

summer, when George Tenet was around town literally pounding on desks saying, something is happening, this is an unprecedented level of threat information. He didn't know where it was going to happen, but he knew that it was coming.

Interviews conducted during the Joint Inquiry show that the general view within the Intelligence Community in the spring and summer of 2001 was that an attack on U.S. interests was more likely to occur overseas, possibly in Saudi Arabia and Israel. Intelligence information, the arrest of suspected terrorists in the Middle East and Europe, and a credible report of a plan to attack a U.S. embassy in the [page 218] Middle East shaped the Community's thinking about where an attack was likely to occur. In fact, FBI agents working in Yemen on the *Cole* investigation were told to leave the country because of concern about a possible attack.

The belief that an attack was likely to occur overseas was also reflected in numerous statements and data the Joint Inquiry reviewed, for example:

- In a May 16, 2002 press briefing, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice said: "I want to reiterate that during this time, the overwhelming bulk of the evidence was that this was an attack that was likely to take place overseas"
- The FBI's Assistant Director for Counterterrorism at the time said that the intelligence he was seeing led him to believe with a high probability – "98 percent" – that an attack would occur overseas.
- At a Joint Inquiry hearing, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage testified: "I, in general, perceived the threat to be at our interests overseas, primarily in the Gulf, some in Southeast Asia, and most definitely in Israel. That is from my point of view and the Department of State."
- At the same hearing, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz testified: "I would say near-term we perceived the threat to be overseas, as Secretary Armitage says. In the mid- to longer-term, we perceived the threat to be mass casualties in the United States as a result of chemical or biological or conceivably nuclear attack. . . ."