

the attacks that occurred on that day. The record that has been established through this Inquiry leads to the following factual findings and conclusions.

1. Finding: While the Intelligence Community had amassed a great deal of valuable intelligence regarding Usama Bin Ladin and his terrorist activities, none of it identified the time, place, and specific nature of the attacks that were planned for September 11, 2001. Nonetheless, the Community did have information that was clearly relevant to the September 11 attacks, particularly when considered for its collective significance.

Discussion: This Inquiry has uncovered no intelligence information in the possession of the Intelligence Community prior to the attacks of September 11 that, if fully considered, would have provided specific, advance warning of the details of those attacks. The task of the Inquiry was not, however, limited to a search for the legendary, and often absent, “smoking gun.” The facts surrounding the September 11 attacks demonstrate the importance of strengthening the Intelligence Community’s ability to detect and prevent terrorist attacks in what appears to be the more common, but also far more difficult, scenario. Within the huge volume of intelligence reporting that was available prior to September 11, there were various threads and pieces of information that, at least in retrospect, are both relevant and significant. The degree to which the Community was or was not able to build on that information to discern the bigger picture [page 8] successfully is a critical part of the context for the September 11 attacks and is addressed in the findings that follow.

2. Finding: During the spring and summer of 2001, the Intelligence Community experienced a significant increase in information indicating that Bin Ladin and al-Qa’ida intended to strike against U.S. interests in the very near future.

Discussion: The National Security Agency (NSA), for example, reported at least 33 communications indicating a possible, imminent terrorist attack in 2001. Senior U.S. Government officials were advised by the Intelligence Community on June 28 and July 10, 2001, that the attacks were expected, among other things, to “have dramatic consequences on governments or cause major casualties” and that “[a]ttack preparations have been made. Attack will occur with little or no warning.”