

Although Atta and Hazmi appear to have been in Virginia at about the same time in early April, they probably did not meet then. Analysis of late April communications associated with KSM indicates that they had wanted to get together in April but could not coordinate the meeting.¹³⁷ Atta and Hazmi probably first met in the United States only when Hazmi traveled round-trip from Newark to Miami between June 19 and June 25.

After he returned to New Jersey, Hazmi's behavior began to closely parallel that of the other hijackers. He and Hanjour, for instance, soon established new bank accounts, acquired a mailbox, rented cars, and started visiting a gym. So did the four other hijackers who evidently were staying with them in New Jersey. Several also obtained new photo identification, first in New Jersey and then at the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, where Hazmi and Hanjour had obtained such documents months earlier, likely with help from their Jordanian friend, Rababah.¹³⁸

Atta probably met again with Hazmi in early July. Returning from his initial cross-country surveillance flight, Atta flew into New York. Rather than return immediately to Florida, he checked into a New Jersey hotel. He picked up tickets to travel to Spain at a travel agency in Paterson on July 4 before departing for Fort Lauderdale. Now that the muscle hijackers had arrived, he was ready to meet with Ramzi Binalshibh for the last time.¹³⁹

The Meeting in Spain

After meeting with Atta in Berlin in January 2001, Binalshibh had spent much of the spring of 2001 in Afghanistan and Pakistan, helping move the muscle hijackers as they passed through Karachi. During the Berlin meeting, the two had agreed to meet later in the year in Kuala Lumpur to discuss the operation in person again. In late May, Binalshibh reported directly to Bin Ladin at an al Qaeda facility known as "Compound Six" near Kandahar.¹⁴⁰

Bin Ladin told Binalshibh to instruct Atta and the others to focus on their security and that of the operation, and to advise Atta to proceed as planned with the targets discussed before Atta left Afghanistan in early 2000—the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, the White House, and the Capitol. According to Binalshibh, Bin Ladin said he preferred the White House over the Capitol, asking Binalshibh to confirm that Atta understood this preference. Binalshibh says Bin Ladin had given the same message to Waleed al Shehri for conveyance to Atta earlier that spring. Binalshibh also received permission to meet Atta in Malaysia. Atef provided money for the trip, which KSM would help Binalshibh arrange in Karachi.¹⁴¹

In early June, Binalshibh traveled by taxi from Kandahar to Quetta, Pakistan, where al Qaeda courier Abu Rahmah took him to KSM. According to Binalshibh, KSM provided a plane ticket to Malaysia and a fraudulent Saudi passport to use for the trip. KSM told him to ask Atta to select a date for the attacks. Binalshibh was to return to Germany and then inform KSM of the date. KSM