

LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE

Additional Views of Senator Carl Levin

A fair reading of the facts contained in the Joint Inquiry report has led me to a deeply troubling conclusion:

Prior to September 11th, United States intelligence officials possessed terrorist information that if properly handled could have disrupted, limited, or possibly prevented the terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center Towers, the Pentagon, and United Airlines Flight 93. At crucial points in the twenty-one months leading up to September 11th, this intelligence information was either not shared or was not acted upon, and, as a result, opportunities to thwart the terrorist plot were squandered.

While the Joint Inquiry did not uncover a “smoking gun” leading up to September 11th, a number of “lit fuses” were known to counter-terrorism officials during a period of time when our Intelligence Community was at a heightened state of alert over imminent attacks from al-Qaeda. The report details how in the months leading up to September 11th these fuses were allowed to burn and how attempts to extinguish them were shockingly frustrated.

Two of the terrorists hijackers – al-Mihdhar and al-Hazmi – were allowed to enter the United States in January 2000 because the CIA, who knew the two to be linked with al-Qaeda and the 1998 East African embassy bombings, failed repeatedly to place them on a entry watchlist. One of the two – al Mihdhar – was able to leave and re-enter the United States in 2001 and, according to the FBI, may have spent his time abroad organizing the travel of the twelve terrorists who constituted the hijacking “muscle” into the United States.

On June 11, 2001, at a meeting of FBI and CIA officials, FBI field agents from New York investigating al-Qaeda’s responsibility for the deadly U.S.S. Cole bombing, pressed for information regarding the CIA’s interest in al-Mihdhar and al-Hazmi and their attendance at the

LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE