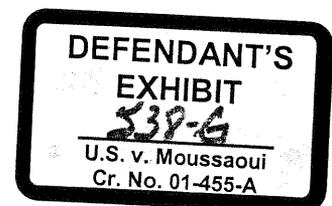


COVER SHEET FOR PORTIONS OF THE JICI REPORT REGARDING
BIN LADEN'S INTENTIONS TO STRIKE INSIDE THE U.S. AND
INDICATIONS OF A POSSIBLE TERRORIST ATTACK IN THE SPRING
AND SUMMER 2001

In February 2002, the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the U.S. House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence agreed to conduct a joint inquiry into the activities of the U.S. intelligence community in connection with the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. During the course of the inquiry, the committees held nine public hearings as well as thirteen closed sessions. In addition, the joint inquiry staff reviewed almost 500,000 pages of documents from the intelligence community agencies and other sources. The staff also conducted approximately 300 interviews, and participated in numerous briefings and panel discussions, that have involved almost 600 individuals from the intelligence community agencies, other U.S. Government organizations, state and local entities, and representatives of the private sector and foreign governments.

On December 20, 2002, the committees filed their final report, entitled "Joint Inquiry into Intelligence Community Activities Before and After the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001" (the "JICI Report"). Two parts of that report discussed the pre-9/11 intelligence about Usama Bin Laden's intentions to strike inside the United States and indications of a possible terrorist attack in the Spring and Summer of 2001. Attached hereto, is a copy of declassified portions of the JICI Report discussing these matters. Specifically, the following pages, some excerpted, are attached: 1, 7-9 and 198-209.



PART ONE—FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. Finding: While the Intelligence Community had amassed a great deal of valuable intelligence regarding Usama Bin Ladin and his terrorist activities, none of it identified the time, place, and specific nature of the attacks that were planned for September 11, 2001. Nonetheless, the Community did have information that was clearly relevant to the September 11 attacks, particularly when considered for its collective significance.

Discussion: This Inquiry has uncovered no intelligence information in the possession of the Intelligence Community prior to the attacks of September 11 that, if fully considered, would have provided specific, advance warning of the details of those attacks. The task of the Inquiry was not, however, limited to a search for the legendary, and often absent, "smoking gun." The facts surrounding the September 11 attacks demonstrate the importance of strengthening the Intelligence Community's ability to detect and prevent terrorist attacks in what appears to be the more common, but also far more difficult, scenario. Within the huge volume of intelligence reporting that was available prior to September 11, there were various threads and pieces of information that, at least in retrospect, are both relevant and significant. The degree to which the Community was or was not able to build on that information to discern the bigger picture ~~page 8~~ successfully is a critical part of the context for the September 11 attacks and is addressed in the findings that follow.

2. Finding: During the spring and summer of 2001, the Intelligence Community experienced a significant increase in information indicating that Bin Ladin and al-Qa'ida intended to strike against U.S. interests in the very near future.

Discussion: The National Security Agency (NSA), for example, reported at least 33 communications indicating a possible, imminent terrorist attack in 2001. Senior U.S. Government officials were advised by the Intelligence Community on June 28 and July 10, 2001, that the attacks were expected, among other things, to "have dramatic consequences on governments or cause major casualties" and that "[a]ttack preparations have been made. Attack will occur with little or no warning."

Some Community personnel described the increase in threat reporting as unprecedented, at least in their own experience. The Intelligence Community advised senior policymakers of the likelihood of an attack but, given the non-specific nature of the reporting, could not identify when, where, and how an attack would take place. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, in his testimony, described his recollection of the threat and the U.S. Government's response:

We issued between January and September nine warnings, five of them global, because of the threat information we were receiving from the intelligence agencies in the summer, when [DCI] George Tenet was around town literally pounding on desks saying, something is happening, this is an unprecedented level of threat information. He didn't know where it was going to happen, but he knew that it was coming.

3. Finding: Beginning in 1998 and continuing into the summer of 2001, the Intelligence Community received a modest, but relatively steady, stream of intelligence reporting that indicated the possibility of terrorist attacks within the United States. Nonetheless, testimony and interviews confirm that it was the general view of the Intelligence Community, in the spring and summer of 2001, that the threatened Bin Ladin attacks would most likely occur against U.S. interests overseas, despite indications of plans and intentions to attack in the domestic United States.

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Discussion: Communications intercepts, the arrests of suspected terrorists in the Middle East and Europe, and a credible report of a plan to attack a U.S. Embassy in the Middle East shaped the Community's thinking about where an attack was likely to occur. While former FBI Director Louis Freeh testified that the FBI was "intensely focused" on terrorist targets within the United States, the FBI's Executive Assistant Director for Counterterrorism testified that in 2001 he thought there was a high probability – "98 percent" – that the attack would be overseas. The latter was the clear majority view, despite the fact that the Intelligence Community had information suggesting that Bin Ladin had planned, and was capable of, conducting attacks within the domestic United States.

This stream of reporting began as early as 1998 and continued during the time of heightened threat levels in 2001. For example, the Community received reporting in May 2001 that Bin Ladin supporters were planning to infiltrate the United States to conduct terrorist operations and, in late summer 2001, that an al-Qa'ida associate was considering mounting terrorist attacks within the United States.

[Of particular interest to the Joint Inquiry was whether and to what extent the President received threat-specific warnings during this period. The Joint Inquiry was advised by a representative of the Intelligence Community that, in August 2001, a closely held intelligence report for senior government officials included information that Bin Ladin had wanted to conduct attacks in the United States since 1997. The information included discussion of the arrest of Ahmed Ressam in December 1999 at the U.S.-Canadian border and the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. It mentioned that members of al-Qa'ida, including some U.S. citizens, had resided in or traveled to the United States for years and that the group apparently maintained a support structure here. The report cited uncorroborated information obtained and disseminated in 1998 that Bin Ladin wanted to hijack airplanes to gain the release of U.S.-held extremists; FBI judgments about patterns of activity consistent with preparations for hijackings or other types of attacks; as well as information acquired in May 2001 that indicated a group of Bin Ladin supporters was planning attacks in the United States with explosives].*

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* National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice stated in a May 16, 2002 press briefing that, on August 6, 2001, the President's Daily Brief (PDB) included information about Bin Ladin's methods of operation from a historical perspective dating back to 1997. One of the methods was that Bin Ladin might choose to hijack an airliner in order to hold passengers hostage to gain release of one of their operatives. She stated, however, that the report did not contain specific warning information, but only a generalized warning, and did not contain information that al-Qa'ida was discussing a particular planned attack against a specific target at any specific time, place, or by any specific method.

D. Intelligence about Bin Ladin's Intentions to Strike Inside the United States

Central to the September 11 plot was Bin Ladin's determination to carry out a terrorist operation inside the United States. The Joint Inquiry therefore reviewed information the Intelligence Community held before September 11 that suggested that an attack within the United States was a possibility. Our review confirmed that, shortly after Bin Ladin's May 1998 press conference, the Community began to acquire intelligence that Bin Ladin's network intended to strike within the United States. Many of these reports were disseminated throughout the Community and to senior U.S. policy-makers.

These intelligence reports should be understood in their proper context. First, they generally did not contain specific information as to where, when, and how a terrorist attack might occur, and, [page 17], generally, they were not corroborated. Second, these reports represented a small percentage of the threat information that the Intelligence Community obtained during this period, most of which pointed to the possibility of attacks against U.S. interests overseas. Nonetheless, there was a modest, but relatively steady stream of intelligence indicating the possibility of terrorist attacks inside the United States. Third, the credibility of the sources providing this information was sometimes questionable. While one could not, as a result, give too much credence to some of the individual reports, the totality of the information in this body of reporting clearly reiterated a consistent and critically important theme: Bin Ladin's intent to launch terrorist attacks within the United States.

The Joint Inquiry reviewed many intelligence reports, including:

- In June 1998, the Intelligence Community obtained information from several sources that Bin Ladin was considering attacks in the United States, including Washington, D.C., and New York. This information was provided to [—————] senior government officials in July 1998.
- In August 1998, the Intelligence Community obtained information that a group of unidentified Arabs planned to fly an explosive-laden plane from a foreign country into the World Trade Center. The information was passed to the FBI and the FAA. The latter found the plot to be highly unlikely, given the state of the foreign country's aviation program. Moreover, the agencies believed that a flight originating outside the United States would be detected before it reached its intended target inside the United States. The FBI's New York office took no action on the information, filing the communication in the office's bombing file. The Intelligence Community acquired additional information since then suggesting links between this group and other terrorist groups, including al-Qa'ida
- In September 1998, the Community prepared a memorandum detailing al-Qa'ida infrastructure in the United States, including the use of fronts for terrorist activities. [page 200] This information was provided to [—————] senior government officials in September 1998.
- In September 1998, the Community obtained information that Bin Ladin's next operation might involve flying an explosives-laden aircraft into a U.S. airport and detonating it. This information was provided to [—————] senior government officials in late 1998.
- In October 1998, the Community obtained information that al-Qa'ida was trying to establish an operative cell within the United States. This information suggested an

effort to recruit U.S. citizen Islamists and U.S.-based expatriates from the Middle East and North Africa.

- In the fall of 1998, the Community received information concerning a Bin Ladin plot involving aircraft in the New York and Washington, D.C. areas.
- In November 1998, the Community obtained information that a Bin Ladin terrorist cell was attempting to recruit a group of five to seven men from the United States to travel to the Middle East for training, in conjunction with a plan to strike U.S. domestic targets.
- In November 1998, the Community received information that Bin Ladin and senior associates had agreed to allocate rewards for the assassination of four "top" intelligence agency officers. The bounty for each assassination was \$9 million. The bounty was in response to the U.S. announcement of an increase in the reward for information leading to Bin Ladin's arrest.
- In the spring of 1999, the Community obtained information about a planned Bin Ladin attack on a government facility in Washington, D.C.
- In August 1999, the Community obtained information that Bin Ladin's organization had decided to target the U.S. Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and DCI. "Target" was interpreted by Community analysts to mean "assassinate."
- In September 1999, the Community obtained information that Bin Ladin and others were planning a terrorist act in the United States, possibly against specific landmarks in California and New York City.
- In late 1999, the Community obtained information regarding possible Bin Ladin network plans to attack targets in Washington, D.C. and New York City during the Millennium celebrations.

- On December 14, 1999, Ahmed Ressam was arrested as he attempted to enter the United States from Canada, and chemicals and detonator materials were found in his car. Ressam's intended target was Los Angeles International Airport. Ressam was later determined to have links to Bin Ladin's terrorist network.
- In February 2000, the Community obtained information that Bin Ladin was making plans to assassinate U.S. intelligence officials, including the Director of the FBI.
- In March 2000, the Community obtained information regarding the types of targets that operatives in Bin Ladin's network might strike. The Statue of Liberty was specifically mentioned, as were skyscrapers, ports, airports, and nuclear power plants.
- In March 2000, the Intelligence Community obtained information suggesting that Bin Ladin was planning attacks in specific West Coast areas, possibly involving the assassination of several public officials.
- In April 2001, the Community obtained information from a source with terrorist connections who speculated that Bin Ladin was interested in commercial pilots as [redacted] potential terrorists. The source warned that the United States should not focus only on embassy bombings, that terrorists sought "spectacular and traumatic" attacks and that the first World Trade Center bombing would be the type of attack that would be appealing. The source did not mention a timeframe for an attack. Because the source was offering personal speculation and not hard information, the information was not disseminated within the Intelligence Community.

The Joint Inquiry did not find any comprehensive Intelligence Community list of Bin Ladin-related threats to the United States that was prepared and presented to policymakers before September 11. Such a compilation might have highlighted the volume of information the Community had acquired about Bin Ladin's intention to strike inside the United States.

[Nonetheless, the Intelligence Community did not leave unnoticed Bin Ladin's February 1998 declaration of war and intelligence reports indicating possible terrorist attacks inside the

United States. The Community advised senior officials, including [—————] the Congress, of the serious nature of the threat. The Joint Inquiry also reviewed documents, other than intelligence reports, that demonstrate that the Intelligence Community, at least at senior levels, understood the threat Bin Ladin posed to the domestic United States, for example:

- A December 1998 Intelligence Community assessment that Bin Ladin “is actively planning against U.S. targets. . . . Multiple reports indicate UBL is keenly interested in striking the U.S. on its own soil [A]l-Qa’ida is recruiting operatives for attacks in the U.S. but has not yet identified potential targets.”
- The December 1998 declaration of war memorandum from the DCI to his deputies at the CIA:

We must now enter a new phase in our effort against Bin Ladin . . . we all acknowledge that retaliation is inevitable and that its scope may be far larger than we have previously experienced. . . . We are at war. . . . I want no resources or people spared in this effort, either inside CIA or the [Intelligence] Community.

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- A document prepared by the CIA and signed by the President in December 1998: “The Intelligence Community has strong indications that Bin Ladin intends to conduct or sponsor attacks inside the United States.”
- June 1999 testimony to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence by the CTC Chief and a July 1999 briefing to House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence staff members describing reports that Bin Ladin and his associates were planning attacks inside the United States.
- A document prepared by the CIA and signed by the President in July 1999 characterizing Bin Ladin’s February 1998 statement as a “de facto declaration of war” on the United States.

In testimony before the Joint Inquiry, however, former National Security Advisor Sandy Berger put this information in context:

The stream of threat information we received continuously from the FBI and CIA pointed overwhelmingly to attacks on U.S. interests abroad. Certainly the potential for attacks in the United States was there.

E. Indications of a Possible Terrorist Attack in Spring and Summer 2001

The Joint Inquiry record confirms that, in the eyes of the Intelligence Community, the world appeared increasingly dangerous for Americans in the spring and summer of 2001. During that period, the Intelligence Community detected a significant increase in information that Bin Ladin and al-Qa'ida intended to strike against U.S. interests in the very near future. Some Community officials have suggested that the increase in threat reporting was unprecedented, at least in their own experience. While the reporting repeatedly predicted dire consequences for Americans, it did not provide specific detail that could be acted on.

Between late March and September 2001, the Intelligence Community identified numerous signs of an impending terrorist attack, some of which pointed specifically to the United States as a target: [page 213]

- In March, an intelligence source claimed that a group of Bin Ladin operatives was planning to conduct an unspecified attack in the United States in April 2001. One of the operatives allegedly resided in the United States.
- In April, the Intelligence Community obtained information that unspecified terrorist operatives in California and New York State were planning a terrorist attack in those states for April.
- [Between May and July, the National Security Agency reported at least thirty-three communications suggesting a possibly imminent terrorist attack. The Intelligence Community thought at the time that one of them might have constituted a signal to proceed with terrorist operations. While none of these reports provided specific information on the attack, and it was not clear that any persons involved in the intercepted communications had first-hand knowledge of where, when, or how an

attack might occur, they were widely disseminated within the Intelligence Community].

- In May, the Intelligence Community obtained a report that Bin Ladin supporters were planning to infiltrate the United States by way of Canada to carry out a terrorist operation using high explosives. This report mentioned without specifics an attack within the United States. In July, this information was shared with the FBI, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Customs Service, and the State Department and was included in an intelligence report for senior government officials in August.

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- In May, the Department of Defense acquired and shared with other elements of the Intelligence Community information suggesting that seven persons associated with Bin Ladin had departed various locations for Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- In June, CTC obtained information that key operatives in Bin Ladin's organization were disappearing, while others were preparing for martyrdom.
- In July, the CTC became aware of a person who had recently been in Afghanistan who reported, "Everyone is talking about an impending attack." The Intelligence Community was also aware that Bin Ladin had stepped up his propaganda efforts in the preceding months.
- On August 16, the INS detained Zacarias Moussaoui in Minneapolis, Minnesota. His conduct had aroused suspicions about why he was learning to fly large commercial aircraft and had prompted the flight school he was attending to contact the local FBI field office. FBI agents believed that Moussaoui might have intended to carry out a terrorist act.
- On August 23, CIA requested that al-Mihdhar and al-Hazmi, who had first come to the attention of the CIA and NSA in 1999 as possible associates of Bin Ladin's

network, be added to the Department of State watchlist for denying entry to the United States.

- In late summer, the Intelligence Community obtained information that a person associated with al-Qa'ida was considering terrorist operations in the United States. There was no information as to the timing or possible targets.
- On September 10, NSA intercepted two communications [—————] suggesting imminent terrorist activity. These communications were not translated [redacted] into English and disseminated until September 12. They were not specific, and it is unclear whether they referred to the September 11 attacks.

During the summer of 2001, the Intelligence Community also disseminated information to a wide range of senior government officials at all federal agencies and military commands about the potential for imminent terrorist attacks. For example:

- On June 25, the Intelligence Community issued a terrorist threat advisory warning government agencies that there was a high probability of an imminent “spectacular” terrorist attack resulting in numerous casualties against U.S. interests abroad by Sunni extremists associated with al-Qa'ida.
- Subsequently, intelligence information provided to [—————] senior government leaders on June 30 indicated that Bin Ladin's organization expected near-term attacks to have dramatic consequences on governments or cause major casualties.
- [A briefing prepared for senior government officials at the beginning of July asserted: “Based on a review of all-source reporting over the last five months, we believe that UBL will launch a significant terrorist attack against U.S. and/or Israeli interests in the coming weeks. The attack will be spectacular and designed to inflict mass casualties against U.S. facilities or interests. Attack preparations have been made. Attack will occur with little or no warning].”

- Later, on July 9, intelligence information provided to [—————] senior government leaders indicated that members of Bin Ladin's organization continued to expect imminent attacks on U.S. interests.

[Of particular interest to the Joint Inquiry was whether and to what extent the President received threat-specific warnings during this period. Access to this information was denied the Joint Inquiry by (page 216) the White House. However, the Joint Inquiry was told by a representative of the Intelligence Community that, in August 2001, a closely held intelligence report for [—————] senior government officials included information that Bin Ladin had wanted to conduct attacks in the United States since 1997. The information included discussion of the arrest of Ahmed Ressam in December 1999 at the U.S.-Canadian border and the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. It mentioned that members of al-Qa'ida, including some U.S. citizens, had resided in or traveled to the United States for years and that the group apparently maintained a support structure here. The report cited uncorroborated information obtained and disseminated in 1998 that Bin Ladin wanted to hijack airplanes to gain the release of U.S.-held extremists; FBI judgments about patterns of activity consistent with preparations for hijackings or other types of attacks; as well as information acquired in May 2001 that indicated a group of Bin Ladin supporters was planning attacks in the United States with explosives].*

The Joint Inquiry was also interested in the nature and scope of the intelligence that was being provided to senior policymakers regarding the terrorist threat. In addition to the President's Daily Brief, the Intelligence Community produces a Senior Executive Intelligence Brief (SEIB) each day, a series of short articles that summarize political, military, economic, and diplomatic developments around the world of particular interest to senior government executives. The Joint Inquiry reviewed SEIBs distributed by the Intelligence Community in the spring and summer of 2001 and confirmed a rise in reporting on Bin Ladin between March and June. This increase was still only a relatively small portion of the array of intelligence subjects that the SEIBs brought to the attention of policymakers. For example, the peak in Bin Ladin-related

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reporting came in June 2001 when Islamic extremists, including Bin Ladin and al-Qa'ida, were referred to in eighteen of the 298 articles that appeared in the SEIBs that month.

The rise in threat reporting concerning Bin Ladin in 2001, though lacking in detail, did generate government terrorist advisories and warnings, including:

- An FAA Circular on June 22, 2001, referring to a possible hijacking plot by Islamic terrorists to secure the release of fourteen persons incarcerated in the United States in connection with the 1996 bombing of Khobar Towers.

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- A public, worldwide caution issued by the State Department on June 22, warning Americans traveling abroad of the increased risk of a terrorist action.
- Four terrorism warning reports or warning report extensions issued by the Department of Defense on June 22 and 26, and July 6 and 20, primarily to alert U.S. military forces and the Department of Defense to signs that Bin Ladin's network was planning a near-term, anti-U.S. terrorist operation.
- A State Department démarche to Taliban representatives in Pakistan on June 26, 2001, declaring that the Taliban would be held responsible for terrorist attacks carried out by Bin Ladin or al-Qa'ida.
- An FBI communication on July 2, advising federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies of increased threat reporting about groups aligned with or sympathetic to Bin Ladin. The communication noted that the majority of the reports suggested a potential for attacks against U.S. targets abroad and that the FBI had no information suggesting a credible threat of terrorist attack in the United States, although the possibility could not be discounted.

Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage described the situation to the Joint Inquiry:

In fact, [the intelligence] was good enough for us to take several steps. We issued between January and September nine warnings, five of them global, because of the threat information we were receiving from the intelligence agencies in the

summer, when George Tenet was around town literally pounding on desks saying, something is happening, this is an unprecedented level of threat information. He didn't know where it was going to happen, but he knew that it was coming.

Interviews conducted during the Joint Inquiry show that the general view within the Intelligence Community in the spring and summer of 2001 was that an attack on U.S. interests was more likely to occur overseas, possibly in Saudi Arabia and Israel. Intelligence information, the arrest of suspected terrorists in the Middle East and Europe, and a credible report of a plan to attack a U.S. embassy in the [page 218] Middle East shaped the Community's thinking about where an attack was likely to occur. In fact, FBI agents working in Yemen on the *Cole* investigation were told to leave the country because of concern about a possible attack.

The belief that an attack was likely to occur overseas was also reflected in numerous statements and data the Joint Inquiry reviewed, for example:

- In a May 16, 2002 press briefing, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice said: "I want to reiterate that during this time, the overwhelming bulk of the evidence was that this was an attack that was likely to take place overseas"
- The FBI's Assistant Director for Counterterrorism at the time said that the intelligence he was seeing led him to believe with a high probability – "98 percent" – that an attack would occur overseas.
- At a Joint Inquiry hearing, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage testified: "I, in general, perceived the threat to be at our interests overseas, primarily in the Gulf, some in Southeast Asia, and most definitely in Israel. That is from my point of view and the Department of State."
- At the same hearing, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz testified: "I would say near-term we perceived the threat to be overseas, as Secretary Armitage says. In the mid- to longer-term, we perceived the threat to be mass casualties in the United States as a result of chemical or biological or conceivably nuclear attack. . . ."

- Deputy National Security Advisor Steve Hadley asserted in a written response to Joint Inquiry questions:

The specific warning the Administration did have pointed to operations against U.S. interests abroad. . . . The threat warnings, in the spring and summer of 2001, did not, to my knowledge, include any specific warning information to indicate plans for terrorist [page 219] attacks inside the United States. . . . During this period of increased threat reporting, information from [Intelligence Community] agencies focused specifically on potential attacks in Europe, the Middle East, and the Arabian Peninsula. . . . [Intelligence Community] officials, however, did not discount the possibility of domestic attacks by al-Qa'ida and other groups.

Bin Ladin-related threat reporting began to decline in July 2001. The Intelligence Community did, however, continue to follow up on some of the information in its possession.