

- In August 2001, the Intelligence Community obtained information about a plot to bomb the U.S. embassy in Nairobi from an airplane or crash the airplane into it. The Intelligence Community learned that two people who were reportedly acting on instructions from Bin Ladin met in October 2000 to discuss this plot.

The CIA disseminated several of these reports to the FBI and to agencies responsible for preventive actions. These included the FAA, which is responsible for issuing security directives, alerting domestic and international airports and airlines of threats the Intelligence Community has identified.*

In testimony before the Joint Inquiry, DCI Tenet mentioned additional evidence developed since September 11 concerning al-Qa'ida's intention of to use airplanes as weapons:

[After 11 September, we learned from a foreign government service that in 1996, Bin Ladin's second-in-command, Muhammad Atif, drew up a study on the feasibility of hijacking US planes and destroying them in flight, possibly influenced by Yousef's and Mukhtar's unrealized plans [the Bojinka Plot]. . . . Bin Ladin's determination to strike America at home increased with the issuance of the February 1998 *fatwa* targeting all Americans, both military and civilian. The ideas about destroying commercial airliners that had been circulating in al-Qa'ida leadership circles for several years appear to have been revived after that *fatwa*, in the early planning stages of the 9/11 plot. We believe that outside events also shaped al-Qa'ida leaders' thinking about an airliner attack. [—————
—————] the October 1999 crash of Egypt Air Flight 990, attributed in the media to a suicidal pilot, may have encouraged al-Qa'ida's growing impression that air travel was a vulnerability for the United States].

Despite these reports, the Intelligence Community did not produce any specific assessments of the likelihood that terrorists would use airplanes as weapons, and U.S. policymakers apparently remained unaware of this kind of potential threat. Former National Security Advisor Sandy Berger testified before the Joint Inquiry: "We heard of the idea of airplanes as weapons, but I don't recall being presented with any specific threat information about an attack of this nature or any alert highlighting this [page 223] threat or indicating it was any more likely than any other." In response to written Joint Inquiry questions, Deputy National Security Advisor Steve Hadley asserted:

* As noted earlier, however, the former intelligence office at FAA, the Transportation Security Intelligence Service, researched 12 reports concerning the possible use of airplanes as weapons that the DCI testified had been disseminated to appropriate agencies and found that there was no record of FAA receipt of three of them, two others had been derived from State Department reports, and one was not received by FAA until after September 11, 2001.