

- 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

* 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.