

Again, in that meeting, the CIA had missed yet another opportunity to advise the FBI about al-Mihdhar's visa and possible travel to the United States and, again, the CIA took no action to watchlist these individuals. Just two days later, al-Mihdhar obtained a new U.S. visa and, on July 4, 2001, he re-entered the United States.

It was not until mid July 2001, that a concerned CIA officer assigned to the FBI triggered a CIA review of its cables regarding the Malaysia meeting, a task that, [page 16] ironically, fell to an FBI analyst assigned to the CTC. Working with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the FBI analyst determined that both al-Mihdhar and al-Hazmi had entered the United States. As a result of that effort, on August 23, 2001, the CIA finally notified the FBI and requested of the State Department that the two individuals should be watchlisted.

Even then, there was less than an all-out effort to locate what amounted to two Bin Ladin-associated terrorists in the United States during a period when the terrorist threat level had escalated to a peak level. For example, neither CIA, FBI, nor State Department informed the FAA. On August 21, 2001, coincidentally, FAA had issued a Security Directive, entitled "Threat to U.S. Aircraft Operators." That Directive alerted commercial airlines that nine named terrorism-associated individuals -- none of whom were connected to the 19 hijackers -- were planning commercial air travel and should receive additional security scrutiny if they attempted to board an aircraft. The Directive was updated on August 24 and August 28, 2001. Had FAA been advised of the presence of al-Hazmi and al-Mihdhar in the United States, a similar directive could have been issued, subjecting the two, their luggage and any carry-on items to detailed, FAA-directed searches.

Further, only the FBI's New York field office received a request from FBI Headquarters to conduct a search for the two prior to September 11, 2001. The Headquarters written instruction to the New York field office only identified al-Mihdhar in its subject line. Nawaf al-Hazmi was mentioned in the text, and it is not clear whether it was intended that he be a subject of the search as well. It was not until September 11, 2001 that the Los Angeles FBI field office was asked to conduct a search. Other FBI