

the significance and location of al-Mihdhar and al-Hazmi, that chance, unfortunately, never materialized].

The Phoenix Electronic Communication

5.e. On July 10, 2001, an FBI Phoenix field office agent sent an “Electronic Communication” to four individuals in the Radical Fundamentalist Unit (RFU) and two individuals in the Usama Bin Ladin Unit (UBLU) at FBI Headquarters, and to two agents on International Terrorism squads in the FBI New York field office. In the communication, the agent expressed his concerns, based on his first-hand knowledge, that there was a coordinated effort underway by Bin Ladin to send students to the United States for civil aviation-related training. He noted that there was an “inordinate number of individuals of investigative interest” in this type of training in Arizona and expressed his suspicion that this was an effort to establish a cadre of individuals in civil aviation who would conduct future terrorist activity. The Phoenix agent’s communication requested that FBI Headquarters consider implementing four recommendations:

- **accumulate a list of civil aviation universities/colleges around the country;**
- **establish liaison with these schools;**
- **discuss the theories contained in the Phoenix EC with the Intelligence Community; and**
- **consider seeking authority to obtain visa information concerning individuals seeking to attend flight schools.**

However, the FBI Headquarters personnel did not take the action requested by the Phoenix field office agent prior to September 11, 2001. The Phoenix communication generated little or no interest at either FBI Headquarters or the FBI’s New York field office.

[Page 22]

Discussion: Before the Joint Inquiry, the Phoenix agent who authored the Phoenix communication testified that:

What I wanted was an analytical product. I wanted this discussed with the Intelligence Community. I wanted to see if my hunches were correct.

He noted, however, that he also knew that this type of analytical product took a back seat to operational matters at the FBI:

But, I am also a realist. I understand that the people at FBI Headquarters are terribly overworked and understaffed, and they have been for years. And at the time that I am sending this in, having worked this stuff for 13 years, and watched the unit in action over the years, I knew that this was going to be at the bottom of the pile, so to speak, because they were