

- Deputy National Security Advisor Steve Hadley asserted in a written response to Joint Inquiry questions:

The specific warning the Administration did have pointed to operations against U.S. interests abroad. . . . The threat warnings, in the spring and summer of 2001, did not, to my knowledge, include any specific warning information to indicate plans for terrorist [page 219] attacks inside the United States. . . . During this period of increased threat reporting, information from [Intelligence Community] agencies focused specifically on potential attacks in Europe, the Middle East, and the Arabian Peninsula. . . . [Intelligence Community] officials, however, did not discount the possibility of domestic attacks by al-Qa'ida and other groups.

Bin Ladin-related threat reporting began to decline in July 2001. The Intelligence Community did, however, continue to follow up on some of the information in its possession.

F. Intelligence Information on Possible Terrorist Use of Airplanes as Weapons

Central to the September 11 attacks was the terrorists' use of airplanes as weapons, which National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice addressed in a May 2002 press briefing:

I don't think anybody could have predicted that these same people would take an airplane and slam it into the World Trade Center, taken another one and slam it into the Pentagon; that they would try to use an airplane as a missile, a hijacked airplane as a missile. All of this reporting about hijacking was about traditional hijacking. You take a plane – people were worried they might blow one up, but they were most worried that they might try to take a plane and use it for release of the blind Sheikh or some of their own people.

The Joint Inquiry confirmed that, before September 11, the Intelligence Community produced at least twelve reports over a seven-year period suggesting that terrorists might use airplanes as weapons. As with the intelligence reports indicating Bin Ladin's intentions to strike inside the United States, the credibility of sources was sometimes questionable and information often sketchy. The reports reviewed by the Joint Inquiry included:

- In December 1994, Algerian Armed Islamic Group terrorists hijacked an Air France flight in Algiers and threatened to crash it into the Eiffel Tower. French authorities deceived the terrorists into thinking the plane did not have enough fuel to reach Paris and diverted it to Marseilles. A French anti-terrorist force stormed the plane and killed all four terrorists.