



FBI Background Paper **Background Paper**

Moderator: Agostina Copparoni

Director: Emilia Verdugo

Committee: FBI

Topic: The role of the FBI in countering domestic terrorism and protecting civil liberties in the post-9/11 era.

Disclaimer:

This committee takes place immediately after the events of September 11, 2001. Therefore, all information used by delegates must be limited to what was known or available at that specific moment in time. Any reports, conclusions, or developments published later may only be referenced in the background paper as external context, but cannot be used by delegates as in-committee knowledge.

Although certain cases that occurred after 9/11 are included to explain the long term evolution of counterterrorism efforts, delegates must remain consistent with the historical perspective of the aftermath. Any use of information that characters or agencies would not have known in 2001 may result in a warning.

Letter to Agents

Agents, welcome to the Bureau! My name is Emilia Verdugo, your director. Agostina Copparoni will be your moderator, and together we'll be your chair for this SPIS MUN 2026. We are extremely excited and honored to have you all join us as agents of the FBI, and we're looking forward to seeing you handle the challenges you'll have as a prosecutor of justice. The FBI committee may not be an easy one, it may be a bit difficult if you haven't done much research. We really encourage you to investigate and research a lot for this committee, as the challenges of balancing security and liberty may leave you lost during the debate.

The committee will dive into the role of the FBI in the rough years following 9/11, when the Bureau faced the challenges of combating domestic terrorism while defending the constitutional freedom of American citizens. You will confront the difficulties that define this time period : expanding surveillance capabilities vs maintaining privacy, securing security vs protecting freedom, and uniting agencies vs guarding authority. As agents, you will determine how the Bureau responds to the challenges of this era.

We are both thrilled for this SPIS MUN 2026, I am really hoping that you all have an incredible experience in our committee! Please enjoy your role in being an agent. We really look forward to seeing you all excel as officers of the Bureau! If any of you have any questions, doubts or concerns, please feel free to reach out to us to discuss and explain any issues needed. Don't hesitate to ask us anything, we'll gladly answer any questions. Remember to research a whole lot and any type of information will help! We wish you the best of luck, agents!

Please reach out if you have any questions or doubts.

Agostina Copparoni, Emilia Verdugo

The Chair, FBI Committee

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Committee Overview:

The Federal Bureau of Investigation was established on July 26, 1908. The rise of the agency was due to the lack of central agency to cover federal crimes, specifically those that crossed state lines. Corruption was a problem in some jurisdictions, and law enforcement didn't have the resources to deal with the growing national crime issues. J. Edgar Hoover became director of the Justice Department's Bureau of Investigation in 1924. When Hoover took charge, the range of federal interest had significantly grown yet agents were still prohibited to carry weapons or even arrest criminals. Agents were still required to present their information by law to local or state law enforcement officials.

By the 1930s, the FBI was formally able to arrest criminals and carry firearms. Under Hoover's rule the FBI began to be acknowledged for its efforts in combating organized crime, bank robberies, and the notorious gangsters in the era. After that the FBI became involved during the World War II and Cold War with a heightened focus on counterintelligence and espionage. It eventually became more and more important to neutralize threats to national security. In the post -9/11 era, the Bureau has been emphasized more in counterterrorism and cybercrime. Throughout history the agency has been fundamental in addressing an extent of criminal activities that affect the United States. The Bureau constantly improve their technological advancements and are committed to ensure a safe space in the nation.

Topic Background:

“9/11” is shorthand for four coordinated terrorist attacks carried out by Al-Qaeda, an Islamist extremist group, that occurred in the morning of September 11, 2001. Four planes flying over the eastern US were clutched simultaneously by small teams of hijackers. They were then used as huge, leading missiles to crash into New York and Washington landmark buildings; two planes hit the famous Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York, with the second strike approximately 17 minutes after the first one. The buildings then set on fire, trapping people on the upper floors, and surrounding the whole city in the smoke of it. In less than two hours , both 110-story towers collapsed in enormous clouds of dust and smoke.

A third plane absolutely destroyed the western face of the Pentagon, the giant headquarters of the US military outside the nation's capital, Washington D.C. The fourth plane crashed in a field around Pennsylvania after the passengers fought back. It is thought that the hijackers were meant to attack Washington's Capitol Building.

In total 2,977 people lost their lives that day, most of them being in New York. All 246 passengers and crew members aboard the four planes died. At the twin towers around 2,606 people died and at the pentagon, 125 people were killed. The youngest victim, being 2 years old, Christine Lee Hanson and the oldest, being 82 years old, Robert Norton, both plane passengers. About 17,400 people were in the towers; none survived above the North Tower impact, but only 18 escaped above the South Tower impact. Victims came from 77 different countries, including 441 NYC first responders. Thousands were injured or later fell ill, due to the toxic debris exposure.

Current Situation (September 15, 2002 MAX):

On February 26, 1993, a bomb was detonated in the underground parking garage of the North Tower. The terrorist attack killed 6 people almost instantly, and more than a thousand of people were injured in some way. It was the first time a major large-scale terrorist attack from the Middle East was directly against our nation. A small group of terrorists escaped the scene unnoticed, yet a massive investigation had begun. The FBI instincts told them this was a terrorist-related attack, for some time they had been investigating Islamic fundamentalist in, still there was no clear evidence to prove their point. Around 700 FBI agents worldwide joined in to uncover a key bit of evidence. They later discovered that the terrorists were related to groups like al-Qaeda, the same network behind 9/11.

September 11, 2001 nineteen Al-Qaeda members direct four commercial airplanes towards two World Center towers in New York City, and on into the Pentagon outside Washington, DC. After efforts of passengers to try to wrestle back control, the fourth aircraft crashed in rural Pennsylvania. The day after, major news outlets published a significant amount of headlines informing about the attack. The U.S government began to work on a response, and fundamental world leaders offered support to our country. As well, U.S airspace was completely suspended until further notice.

Cases Information:

1. 9/11 Investigation

The FBI didn't take long to begin the biggest investigation ever for the Bureau. Immediately after the attacks, the FBI's job was to identify the terrorist in order to prevent further attacks. Experts in terrorism and other areas gather around to discover who was responsible and why the incident happened. Within minutes, agents in Washington D.C started command posts for each of the three affected places. Thousands of agents began interrogating witnesses and sources to gather as much information as possible. In less than 24 hours, the FBI had 19 terrorists related to the attack.

2. Amerithrax (Anthrax Letters Case, 2001)

The FBI began one of its largest investigations in its history, they had thousands of interviews, lab tests, and document reviews. They had to find out what was happening and who was behind it all with some letters containing powdered anthrax spores after the 9/11 attack, the letters were mailed to the U.S. media outlets and senators. The letter attacks killed 5 people and sickened 17 others. After a few days of investigating the FBI named Dr. Bruce Ivins as the main perpetrator in 2008, but unfortunately before the charges could be filed, Dr. Bruce passed away due to suicide. The FBI formally closed the case in 2010.

3. Oklahoma City Bombing (1995)

In Oklahoma city, 1995, a major bombing occurred, it was one of the deadliest acts of domestic terrorism the country had faced before 9/11. It happened when Timothy McVeigh, a motivated man with anti-government and white extremist beliefs, detonated a truck bomb outside a federal building, killing around 168 people. The attack revealed the FBI's early challenges in recognizing and combatting homegrown white extremism, as the agents focused more on foreign threats. In response, the FBI expanded its domestic terrorism investigations and improved coordination among law enforcement agencies to better prevent similar attacks.

4. Boston Marathon Bombing (2013)

On April 15 2013, as runners ran and were being cheered by thousands of people, two brothers; Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, executed the largest attack in the U.S. after 9/11. They detonated two explosives around the finish line which caused three people to die and injured more than 500 others. After some months the FBI released photos and a video showing the two suspects, the FBI worked in teams with the FBI's Boston Evidence Response team and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. They then got criticized for missing all of the warning signs the brothers gave.

5. COINTELPRO (1956–1971)

COINTELPRO (Counter Intelligence Program) was a Bureau operation that ran from 1956 to 1971. The FBI wanted to surveil, infiltrate, discredit, and disrupt domestic political organizations that the FBI considered subversive or radical. This was a secret and often illegal campaign to neutralize groups and individuals it considered threats to the status quo. It violated civil liberties and contributed to mistrust between communities and law enforcement.

6. Waco Siege (1993)

During the winter and part of spring in 1993, more than 80 people, including four federal agents and at least 20 children died in two violent attacks between the federal law enforcement and the Branch Davidian Christian sect around Waco, Tx. Government agents began investigating the Branch Davidians over charges that children over there were being abused and that the group owned stockpiles of weapons. On the morning of February, 28, 1993, 76 agents from the Bureau that specialized in alcohol, tobacco, and firearms arrived at the compound, called Mount Carmel, expecting to surprise the Branch Davidians.

7. Capitol Hill Riot / January 6 (2021)

On January 6, 2021, the capital hill riot began. It happened when Trump supporters stormed the U.S. capitol to stop congress from making Joe Biden win the presidential election. The FBI was criticized for underestimating threats despite online warnings. It failed to act on intelligence because of gaps in monitoring social media, where plans were being made and openly shared, and due to the political sensitivity at the time, as some FBI agents feared appearing biased against major Trump supporters. These problems led to poor preparation, although later, the FBI launched a massive investigation team and made over 1,400 arrests..

8. Judge Robert Vance Mail Bombing Case (1989)

In 1989, Judge Robert Vance was killed by a mail bomb, part of a plan targeting legal officers. The FBI linked the bombs, traced the mailing patterns and matched threatening letters to the suspect Walter Leroy Moody Jr. who held a grudge against the court. Some evidence from his home had been found and that tied him to the attacks, leading authorities to his conviction and later on, execution.

Past Actions:

Over the years, the FBI has developed new tactics and strengthened collaborations to confront terrorism and major criminal threats. After the attacks on September 11, 2001, the Bureau shifted its primary focus toward national security, working closely with the CIA, NSA, and the Department of Homeland Security to identify the perpetrators, prevent additional plots, and improve intelligence-sharing across federal and local agencies.

In the Amerithrax investigation, the FBI collaborated with public health officials and the U.S. Postal Service, using DNA forensics to trace the origin of the anthrax spores. Dr. Bruce Ivins became the main suspect due to his access to the specific strain used, inconsistencies in his laboratory records, and scientific trace-back evidence connecting the spores to his research materials. These elements formed the core evidence against him.

Following the Oklahoma City bombing, the FBI partnered with the ATF and local police forces. Timothy McVeigh was identified after investigators traced a vehicle axle found in the debris back to a Ryder rental truck. Witness descriptions and rental agency records supported his identification. Forensic debris and explosive residue provided additional evidence linking him to the bombing.

In the Boston Marathon bombing, the FBI worked with local authorities and relied heavily on digital evidence. Surveillance footage showed the Tsarnaev brothers leaving backpacks at the explosion sites. Recovered bomb fragments matched items they had purchased, and investigators used online activity and digital communications to further support the case against them.

Past operations also shaped the Bureau's evolution. The COINTELPRO program led to significant reforms and greater civil rights protections, while the Waco siege pushed the FBI to improve negotiation strategies and crisis management. After the Capitol Hill riot, the FBI used facial recognition tools, geolocation data, social media tracking, and cooperation with national partners to identify and arrest suspects. Public videos, livestreams, and digital footprints served as direct evidence placing individuals inside restricted federal property.

In the Judge Vance mail bombing case, the FBI worked with postal inspectors and multiple investigative units. Walter Leroy Moody became the primary suspect due to similarities between the bombs used in the attacks and a previous device connected to him. Chemical signatures, bomb-making patterns, witness statements, and his prior criminal history formed the key evidence against him.

Delegates must maintain a clear and detailed criminal record for each case, explaining why each individual was considered a suspect and what physical, forensic, digital, or testimonial evidence supported their involvement. This record will act as essential "evidence" during committee proceedings, guiding interrogation, investigation, and decision-making throughout the simulation.

Criminal Record:

1. Amerithrax (Anthrax Letters Case, 2001)

Dr. Bruce Ivins was a master in microbiology who has worked for 27 years in the Bacteriology Division at USAMRIID. The Task Force investigation has revealed that Dr. Ivins is considered an expert in the growth, sporulation, and purification of *Bacillus anthracis*, the same organism used in the mail attacks. A review of USAMRIID records, laboratory notebooks, written protocols, and professional publications have shown that Dr. Ivins has worked with *Bacillus anthracis* since 1980. On

October 6, Dr. Ivnins had been working extra hours in the laboratory. This happened for eight consecutive nights. When asked, Dr. Ivnins said he couldn't give a legitimate reason for the extended hours, other than "home was not good" and he wanted to go there "to escape" from his life at home. Before the mails were sent, the FBI found email addresses, which were linked to Dr. Ivnins. His secret online identity allegedly counted the planning and motive of the attacks. His past actions and obsession are directly connected to the crime's location. Based on that information the FBI concluded that there was enough information to define that Dr. Ivnins was responsible for preparing and mailing the anthrax letters.

Oklahoma City Bombing (1995)

Timothy McVeigh:

Timothy McVeigh, a decorated Gulf War veteran who grew increasingly angry at the U.S. government after the Waco siege and the Ruby Ridge standoff, became the main suspect in the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing when investigators traced the rented Ryder truck used in the explosion to him. Just ninety minutes after the attack, he was already in custody for a traffic stop, and witnesses at the rental agency identified him as the man who rented the truck under a false name. Physical evidence included receipts for bomb materials, traces of explosives on his clothing, and testimony from his accomplice Terry Nichols, which further connected him to the crime. McVeigh's past actions, such as visiting Waco during the 1993 siege and spreading anti-government propaganda, showed a clear ideological motive for targeting a federal building. Together, his extremist beliefs, prior behavior, and overwhelming physical evidence led authorities to conclude that he was the central figure behind the bombing that killed 168 people.

4. Boston Marathon Bombing (2013)

Tamerlan: Tamerlan first came into the USA through New York's JFK international airport, said a federal officer. In 2009 he got arrested, accused of domestic abuse and battery after allegedly assaulting his girlfriend, according to Cambridge Police Department records. In April of the year 2013...Two explosions went off near the finish line at the Boston Marathon, killing three people and injuring more than 170. Authorities describe the blasts as a terrorist attack and vow to bring whoever is responsible to justice. And on April 18 2013, at 5 p.m. The FBI releases photos and videos showing two men they described as suspects in the Boston Marathon bombings. At 11 p.m. The Police responded to a call on the campus of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where a police officer Sean Collier, 26, was shot. He died from his injuries. Police later say they believe the bombing suspects were responsible for the shooting. April 19, 2013, Tsarnaev dies after a shootout with police in Watertown, Massachusetts. Hours later, investigators reveal that he and his 19-year-old younger brother are the marathon bombing suspects.

Dzhokhar Tsarnaev: Dzhokhar Tsarnaev faced multiple federal charges after the Boston Marathon bombing, including using a weapon of mass destruction and murdering a police officer. Prior to the attack, he showed suspicious behavior, such as possessing materials that could be used to make explosives, but no legal actions were taken against him before the bombing.

Friends and associates of Dzhokhar Tsarnaev were also involved in legal troubles related to the bombing investigation. Azamat Tazhayakov and Dias Kadyrbayev were convicted of obstructing justice for hiding or removing evidence. Another friend, Robel Phillipos, was convicted for lying to authorities during the investigation.

5. COINTELPRO (1956–1971)

COINTELPRO:

In March 1971, a small group of antiwar activists broke into an FBI field office in Media, Pennsylvania, uncovering a secret government program known as COINTELPRO. The documents they stole revealed that under the leadership of J. Edgar Hoover, the FBI had been conducting widespread illegal surveillance and disruption campaigns against civil rights leaders, antiwar activists, and Black liberation groups. The bureau had used infiltration, wiretapping, forged letters, and planted rumors to create mistrust and internal conflict within these movements, often aiming to discredit or neutralize their leaders. The evidence from the stolen files directly proved the existence of this covert operation, which had long been suspected but never confirmed. These revelations exposed the FBI's pattern of suppressing political dissent and violating constitutional rights, prompting public outrage, congressional investigations, and lasting reforms in government oversight of intelligence agencies.

6. Waco Siege (1993)

the Branch Davidians:

The Branch Davidians, led by David Koresh, were under suspicion for amassing illegal weapons and preparing for an apocalyptic confrontation, which prompted a raid in February 1993 and a subsequent 51-day standoff at their Mount Carmel compound near Waco, Texas. Investigations after the siege revealed large quantities of firearms, ammunition, and modified automatic-weapons parts, supporting claims of weapon stockpiling and paramilitary preparation by the group. Prior to the siege, the Davidians had a documented history of weapons training and hoarding, defying law enforcement inspections and barricading themselves inside the compound, which aligned with government concerns about their readiness for violent resistance. Together, the group's militant background, the voluminous armaments uncovered, and the firefight and siege events provided the basis for identifying the Branch Davidians and Koresh as the central actors in the confrontation.

7. Judge Robert Vance Mail Bombing Case (1989)

Walter Leroy Moody Jr.:

Walter Leroy Moody Jr. was an American domestic terrorist convicted of the 1989 mail bomb murder of the U.S. Circuit Judge Robert S. Vance in Alabama and civil-rights attorney Robert E. Robinson in Georgia. Moody has previously served time for possessing a bomb that exploded in his home in 1972, injuring his wife, and later engaged in obstruction and witness-tampering schemes to overturn that conviction. In 1989, motivated by resentment towards the federal courts, he mailed a series of explosive devices to judges, lawyers, and civil rights offices, killing two people and injuring others. Convicted in federal court on 71 and sentenced to multiple life terms plus 400 years in prison.

Capitol Hill Riot, January 6 (2021)

Jacob Chansley:

Jacob Anthony Chansley, a 34 year-old man who referred to himself as the "QAnon Shaman". A huge Trump supporter, Chansley was pictured wearing horns and bearskin as a coat during the Capitol Hill Riot, becoming one of the most recognizable figures in the riot. Jacob was arrested days after the Riot. In November he had a 41 month prison sentence for his involvement, 36 months of supervised release. In court he mentioned how he believed how "it was wrong" to enter the Capitol and that he hopes to get "better". Out of all of the people that were involved in the riot, Chansley got the longest prison sentence.

Richard Barnett:

Richard Barnett, a 61 year old man who was pictured sitting in with one boot on a desk in the office of House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi. In the image he wore a baseball cap and a checkered shirt, went completely viral and so did the pictures of some notes he left at Mrs. Pelosi's desk. Mr. Barnett now faces multiple charges of connection with the riot, including obstruction of an official proceeding, entering a restricted building with a deadly or dangerous weapon and disorderly conduct. He has pleaded not guilty to the charges and rejected the government's offer in April of a plea deal. He is currently not in jail.

Aaron Mostofsky:

Aaron Mostofsky, a 35 year old son of a prominent and politically connected NYC judge. Mostofsky was pictured wearing a fur pelt like a "caveman" and holding a police riot shield and a wooden stick inside the US Capitol in the riot. He told the New York Post that he felt like the supporters of Trump "were cheated", in the election. "I don't think that 75 million people voted for Trump, I think it was close to 85 million," he told the newspaper. Mostofsky was arrested in New York six days later and was charged with multiple offenses, including theft of government property, assaulting or impeding officers and disorderly conduct.

Guiding Questions:

1. How was the FBI involved in terrorist related attacks?
2. What did your agent do during the 9/11 attack?
3. What strategies does the FBI implement to prevent future domestic terrorist threats?
4. How did the FBI change its priorities after 9/11
5. What role did your agent had on investigations related to terrorism
6. What are some notable FBI operations or cases involving domestic terrorism since 9/11
7. What mechanisms does the FBI have in place to ensure the protection of civil liberties while conducting counterterrorism activities?

Closing Statements:

Agents, we hope you liked this SPIS MUN 2026 edition, we both wish you goodbye and thank you. We are extremely thankful and happy about this, we really want to thank all of you agents who read this and who participated in this committee. We both appreciate your patience and participation, hope to see you agents next time and we wish you all the best of luck! We are thrilled to have had you in the Bureau as agents of the FBI, we had a blast working with everything involving the committee. We are sad but grateful that this SPIS MUN '26 has come to an end. Thank you and we hope to see you all soon!

Quorum :

Andrew McCabe – Former FBI Deputy Director (2016–2018)

1. **Andrew McCabe** – Former FBI Deputy Director (2016–2018)
2. **Chris Swecker** – Assistant Director of the Criminal Division (2004–2006)

3. **Christopher A. Wray** – Current FBI Director (2017–Present)
4. **Coleen Rowley** – FBI whistleblower and legal counsel (pre-9/11 era)
5. **Dana Boente** – Former General Counsel for the FBI
6. **Frances Townsend** – Homeland Security Advisor to President George W. Bush
7. **James B. Comey** – FBI Director (2013–2017)
8. **J. Edgar Hoover** – First Director of the FBI (1935–1972)
9. **John Pistole** – Deputy FBI Director (2004–2010)
10. **Louis J. Freeh** – FBI Director (1993–2001)
11. **Michael Chertoff** – Secretary of Homeland Security (2005–2009), former federal prosecutor
12. **Philip Mudd** – Former Deputy Director, FBI National Security Branch
13. **Robert S. Mueller III** – FBI Director (2001–2013)
14. **Steven McCraw** – Former FBI Assistant Director, Intelligence Division
15. **Thomas J. Pickard** – Acting FBI Director during mid-2001

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