

AN EXERCISE IN REFLECTION: CIA MUSEUM STORIES

If you've spent any time on the CIA's website, you may have come across the CIA Museum. The Museum contains a collection of stories that are important to the CIA for various reasons. We have selected two of these stories for you to read and then answer some reflection questions related to the stories. Take some time to read, reflect, and record your answers. You will have an opportunity to share your thoughts with your fellow intelligence officers throughout orientation.

The selected stories are:

- The Final Chapter in the Hunt for Bin Ladin
 - Terrorist Bombing of Pan Am Flight 103
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THE FINAL CHAPTER IN THE HUNT FOR BIN LADIN

Abbottabad, Pakistan—In the early morning hours of May 2, 2011, a US military raid on an al-Qa'ida compound killed Usama Bin Ladin, America's most wanted terrorist. The mission's success was the culmination of many years of complex, thorough, and highly advanced intelligence operations and analyses led by the CIA with support from partners across the Intelligence Community.

Shortly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States, the CIA began collecting information on key individuals connected to or providing support to Bin Ladin. Reporting made clear early on that he communicated via a network of couriers. It was years later, however, before more was known about one key courier than simply his kunya, or operational pseudonym. Analysts then worked several more years before identifying the area in Pakistan where the courier was believed to be located.

By late 2010, further intelligence enabled the identification of the courier's compound in Abbottabad, a town in Pakistan's Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province (formerly the Northwest Frontier Province), about 35 miles north of Islamabad. The compound and its main residence had extensive security features unusual for the area: high walls topped with barbed wire, double entry gates, opaque windows, no apparent internet or telephone connections, and all trash burned rather than collected. Moreover, the two registered owners did not appear to work or have an income that would allow them to afford such a large residence. This led the Intelligence Community to assess that the compound was probably being used to hide Bin Ladin, as well as the courier.

The operation on May 2nd, authorized by the President on April 29th, was a surgical raid by a small team of special operations forces designed to minimize collateral damage and to pose as little risk as possible to

noncombatants on the compound or to Pakistani civilians in the neighborhood. In the aftermath, Bin Ladin was positively identified via several independent means.

The large quantity of materials collected from the compound required time for a thorough review. The CIA led a multi-agency task force to prioritize, catalogue, and analyze them for intelligence about al-Qa'ida's affiliates, plans and intentions, and current threats. The collected materials indicated that Bin Ladin remained an active leader in al-Qa'ida, providing strategic, operational, and tactical instructions to the organization. Though separated from many al-Qa'ida members in remote areas of the region, he was far from a figurehead. Bin Ladin remained in charge while in hiding.

Bin Ladin was al-Qa'ida's founder and only amir, or commander, in its history until his death. He was largely responsible for the organization's mystique, its ability to raise money and attract new recruits, and its focus on the United States as a target for terrorist attacks. The death of Usama Bin Ladin marked a significant victory in the US-led campaign to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qa'ida.

The daring raid that ensured that Bin Ladin will never kill again was a team effort, the product of increased integration within the Intelligence Community and of close collaboration with our military partners. The CIA was at the center of it all, driving the collection of vital information, assessing each piece of data, and analyzing all sources to produce the compelling intelligence case that led US forces to Abbottabad. The Agency's contributions were the product of a decade of positive changes -- improved collection, analysis, technology, and support.

THE FINAL CHAPTER IN THE HUNT FOR BIN LADIN:

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Answer the following questions, reflecting on the story you just read.

What did you learn about the Agency from this story?

What are the three most important things you take away from this story as you begin your new career?

What questions or issues did this story raise for you about the CIA?

TERRORIST BOMBING OF PAN AM FLIGHT 103

On 21 December 1988, Pan American flight 103, a Boeing 747, took off from London, bound for New York City. As it was climbing on its northerly flight path, it exploded over the town of Lockerbie in the Dumfries and Galloway region of southwest Scotland. In all, 270 people from 21 countries were killed, including all 259 passengers and crewmembers plus 11 people on the ground in Lockerbie.

The plastic explosive that detonated in the forward cargo hold triggered a sequence of events that led to the rapid destruction of the aircraft. Winds scattered victims and debris along an 81-mile-long corridor 845 square miles in area.

The Lockerbie bombing became the subject of Britain's largest criminal inquiry led by its smallest police force, the Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary. This widely regarded assault on a symbol of the United States, with 189 of the victims being Americans, stood as the deadliest terrorist attack on American civilians until the attacks of September 11, 2001.

The determined investigation over more than 11 years was a jigsaw-puzzle assembly by many cooperating law-enforcement, intelligence, and legal personnel from numerous countries—including a CIA electronics expert who uncovered a key piece of evidence.

In 1989, months after the plane crash and end of the formal recovery effort, a piece of scorched shirt was discovered. The piece contained a fragment of circuit board that the heat of the explosion had fused into the shirt's polyester fabric.

The Scots photographed the circuit-board fragment and gave a photo to the FBI, who passed a copy to the CIA where a Directorate of Science & Technology (DS&T) electronics expert observed two things that reminded him of a device he had seen before—a timer from an earlier Libyan terrorist attack. Further analysis confirmed that the fragment exactly matched part of a timer circuit manufactured specifically for the Libyans.

The trial of two Libyans convened before a Scottish court in the Netherlands in 2000. CIA's DS&T officer was called to the stand as an expert witness. To protect his identity he was in disguise, used an alias, and had his voice altered. The CIA officer differentiated the timers of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) from the ones used by the Libyans and identified the circuit-board fragment to be from a Libyan timer. These facts were crucial because the Libyans' defense rested on the premise that the PFLP-GC—not the Libyans—had bombed Pan Am 103.

Terrorists have always operated in secrecy, in part because America and its allies devote advanced technical resources to uncovering and thwarting their plans. While technical experts called in after a terrorist incident provide valuable assistance to those who seek justice, CIA experts in weapons, ordnance, electronics, and other fields work in the shadows to prevent such incidents. As a matter of pride to these experts who are accustomed to anonymity, few people know the details of their lifesaving contributions to combating terrorism.

In the case of Pan Am 103, the CIA expert's testimony on his identification of the circuit-board fragment was key evidence that led to the conviction of one of the two accused Libyan terrorists.

TERRORIST BOMBING OF PAN AM FLIGHT 103:

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Answer the following questions, reflecting on the story you just read.

Choose three adjectives that describe your reaction to this story. Explain why you chose these adjectives.

How do you think you'll be able to apply what you learned in this story to your job as an Agency officer?

Collaboration was crucial in bringing the Libyan terrorists to justice. What kinds of collaboration do you anticipate as an Agency officer?
