

17. Finding: Despite intelligence reporting from 1998 through the summer of 2001 indicating that Usama Bin Ladin's terrorist network intended to strike inside the United States, the United States Government did not undertake a comprehensive effort to implement defensive measures in the United States.

Discussion: As noted earlier, the Joint Inquiry has established that the Intelligence Community acquired and disseminated from 1998 through the summer of 2001 intelligence reports indicating in broad terms that Usama Bin Ladin's network intended to carry out terrorist attacks inside the United States. This information encompassed, for example, indications of plots for attacks within the United States that would include:

- attacks on civil aviation;
- assassinations of U.S. public officials;
- use of high explosives;
- attacks on Washington, D.C., New York City, and cities on the West Coast;
- crashing aircraft into buildings as weapons; and
- using weapons of mass destruction.

The intelligence that was acquired and shared by the Intelligence Community was not specific as to time and place, but should have been sufficient to prompt action to insure a heightened sense of alert and implementation of additional defensive measures. Such actions could have included: strengthened civil aviation security measures; increased attention to watchlisting suspected terrorists so as to keep them out of the United States; greater collaboration with state and local law enforcement authorities concerning the scope and nature of the potential threat; a sustained national effort to inform and alert the American public to the growing danger; and improved capabilities to deal with the consequences of attacks involving mass destruction and casualties. The U.S. Government did take some steps in regard to detecting and preventing the use of weapons of mass destruction, but did not pursue a broad program of additional domestic defensive measures or public awareness.

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