

As the JIS has recounted, the FBI's case file for the Murad case essentially ignored the air crash plot, and FBI agents interviewed as part of our inquiry confirmed that Murad's only significance to them was in connection specifically with the crimes for which he was charged: "the other aspects of the plot were not part of the criminal case and therefore not considered relevant."¹²⁵ Convinced that the only information that really matters was information directly related to the criminal investigation at hand, the FBI thus ignored this early warning sign that terrorists had begun planning to crash aircraft into symbols of U.S. power. Thus, rather than being stored in a form that would permit this information to be assessed and re-assessed in light of a much broader universe of information about terrorist plans and intentions over time, the Murad data-point was simply forgotten. Like all the other tidbits of information that might have alerted a sophisticated analyst to terrorists' interest in using airplanes to attack building targets in the United States,¹²⁶ the episode disappeared into the depths of an old case file and slipped out of the FBI's usable institutional memory.

The handling of information about the Murad air-crash plot and the flight-school information is, unfortunately, illustrative of the FBI's more general problems in "connecting the dots" in ways that good intelligence analysts are expected to do. So pervasive was the FBI's

¹²⁵ JIS, written statement presented to SSCI/HPSCI joint hearing (September 18, 2002), at 11-12.

¹²⁶ For a summary of intelligence holdings – from all intelligence agencies – related to the potential use of aircraft as weapons, *see* JIS, written statement presented to SSCI/HPSCI joint hearing (September 18, 2002), at 26-28.