

equipment. He was arrested after an alert Customs agent asked to search his car and he attempted to flee. Investigation revealed that his target was Los Angeles International Airport and that he was an operative with ties to Bin Ladin's network.

In describing what the U.S. Government might have done differently before September 11, DCI Tenet testified:

[T]he one thing that strikes me that we all just let pass from the scene after the Millennium threat was this fellow who tried to cross the border from Canada into the United States. There were no attacks. There were no Americans killed. We didn't have any hearings. We didn't talk about failures. We didn't talk about accountability. We just assumed the system would keep working because it prevented the last attack. He tried to cross the border; and I think one of the things that everybody should have done is say, "what does this mean?," more carefully, rather than just moving from this threat to the next. Assuming that it had been disrupted, what does it mean for the homeland? Should we have taken more proactive measure sooner? Hindsight is perfect, but it is the one event that sticks in my mind.

In October 2000, Bin Ladin operatives carried out an attack by boat on *USS Cole*, as it was refueling in Aden, Yemen. Seventeen U.S. sailors were killed. An investigation revealed that *USS The Sullivans* had been the original target of the *Cole* attack in January 2000, but the terrorists' boat had sunk from the weight of the explosives loaded on it.

C. Attributes of Bin Ladin's Terrorist Operations

As the 1990s progressed, it became clear that Bin Ladin's terrorist network was unusual, although not unique, in its skill, dedication, and ability to evolve. The 1998 embassy attacks, the [page 206] planned attack in Jordan around the Millennium, and the attack on *USS Cole* suggested a highly capable adversary. Operations carried out by Bin Ladin's network before September 11 suggested several worrisome traits:

- Long-range planning. The 1998 attack on two U.S. embassies in East Africa took five years from its inception. The planning for the attack on *USS Cole* took several years.