

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