in January through the fall 2000.

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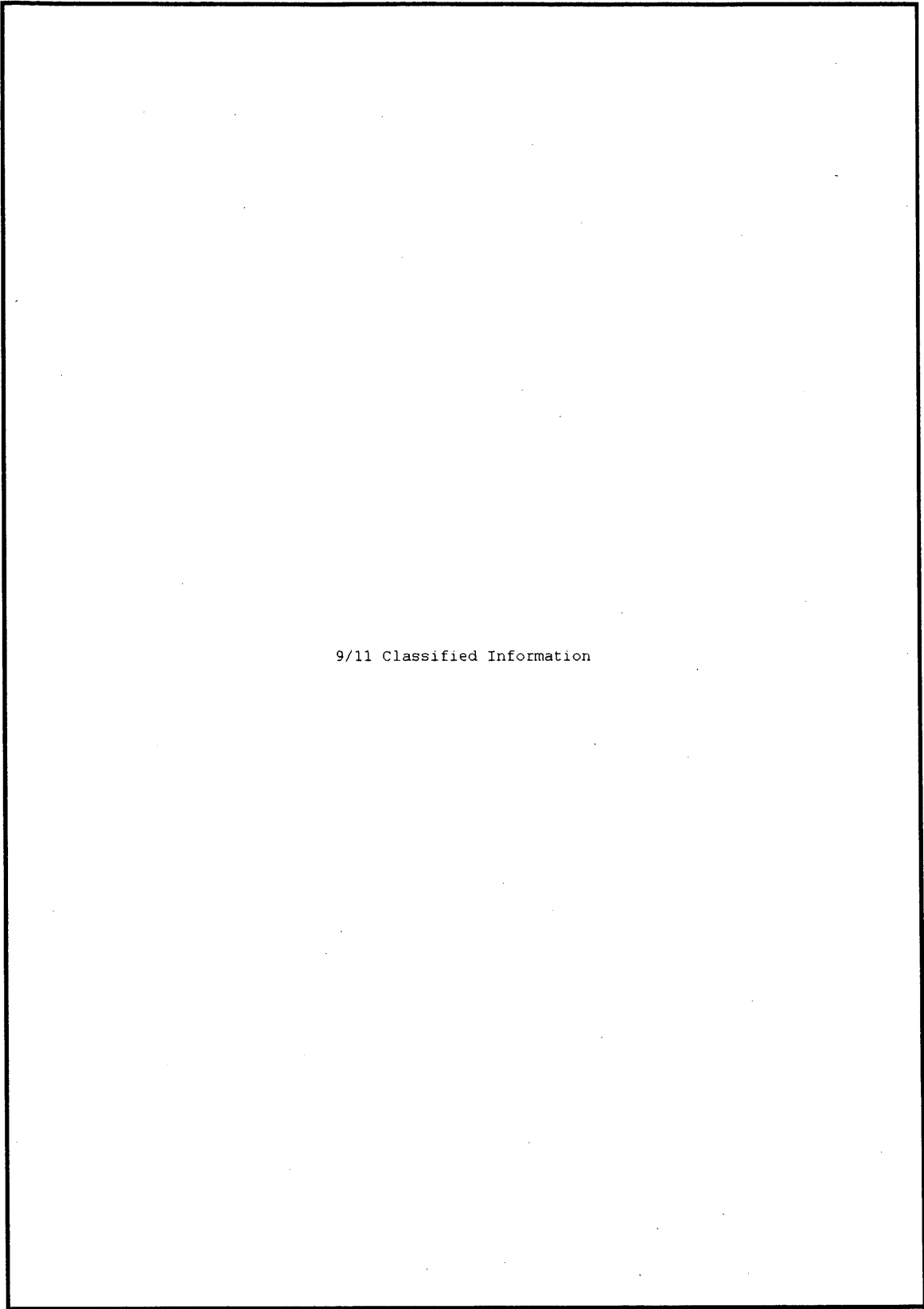
(U) CIA officers need to be trained in what NSA needs in order to do its best collection and analysis in support of CIA operations. And the HUMINT-SIGINT partnership needs education both ways to build a sense of trust and sense of team.

(U) TECHNICAL COLLECTION:

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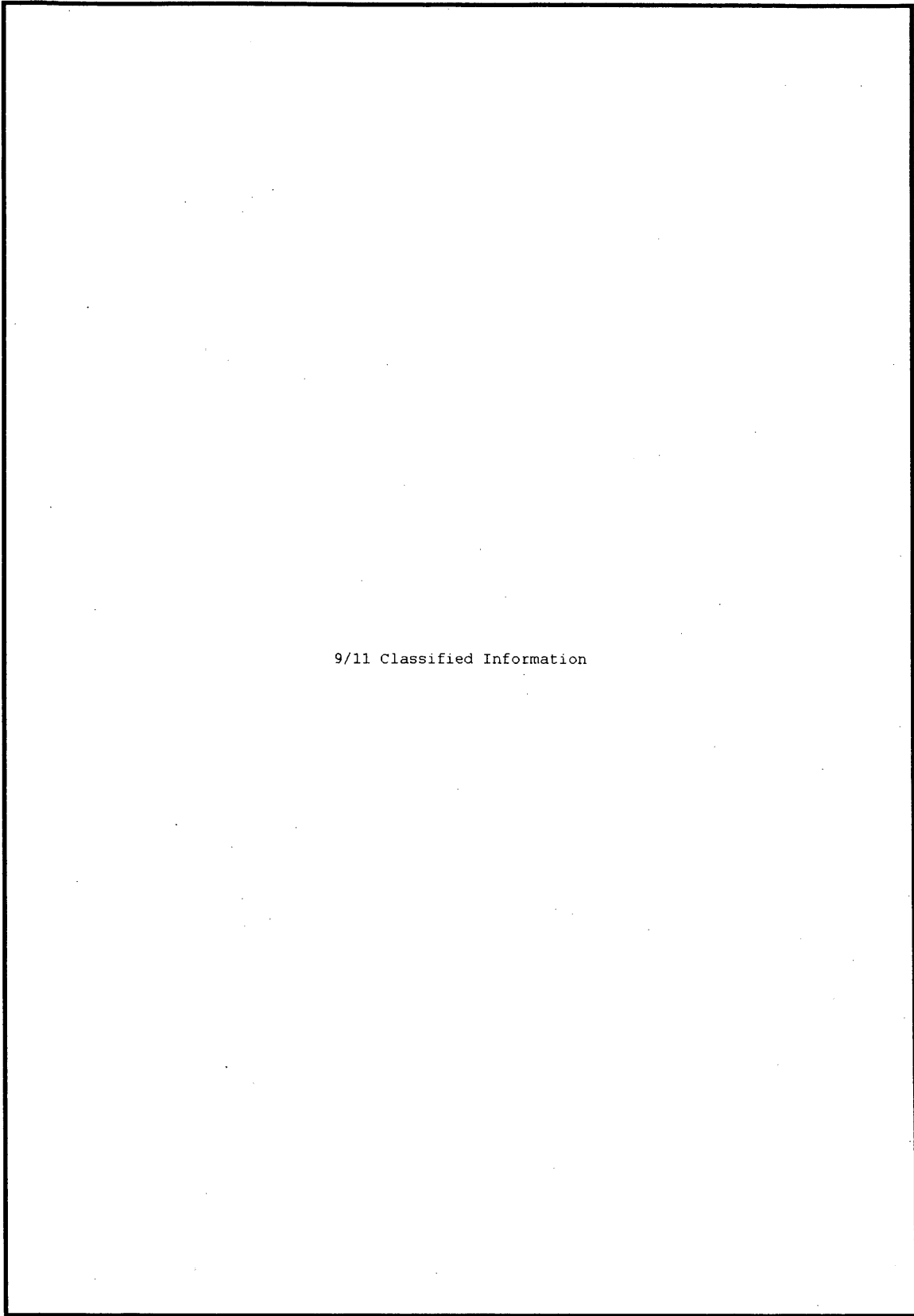
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(U) We had a brief discussion of lessons-learned. NSA conducts some formal lessons learned exercises, but more are informal. Everyday they go over what is working and what is not and what else they need to do. But [Redacted] said some of the best ideas on new methodology does not come from integrating lessons learned into the training – they are convinced this leads to “old think.” NSA’s greatest successes come from saying – “don’t go on what you know – it’s what you don’t know that gives the breakthrough.” The new guys are usually the innovators and have fresh ideas because they don’t know “how we’ve always done it”. They are coming out of the technical sector more. They are familiar with the target technology and interact with many forms of communications.

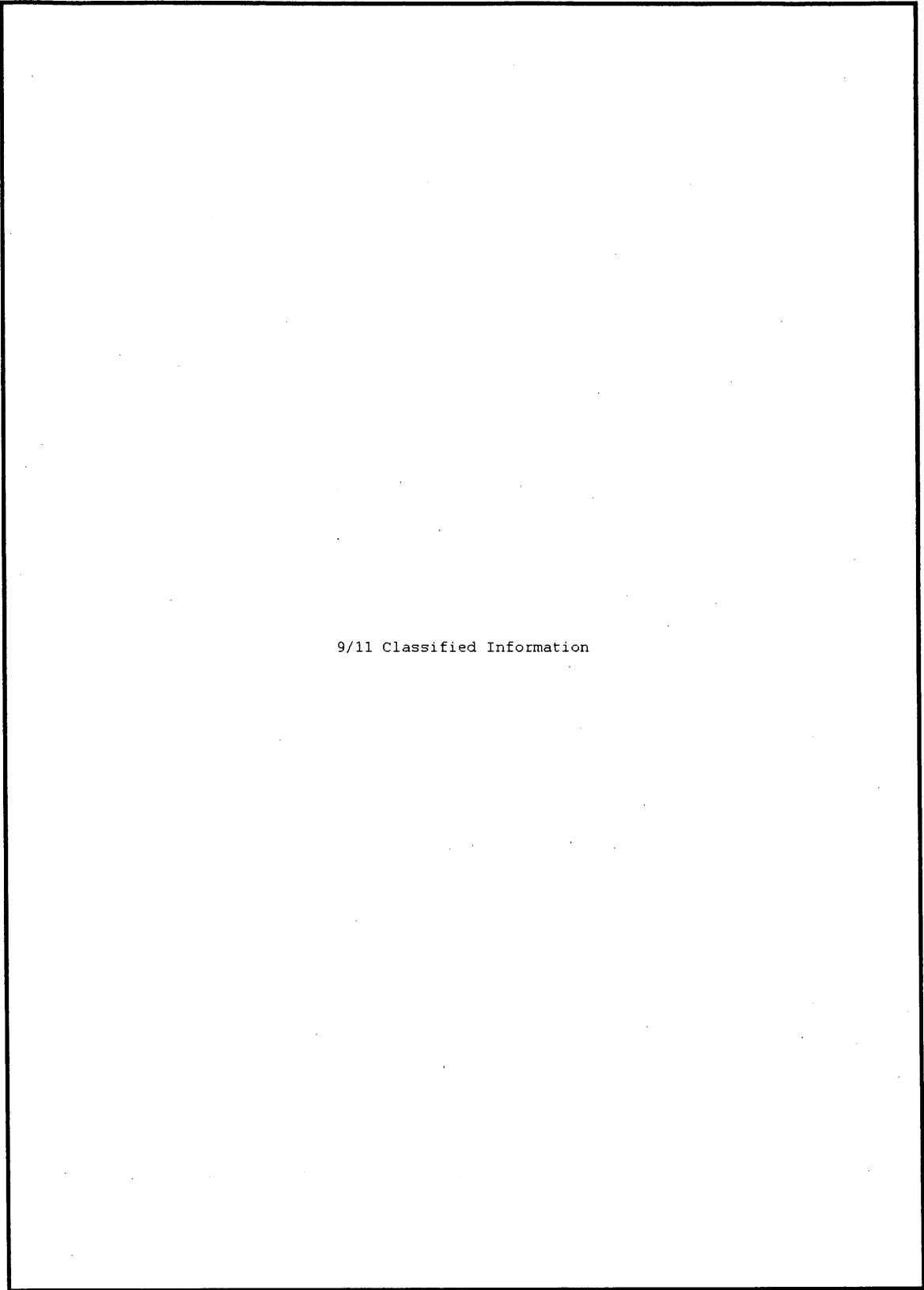
(U) Since the reorganization of early 2001, CT is much more focused and collection is much more dominant which [Redacted] sees as a good thing. CT got more manning and billets after the attacks.

[Redacted]

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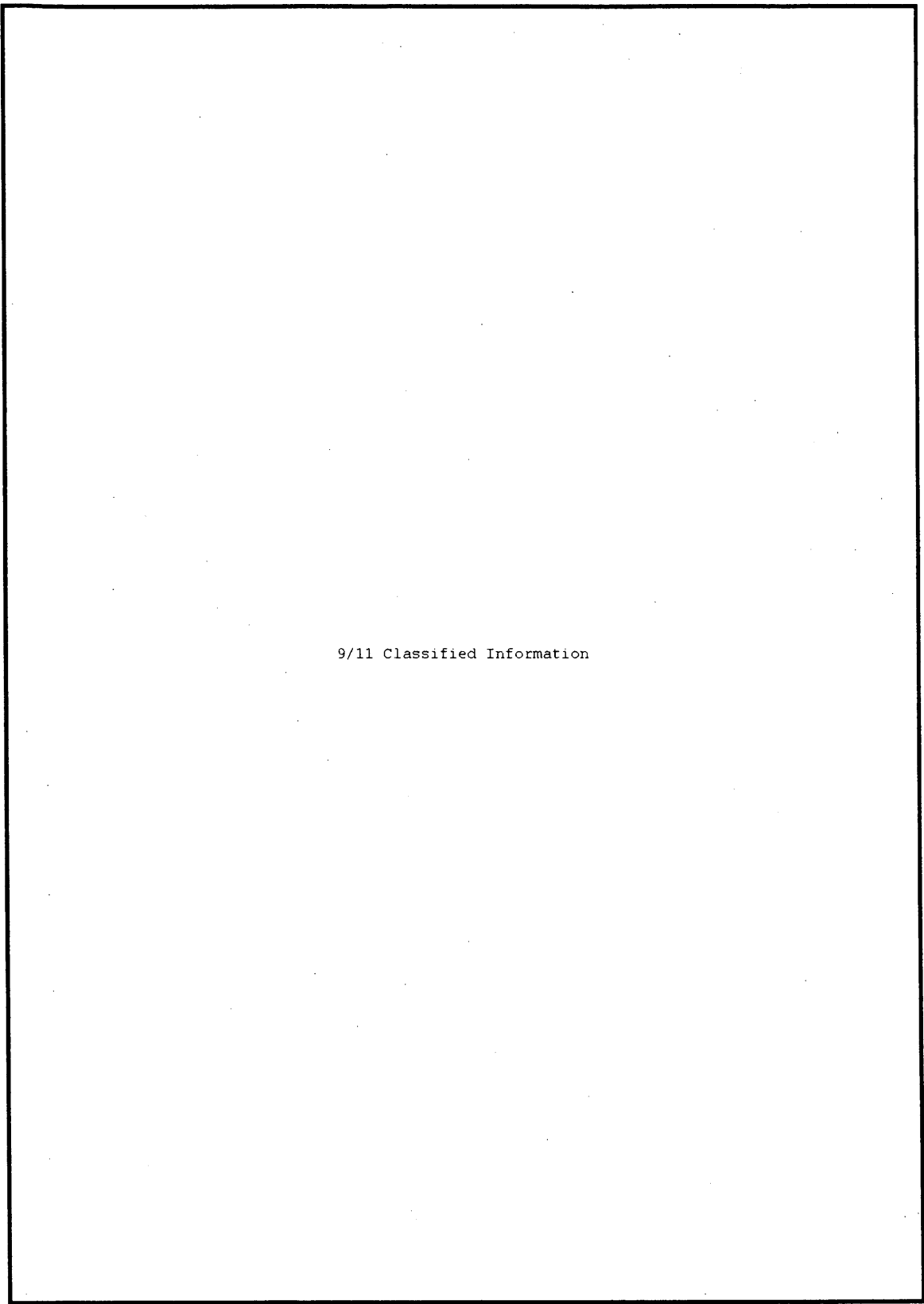
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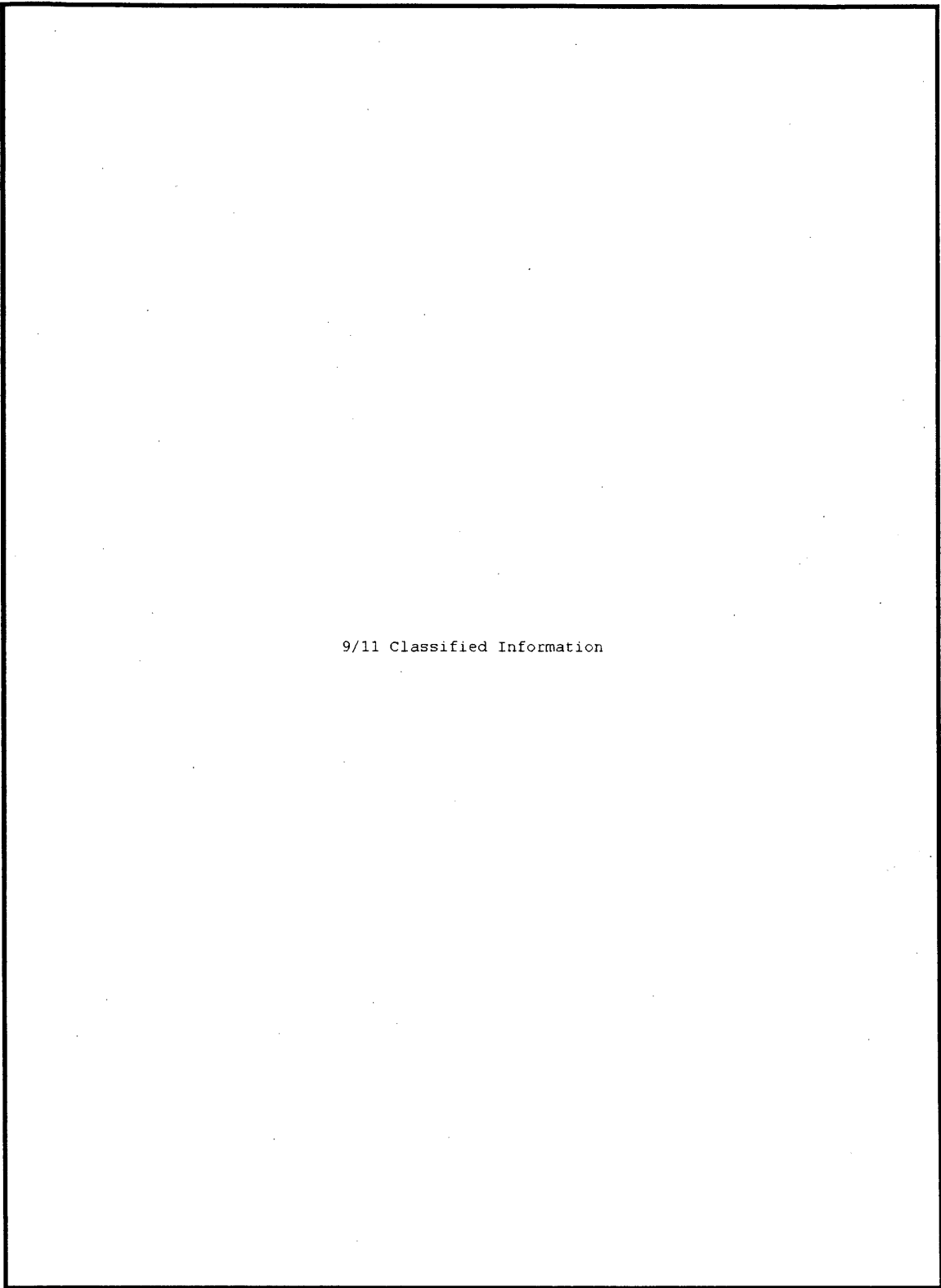
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(TS//SI//NF) In Europe, NSA had access issues partly due to European laws.

[Redacted] The HUMINT-SIGINT relationship has grown overtime, especially since 1999. Other IC personnel need training in CT SIGINT and NSA personnel need to work with other IC and law enforcement people on CT so they can learn how to best support them.

[NOTE: The information in these interviews is consistent with the historical NSA documents we reviewed both from the Joint Inquiry and those that the 9/11 Commission requested.]

[Redacted]