

FLIGHT PATH

THE FIFTH PLANE AND THE
THREAT TO AIR FORCE ONE

KRISTJAN THORSTEINSON



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Dedicated to Art Thorsteinson

Let's just all assume that we can get to hard truth, that we can actually boil this down to what CSEC is doing here and NSA is doing across the lake and GCHQ is doing in Great Britain and ASD is doing in Australia. Even then you've got a problem. Because even then you're walking into a movie theater late in the third reel, and you're looking at a scene, a snapshot of the third reel and you're saying, "Aha, the butler did it!"

Actually, you need to go back and look at the whole movie. You need to see what went on before. Because if you know what went on before you may have a different interpretation of what you think the butler is guilty of.

- Former NSA and CIA Director General Michael Hayden, Munk Debates, Roy Thomson Hall, Toronto, May 2, 2014.

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Introduction

Reframing a Decade

"The Americans did not want to rely exclusively on us after September 11th. That is understandable."

- *Die Welt* news interview with unnamed German intelligence officer; quoted by *The London Telegraph*, "Barack Obama 'approved tapping Angela Merkel's phone 3 years ago'," October 27, 2013¹

A dark Bundespolizei Eurocopter flew northeast over the Westend-Süd district, the financial center of Frankfurt am Main. It maintained its course for a few minutes and then lowered its elevation. The target soon came into view, a complex of buildings surrounded by a tall, grey steel fence. After descending two hundred feet above the roof of one of the buildings, it executed several slow and deliberate passes while a special team on board took photographs.² Inside, the staff of the United States Consulate General began making phone calls.

The reason for the August 28, 2013 flyover, ordered by Chancellor Angela Merkel's then Chief of Staff Ronald Pofalla, was to search for signs of exposed electronic monitoring equipment.³ The decision was made in reaction to a number of incidents including the June 2013 disclosures of former NSA contractor Edward Snowden. *Der Spiegel*, which was given access to some of the Snowden's stolen material, reported that the United States intelligence establishment had a put a "considerable" focus on the European superpower:

According to the listing, Germany is among the countries that are the focus of surveillance. Thus, the documents confirm what had already been suspected for some time in government circles in Berlin -- that the US intelligence service, with approval from the White House, is spying on the Germans -- possibly right up to the level of the chancellor.

...

The most closely monitored regions are located in the Middle East, followed by Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. The latter two are marked in red on the NSA's map of the world. Germany, the only country in Europe on the map, is shown in yellow, a sign of considerable spying.⁴

Reconnaissance missions were also conducted at the United States Embassy in Berlin, not far from Chancellor Merkel's residence.⁵ Relations were further strained over additional charges that the United States had targeted Chancellor Merkel's phone.⁶ It is believed that current spying operations began with former Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, who publically opposed the United States' invasion of Iraq.⁷ Merkel, who would acquire the position of Chancellor in 2005, was believed to have been targeted as early as 2002 while she was the parliamentary chairwomen of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU).⁸

The flyovers served as a symbolic message to the United States intelligence establishment Germany did not appreciate being spied upon. An anonymous German official, first quoted in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, was particularly outspoken: "The message to the American friends was meant to be: Stop. Germany strikes back!"⁹ The statement was not without pique; states have no friends, only interests. Another unnamed German official categorized the flyovers as a collective "shot across the bow" to the United States.¹⁰

Nearly a year later, in July of 2014, Germany publicly identified at least two people they claimed were spies for the United States.¹¹ One worked for the BND, Germany's foreign intelligence service:

The more troubling case centers on a 31-year-old midlevel employee of the federal intelligence service who was arrested on July 2. He was detained on suspicion of spying for Russia, but then astonished his interrogators by claiming to have passed 218 German intelligence documents to the United States.

That man, identified only as Markus R., first came on the radar of German counterintelligence on May 28, when he sent an email to the

Russian consulate in Munich offering information, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* reported Saturday.¹²

In retaliation, Germany expelled the CIA station chief from the country; on July 11, 2014 *The Washington Times* reported:

The German government ordered the CIA's top officer in Berlin to leave the country Thursday in an extraordinary escalation of a conflict between the two allies over U.S. espionage.

The move amounts to a high-profile expression of German anger over alleged CIA operations uncovered by German investigators in recent weeks, as well as continued public outrage over the exposure last year of widespread U.S. surveillance programs whose targets included Chancellor Angela Merkel.

By July 26, Chancellor Merkel had formally ordered her foreign intelligence service to actively spy on the United States and Britain:

Angela Merkel has ordered its intelligence service to spy on the U.S and Britain for the first time since 1945, according to reports. The move will see Germany's equivalent of MI5, the BND, monitor British and American spying operations on its soil.

The move is thought to be a response to the discovery earlier this month of two alleged U.S. spies in Germany and revelations that the U.S. National Security Agency was conducting mass surveillance of German citizens and eavesdropping on Merkel's cellphone.

A government source told *Süddeutsche Zeitung* newspaper: 'We need to send a strong signal.' After the defeat of the Nazis and the end of World War II in 1945, the new authorities of West Germany adopted a policy of turning a blind eye to the intelligence activities of some of the victors, namely the U.S., Britain and France.¹³

Inexplicably, the United States committed itself to spying on one of the few allies that actively supported its mission in Afghanistan. Under the banner of NATO's Operation Enduring Freedom, Germany was an active force in Afghanistan (Regional Command North) after September 11, 2001. It was the

first time German soldiers were deployed en masse in a combat-ready capacity since World War II. Despite suffering casualties and the unpopularity of the mission at home, German participation in Afghanistan has continued.

Although it was an active participant in the NATO mission, German forces were not called upon for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Already dealing with an economic downturn, then Chancellor Schröder's coalition between the Social Democratic Party and the Greens had argued over supporting the United States further without a formal UN resolution authorizing military operations in Iraq.¹⁴ Some were concerned that allowing the US to use Germany's bases and airspace would be a violation of the German Constitution.¹⁵ On March 19, 2003, the day before the US invasion of Iraq, Chancellor Schröder spoke to the German parliament regarding this matter. He reaffirmed his government's obligations to their NATO partner and announced that the United States was allowed fly over rights and the use of bases in Germany for the invasion of Iraq.¹⁶ German troops were not deployed.¹⁷

While Germany was not entirely cooperative, the Chancellor was reflecting the opinion of his coalition and constituency; there was very little support in Germany for the United States' mission in Iraq. Germany's intelligence establishment was cooperative, to say the least, given the anti-war climate of Berlin. Although many German politicians publicly withdrew support for the proposed invasion of Iraq, it was the German foreign intelligence service, the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND), which provided the very data the war was predicated upon.

Intelligence officials from the two governments met in Munich in February of 2001 to review the allegations of Rāfid Ahmad Alwān, an Iraqi defector seeking asylum in Germany.¹⁸ Alwān, eventually codenamed "Curveball," had told German authorities that he had witnessed a functioning mobile biological weapons lab while in Iraq in the mid-1990's.¹⁹ By December 18, 2002, then CIA Director George Tenet, who planned to meet the president in three days time to discuss intelligence on Iraq, contacted the BND regarding their asset to see if the information he provided would hold up to a United States' analysts' scrutiny.²⁰ He asked if Alwān could be interviewed directly by U.S. authorities or appear live on camera for them.²¹ In a letter acquired by *60 minutes* dated December 20, 2002, August Hanning, then

Director of the BND, replied to Tenet's request.²² It was impossible, Hanning wrote, for Alwan to be interviewed or to appear on camera for the U.S. authorities.²³ Hanning then emphasized that while the information Alwan (Curveball) presented to BND, "was in essence judged as plausible and convincing...it couldn't be confirmed."²⁴ Tenet has since responded that he never saw the Hanning letter.²⁵ Little more than a month after their exchange, on Feb 5, 2003 Secretary of State Colin Powell gave his presentation to the UN, including Alwan's allegations of "mobile biological weapons labs," confident that the information he had received had been properly vetted.²⁶ In October of 2004 the CIA Iraqi Survey Group determined that the data was false.²⁷

In 2008 *Der Spiegel* found Curveball in Southern Germany awaiting citizenship. He told reporters for the paper, "I am not to blame. I never said that Iraq had weapons for mass destruction. Not at all, not in my entire life."²⁸ Seven years later, in 2011, Alwan publically admitted to fabricating the information for the sole reason of overturning the regime of Saddam Hussein.²⁹ The inimitable John le Carré, in a 2013 *Guardian* article, criticized the amount of influence intelligence agencies have on foreign policy, citing Curveball as an example:

We went to war on the strength of information supplied by two ingenious fabricators. One of them, aptly named Curveball, was a fast-talking Iraqi refugee flying on the seat of his pants who, assiduously cultivated by his German keepers, provided us with Saddam's nonexistent mobile bio-labs – the same illusory vehicles that Colin Powell presented to the United Nations with much panache and the help of the CIA's colourful visual aids. Remember "slam-dunk"?³⁰

Der Spiegel went on to highlight the tensions that began to develop between German and United States authorities in the wake of the Curveball debacle:

According to Lawrence Wilkerson, a close aide to Powell at the time, the BND "did not just send their information about Curveball as a chance operation. It was carefully considered what they sent to

us, each and every word was weighed very carefully." He continues: "I can't exclude the Germans completely here from their share of guilt."

Wilkerson is not alone in pointing the finger at Germany. The former US weapons inspector in Iraq David Kay is clear in his criticism of the way the BND handled "Curveball." He says the BND did not make "all the appropriate efforts to validate the source." He also says that, by rejecting CIA requests to be allowed to question "Curveball" directly, German intelligence prevented others from taking over the job of evaluation. "That was dishonest, unprofessional and irresponsible," Kay says.³¹

The fallout over Curveball's lies did not encourage a cooperative atmosphere, and further complicated relations which had begun to fray shortly after the September 11, 2001 attacks. Some felt that the German federal government had been ineffectual at conducting their investigations. In a July, 2002 article entitled "The 9/11 Inquest: Now Americans Say Germans Bungled," *The New York Times* reported, "In the eyes of some American officials, the German police and intelligence agencies missed signals about the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States, failed to push hard enough beforehand to unravel the plot and, more recently, refused to arrest men suspected of being accomplices of the conspirators."

During the early stages of the scandal, some were a bit pointed with their criticisms of the German federal government. Immediately following Chancellor Merkel's rebukes over the alleged tapping of her phone, a chorus of former intelligence professionals and related authorities gave an astonishing reply.

NSA whistleblower Thomas Drake was quoted by *Der Spiegel* as saying, "After the attacks of September 11, 2001, Germany became intelligence target number one in Europe."³² *Reuters* paraphrased popular author Frederick Forsyth: "Forsyth said Washington might think it has cause to monitor a country where the September 11, 2001 attacks were planned."³³ *The London Telegraph* quoted former NSA official John Schindler's Twitter feed: "If 9/11 had happened to Germany and been planned in NY not Hamburg, I'd expect

[German] intel to monitor USA top 2 bottom."³⁴ *The Hindustani Times* quoted former CIA operative Bob Baer as saying, "Remember 9/11 was launched from Europe not (the) Middle East."³⁵ These were, again, responses to NSA activities in Germany.

A similar analysis was provided by Republican Congressman Peter King, the Chairman of the House subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence. Congressman King, referring specifically to allegations that the United States was spying on German government officials, was quoted as saying, "As far as Germany, that's where the Hamburg plot began, which led to 9/11."³⁶ Finally, former NSA and CIA director Michael Hayden, in an interview with *Der Spiegel*, laid to rest the idea that the United States had been engaged in "business as usual" industrial espionage: "I can neither confirm nor deny what we do or don't do, but in essence, what may or may not have been done against the chancellor is quite different from industrial strength activities being conducted from German soil."³⁷ Over and over, the message was clear. One of the reasons why Germany was being spied on was because of the attacks of September 11, 2001. It was the combined foreign and domestic intelligence apparatus of Germany that had been directly criticized in the press. The heads of both services, as well as the intelligence coordinator answer directly to the Chancellor, making whoever holds the position a valuable target.

It is crucial to highlight the particular situations which markedly transformed the professional "friendship" between the services of both countries. United States authorities were upset with the way in which their German counterparts had conducted their investigations in the lead up to the attacks, their handling of suspects and, subsequently, intelligence for some years after. The NSA was also concentrating activities in Germany because it had become an apparent hub for radical terrorist elements hostile to the United States.

The United States had lost so much confidence in their German colleagues after the attacks of September 11, 2001 that it began conducting covert surveillance on suspects in Germany without the German government's knowledge.³⁸ They had even planned to assassinate a German citizen, a fact that is considerably downplayed in the press in comparison to the spying allegations.³⁹ *Vanity Fair* published a comprehensive piece which gave a

glimpse into the assassination team:

Among the team's targets, according to a source familiar with the program, was Mamoun Darkazanli, an al-Qaeda financier living in Hamburg who had been on the agency's radar for years because of his ties to three of the 9/11 hijackers and to operatives convicted of the 1998 bombings of U.S. Embassies in East Africa. "The CIA team supposedly went in 'dark," meaning they did not notify their own station—much less the German government—of their presence; they then followed Darkazanli for weeks and worked through the logistics of how and where they would take him down.⁴⁰

Khaled al-Masri, a German citizen of Lebanese descent, was believed to be an associate of Darkazanli because his name was similar to someone else, a victim of mistaken identity.⁴¹ He claims to have been tortured under captivity and attempted to sue the United States government for compensation; the judge that heard his complaint dismissed the lawsuit on the grounds of national security.⁴²

Why would the United States risk a bitter international fracas by sidestepping their hosts in this manner, engaging in secret missions without notifying the German state, purposefully targeting a German citizen for assassination?

This was the response of the United States intelligence establishment to the reluctance of the German government to grant access to key suspects they felt were directly related to the September 11, 2001 attacks. Germany had repeatedly refused the United States and other countries access to Mamoun Darkazanli. In 2005 German courts ruled in Darkazanli's favor and denied extradition requests by Spain and the United States:

Germany's highest court also decided at the last minute in 2005 against a request from Spain to extradite Darkanzanli, who Spanish prosecutors believed had al-Qaida links.

In the eyes of US officials, that was the last evidence they needed of Germany's reluctance to act in its dealings with suspected terrorists.⁴³

This was not the only time US authorities were rebuffed by the German state. In 1997, a man known to be associated with Darkanzanli, Mohammed Haydar Zammar, was briefly placed under surveillance by the Germans at the request of Turkish intelligence. The surveillance only lasted a few months. The head of the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (BfV), or Office for the Protection of the Constitution, denied that there was any "evidence of criminal planning" and ended his investigation:

In 1996, Zammar set off for another visit to Afghanistan, where he formally pledged allegiance to al Qaeda, according to an Arab intelligence agency. The next year, the Germans, tipped off by Turkish intelligence, placed Zammar under surveillance. But, as with a later surveillance of one of Atta's roommates...the tail was dropped within months for lack of evidence of criminal planning.

"What we did not see were concrete signs for such a violent act as occurred in New York," said Peter Frisch, the former head of the German Office for the Protection of the Constitution, which monitored extremists in the country. "We had neither the people to do [surveillance], nor did we know that we should."

Hamburg -- and Germany as a whole -- was an almost risk-free environment for Islamic radicals. German officials, mindful of the country's Nazi past, say now that they were reluctant to target mosques and risk allegations of racism or religious persecution. Such reservations meant that while authorities were aware of the calls to arms that fired up the members of the Hamburg cell, they saw no cause to intervene. ⁴⁴

If the head of the BfV needed an excuse to monitor Darkanzanli or Zammar, he got it when the CIA approached his department in 1999 and tried to recruit Darkanzanli, an obvious flag that he was of some value. Any associate of Darkanzanli, such as Zammar, would also be seen as a potential intelligence target. The BfV denied their request:

The *Chicago Tribune* newspaper wrote in November 2002 that the CIA had been particularly irritated back in 1999. At the time, the US intelligence agency reportedly sought to recruit Darkazanli as a spy.

But the Hamburg branch of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution rejected the request, telling the CIA that foreign intelligence agencies were not allowed to operate inside Germany.⁴⁵

If Spain and the United States were correct, Darkanzanli could have been a valuable resource in detecting radical elements and potential threats within Germany. It is unlikely that the Germans would not have approached him themselves after the CIA showed so much interest. They may have already done so prior to the United States' requests.

In January of 2014, President Barack Obama emphasized the United States' intelligence establishment's interests in Germany when he was interviewed by ZDF's Claus Kleber in Berlin. After being asked why the United States felt compelled to engage in spying operations in Germany, the president responded by highlighting a core point:

Claus Kleber: But people see this immense size of the American security and spying apparatus. And they look at that, they look at your speech today, as well and they say: Listen, what I want is that no agency like that is collecting any data from people in Germany. They should just stop that, unless you have specific reasons to look for this person, like the Hamburg cell of 9/11 and so on.

President Barack Obama: But of course, here's the challenge: We don't always know who the Hamburg cell is, until after the fact.⁴⁶

The president was referring to a very specific incident but refrained from naming names as a courtesy. In January of 2003, *The New York Times* learned of another case of mishandled intelligence. Apparently Germany's domestic intelligence service, the BfV, had identified key individuals of the Hamburg cell, "as early as 1998," but did not notify the United States or intensify their monitoring activities:

Three years before the Sept. 11 attacks, Germany's domestic intelligence service was tracking prominent members of the Hamburg terrorist cell that planned and executed the aircraft hijackings, according to newly obtained documents.

The documents, including intelligence reports, surveillance logs and

transcripts of intercepted telephone calls, appear to contradict public claims by the German authorities that they knew little about the members of the Hamburg cell before the attacks.

As early as 1998, the records show, the Germans monitored a meeting between men suspected of plotting the attacks. The surveillance would lead a year later to the Hamburg apartment where Mohamed Atta and other main plotters were living while attending universities.

While the records do not indicate that authorities heard any mention of a specific plan, they depict a surveillance mission extensive enough to raise anew the politically sensitive question of whether the Germans missed a chance to disrupt the cell during the initial stages of planning the attacks.⁴⁷

German authorities dropped investigations on targets widely suspected of being members of the al-Qaeda organization, "during the initial stages of the planning" of the September 11, 2001 attacks.

Before concluding his interview with German public television, President Obama re-emphasized the Hamburg cell issue:

President Barack Obama: Now, one of the things that I have said throughout the speech is: I am very sympathetic to why the German people would be concerned about this. Obviously, there is a history there with respect to East Germany that tells us what happens if you have a vast surveillance state and it turns on its own citizens. Here in the United States, as I mentioned, there have been times where surveillance has been abused. And I would not be in the seat I am today, were it not for figures like Dr. King who, at times, our own government spied on, in ways that were inappropriate.

So what I'm trying to do is to make sure on the one hand that a group like the Hamburg cell we can identify before rather than after they have killed a whole lot of innocent people, but also to create a series of safeguards and limits, checks, an oversight so that the process whereby we are doing that is not something that would lead the

ordinary German or American or Brazilian to think that our networks are somehow reading their text messages that they are sending to their spouses.⁴⁸

In early 2013, the NSA attempted to develop a more "formal" and productive relationship with both the BND and the BfV. In June, 2014 *Der Spiegel* published 53 stolen NSA documents obtained from former NSA contractor Edward Snowden. *Der Spiegel* claimed that the material they had acquired was, "the best source for describing how the NSA has turned Germany into its most important base in Europe in the wake of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001."⁴⁹

One document, dated April 8, 2013, included a list of "Director's Talking Points." These talking points highlighted the NSA's relationship with the BND and its domestic equivalent, the BfV. The Director was planning to acknowledge that NSA/CT (NSA/Counterterrorism) had just established "a formal relationship with the BfV (approved 20 March 2013)."⁵⁰

Just as the United States began a "formal relationship with the BfV" in 2013, an agency it had been at odds with in the past, the Edward Snowden disclosures effectively drove the two sides apart again.

It will take some time to reform the professional relationship between the intelligence agencies of the two super powers. For now, stability is the watchword, intimately tied to economic and, subsequently, geostrategic interests. Although the media of both countries focused on the spying disclosures, Germany and the United States went out of their way to publicly express their partnership and opposition to Russia's 2014 military intervention in the Ukraine.

Without the proper historical context, statements of United States officials responding to spying allegations appear dismissive. There were, however, very good reasons for their terse remarks: they were speaking with special knowledge. They understood that the German government had kept suspects (and, subsequently, intelligence) from United States investigators. They also missed key opportunities that could have prevented the September 11, 2001 attacks. For this very reason the NSA has attempted a more robust partnership with the BND and the BfV. In March, 2014, General Mark Hayden spoke

unapologetically with *Der Spiegel*:

The whole question about the chancellor has made this much more difficult. Although I'm not prepared to apologize for conducting intelligence against another nation, I am prepared to apologize for embarrassing a good friend. I am prepared to apologize for the fact we couldn't keep whatever it was we may or may not have been doing secret and therefore put a good friend in a very difficult position. Shame on us. That's our fault.⁵¹

General Hayden's comments reveal that there was *something* the German government should have been embarrassed about.

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<http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2010/01/blackwater-201001#>.

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⁴³ Florian Gathmann and Veit Medick, "Magazine Report Angers Politicians: Did the CIA Plot to Kill German Citizen?," *Der Spiegel*, January 05, 2010, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/magazine-report-angers-politicians-did-the-cia-plot-to-kill-german-citizen-a-670196.html>.

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Chapter 1

"I Want To Go To Germany!"

"They saw where we reacted, and presumably also where we didn't react."

Were they casing American airports to see if extra precautions went into effect?

"They not only know how to plan, but they know how to test," said this source," and they know, obviously, where the gaps are."

- Michael Hirsh interview with anonymous U.S. Investigator, "We've Hit The Targets," *Newsweek*, September 13, 2001.¹

The National Commission on the Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States was formed in late 2002 with the mission to provide a complete account of the events of September 11, 2001. During its investigative phase, the commission appointed specific teams to concentrate research on different aspects of the attacks. According to the United States National Archives, "Team 7 was created to investigate commercial aviation and transportation security, including an investigation into the circumstances of the four hijackings."² Team 7 notes include, "documents received by the commission from agencies including the FBI and airlines."³ Many of Team 7's notes are now available to the public on sites such as Scribd.com.* These notes include FBI interviews that were not made public in the final 9/11 Commission report.

An FD-302 is a form used by the FBI to encapsulate interviews, summarizing information of investigative significance that may later be used in a court of law. One particularly unsettling document with this designation can be found in declassified Team 7 files.⁴ It is the account of a Continental Airlines pilot to FBI agents in the week following the attacks of September 11, 2001. After flying for Continental Airlines out of Newark, New Jersey, the pilot was laid over in Birmingham, UK for three days due to the attacks. Sometime during these three days he talked with a female Continental Airlines

flight attendant, who informed him of her own experience a few weeks earlier that eerily prefigured the attacks.

On August 20, 2001, the flight attendant was working on Continental Airlines Flight 50, a transatlantic flight from Newark, New Jersey to Frankfurt, Germany. After working the mid-galley position of the plane for approximately one to two hours of flight time, the flight attendant observed a "Middle Eastern man" get up from his seat, cover his face with his hands and run up the aisle. At first she thought the man was ill, but he ran past the bathroom and began pounding on the cabin door. He was "screaming that he wanted to go to Germany." He did this "2-3 times," "once trying to open the cabin door." The man was finally restrained and seated next to a United States Marine.

Since there was no precedent for the man's behavior, he was most likely perceived as being psychologically disturbed. His repeated demands to go to Germany, unless they referenced a desire for asylum, were easily met.

[redacted] a white male, born [redacted] employed by Continental Airlines as a Boeing 777 and 757 Captain and simulator trainer. [redacted]

[redacted] was advised of the nature of the interview and the identity of the interviewing agent. Also present was [redacted] spouse [redacted] [redacted] furnished the following information.

[redacted] advised that on 9/10/2001 he piloted a Continental Airlines flight from Newark, NJ to Birmingham, UK where he was laid over for approximately 3 days with Continental flight attendant [redacted] employee [redacted]. During that time, [redacted] related the following incident to [redacted]

[redacted] advised that [redacted] told him that she was working as a flight attendant on Continental flight #50, a Boeing 777 leaving Newark, NJ for Frankfurt, Germany on 8/20/2001 at approximately 8AM. The flight's captain was [redacted] employee [redacted] was working the mid-galley position and approximately 1-2 hours after takeoff, a middle eastern male came running forward up the aisle past her, with his head down and his face in his hands. [redacted] thought he might be about to throw up but he ran past the bathroom and began to pound on the cockpit door screaming that he wanted to go to Germany. [redacted] told [redacted] that after the middle eastern man did this approximately 2-3 times, once trying to open the cabin door, he was restrained by the flight crew and put in a window seat next to a United States Marine. The middle eastern man "cold coxed" the Marine and escaped over him coming forward toward her with a box cutter. At that time, a Continental captain traveling on vacation in civilian clothes with his wife, got up and put a full nelson on the middle eastern man. While the middle eastern man's hands were outstretched, someone was able to disarm him. The flight crew put flex cuffs on the middle eastern man and got him back into a seat. [redacted] remembers that whoever put the flex cuffs on the middle eastern man got them too tight and they had to be cut off and put on again.

[redacted] advised that [redacted] stated that the vacationing captain talked to [redacted] and tried to persuade him to land and take the middle eastern man off the flight. [redacted] refused and

Continuation of FD-302 of [REDACTED], On 9/18/2001, Page 2

[REDACTED] continued on to Frankfurt. [REDACTED] that the middle eastern man carried on a back pack which was searched and found to contain "bunches" of box cutters.

[REDACTED] advised that [REDACTED] stated that after the incident, 2 New York police officers identified themselves and said they saw what happened but did not want to get involved. The officers stated that they were available if the flight crew needed any more help.

[REDACTED] advised that [REDACTED] did not tell him what happened to the middle eastern man upon landing in Frankfurt. [REDACTED] encouraged [REDACTED] to report the incident to the FBI and to Continental corporate security. [REDACTED] did make a report to Continental corporate security and [REDACTED] does not know how far it went. [REDACTED] told [REDACTED] that the next day the person to whom she reported the incident, could not remember the facts and that prompted [REDACTED] to call the FBI.

[PDF page 2]

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The unknown man punched the United States Marine and climbed over him. He produced a box cutter and advanced toward the flight attendant. At this point a Continental Airlines captain travelling in civilian clothes got up and "put a full nelson on the middle eastern man." After being disarmed by another passenger, the man's hands were bound with flex cuffs.

The flight attendant of Flight 50 recalled that two "New York police officers identified themselves and said they did not want to get involved." The two "stated that they were available if the flight crew needed any more help." With the immediate situation under control, the man's carry-on back pack was searched. It was found to contain "bunches" of box cutters.

The "vacationing Continental Airlines captain" talked to the pilot of Flight 50 and, "tried to persuade him to land and take the Middle Eastern man off the flight". The pilot "refused", and "continued on to Frankfurt". The vacationing pilot's advice was sound enough. If the man had begun his bizarre behavior two hours into the flight, there were many hours left until the plane was scheduled to land in Germany. Until then, no one could guarantee the planes'

safety.

Laid over in the UK, the Continental Airlines captain advised the flight attendant to report the incident to Continental Airlines corporate security immediately. The flight attendant did as he advised but, "the next day the person to whom she reported the incident, could not remember the facts and that prompted (the captain) to call the FBI."

Unfortunately, the facts are few concerning the landing of the plane in Frankfurt. It could be easily imagined that assault charges would be filed on behalf of the people who were directly threatened on the flight; German police would conduct interviews to determine the course of events and the man would be detained.

However, it appears the captain was not given any further information, and the flight attendant seems to have left out of her narrative to him any mention of the Frankfurt police interviewing her about her assault, advising her to contact Continental Airlines corporate security, or that the German authorities would contact their US counterparts.

It is unclear whether German officials failed to notify their US colleagues of this event, but the evidence is not reassuring. As the record will show, there is no indication that security officials in Newark were ever notified of this incident before or after the attacks of September 11, 2001. Since United Flight 93 originated out of Newark International Airport, it became an obvious focal point for investigators. Everyone responsible for security at the airport was interviewed thoroughly the same week of the attacks. On September 13th, the FBI interviewed Reggie Baumgardner, Continental Airline's then Director of Security at Newark Airport. His interview is preserved in another FD-302 where he informed investigators "that security regulation for the carrying of items such as box cutters was not considered to be a flight risk and therefore would be allowed to pass by security."⁶

: M-INT-00020775
: 265A-NY-280350-NK-323
= 09/13/2001
: REGGIE BAUMGARDNER
:

09/13/01

REGGIE BAUMGARDNER, Director of Security, Continental Airlines, Newark Airport, Terminal C, Newark, New Jersey, telephone number [REDACTED] cellular telephone [REDACTED] was interviewed at his place of employment. After being advised of the identities of the interviewing agents and the nature of the interview he provided the following:

BAUMGARDNER advised that the security guards for Continental work for an outside contractor, HUNTLEIGH USA, Main Office, 45 Academy Street, Newark, NJ. SALLY SANDERSON, telephone [REDACTED] is the General Manager and GRACE ORTEGA, Newark Airport, Terminal C, C3 Checkpoint, telephone number [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is the Security Operations Manager.

BAUMGARDNER stated that security regulations for the carrying of items such as box cutters was not considered to be a flight risk and therefore would be allowed to pass by security.

BAUMGARDNER stated that the gates by the metal detectors are digitally videotaped and they are archived for approximately 30 days. The digital system is run on LORONIX software system. The digital video system is being supervised by FRED CONOVER, Electronic Technologies Corporation, cellular telephone [REDACTED]. BAUMGARDNER advised that he would be providing the back-up recordings to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and would have a work station available early next week for agents to review the previous 30 days if needed.

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There were no FAA regulations prohibiting box cutters prior to September 11, 2001. James C. May, the President of the Air Transport Association of America, spoke to the 9/11 Commission regarding this issue. The system that was in place during the time of the attacks "was not designed to detect or prohibit" this item:

Let me be completely candid with regard to the reported role of box cutting devices in the attack. Under pre-9/11 FAA regulations only "knives with blades four inches long or longer and/or knives considered illegal under local law" were prohibited. Under a non-regulatory Checkpoint Operations Guide, developed by the FAA, the Regional Airline Association and the ATA, with FAA approval interpreting the FAA regulations, box cutting devices were considered a restricted item posing a potential danger. This meant that if such a device was identified, it could be kept off the aircraft. The FAA mandated metal-detection walk-through systems, however, were designed and tested to detect metallic items about the size of a small handgun or larger. The pre-9/11 screening system was not designed to detect or prohibit these types of small items, and we have no information indicating they were identified in the actual 9/11 screening of the terrorists.⁸

What is most important from this interview is what is not said. Although the subject of box cutters was broached by investigators, Mr. Baumgardner gave no indication that he had received information regarding a violent passenger taking off from Newark on a Continental Airlines flight, making use of a box-cutter prior to the hijackings. He was not alone.

In one of the 9/11 Commission's "MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD" documents, team members collected information from Robert "Bob" Coda, the Security Director at Newark International Airport during the time of the attacks.⁹ Mr. Coda, "was not aware of any pre-9/11 suspicious incidents..." Any FAA security related data that was provided to Mr. Coda, in the form of Security Directives (SDs) and Information Circulars (ICs) before the attacks, never mentioned that a man tried to gain access to a Continental Airlines cockpit, initiated violence when he was subdued, eventually threatening a flight attendant with a box cutter.

Threat information/ Intelligence

[U] As the airport security director, Coda received information from the Information Circulars (ICs) and Security Directives (SDs) distributed by FAA. He also had direct contact with FAA Civil Aviation Security Field Office (CASFO). He didn't interface much with law enforcement officers, other than the Port Authority police unit at the airport, which was a visible presence.

[U] Other than from the FAA, the main opportunity for Coda to receive threat information was in regular security consortium meetings that acted as a forum for free exchange of information. To a limited extent, threat information was shared there, but since this was an open meeting, nothing specific or detailed was presented.

[U] Pre-9/11 Coda saw his job as one of compliance with FAA rules, and he felt there was an "invisible wall" between the civilian administration of the airport and the law enforcement side.

[U] Coda wasn't aware of the presence of terrorist cells in the vicinity of the airport. Looking back, if the FBI had knowledge about a threat, he thought from a common sense perspective they would have provided the information to the FAA, and then the necessary information would have "trickled down" to the airport operators and the air carriers.

[U] Coda was not that he is aware of any pre-9/11 suspicious incidents, such as unauthorized surveillance of the airport. He reported that those types of incidents would be referred to the port authority police at the airport; it was not the civilian authority's responsibility. He further indicated that the port authority police produce a log of all security incidents, and that he would send to the Commission the reports covering 1/1/01 to 9/11/01.

[U] Coda stated that ICs and SDs prior to 9/11 were vague and general. It was difficult for the airport to take effective action; "vigilance" was the watchword. The perception was that the FAA was making an effort to keep all parties in the large airport community "in the loop," but it was starting to seem like they were hearing "the same old stuff from the FAA." This in turn led to a reduced sense of urgency.

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The 9/11 Commission received copies of Security Directives and Information Circulars that were in effect up until September 11, 2001, none of which mention the incident on Continental Airlines Flight 50.¹¹

Peter Schurott, then FAA Supervisor of the Newark Civil Aviation Security Field Unit, had "direct contact" with Mr. Coda. In another "MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD" document he informed Commission investigators that there was no indication terrorists were active at Newark International Airport prior to the attacks.¹²

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Suspicious activities

[U] Schurott said that there was no indication of terrorist surveillance at Newark. Suspicious activities went to the Port Authority police. Other reports may have gone to the FSM or the FBI, but he didn't receive them.

[U] Schurott attended the monthly consortia meetings, as did [REDACTED] who was the FBI's liaison to the airport. Schurott said that he never received any information at the consortia or anywhere else about the presence of terrorist groups in the area. He was not aware that terrorists were present or active in the vicinity of Newark.

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The FAA had not been notified of this event prior to attacks, since none of their Security Directives or Information Circulars mentioned anything "specific." Mr. Baumgardner, Continental Airlines' then Director of Security, was not made aware of any suspicious activity involving the use of box cutters; likewise for Mr. Coda, the Security Director for the airport. Mr. Schurott, the FAA Supervisor of the Newark Civil Aviation Security Field Unit, had not been notified of anything out of the ordinary.

If the people in charge of security for Newark International Airport had been properly notified of the events that transpired on Continental Airlines Flight 50, security may have been redoubled and there could have been a stronger emphasis on the identification of box cutters as prohibited items. The FAA would have been able to disseminate more specific directives and circulars to other airlines and airports that were eventually targeted on September 11, 2001.

If the hijackers trusted in God, they nonetheless left nothing to chance. The hijackers made numerous flights testing the reactions of security and personnel, probing for weaknesses to exploit. In chapter seven of the 9/11 Commission's final report it is stated that, "Atta said he, Shehhi, and Jarrah had encountered no problems carrying box cutters on cross-country surveillance flights."¹⁴ The events which transpired on board Continental Airlines Flight 50 should be examined in this light. This was a test of some sort.

Although the apolitical content of the man's outbursts make little sense in

the context of a possible hijacking, his behavior is revealing. His first action was to "scream" and pound on the cockpit door which would be counterintuitive for someone whose intention was to commandeer a plane. His behavior would make sense, however, if he had been tasked with signaling to someone prepositioned in the cockpit before he made an effort to keep the passengers and crew occupied. Note that he did not produce a box cutter until after he had exhausted every opportunity to waste time.

Mr. Baumgardner, Continental Airlines' then Director of Security, gave the FBI information that may indicate how determined the hijackers were to secure the cockpit. On the day before his interview with the FBI, Mr. Baumgardner received a voicemail from Gabriel Vaisman, a Continental pilot from Houston, Texas.¹⁵

BAUMGARDNER added that yesterday he received a voicemail from a Continental pilot out of Houston, Texas named GABRIEL VAISMAN. The message explained how VAISMAN had been approached sometime between 6-12 months ago by a Middle Eastern man when he was flying from Newark to Seattle. This man requested to sit in the "Jump Seat" of the cockpit. The man who made this request was denied the seat as VAISMAN did not recognize any of his credentials. The man became irate and VAISMAN's flight took off without the man aboard.

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Mr. Vaisman explained to Mr. Baumgardner that he was approached sometime between 6-12 months ago by a "Middle Eastern man when he was flying from Newark to Seattle." "This man requested to sit in the 'Jump Seat' of the cockpit." Before the attacks of September 11, 2001, it was normal for a licensed commercial pilot to fly for free in this manner. Mr. Vaisman refused the man entry to the plane, since he "did not recognize any of his credentials." Eventually, "The man became irate and Vaisman's flight took off without the man aboard."

It would make sense that the hijackers would attempt to exploit any gap that presented itself to gain access to the cockpit. Acquiring a jumpseat would be ideal; the hijackers would have fewer people to overpower and could lock the door from the inside, ensuring their objective.

Mr. Vaisman was not alone in reporting someone thought to be posing as a pilot to gain access to the cockpit by way of the jumpseat. Gregory J. McAleer, a United Airlines flight attendant with a private pilot's license, informed investigators that on August 30, 2001 he was working on UA Flight 514 flying out of Chicago O'Hare Airport to Boston Logan Airport when he experienced something very similar to Mr. Vaisman.¹⁷

While greeting passengers as they boarded he witnessed a "Middle Eastern male (unknown male)" walk down the jet-way/passageway and hand him a jump seat pass, an unassuming document printed much like a normal ticket.¹⁸ A legitimate jumpseat pass is acquired with the authority of the airline's gate agent. Mr. McAleer explained that this "...implies that the passenger is a licensed pilot of a United States domestic airline, and allows the holder to sit in the jump seat in the cockpit of the aircraft. The UA gate agent should have been shown valid identification from a domestic airline, along with a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) pilot's license..."¹⁹

Dressed in "a plum colored shirt and a matching tie", the man "was carrying a large Samsonite brand suitcase, which he left out on the jet-way as he entered the aircraft."²⁰ He first walked into the cockpit and engaged the pilot and first officer briefly, stepping out only "a few moments" later.²¹ He exited the craft and returned to the passageway and stood on the right side of the passenger door, where he had left his suitcase; he retrieved his suitcase, then re-entered the plane and took "a seat in row 14 on the aisle of the coach cabin of the 737."²²

The man's unusual behavior made Mr. McAleer suspicious. Why, for instance, would he leave his suitcase in the passageway? If he had a legitimate jump seat pass, wouldn't he bring he bring his luggage with him? Why would he then take an aisle seat in the coach cabin instead of a jumpseat in the cockpit or one of the cabin crew jumpseats (usually located near emergency exits)? Mr. McAleer went to the cockpit and inquired of the Captain the "status of the unknown male."²³ The Captain replied to Mr. McAleer: "he's not 'jump seating', he doesn't have the proper 'ID.' He told me that he has a companion pass. He will be flying as a regular customer in coach."²⁴

Mr. McAleer informed the number one flight attendant of what he had

learned from the Captain and then took his position in the coach class galley in the aft of the 737. At some point during the flight, the unknown man got up from his coach aisle seat and waited for the lavatory in Mr. McAleer's section. The two began a conversation. Mr. McAleer asked the man what airline he flew for. He replied that he flew for COMAIR, "...a regional airline that operates the Delta Airline express flights", but quickly qualified the statement, stating in "clear, but accented English" that he had quit his job that very day.²⁵ The unknown man informed Mr. McAleer that he had the intention to start a business charter airline in Boston.

Upon further questioning, Mr. McAleer became increasingly leery of the passenger. He didn't seem to know enough about normal flight procedures to be employed as a commercial pilot, let alone start a business. Changing the subject, the man asked Mr. McAleer about the 737's intercom system and then returned to his seat without using the lavatory. After landing in Boston, Mr. McAleer "attempted to talk to the captain and first officer about the unknown male, but they had already left the aircraft."²⁶ He could not recall their names and "never flew with either pilot again."²⁷

After the attacks Mr. McAleer, "heard from other flight attendants about a Middle Eastern male who attempted to enter a cockpit on another UA flight dressed in a pilot's uniform, with FAA identification."²⁸ It was at this point that Mr. McAleer realized that the man had never walked passed him to obtain a companion pass from the gate agent. He was certain the man was a stowaway and later identified the man as Fayez Banihammad, one of the nineteen hijackers.

The idea that the hijackers may have impersonated pilots to acquire jump seat passes is further supported by another article, as well as rarely quoted Commission documents. *The Telegraph* determined that "three Qatari men" were targeted as potential hijackers for September 11, 2001.²⁹ After arriving in Los Angeles on August 24, 2001, six days before Mr. McAleer would encounter a man posing as a pilot, they booked a hotel room at a Holiday Inn near the airport. On September 10th, they booked a flight from Los Angeles on a jet that they never boarded. The very same plane, under a different flight number, was eventually flown into the Pentagon the next day. The three men left the country on September 10th. *The Telegraph* reported:

Secret documents reveal that the men flew from London to New York on a British Airways flight three weeks before the attacks and allegedly carried out surveillance at the World Trade Centre, the White House and in Virginia, the US state where the Pentagon and CIA headquarters are located.

They later they flew to Los Angeles, where they stationed themselves in a hotel near the airport which the FBI has now established was paid for by a "convicted terrorist", who also bought their airline tickets.

Hotel staff have told investigators they saw pilot uniforms in their room along with computer print outs detailing pilot names, flight numbers and times and packages addressed to Syria, Afghanistan, Jerusalem and Jordan.

On September 10 they were booked on an American Airlines flight from Los Angeles to Washington, but failed to board. The following day the same Boeing 757 aircraft was hijacked by five terrorists and crashed into the Pentagon.

...

It is not known whether the FBI believe that the men were simply assisting the hijackers or were a fifth cell who pulled out at the final moment. Alternatively, they may have been planning an attack on the West Coast of America or even London which was abandoned or went wrong.

...

The three Qatari men were included on an FBI list of more than 300 people who were wanted for questioning in connection with the 9/11 attacks, which was leaked in 2002.*

At the time, the FBI stressed it was not a list of suspects, but merely parties they thought might have information useful to the investigation.³⁰

Commission documents indicate that the "uniforms" found by hotel staff were "perceived" to be pilot's attire.³¹ It would not be surprising, given the

other pilot related materials that were purportedly found. At least one of the coats, however, was described as having an inverted gold "V" on one sleeve.³² Commercial pilots do not use chevrons to denote rank. This is a system that is exclusively used by military and police.

TOPIC 17: DID FBI IDENTIFY ANY TERRORIST SUSPECTS ON AAL FLIGHT 144 WHICH WAS THE TURNAROUND FLIGHT FO AAL 77, OR THE TURNAROUND FLIGHTS FOR ANY OF THE OTHER HIJACKED PLANES?

- No additional terrorists were identified on any of the turnaround flights.
- Investigation was conducted subsequent to 09/11/2001 on three individuals who were scheduled to travel on American Airlines Flight 144 (AA144); however, to date, neither evidence nor intelligence has indicated a connection to the 09/11/2001 hijackers.
- Information obtained by the FBI subsequent to 09/11/2001 indicated that three Middle Eastern males were scheduled to return from Los Angeles to Washington Dulles on 09/10/2001 via American Airlines Flight 144 (AA144) at 12:45PM; however, none of the three individuals boarded AA144 (note: AA144 became American Airlines Flight 77 which was crashed into the Pentagon on 09/11/2001).

- The three individuals were identified to be:

[redacted]
[redacted] arrived in the United States at Newark, New Jersey, on 08/15/2001 via British Airways Flight #185 from London, England. After staying in the Norfolk/Virginia Beach, Virginia, area (with [redacted]), [redacted] then traveled to Los Angeles, California, on 08/24/2001 via American Airlines Flight 143 with round trip tickets purchased on Priceline.com.

[redacted] stayed at the Holiday Inn, near the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), from 08/24/2001 to 09/10/2001. An employee of the housekeeping staff at the Holiday Inn reported observing numerous items in the room rented by [redacted]

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[redacted] to include two small computers; heavy cardboard boxes with foreign writing; a cellular telephone broken into many small pieces; dark blue/black coats or sweaters (one coat had an inverted gold-colored "V" on a sleeve) with white shirts hanging in the closet [note: these items of clothing were presumed to have been pilots' uniforms]; and a computer printout containing a list of apparent airline flight numbers, times, dates, and names [315N-NY-280350-302, serials 22147, 22168, 22328].

British Airways confirmed that [redacted] departed Los Angeles at 8:35PM on 09/10/2001 via Flight # 268 to London, England, and continued from London to Qatar on 09/13/2001 via British Airways Flight # 125. The return tickets from Los Angeles to Washington Dulles on AA144, which had been previously purchased through Priceline.com, were not utilized.

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[redacted] reported that all three individuals had traveled to the United States for tourism and to visit relatives [315N-NY-280350-LA, serial 4728].

[Note: Preliminary information indicated that an individual named [redacted] attended training at Flight Safety International / Bell Helicopter Training Center; however, further investigation determined that this individual is not identical to [redacted], date of birth [redacted] who departed the United States on 09/10/2001. (315N-NY-280350-HO, serial 798)]

The three men booked a flight on a plane which, under a different flight number, was used to attack the Pentagon the next day. They did not use the

tickets that they had bought and left the country the day before the attacks. The three men had checked into the Holiday Inn only four days after the man on Continental Airlines Flight 50 had brandished a box cutter.

The *Telegraph* article reported that the FBI was certain the hotel room used by the three was paid for by a known terrorist.³⁴ Another Commission "MEMORANDUM" document stressed that the hotel staff, "observed pilot-type uniforms, documents containing United Airlines pilot and flight information..."³⁵ Also of interest; the document states that the subjects in question were not affiliated with "Islamic fundamentalism". Instead, they were thought to be "implicated in gun dealing activities," the type of people who are in the business of procurement.³⁶

Special Agent [redacted] of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms has been with the Joint Terrorism Task Force in the Santa Ana RA office for 6 months and is the case agent for the recently-opened [redacted] case. His interview focused on an EC by him reporting, among other things, about three individuals, [redacted] ("the three travelers") who checked into a room at the Holiday Inn at LAX on August 24, 2001 after arriving on a flight from Dulles. They paid for the room in cash and requested that their room not be cleaned during the last few days of their stay. During cleaning visits, Holiday Inn staff observed pilot-type uniforms, documents containing United Airlines pilot and flight information, cellular phones connected to laptops, and boxes addressed to Syria, Jerusalem, and Afghanistan. Accompanied by [redacted] the three travelers rented a vehicle and put nearly 3000 miles on it in less than a week. The three travelers were scheduled to return to Dulles on 9/10/01 aboard AA Flight 144 but did not show for the flight. Interestingly, Flight 144 was the same Boeing aircraft that would leave Dulles on September 11 as Flight 77.

Also of interest to [redacted] is telephone analysis that shows 16 calls between July 20, 2000 and November 18, 2000 from the phone of [redacted] and recovered during the search of an Al-Qaeda site in Pakistan) to the phone of [redacted] in Lemon Grove. Additionally, 10 calls were made from [redacted] at 7200 Saranac Street in La Mesa to [redacted] who frequents [redacted] apartment complex.

Personal Privacy

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[redacted] advised that the three travelers, [redacted] did in fact leave the United States on September 10, 2001, albeit on a different flight. They returned to Qatar, where [redacted]

The subjects of the [redacted] case tend to be Qatari and do not have documented ties to Islamic fundamentalism. Rather, they are implicated in gun dealing activities.

9/11 Classified Information

Why would a hijacker need to impersonate a pilot if the plan was to take the cockpit by force? Procuring pilot's uniforms could be useful in a few ways. If they were trying to access the cockpit by way of the jumpseat, the uniform could be used to make their presentation of a pilot more authentic. It would also benefit the hijackers if they were attempting to gain access to secure areas of airports.

It is very significant that Continental Flight 50 landed at Frankfurt Airport in August, 2001. There is evidence that some of the hijackers and their support network were intimately familiar with the Frankfurt Airport.

Ziad Jarrah, the United Airlines Flight 93 hijacker pilot, may have piloted an aircraft from the Frankfurt Airport to Florida, giving him limited access to security sensitive areas, including the tarmac, of one of the largest and busiest airports in the world. An FBI summary reveals that on October 29, 2000, hijacker Ziad Jarrah flew Condor flight DE 07178 from Frankfurt, Germany to Tampa, Florida.³⁸ Below this entry, an analyst remarkably noted that on one (undated) occasion Jarrah flew from Frankfurt, Germany to Tampa, Florida, "*piloting aircraft GM0U1U8*":³⁹

- **Frankfurt, Germany to Tampa, FL. (29 October 2000) Admission number, 84811946106, on a B2 visa, entered through Tampa, FL. The intended address listed is 150 Airport Ave., Venice, Florida. Duesseldorf via Frankfurt to Tampa/Florida on October 29, 2000. The flight from Duesseldorf to Frankfurt was with Lufthansa flight number LH 223 and the flight from Frankfurt to Tampa took place on Condor flight DE 07178. [Source TECS]]. [265A-NY-280350-BN-2, 20 September 2001]**
 - ▶ ***Analyst Note:*** Another report indicates that Jarrah traveled from Frankfurt, Germany, to Tampa, Florida, piloting aircraft GM0U1U8. (Immigration number 84811946106, Visa class B2, issued on 5/25/00 in Berlin, port of entry Tampa, FL) [265D-NY-280350-A-16,]

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Like many of the hijackers, Jarrah's training was reported to have been average. At least one flight school he attended described him as "unfit to fly solo" in a busy New York corridor during the latter half of his training.⁴¹ Nonetheless, he was confident enough to make a 5000 mile transatlantic flight between Frankfurt, Germany and Tampa. Could there have been more than one

person using the identity of Ziad Jarrah?

The other hijackers also exhibited a high degree of skill that does not appear commiserate with the level of training they were reported to have received in Florida:

The hijackers who flew two Boeing 767s into the World Trade Center towers were highly skilled pilots, keeping the planes on flight paths set up to strike their targets only about 15 minutes apart, according to aviation experts and officials who have reviewed preliminary radar evidence.

"They almost had to hit the towers like they were threading the eye of a needle," said Michael Barr, director of aviation safety programs at the University of Southern California and a former Air Force fighter-bomber pilot.

"The routes they were flying were very different--one plane coming from the north and the other coming from the south. That adds greatly to the complexity [of synchronizing the attack] and it requires a degree of skill to prevent the planes from banking too much or descending too fast while keeping on course," Barr said.⁴²

The connections between the hijackers and the Frankfurt Airport do not end with Jarrah. Mohamed Atta, and at least two other unnamed associates, attempted to get jobs at the Frankfurt Airport in early 2001. German investigative journalist Jürgen Roth, in his book "Netzwerke Des Terrors,"⁴³ wrote that in February, 2001 Mohamed Atta and company attempted to get jobs with Lufthansa, the principal airline at Frankfurt Airport. Newsday ran a January, 2002 article titled, "Terrorist pilot tried to get job with German airline," which explored this aspect of Roth's book, which is only available in German.

Lufthansa rejected applications of Mohamed Atta and two associates

By Elizabeth Moore
Newsday

Seven months before he hijacked a U.S. jetliner and flew it into the World Trade Center, Mohamed Atta and two associates tried to get jobs with Lufthansa Airlines that would have granted them access to secure areas of the busy international airport in Frankfurt, Germany, according to a new book.

The 33-year-old Egyptian applied for a job with Lufthansa on Feb. 15, 2001, according to "Netzwerke des Terrors (Networks of Terror)," a book published last month by Juergen Roth, one of Germany's top investigative reporters.

By the time he sought work in Frankfurt, Atta had already been to the United States and attended flight training school in Florida. Weeks later he would move out of the apartment he shared with fellow suspected terrorists in Hamburg, Germany.

Atta did not know that Lufthansa's personnel division had access to law enforcement files that indicated he had once been under investigation for petty drug crimes and falsifying phone cards while a student at the Technical University at Hamburg-Harburg in 1995, the book reports, citing federal law enforcement sources.

Atta didn't get the job. Neither did an Iranian citizen who applied three days later using Atta's name, not realizing an internal decision had already been made rejecting Atta. Nor did a third applicant who showed up on March 5, 2001, with Atta at his side. One of the two told Lufthansa's personnel division that he had been a pilot in the Pakistani air force, according to the book.

Lufthansa's U.S. spokesman Tom Tripp Wednesday said he couldn't confirm or deny the report.

"German privacy laws require us to destroy all of those records if we don't hire someone," he said. But he noted that Lufthansa now does more extensive checks on job applicants in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks.

During that period, CIA agents also spotted Atta at chemists and pharmacies in Frankfurt, buying large quantities of chemicals that could be used to make explosives, the book says, again citing confidential law enforcement sources. But a U.S. intelligence official denied the claim.

"Those allegations are without any foundation whatsoever," the official, who asked not to be identified, said Wednesday from Washington.

Why did Mohamed Atta, who would hijack a United States commercial

airliner and commit suicide on September 11, 2001, seek employment with an airline at Frankfurt Airport seven months earlier? The position was described as allowing access to restricted areas of the airport. What would be a reasonable explanation for the hijacker pilot's continued interest if he was, ultimately, meant to be operating in the United States? It could be that the airport allowed the hijackers to perfect techniques and strategies that they had planned to implement later in the United States. The hijacker's activity around Frankfurt Airport may also have been related to an entirely different hijacking plot.

According to a recently declassified Defense Intelligence Agency Information Report, dated September 27, 2001, the al-Qaeda organization may have targeted the Frankfurt Airport between March and August, 2000. Obtained through a 2002 FOIA request by Judicial Watch, a conservative "educational foundation," the report reveals a hijacking plot targeting United States airlines, as well as Lufthansa and Air France. Tom Fitton, the president of Judicial Watch, wrote a *Washington Times* article concerning the shocking declassified material:

In early 2000, the documents informed America's top intelligence analysts that al Qaeda had devised a sophisticated plan to hijack a commercial airliner departing Frankfurt International Airport between March and August 2000. The terrorist team was to consist of an Arab, a Pakistani and a Chechen, and their targets were U.S. Airlines, Lufthansa and Air France. The document pieces together an intricate plot directed by a 40-year-old Saudi, Sheik Dzabir, from a prominent family with ties to the House of Saud. It revealed that al Qaeda had actually penetrated the consular section of the German Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan, relying on a contact referred to as "Mrs. Wagner" to provide European Union visas for use in forged Pakistani passports for the terrorists.⁴⁵

One of the most striking elements of this report is the DIA's interest in a woman with a Germanic surname who worked within the consular section of the German Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan. This representative of the German state had apparently assured "a local Pakistani who was working in the German Embassy" that she would provide him EU visas for passports.

Although "Mrs. Wagner" was undoubtedly aware of the grave security implications inherent in her highly illegal offer, it is unclear if she possessed knowledge of the hijacking plot.

THE PASSPORT HOLDERS RESIDE IN THE FREE BORDER AREA OF PAKISTAN/AFGHANISTAN.
13. [REDACTED] IN THE CITY OF ISLAMABAD, A LOCAL PAKISTANI WHO WAS WORKING IN THE GERMAN EMBASSY THERE HAD GOOD CONTACT WITH A MRS. ((WAGNER00, A GERMAN EMBASSY EMPLOYEE WORKING IN THE CONSULAR SECTION, AND SHE HAD PROMISED TO GET THIS PAKISTANI CITIZEN VISAS FOR PASSPORTS. A PHONE NUMBER WAS GIVEN AS 051-212-412.
14. [REDACTED] LETTER DATED 4 APRIL 2000. IN JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2000, AKHAMAD ((SHAH)) VISITED FRANKFURT. HE

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There was another operative, redacted in the document, who was tasked with getting pistols past Frankfurt Airport's security to the would-be hijackers. This raises the possibility that the plotters managed to recruit someone who had successfully passed the airport's extensive background checks, and who could bypass security.

4. [REDACTED] IF THE INTENDED TARGET WAS A FLIGHT TO THE U.S. THEN A U.S. AIR CARRIER SHOULD BE HIJACKED. HOWEVER, IF THE INTENDED TARGET WAS NOT AN AIRCRAFT FLYING TO THE U.S. THEN A LUFTHANSA PLANE FLYING TO ASIA WAS TO BE HIJACKED. THE HIJACKERS WERE TO BE ISSUED TWO PISTOLS. THE PISTOLS WERE TO BE OBTAINED IN CENTRAL ASIA AND SMUGGLED THROUGH TURKEY TO FRANKFURT. THE PISTOLS WOULD BE GIVEN TO THE HIJACKERS IN THE TRANSIT AREA OF THE FRANKFURT AIRPORT. THE PISTOLS WERE TO BE PASSED BY A [REDACTED] (b)(1),1.4 (b),1.4 (c),1.4 (d)
[REDACTED] TWO OF THE HIJACKERS WOULD BE ISSUED BUSINESS CLASS TICKETS FOR THE INTENDED FLIGHT. APPROXIMATELY ONE HOUR AFTER THE FLIGHT TOOK OFF, THE HIJACKERS WERE TO COMMANDEER THE PLANE AND INSTRUCT THE PILOT TO FLY TO

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The guns would be sent from Central Asia to Turkey, and then onto Germany. It seems excessive for the al-Qaeda plotters in Frankfurt and Pakistan to procure guns from Central Asia. However, if there was a pre-

existent channel originating from Central Asia and ending at Frankfurt Airport, that was successful in the past moving drugs past security, it could be used to get pistols to the hijackers. Central Asia includes Afghanistan, which is the world's leading producer of heroin.⁴⁸ Frankfurt Airport happens to be a major hub for the transit of heroin from Afghanistan to Western Europe and beyond*:

"Drug couriers from around the world travel to or through Germany via its major airports at Frankfurt and Duesseldorf, and its North Sea and Baltic seaports such as Hamburg, Bremen, and Rostock. Much of the heroin for the markets of Europe passes through Germany."⁴⁹

Although there were al-Qaeda plans to hijack a plane from Frankfurt Airport, the hijacker's attempts to gain employment there began six months *after* the proposed operational window had closed (Between March and August, 2000). Mohamed Atta and his co-conspirators may have sought access to security restricted areas of the Frankfurt Airport for another reason.

Allegations that the al-Qaeda organization was involved in heroin trafficking may explain the hijacker's repeated attempts to gain employment with Lufthansa. In 2004, the year of the 9/11 Commission Report's publication, Republican Congressman Mark Steven Kirk was adamant about alleged connections between al-Qaeda and the heroin trade:

The al Qaeda terror group has embraced heroin trafficking to such an extent that its leader, Osama bin Laden, is now a "narco-terrorist," says a U.S. congressman just back from a fact-finding mission in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

"It seems clear to me heroin is the No. 1 financial asset of Osama bin Laden," Rep. Mark Steven Kirk, Illinois Republican, told The Washington Times. "There is a need to update our view of how terrorism is financed.

"And the view of Osama bin Laden relying on Wahhabi donations from abroad is outdated. And the view of him as one of the world's largest heroin dealers is the more accurate, up-to-date view."⁵⁰

While there is no hard evidence that Ziad Jarrah was participating in heroin trafficking, it is suggestive that he was not only believed by authorities

to belong to an organization that reportedly trafficked in the drug, but he had made several commercial, and possibly even one solo flight, between two of the world's most infamous hotspots for the import/export of heroin. Not only is Germany a well known hub for the drug's distribution into Western Europe, but Florida itself has a long history of illicit drug importation. According to United States Federal sources, Florida is also a notorious hub for narcotics importation. South Florida in particular, where Jarrah flew from Frankfurt, is considered a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area:

Major international airports are conveniently located throughout South Florida from Key West to Palm Beach.

...

Numerous other airports in the region include other international airports, such as Marathon International in the Florida Keys and also private and commercial airports. Illicit drugs and associated funds are frequently transported via commercial and private aircraft at all these ports.⁵¹

According to Roth, two other associates of Atta also attempted to get jobs with Lufthansa at the Frankfurt Airport in February, 2001. One man, described as an "Iranian citizen," used Mohamed Atta's name to apply with Lufthansa three days after the hijacker pilot's failed attempt. This raises again the possibility that the hijacker's may have had accomplices that actively used their identities. Roth's book also claims that on another occasion Mohamed Atta was accompanied by another man who told Lufthansa's personnel division that he had been a pilot in the Pakistani Air Force.⁵² A few years earlier, in April of 1997, two Pakistani Air Force pilots were caught smuggling heroin into the United States; *The New York Times* reported that, "two Pakistani Air Force pilots were arrested for smuggling, \$160,000 worth of heroin was seized, and a warning appeared to have been sent to corrupt officers in Pakistan's powerful armed forces."⁵³ This was often represented in the news as being a particularly endemic problem. One of the men was reported to be a senior Pakistani Air Force officer who had flown the heroin into the United States on board an official Pakistani Air Force Boeing 707.⁵⁴ Pakistani officials categorized the DEA led sting as "criminal."⁵⁵

It is not unusual for drug traffickers to get jobs with airlines to help facilitate the flow of drugs.^{56 57 58 59} It is one of the many reasons why major airlines, including Lufthansa, make a point of screening applicants with background checks, FBI fingerprint checks as well as Security Threat Assessments from the TSA.⁶⁰ Working for an airline would allow someone to circumvent normal security procedures. They could pass along contraband, such as guns or heroin, to a passenger who had already successfully passed through security, or place unchecked baggage on board a plane.

There have been critical claims that links between the al-Qaeda organization and the heroin trade are not definitive. Understandably, this comes from a lack of empirical data and the inherently murky nature of the numerous and diverse players involved. Terrorist organizations, the various state and non-state actors that are believed to produce heroin, as well as the networks (including transnational organized crime) that facilitate its distribution, all actively resist detection and analysis. For this reason they are both referred to in professional circles as "dark networks."⁶¹

Dr. Frank Shanty, the Director for the Cobra Institute, a research firm which analyses terrorism and counter-terrorism issues, argues that the reported relationship between, *specifically*, the leadership of the al-Qaeda organization, and heroin trafficking, is often based on speculation and not hard data.⁶² Dr. Shanty's 2011 "The Nexus: International Terrorism and Drug Trafficking from Afghanistan," is insistent on the use of reliable information, as well as separating biased opinion from demonstrable fact.⁶³

Dr. Shanty's position is supported by the 9/11 Commission Report which states:

"there is no reliable evidence that Bin Ladin was involved in or made his money through drug trafficking.

...

To date, the U.S. government has not been able to determine the origin of the money used for the 9/11 attacks. Ultimately the question is of little practical significance. Al Qaeda had many avenues of funding."⁶⁴

While there is little hard data that the al-Qaeda leadership *directly* profited from the drug trade, a number of official sources state unequivocally that the Taliban, which is known to have actively protected and supported Osama bin Laden, *has* received material support (funding, arms, etc) from Afghan based drug traffickers with international connections in exchange for the protection of heroin cultivation and shipments:

Afghan, U.S., and coalition officials believe that linkages between insurgents, terrorists, and narcotics traffickers threaten the security of Afghanistan and the international community. Although much of the conflict between regional and factional militias that once fueled opium cultivation in Afghanistan has now ended, long-established political and commercial networks linking armed groups, landowning elites, transportation guilds, and drug syndicates continue to constitute the foundation of the opium economy. In addition to moving opiates, sophisticated drug transportation and money laundering networks reportedly facilitate the movement of individuals, funds, and weapons for the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and other insurgent groups. In return, Taliban fighters and others provide protection for narcotics activity reportedly including cultivation and shipments. In the past, British officials have warned of "alliances of convenience" based on the use of drug money to recruit tribal "foot soldiers" for insurgent activities.⁶⁵

Dr. Shanty concedes that while there is no hard evidence that Osama bin Laden has profited directly from the heroin trade, with the drug accounting for more than half of Afghanistan's gross domestic product in 2004, its use as currency in the region has been universal.⁶⁶

While professional analysts, such as Dr. Shanty, are pushing for the collection of more reliable data for identifying clear linkages, United States Defense Department officials are assuming the worst based on known *associations*. In a March 28, 2013 article from the American Forces Press Service, Karen Parrish quoted Michael A. Sheehan, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-intensity Conflict on how the Defense Department has responded to the disturbing convergence of terrorist organizations, such as al-Qaida, with "international criminal networks,"

particularly those involved in the "global drug trade":

Sheehan said that while the Defense Department plays a central role in fighting terrorism and a more supporting role battling transnational organized crime, the national strategies governing the two missions are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

While the counterterrorism focus on al-Qaida remains, he said, the landscape is changing. As al-Qaida and other terror groups meld with international criminal networks, DOD is expanding its efforts beyond direct strikes against terrorist targets in supporting an interagency approach, Sheehan said.

"All our national security challenges ... [are] becoming increasingly interagency," he noted.

Fighting terrorism increasingly includes targeting the global drug trade, he said.

"Nowhere is the link between transnational organized crime, insurgency and terrorism more apparent than in Afghanistan, where the Taliban continues to receive a large percentage of its revenue through heroin trade," he added.⁶⁷

U.S. News and World Report conducted numerous interviews in 2005 with authorities who also highlighted the emerging trend of convergence between terrorist and transnational criminal networks:

An inquiry by U.S. News, based on interviews with counterterrorism and law enforcement officials from six countries, has found that terrorists worldwide are transforming their operating cells into criminal gangs. "Transnational crime is converging with the terrorist world," says Robert Charles, the State Department's former point man on narcotics. Antonio Maria Costa, the head of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, agrees: "The world is seeing the birth of a new hybrid of organized-crime-terrorist organizations. We are breaking new ground."⁶⁸

Citing the lack of available intelligence and the inherent, secretive nature

of dark networks, analysts have taken a unique approach to measuring the data that *is* readily available. Dr. Sean F. Everton is an assistant professor who works for the Department of Defense Analysis at the Graduate School of Operational and Information Sciences in Monterey, California. In his 2013 book, "Disrupting Dark Networks," Dr. Everton explains how analysts have turned to Social Network Analysis (SNA) to better understand how dark networks are composed, measuring their underlying social/organizational relations:

Since 9/11, analysts have become increasingly drawn to the use of SNA as a tool for understanding dark networks (Reed 2007; Ressler 2006), largely because of Valdis Krebs's (2001) analysis of the hijacker network.

Social network analysts would categorize the Frankfurt Airport as a "place" where dark networks (terrorist organizations and drug traffickers) share common, trusted "nodes," individual actors that form a bridge between Central Asia and the EU. In SNA this overlapping of networks through shared nodes is termed a "multiplexity." In the case of the 2000 Al-Qaeda plot to hijack an plane with at the Frankfurt Airport, nodes used regularly to distribute heroin (such as someone who had already worked at the airport and had access to security sensitive areas) could have been used to smuggle pistols to hijackers waiting in the transit area. This is a perfect example of the convergence between terrorist organizations and organized crime. Using a trusted channel, or series of nodes already in place, is simply more efficient than creating new ones.

There are even more examples of well known, high profile terrorist cases having connections to heroin trafficking and, specifically, the Frankfurt Airport.

On December 21, 1988, Pan Am flight 103 left Frankfurt Airport; after stopping at Heathrow Airport in the UK, the plane exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing all 243 passengers and 16 crew members.⁶⁹ On December 18, 1990 Bob Wise, a Democratic Representative from West Virginia, announced on C-span the allegations his subcommittee was tasked to investigate:

On October 30, 1990 the first in a series of news stories appeared

alleging that a drug enforcement administration operation targeting a Middle Eastern heroin smuggling network may have been infiltrated by terrorists responsible for the December 21, 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103.⁷⁰

While the subject is highly contested and not without its detractors, one element of the story is indisputable; there were as many as "three controlled deliveries", involving United States and German authorities at the Frankfurt Airport, proving that it had indeed been used for "controlled deliveries" in the years leading up to the Pan Am 103 terrorist attack:

Finally, there had been no "controlled deliveries" of drugs or sting operations through Cyprus or Frankfurt since 1987. There had been three controlled deliveries through Frankfurt between 1983 and 1987, but none involved Pan Am planes.⁷¹

Although the story of a sanctioned heroin ring infiltrated by terrorists at Frankfurt Airport had enough clout to initiate official investigations and make the cover of *Time Magazine*,⁷² Libyan Intelligence was eventually connected to the bombing based on a circuit board believed to be part of the bomb.⁷³ The 1994 Allen Francovich documentary, "The Maltese Double Cross," includes revealing interviews with Pan Am security and covers much of the same material, including the heroin ring covered in the *Time* cover article on Pan Am 103.⁷⁴

Frankfurt Airport and heroin trafficking also figure into the early history of one of the lead suspects in the 2008 Mumbai, India terrorist attacks. In 1988 (The same year as the Pan Am 103 attack), David Coleman Headley (born Daood Sayed Gilani) was caught by German customs officials at the Frankfurt Airport attempting to smuggle 2 kilos of heroin from Pakistan to Philadelphia.⁷⁵ Although he had been arrested in Frankfurt he was turned over to the DEA immediately and turned on his co-conspirators, serving a reduced sentence.⁷⁶ He became a paid DEA informant tasked with infiltrating heroin networks in Pakistan.⁷⁷

Headley was caught attempting to traffic 15 kilos of heroin in 1997.⁷⁸ He served 9 of his 15 month sentence for this crime before he was sent by the United States government back into Pakistan to collect information on Islamic

radicals.⁷⁹ While living back in the United States, he was reported to authorities by his wife when she witnessed him "champion" the hijackers just after the September 11, 2001 attacks.⁸⁰ He was believed to have joined the al-Qaeda affiliated Lashkar-e-Toiba in Pakistan in 2006.⁸¹

As an American citizen, with over a decade of covert experience working for the United States government, David Coleman Headley conducted surveillance in Mumbai, India over a two year period beginning in 2007.⁸² He meticulously laid out an attack plan utilizing both video and GPS coordinates that he had recorded during his time in Mumbai.⁸³ On November 22, 2008 a ten man team assaulted Mumbai killing 166 people, injuring over 300. In October 2009, Headley was arrested in Chicago as he was attempting to leave the country.⁸⁴

The Mumbai attacks, called by the press "India's 9/11," were planned by a man who got his start moving heroin from Pakistan through Frankfurt Airport. He became a DEA informant, and was eventually tasked with spying on terrorist connected heroin networks. He eventually turned on his American handlers, joined an Al-Qaeda affiliate in Pakistan, and planned the attacks on Mumbai.

It would seem, then, that Continental Airlines Flight 50 landed at a place where dark network ties, including ones with direct connections to the al-Qaeda organization, have overlapped in the past.

Hamburg, an important location in the formation of the hijack cells, was often featured in initial reports regarding the organization of the hijacker cells. Hamburg was the location of the apartment at 54 Marienstrasse where some of the hijackers lived and the local University where they went to school. Only a couple days after the attacks United States authorities joined German police who raided 14 locations in Hamburg.⁸⁵ *The New York Times* reported that the chancellor of the Technical University of Hamburg-Harburg had found seven names in the school's records from a list of thirteen suspects given to him by the FBI.⁸⁶

According to a 2002 *New York Times* article, United States investigators questioned people in Hamburg about suspects thought to be associates of the September 11, 2001 hijackers.⁸⁷ While German police had aided them before,

United States authorities felt it necessary to bypass the German government altogether while conducting their interviews in Hamburg:

About this time, American investigators took matters into their own hands. An investigator familiar with the episode said the German police discovered that American agents had been questioning people in Hamburg about Mr. Darkazanli and Mr. Zammar without informing the German authorities.

The discovery drew sharp complaints from the Germans, the investigator said.

American investigators contend this was a critical period in the formation of the Hamburg cell, which provided three of the four suspected hijackers on Sept. 11. Mr. Shibh and Mr. Bahaji disappeared just before the attacks and have been charged with conspiracy by the Germans.

A senior German intelligence official said that the light surveillance of the Marienstrasse apartment suggested that Mr. Atta and the others were inconspicuous students. Early in 2000 a judge refused permission to extend the monitoring, ruling that the police did not have evidence of a crime.

...

Mr. Zammar has not been charged in Germany, even though after the attacks, German officials say, American officials pressed them to arrest him. In October, he was taken into custody by Moroccan police, apparently in collusion with the CIA, after getting off a flight to Casablanca, Morocco. He was then deported to his native Syria, where he was taken into custody by Syrian authorities.⁸⁸

Mohammed Haydar Zammar, jailed in Syria for 12 years, was released in a prisoner exchange in March, 2014. A European arrest warrant for Darkazanli, issued in Spain in 2005, was rejected by the German state who argued that it was invalid:

Spanish authorities allege that Darkazanli was "one of the key figures of the al Qaeda terror network" and "the permanent contact

person and assistant of Osama bin Laden in Germany," Hamburg authorities said in a statement. He is accused of giving logistical and financial support to the network in Spain, Germany and Britain since 1997, the statement said.⁸⁹

Instead of extraditing Darkazanli, he was freed by the German government in 2005, the same year the German authorities also refused extradition warrants and paroled Mohammed Ali Hamadi.⁹⁰ Not only had the German state refused to let the CIA recruit Darkazanli before the September 11, 2001 attacks⁹¹, they actively protected him from extradition, eventually giving him his freedom after the attacks. According to *Vanity Fair*, Darkazanli was reportedly targeted for assassination by the CIA.^{92 93} The *BBC* explained Germany's constitutional law which prohibits the extradition of German citizens:

Mamoun Darkazanli, 46, who was fighting extradition to Spain, was released from custody in Hamburg, where he had been in detention since last October.

The court ruled the new European arrest warrant violated German law.

The case was a test of the new warrant introduced last year to speed up the handover of terror suspects.

Mr Darkazanli appears in a 1999 wedding video with two of the three 11 September 2001 suicide hijackers who had lived in Hamburg.

Mr Darkazanli has not been charged in Germany, whose constitution prohibits the extradition of its own citizens.⁹⁴

While the law is essential for protecting the rights of legal German citizens, it is just the sort of loophole to make anyone with ill regard for the United States to *want to go to Germany*.

In contrast to Hamburg the city of Frankfurt largely escaped the attention of the press after the attacks of September 11, 2001. Although the hijacking plot involving a plane from Frankfurt Airport was unknown at the time, the city was identified by at least one German news agency as being a "command post"

for Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda network shortly after the attacks.⁹⁵ On September 19, 2001, German newspaper *Die Welt* reported:

The command post of Usamah Bin-Ladin's Islamic network of terrorism in Germany is most probably located in Frankfurt/Main. In the worldwide search for more supposed activists of the Muslim extremists - after Hamburg, Bochum and Greifswald - a hot trail again leads to the Rhine-Main area.

According to indications by a foreign intelligence service, a Lebanese car dealer in the greater Frankfurt/Main area acts as a "logistical bridgehead" and "information centre" for the criminal holdings. The man is one of the central contact points for the terrorist cells operating in Germany.

He provides lodgings, procures identification papers, takes care of vehicles and secures financing of the militant fundamentalists, deployed legally as well as illegally in Germany, according to a secret report which also draws attention to the close contacts of this key figure with Iraq. An Arab bank headquartered in Frankfurt supposedly is also involved in the financial transactions.

Thus the German financing and banking capital has again attracted the attention of the security authorities, whose investigative machinery is working at full speed. On the second day of Christmas of last year, they succeeded in arresting in Frankfurt four presumed "Islamic warriors of God" and confiscating from them an extensive weapons arsenal.

Investigations showed that the mujaheddin, who belong to the international Bin-Ladin network, had been trained in special camps for the war of terrorism. An indictment by the federal attorney general can be expected by this autumn.

The commando is suspected of having prepared itself for an attack on the Christmas market in Strasbourg by the turn of the year. Five months ago, a fifth accomplice of this group was taken into custody in Frankfurt. The trail leads to Frankfurt, not only of the attack in

Strasbourg which was foiled by the authorities, but also in connection with the preparation of a poison gas attack on the European Parliament; in addition to London and Milan.⁹⁶

Osama bin Laden has reportedly used the city of Frankfurt to launder money: "There have also been reports that Osama Bin Laden, the Saudi-born dissident accused by the US of being behind last week's attacks, might have laundered money in Frankfurt. Bin Laden denies being behind the attacks."⁹⁷

Security has always been an issue for the Frankfurt Airport. It is an essential international hub making it not only an important stop for drug traffickers, but also a prime target for political radicals seeking global attention. Those elements are not, of course, mutually exclusive, as in the case of the al-Qaeda organization. The United States military has a number of installations in the Frankfurt area, "including the Ramstein Air Base often used as a logistical hub for operations in Afghanistan or Iraq."⁹⁸

The airport itself has a long and tragic history of terrorist activity. In 1985, a bomb in a Frankfurt Airport passenger terminal killed three people.⁹⁹ That same year Lebanese militant Mohammed Ali Hamadi participated in the hijacking of TWA Flight 847 in Cairo, during which he is believed by US authorities to have murdered a US Navy diver.¹⁰⁰ He was arrested two years later by West German authorities at Frankfurt Airport, attempting to smuggle methyl nitrate, an explosive substance, on board a plane.¹⁰¹ In 1988, Pan Am 103 left the Frankfurt Airport with a bomb disguised as a cassette player on board and exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland.¹⁰² In 1989, the State Department was warned by West German authorities of a suspected terror network based "in the Frankfurt area", posing a threat to the Frankfurt Airport.¹⁰³

The city of Frankfurt was also the center of a great deal of terrorist activity in the year running up to the September 11, 2001 attacks. *The New York Times* reported that on December 26, 2000, the German police had arrested four men suspected of being associates of Osama bin Laden in Frankfurt.¹⁰⁴ Police confiscated, "an arsenal of rifles, handguns, machine guns, homemade detonators, a grenade, false documents and a quantity of potassium permanganate for potential bomb-making."¹⁰⁵

Frankfurt airport has remained in the news after September 11, 2001. Terrorist tactics in recent years have become more sophisticated, recalling those employed by the September 11, 2001 hijackers. In 2006 *The New York Times* reported on a German investigation into the bribing of a Frankfurt Airport worker who was commissioned to put a bomb on a plane; the man had access to security sensitive areas of the airport:¹⁰⁶

"German authorities, investigating an alleged plot to hide an explosive device aboard a passenger jet here last summer, detained six men on Friday on suspicion of belonging to a terrorist group.

All but one of the men was released the following day, the federal prosecutor in Karlsruhe said on Monday.

But German authorities said they are investigating additional people whom they believe sought to bribe an employee at Frankfurt Airport to place a bomb aboard the plane in luggage.

The plot was in its very early stages, the prosecutor said, and it may have foundered because of a dispute over how much to pay the airport employee. He was operating inside the security zone at the airport, which is Europe's third busiest.

...

Robert A. Payne, a spokesman for Fraport, which operates the Frankfurt airport, declined to comment

...

A German expert on terrorism, Rolf Tophoven, said the report of the alleged Frankfurt plot was alarming because it suggested that terrorists were seeking ways around the tight security checks that are now common at major airports.

"This is a new tactical development, because they tried to infiltrate the security infrastructure by hiring a person who had access to the airfield and aircraft," Mr. Tophoven said. "You can protect an airfield with electronic fences and X-rays, but you can't protect against human weakness."¹⁰⁷

This was not the only instance of terrorist elements attempting to use someone who was familiar with and had access to secure areas of the Frankfurt Airport. In September of 2007, three men were arrested for plotting attacks in the Frankfurt area with the Frankfurt Airport thought to be one of the targets.¹⁰⁸ As many as eight people were sought as accomplices in the plot. One of the men, a citizen from Turkey, worked in the security division of the railway at the Frankfurt Airport from 1997 until 2002.¹⁰⁹ This is the same time period that al Qaeda was believed to have targeted the airport. This Turkish national would also have been employed at the airport at the same time that Mohamed Atta and his associates attempted to find employment with Lufthansa.¹¹⁰

The airport remains to this day a target for terrorists. In 2011, a 21 year old Kosovo citizen shot and killed two US airmen at Frankfurt Airport, injuring several others.¹¹¹ He was working at the airport at the time.¹¹²

With the airport's history of terrorist incidents, which stretch back for decades, it is odd that the events which unfolded on board Continental Airlines Flight 50 in August of 2001 do not appear to have been relayed to US authorities. Fraport (now Fraport AG), which runs Frankfurt Airport and is in charge of security there,¹¹³ was entirely owned by a combination of the local and Federal government up until June 2001: "In June 2001, Frankfurt Airport went to the Frankfurt Stock Exchange with an initial public offering (IPO) after the transformation of its legal form into Fraport AG. Before the IPO, the airport was wholly owned by the Federal Government, the State of Hesse and the City of Frankfurt."¹¹⁴ A year after the June 2001 initial public offering, the airport was still majority owned by the state, private ownership totaling 29%: "Ownership of Fraport AG's shares is now divided as follows: the State of Hesse holds 32.1 percent, the City of Frankfurt 20.5 percent, the Federal Republic of Germany 18.4 percent and private/institutional investors 29.0 percent."¹¹⁵

Because of this integral relationship between Fraport AG and the local government of Hesse, as well as the Federal government of Germany, employees have been screened using Hesse state police databases, a fact that was either not known or did not matter to the hijacker cell that purportedly sought work at secure locations of the Frankfurt Airport in 2001.¹¹⁶ Since the

attacks of September 11, 2001, the screening process has become more robust, including files collected by the East German "Stasi" prior to German reunification in 1990.¹¹⁷ This may be the reason why people who had successfully acquired jobs at the airport were being targeted. *The New York Times* reported on the screening process of the vast Frankfurt Airport workforce:

Among the 63,500 employees at Frankfurt's giant airport there are almost as many nationalities as there are among the millions of passengers who pass through the airport each year.

...

But before anyone is hired for a permanent job, or a plumber is sent in to repair a broken sink, the names are run through computers of the state police in Hesse (Frankfurt is its biggest city) and at Germany's domestic intelligence service. The background of every employee is checked.

Thomas Uber, the spokesman for the Economic and Transport Ministry in Hesse State, which is responsible for the checks, said about 1,200 such checks are done every month. About 10 percent to 20 percent of applicants are turned down, he said.

"Except for minor things, like theft, we have never had a security problem involving an employee," Mr. Uber said.

...

Kurt Bodewig, the federal minister of transport, said the measures would include wider security checks for prospective airport employees, whose names will now additionally be run through computers at Germany's military intelligence service; at the B.N.D., the German equivalent of the C.I.A., and the files of the former East German intelligence service, the Stasi.¹¹⁸

Although the airport's near monolithic security apparatus appeared to be unassailable, it had not escaped criticism a year after the September 11, 2001 attacks. In late September of 2002 a curious incident made the German press. It involved two men who attempted to board a Lufthansa jet; one carried a concealed knife, the other a "toy pistol." The two men used airport identity

cards to get passed security and then tried to board the plane by way of the gangway, a ramp that allows access from the runway:

Were the guys with the knife and toy pistol attempting to hijack a Lufthansa airliner, or were they undercover police conducting a security test? No one in the German government was willing Friday to say for sure.

Officials revealed that last Saturday morning at the Frankfurt airport, two men appeared on the runway beside a Lufthansa jet bound for Tel Aviv. According to German media, the men attempted to walk up the gangway and into the plane. They flashed airport identity cards and tried to brush past a Lufthansa security guard.

The guard then reportedly stopped and frisked them with a hand-held metal detector. One of the men had what was described as a bowie knife strapped to his leg. The other had a toy pistol in his belt. The men told the guard that they were part of a special airport security team and informed him: "You successfully passed."

The men--described as Arab-looking--hopped into a dark-colored car with airport plates and drove off with two other men. They were not stopped or heard from again.

Frankfurt police said Lufthansa filed a report, but not until four days after the incident.

"It could be a prank, a test or something criminal," said police spokesman Peter Oehm.

"We believe our employee and are taking the matter very seriously," said Lufthansa spokesman Thomas Jachnow.

The Transport Ministry, which is in charge of the airport, said it wasn't sure what happened. "We don't know if this was a test. We assume this," said Juergen Frank, a ministry spokesman. "The matter is under investigation."

Frank added: "All I can say is that it would be unrealistic that these men show police identity cards, get back into the car and disappear if they had wanted to hijack a plane."¹¹⁹

With the obvious threats against Lufthansa in the past, it would make sense that security would focus on the airline. What is perhaps most disturbing about this incident, and highlights the problems inherent in an effectively opaque security system, is the fact that no one could identify who the men were after they claimed to be part of a security test:

German authorities said Friday they were investigating a Frankfurt airport security guard's account that he stopped two armed men from boarding a plane bound for Israel.

The incident last Saturday, involving a Lufthansa airliner being prepared for a morning flight to Tel Aviv, apparently was a security test, but German authorities have yet to determine the men's identity, Transport Ministry spokesman Juergen Frank said.

One of the men was concealing a toy pistol and the other a knife, he said. After the guard found the weapons with a hand-held metal detector, one of the men showed him a police identity card and told him he had "passed the test," Frank said.¹²⁰

Fraport AG, which is in charge of security at Frankfurt Airport, knew nothing of the supposed test and contacted multiple government agencies attempting to get an answer:

German border police at Frankfurt airport said they had not been involved in any security test last Saturday, nor had they been informed of any such operation being carried out by other security officials.

But they also cast doubt on suggestions the incident was a foiled hijacking.

"Nobody can confirm what the (Lufthansa) security official said. It is unlikely that such a thing happened," a police spokesman said.

Frankfurt airport operator Fraport said it had notified the appropriate agencies at the time of the incident to ask whether a test was being conducted. All said no.¹²¹

Another article from *Sky News* highlighted that the Interior Ministry had denied that the men were under official license:

Two men carrying a toy pistol and a knife were intercepted boarding a Lufthansa plane for Tel Aviv. But a security agent with the German airline let the pair go after they showed police identification cards and claimed to be undercover agents.

The German Interior Ministry has denied the men were police officers or agents on an operation.

The Frankfurt daily, *Zeitung*, said the men may have been planning to hijack the plane, while other reports suggested they could have been undercover journalists.¹²²

One of the most significant problems identified by the 9/11 Commission was a lack of inter-agency communication within the U.S. intelligence community. This led to an inability to successfully share and collate data. In the case of Flight 50, there appears to have been a lack of communication between German and US authorities. If incidents such as this led up to the United States expanding its espionage activities in Berlin and Frankfurt, they could only be further augmented by Germany's history of denying the United States authorities access to key terrorist suspects and withholding essential investigative data.

Even if Continental Airlines Flight 50 was an isolated incident where a man used a box cutter to terrorize a plane, there was enough information for the German government to warn US authorities immediately. The fact that the plane landed at an airport that has had a considerable history of being a either a target or staging place for terrorist events would not have been lost on United States authorities. There is every reason to believe that had they been properly notified, the attacks may have been successfully disrupted. On the morning of September 11, 2001, almost three weeks after the Flight 50 incident, another Continental Airlines jet from Newark would threaten Air Force One.

* <http://www.scribd.com/911DocumentArchive>

Maintained by <http://HistoryCommons.org>

* http://space.crono911.net/EBook/008_Finnlist.pdf

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Chapter 2

"To Bush, With Love"

Q: What's your best surmise now? Was there a fifth plane, a sixth plane?

Dr. Rice: I suspect there might have been a fifth plane -- yes.

- Bob Woodward's interview with US National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, Internal transcript from the Office of the Press Secretary dated October 24, 2001 ¹

In the early evening of January 30, 2002 several hundred people packed into the Daytona Jet Center hangar at the Daytona Beach International Airport to hear President George W. Bush give a speech.² It was almost six o'clock when the majority of attendees had settled in under the watchful eye of the secret service. With the president scheduled to speak in a half hour, a number of invited speakers began their formal introductions.² Meanwhile George W. Bush sat smiling, drawing confidence from the support of the present assembly, still enjoying the success of his last speech.

Only the night before, the president had given his State of the Union Address to Congress where he outlined for the nation and the world the accomplishments his administration had made in the four months following the attacks of September 11, 2001. He referred to the rebuilding efforts still underway in New York and Washington, D.C. and how the United States' actions had "rid the world of thousands of terrorists," and "saved a people from starvation, and freed a country from brutal oppression".³ The president also gave an indication of the administration's new focus on Saddam Hussein's Iraq:

Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax and nerve gas and nuclear weapons for over a decade. This is a regime that has already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens,

leaving the bodies of mothers huddled over their dead children. This is a regime that agreed to international inspections, then kicked out the inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world.³

Although his approval rating had dipped slightly from the 90% he had recently garnered, the president was still riding the tide of widespread support when he made his return to Florida the next day.⁴ After being introduced by the widow of Dale Earnhardt, the president waved down the crowd's cheers and took the stand. His voice resonated in the overlit, crowded hangar. With a nod to the previous night's address he acknowledged the nation's achievements and gave an indication of what lay ahead. In thirty concise minutes, punctuated by applause, the president praised the American people for their strength and emphasized the "dangerous phase" the nation had entered in the war on terror.⁵

Four months earlier the picture was much different; President Bush was only a couple hundred miles Southwest of Daytona Beach at the Emma T. Booker Elementary School in Sarasota. While sitting in a chair listening to children read their lessons aloud, the president was notified by White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card that the country was under attack. Many thought that the president appeared anxious and criticized how long he spent at the elementary school. Since then, it was a priority for the president to project the image of a decisive leader. The Daytona event, like his speech to Congress, was very successful.

Having wrapped up his speech at the Daytona Jet Center, President Bush stepped into the crowd and began shaking hands. A baby was reportedly crowd surfed to the president as the press memorialized the event.⁵ While the enthusiasm of the crowd was sincere, everything had been neatly organized and choreographed. The event had been carefully planned to symbolically show that the president had the approval of the American people as well as Congress. The next morning he would tour the Volusia County Fire Services Training Center and give a short speech to senior volunteers before returning to Washington the same day to meet with German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder at the White House.⁶

The meeting between the two was a formal exchange of pleasantries,

much of it for the press. Both men, however, reportedly discussed the prospect of Germany's participation in a coalition opposing the regime of Saddam Hussein.⁷ A decade later, this has turned into a bone of contention between the two former heads of state. In 2006 Gerhard Schröder published his political memoirs, *Decisions: My Life in Politics*, in which he criticized then President George W. Bush:

"I don't know exactly when in the year 2002 the change in justification for a war against Saddam Hussein's Iraq took place -- when, in other words, the fight against international terrorism slid into the background and the possible existence of weapons of mass destruction was thrust into the foreground. But the change made me increasingly distrustful."⁸

In his similarly titled *Decision Points* (2010), the former American president insisted that Gerhard Schröder had initially shown support for Germany's involvement in Iraq during their meeting and quoted him as saying, "What is true of Afghanistan is true of Iraq. Nations that sponsor terror must face consequences. If you make it fast and make it decisive, I will be with you."⁹ Schröder has since responded explaining that his offer of support was conditional; the United States should have provided conclusive evidence that Iraq supported Al-Qaeda fighters.¹⁰

Security for President Bush's speech in Daytona Beach was exceptionally strict. Everyone who had been admitted into the hangar had their identification checked and was issued a color coded ticket distinguishing the general audience from the press.⁵

Holding the event at an airport was unconventional, but the hangar was ideal for security; it would be virtually impossible to approach the event unseen. The Daytona Beach Jet Center would have been very grateful for the exposure provided by the event, given that they were affected financially by the attacks of September 11, 2001. Continental Airlines pulled its operations from the airport, forcing the fixed-base operator (FBO) to lay off a number of employees. An October 2, 2001 article from the Daytona Beach News-Journal explained the FBO's duties which included, "ticketing, ground-handling and fueling for the airline":

The Daytona Beach Jet Center has laid off 24 employees, or about one-third of its work force, because of the decline in flying following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, officials said. "This is a terrible thing, but it's part of the ripple effect," said Dean Marchetti, the Jet Center's general manager. "Continental's pullout affected us adversely." The Jet Center did the ticketing, ground-handling and fueling for the airline...¹¹

There were good reasons for the Secret Service to be so meticulous. Not only had the hijackers made Central Florida their home, but the city of Daytona Beach had featured prominently in the news as a hotbed of investigation only days after the September 11, 2001 attacks. The FBI had a presence at the airport on the night of the attacks, investigating flight school records, such as those of Phoenix East, for any trace of the hijacker cells.¹²

Only one school at the airport had records that matched the name of one of the hijackers. The Daytona Beach International Airport is adjacent to Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, a flight school established in 1926. Embry-Riddle has provided flight training for pilots from around the world for decades, many of them from the Middle East. The school made the national news shortly after the attacks when authorities initially thought that one of the hijackers, Waleed A. Al-Sheri, may have trained at its campus in Daytona Beach. By September 22, 2001 he school had been vindicated; the man initially thought to be the hijacker Waleed A. Al-Sheri was found alive in Morocco.¹³

The New York Times revealed that more than one hijacker's name was associated with Daytona Beach. Although an ERAU graduate who had the name of Waleed A. Al-Shehri was not connected to the attacks, the manager of same apartments said that another hijacker, Ahmed al-Ghamdi, had also lived there. *The New York Times* reported that the hijackers, "overlapped in Daytona Beach in the mid- to late-1990's. A manager at the Anatole apartments near Daytona Beach International Airport said Ahmed al-Ghamdi, who was on United Airlines Flight 175, lived in the complex in 1995 (School officials say they have no record of Mr. Ghamdi attending the school). Records also indicate that a man whose name matched Mohammed Atta's lived at a different address in Daytona Beach during the mid- to late 1990's."¹⁴ *The Boston Globe*

reported that as many as thirty six individuals, described as, "possible confederates and moneymen," had connections to Daytona Beach.¹⁵

Hijacker Mohamed Atta spent time flying in Volusia County according to a record showing that he purchased \$36.33 of fuel at the "Daytona Beach Airfield" for a plane owned by Huffman Aviation in Venice (Tail Number N225HA).¹⁶

Besides the FBI's initial interest in Embry-Riddle, another incident involving a strip club in Daytona Beach made the national news in the first weeks after the attacks. Only ten minute drive from the Daytona Beach International Airport, The Pink Pony was widely reported to have had a connection to someone with advanced knowledge of the September 11, 2001 attacks. The manager of the Pink Pony told investigators that three patrons "spewed anti-American sentiments in his bar and talked of impending bloodshed the night before the attacks."

The day after the attacks, agents interviewed John Kap, manager of the Pink Pony and Red Eyed Jack's Sports Bar in Daytona Beach. He said three men spewed anti-American sentiments in his bar and talked of impending bloodshed the night before the terrorist attacks.

Kap said he told FBI agents that one man left a business card and a copy of the Quran - the sacred book of Islam - at the bar.

That story was bogus, said an attorney for one of the men.

Orlando attorney Mark NeJame said his client, a U.S. citizen born in Kuwait, went to the adult nightclub with two friends the night of Sept. 10. The 34-year-old furniture business owner didn't want to be identified because he is married to a U.S.-born woman and has two kids, NeJame said.

At the bar, the three men engaged in a conversation with another patron on Christianity and the Book of Revelations, which describes catastrophes, wars and violence. During the discussion, the other patron went and got a book on Christianity, which apparently was left behind. The FBI questioned his client but he was never taken into custody, NeJame said.

"They realized it was a completely bogus claim," NeJame said.

FBI Special Agent Bill Hurlburt declined comment on the report.

Kap would not answer specific questions Tuesday about the incident but said, "we didn't do this to become famous. We just turned over information."¹⁷

As in the case with Embry-Riddle, United States investigators found more smoke than fire; what was first seen as a solid lead was reported later to be a misunderstanding. The Orlando lawyer that represented the three men said that his clients were not discussing the impending attacks, but religious matters with another Pink Pony customer. Their use of apocalyptic language was, he explained, misinterpreted. The book that was left at the bar, thought to be The Koran, was described later as a "book on Christianity."

If authorities were not frustrated enough by reports such as this, they were further impeded by the hijacker cells' deliberate attempts to leave behind false leads.

Investigative journalist Seymour Hirsch consulted a number of "high-level" sources shortly after the attacks who discussed the false trails left behind in detail. Some officials, taking into consideration the level of planning and military precision involved in the attacks, expressed their apprehension that Osama Bin-Laden's al-Qaeda network had acted alone:

A former high-level intelligence official told me, "Whatever trail was left was left deliberately—for the F.B.I. to chase."

...

In interviews over the past two weeks, a number of intelligence officials have raised questions about Osama bin Laden's capabilities. "This guy sits in a cave in Afghanistan and he's running this operation?" one C.I.A. official asked. "It's so huge. He couldn't have done it alone." A senior military officer told me that because of the visas and other documentation needed to infiltrate team members into the United States a major foreign intelligence service might also have been involved.

...

"These people are not necessarily all from bin Laden," a Justice Department official told me. "We're still running a lot of stuff out," he said, adding that the F.B.I. has been inundated with leads.¹⁸

For over a decade since the attacks, Daytona Beach has been represented as a mere footnote in the history of the hijacker's movements in Florida. It was, however, the site of one of the most important crime scenes related to the attacks of September 11, 2001.

In the early morning of September 12th, 2001, while rescue efforts were still underway, a Continental Airlines 737 Jet was investigated at the Daytona Beach International Airport by local Volusia County authorities. Surrounded by an ambulance, police cars and a bomb disposal unit, the plane sat for the entire world on *CNN* for almost two minutes. With the stricken Manhattan skyline as a backdrop, Paula Zahn reported on the unfolding investigation of the mysterious plane:

"All right. Leon, I'm going to take you directly back to Daytona Beach. Looking at some interesting pictures from the Daytona International airport. We are told a bomb squad is thoroughly searching the cargo hold of a Continental jet. We don't know a whole lot about it but our understanding is that the luggage in this plane for whatever reason did not make its connection. We do not understand at this moment how this might be connected to the other stories coming out of south Florida."¹⁹ *

That same morning *Salon* reported, "Also, a bomb squad searched the cargo hold of a Continental Airlines jet at Daytona International Airport. Fox News reported that some of the terrorists may have received flight training at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, but it was not known why the plane was being searched."²⁰

Local NBC News affiliate *WESH Orlando* was able to ask investigators on the ground detailed questions and acquired very specific information regarding the mysterious plane:

"Two commercial jets that have been parked overnight were investigated and graffiti was found near the main landing gear of one

of the planes. Sources said that the graffiti said "To Bush, with love." The flight originated in Newark Tuesday morning. It is still unclear if the writing was put there before the flight took off or after it landed in Daytona Beach."²¹

The luggage aboard Flight 1078 had "not made its connection." Why wasn't the luggage removed from the plane the day it landed? It is as if the commercial jet had landed in an unofficial way, bypassing normal procedures. If airport workers had attended to the plane on September 11th, 2001, removing its luggage that day, in all likelihood the strange message it bore would have been reported to the authorities immediately. Regardless, the plane was not found until the next day.

Stranger still, a *London Guardian* "intelligence source" confessed that box-cutters were "found taped to the backs of fold-down trays" on board a "Continental Airlines flight" that originated from Newark. It was believed that the plane was "due to be hijacked". If the source was referring to Flight 1078, then the plane had not been cleaned or inspected after it landed in Daytona Beach on September 11th.

Following the discovery of fresh documentary evidence, investigators in the US and Europe are working on the assumption that 30 terrorists, in six teams, were intended to have taken part in the onslaught. It is thought at least one plane was to have been aimed at the White House.

...

An intelligence source in the US said another plane due to have been hijacked was a Continental Airlines flight from Newark on the morning of September 11. Retractable knives (similar to Stanley knives) of the same type used in the four successful hijackings were found taped to the backs of fold-down trays.

...

The source did not give details of the sixth plane. However, similar knives were found stashed in the seats on a plane which had been due to leave Logan airport in Boston the same morning, and which was delayed and then cancelled.²²

The Daytona Beach News Journal reported that authorities were particularly alarmed by the mystery plane due to the bizarre message found "scratched" into its front wheel well. They were also concerned that the Continental jet took off at "roughly the same time" as Flight 93, which also originated from Newark:

FBI agents and other law enforcement officers scrutinized a Continental Airlines jet stranded at Daytona Beach International Airport on Wednesday after a security sweep revealed a scrawled message apparently addressing President Bush. The salutation, which officials did not release but sources confirmed made a reference to the president, prompted a close inspection of the craft partly because of its origin -- Newark International Airport in New Jersey. One of four planes hijacked in a wave of terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C., on Tuesday took off from that airport at roughly the same time as the flight to Daytona."(The graffiti) raised concern," Volusia County spokesman Dave Byron said.

Byron said the FBI is handling the investigation into the graffiti found on one of the plane's wheel wells. A thorough search of the Boeing 737 jet revealed nothing otherwise out of the ordinary, he said.

Meanwhile, as part of Wednesday's search at the airport, officers from several agencies used a bomb-sniffing dog to check both planes as required under the FAA's heightened security measures, Byron said. An officer found the message scratched into one of the Continental jet's wheel wells, officials said, prompting a more thorough search that involved deputies, FBI agents, the Daytona Beach Police crime scene processing unit and others. Sheriff Ben Johnson and other high-ranking officials showed up on the scene during the search. The Sheriff's Office bomb-disposal unit was among the vehicles surrounding the plane.²³

Whether the plane was first found during a security sweep by police or by an airport worker depends on the source. *The Daytona Beach News-Journal*

article reported that "An officer found the message scratched into one of the Continental jet's wheel wells, officials said, prompting a more thorough search", while the local *Orlando Channel 9 Eyewitness News* maintained that it "was discovered by an airport worker." *Channel 9* reported:

The FBI is also investigating a suspicious airplane in Daytona Beach with a threatening message on it.

...

Federal agents searched a plane at the Daytona Beach International Airport. There was a scrawled message on the wheel well of a Continental plane was discovered by an airport worker. Officials would only say the message addressed President Bush. Federal agents are concerned because the plane originated in Newark, New Jersey on Tuesday. One of the four planes hijacked by terrorists on Tuesday was also out of Newark. A spokesman said the FBI told them not to discuss it.²⁴

In either case, it appears that no one searched the plane until the day after the attacks. The *Orlando Sentinel* ran a similar article: "The Continental flight from Newark, N.J., became the focus of attention when graffiti was found on one of the plane's wheel rims. Volusia County spokesman Dave Byron would not say what the inscription said or how it was written on the wheel. The plane was searched by the sheriff's bomb squad, and the FBI was notified."²⁵

Finally, according to a September 15, 2001 article from *The Mirror*, FBI agents left little to the imagination when initially voicing their concerns about the mysterious Continental jet:

FBI agents now believe a Continental Airlines plane was intended for an attack on President Bush while he was aboard Air Force One in Florida. A mysterious message found on the undercarriage of the jet at Daytona Beach, Florida.

One airport worker said: It was something like 'To Bush with Love'. A police spokesman said: The graffiti caused some concern. It is being investigated by the FBI - they want to know how it came to be on one of the wheel wells.²⁶



Photo Courtesy of the *Orlando Sentinel*.

There was only one Continental Airlines jet that was scheduled to arrive in Daytona Beach from Newark on the morning of September 11th, the tail

number of which matches the one that was shown nationwide on CNN: N60312.

According to the Bureau of Transportation's detailed statistics for departure, on the morning of September 11, 2001, Continental Flight 1078 left its gate at 7:45 AM, 5 minutes ahead of the scheduled take off time of 7:50 AM. It took 25 minutes to taxi onto the runway and its wheels left Newark International Airport at precisely 8:10 AM.²⁷

Detailed Statistics

Departures

Airport: Newark, NJ - [Newark Liberty International \(EWR\)](#)

Airline: Continental Airlines (CO)

Month(s): September

Day(s): 11

Year(s): 2001

Carrier Code	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	Flight Number	Tail Number	Destination Airport	Scheduled Departure Time	Actual Departure Time	Scheduled Elapsed Time (Minutes)	Actual Elapsed Time (Minutes)	Departure Delay (Minutes)	Wheels-off Time	Taxi-out Time (Minutes)
CO	09/11/2001	1078	N60312	DAB	07:50	07:45	0162	0152	-5	08:10	0025

19

It touched down at Daytona Beach International Airport at 10:15 AM, taxiing for 2 minutes. It had arrived fifteen minutes earlier than its scheduled time, which was not unusual. The entire flight lasted two and a half hours, spanning the length of the attacks and their immediate, chaotic aftermath.

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Detailed Statistics

Arrivals

Airport: Daytona Beach, FL - [Daytona Beach International \(DAB\)](#)

Airline: Continental Airlines (CO)

Month(s): September

Day(s): 11

Year(s): 2001

Carrier Code	Date (MM/DD/YYYY)	Flight Number	Tail Number	Origin Airport	Scheduled Arrival Time	Actual Arrival Time	Scheduled Elapsed Time (Minutes)	Actual Elapsed Time (Minutes)	Arrival Delay (Minutes)	Wheels-on Time	Taxi-in Time (Minutes)
CO	09/11/2001	1078	N60312	EWR	10:32	10:17	0162	0152	-15	10:15	0002

It is curious that someone was able to vandalize Flight 1078 and escape

unnoticed. Equally puzzling is the fact that no one appears to have attended to the personal property on board the jet once it landed. If box cutters were indeed found "taped to the backs of fold-down trays" the direct flight had obviously landed under suspicious conditions. If Flight 1078 had gone through normal landing procedures, it would have been inspected and cleaned that day. The box-cutters, if the Guardian article is correct, would have been found. The luggage would have made its way to the baggage claim. To what degree, then, had the plane been compromised?

Ultimately, the crime scene at the Daytona Beach International Airport acted as a macabre taunt to investigators. It could be argued that the scene was "staged," although the term usually applies to a deliberately altered crime scene meant to mislead or misdirect investigators. It would be appropriate to consider not only the motive of this particular crime (the seeming hijack of a plane and its vandalization), but the motive behind the staging itself (the elaborate scene left for investigators).²⁸

* Paula Zahn's segment is available from the "September 11 Television Archive" on Archive.org: CNN Sept. 12, 2001 12:35 pm - 1:17 pm (September 12, 2001). The segment starts 5:55 minutes into the archived clip, clearly showing the plane's tail number: N60312.
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Chapter 3

"Air Force One is next."

QUESTION: Why did the president go to Nebraska and not back here to the White House?

FLEISCHER: Because the information that we had was real and credible about Air Force One, and the manner in which Air Force One operated maintained the security of Air Force One at all times. That also is one of the reasons why Air Force One did not come back to Andrews where some people may have thought it would.

QUESTION: If we can make the connection here, that would suggest that the threat against Air Force One came in the form of another aircraft.

FLEISCHER: No, I'm not indicating what form it came in, and I will not.

QUESTION: What time did the White House get this information?

FLEISCHER: On the flight from Sarasota to the first location.

- White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer's White House news conference, Washington, D.C., September 12, 2001.¹

There is evidence that President George W. Bush was threatened with assassination in the early morning of September 11, 2001. A September 26, 2001 article from *The Longboat Observer* reported on an incident involving a number of "Middle Eastern" men who visited the president's resort on the morning of the attacks. They did so before 6:00 AM in a white van. Dropping the supposed name of a Secret Service agent that no one was able to verify, they informed the security guard at the resort that they were journalists who had a poolside interview with the president:

By now, most everyone knows President George W. Bush began that

fateful day, Sept. 11, on Longboat Key, but the FBI is now investigating whether terrorists also began that fateful day here on the island.

At about 6 a.m. Sept. 11, Longboat Key Fire Marshall Carroll Mooneyhan was at the front desk of the Colony Beach & Tennis Resort as Bush prepared for his morning jog. From that vantage point, Mooneyhan overheard a strange exchange between a Colony receptionist and security guard.

A van occupied by men of Middle Eastern descent had pulled up to the Colony stating they had a "poolside" interview with the president, Mooneyhan said. The self-proclaimed reporters then asked for a Secret Service agent by name. Guards from security relayed the request to the receptionist, who had not heard of either the agent or plans for an interview, Mooneyhan said.

The receptionist gave the phone over to a nearby Secret Service agent, who said the same thing — no one knew of an agent by that name or of any poolside interview.

The agent told the occupants of the van to contact the president's public relations office in Washington, D. C., and turned them away from the premises, Mooneyhan said.

In light of the attacks, Mooneyhan wonders if what he witnessed is related to the events of Sept. 11.

So does the FBI.

"That's very strange," said an unnamed agent with the Sarasota field office of the FBI, who directed agents to look into the matter.²

The September 25, 2001 *Longboat Observer* article also reported that there was suspicious activity involving a van driven by "men of Middle Eastern descent." Someone witnessed the men waving their fists out of the windows of the van screaming, "Down with Bush!":

Earlier, the FBI questioned a Longboat Key man who also had a strange run-in with a van occupied by men of Middle Eastern descent.

At 8:50 a.m. the man stood on the Sarasota bayfront waiting to watch the presidential motorcade pass. A dilapidated van passed him with two men of Middle Eastern descent "screaming out the windows, 'Down with Bush' and raising their fists in the air."

The Longboat Key resident later reported the incident to police, who turned the matter over to FBI agents who questioned him.³

These darkly suggestive events originated from the very city the president would subsequently take off from on the morning of September 11, 2001. They may have been related to a much larger plot that would ultimately target the president.

President George W. Bush was escorted out of the Emma E. Booker Elementary School into a running, armored car at 9:35 AM.⁴ While the president was sped to Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport only three miles away, the crew of Air Force One prepared the presidential jet for a quick takeoff. Arriving in a few minutes, the secret service busied itself investigating luggage and conducting identification checks of the boarding passengers. President Bush walked to the top of the gangway, turned, and waved to the press before the door was secured. With veteran pilot Colonel Mark Tillman at the helm, the brand new 2001 Boeing VC-25 lifted off "like a rocket" and headed North for Washington, D.C.⁵ *USA Today* reported: "At 9:54 am, Air Force One took off..."⁶ This time is supported by declassified "Commission Sensitive" radar maps of Air Force One's progress which give a start time of "9:54:42."⁷

With all of the suspected terrorist activity surrounding the president in Sarasota in the early morning, it would not be unreasonable to suspect that the terrorists' support network in Florida had continued to track his movements that morning. There may even have been a "spotter" near the airport, waiting for Air Force One to take off.

Ari Fleischer told reporters the day after the attacks that White House

officials were informed of a credible threat to Air Force One after it had taken off from Sarasota.⁸ This was reported in a September 13, 2001 *USA Today* article which revealed that the threat came in the form of an "anonymous call" to the Secret Service.⁹ In the first few weeks after the attacks it was initially thought that whoever had made the threat possessed inside knowledge, including code words: "Bush and his entourage were rushed aboard Air Force One. Within the hour, the Secret Service received an anonymous call: "Air Force One is next." According to a senior government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, the caller knew the agency's code words relating to Air Force One procedures and whereabouts."¹⁰

Ten days later on September 23, 2001, Tony Snow of *Fox News Sunday* interviewed then National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, attempting to flesh the story out further:¹¹

SNOW: On September 11, there's a report that there was a coded message that said we're going to strike Air Force One. It was using specific coded language and it made an credible threat. Is that true?

RICE: That is true.

SNOW: So we have a mole somewhere?

RICE: It's not clear how this coded name was gotten. Now, we're a very open society. And I don't think it's any surprise to anyone that leaks happen. So I don't know. It's possible the code name leaked a long time ago and was just used.

SNOW: How on earth would that happen?

RICE: I don't know. I don't know. We're obviously looking very hard at the situation. But I will tell you that it was plenty of evidence from our point of view to have special measures taken at that moment to make certain the president was safe.¹²

It was later determined that there was a much less dramatic explanation for the "coded language" delivered with the threat; the codeword for Air Force One, "Angel", had been introduced by someone within "the communications channel," and not by the person who had initially phoned in the threat to the

Secret Service. National Security Advisor Rice made a point of clarifying the situation to journalist Bob Woodward.¹³ She was first made aware of the threat "a few minutes later" after meeting with Vice President Dick Cheney:

Q And how did the Vice President make this recommendation about go on to Louisiana and -- this thing that apparently was going around, there was some threat to the President. *Michigan*

*Threat to
Pres -
"one of the
communications
told
us"*
DR. RICE: Right. What happened was, as I said, the minute I got to the -- the Vice President said he didn't think we should bring the President back. But a few minutes later, one of the communicators told us -- I think we were standing together -- that there had been a named threat against Air Force One. And at that point the question was, where could you take the President. And there were several candidates. One was Barksdale.

Q It was the named threat, that somehow they got the call sign, or something like that, of Air Force One?

DR. RICE: Right. Right. Somebody had said there was a threat --

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Q Against Magnet Four or something like that?

DR. RICE: Exactly. That's right. We later learned that it was probably somebody in the communications channel that had actually used the code name not whoever had called in. So it's now not clear whether there really ever was a threat against Air Force One. But I can tell you --

Q If you think there is, you have to act.

DR. RICE: -- if you think there is, you have to act. And especially in a circumstance like that, information is just flooding in and you're trying to sort for fidelity, but you're also trying to react to the most potentially damaging. And that, that there was a threat against Air Force One was pretty realistic under the circumstances, very realistic under the circumstances. -

Q So what happened next, then?

DR. RICE: So we were matching tail numbers and I remember saying to somebody, we need a log, we need to log what's happening here. Because you have probably 20 people trying to do things, and just making sure that everything is getting done is really important; making sure that you know what you've done is really important. *tail #s* *Log*

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On February 10, 2002 Bob Woodward explained to *Reliable Sources* host

Howard Kurtz that, as far as he knew, it was the Situation Room watchstander who had introduced the codeword "Angel." This would stand to reason, given that anyone tasked with transferring secure communications to the PEOC during an attack would very likely use code words.

KURTZ: But in part, for example, the press widely scoffed at this notion that there was a threat against Air Force One on September 11, perhaps a cover story by the White House to avoid -- to cover up the embarrassment that Bush didn't return directly to Washington. You found out that there actually was a (UNINTELLIGIBLE) threat that made it seem more serious than it was. So perhaps the original reporting was not very good there.

WOODWARD: Well, I don't know, the -- it's not been fully explained. But the -- but as we show, and I think this is kind of one of the dark sides of all of this, on the first day, they didn't know what was going on. It was chaos. There were -- the plans really didn't work. Lots of people didn't know what to do. And in the White House, somebody got a report allegedly that Air Force One was threatened, and a watch stander translated it into the code word for Air Force One, which is Angel, or was Angel, and (UNINTELLIGIBLE)...

KURTZ: And they said, Oh, my God, somebody's got the code word.

WOODWARD: Exactly, and...

KURTZ: But it turned out to be a White House official throwing that -- or a staffer putting it into play.¹⁵

National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice stated plainly in her interview with Bob Woodward that the message was relayed to her "a few minutes later" after she had met with Vice President Dick Cheney in the Presidential Emergency Command Center (PEOC). The PEOC is an "underground facility hardened to withstand blast overpressure from a nuclear detonation," located below the ground floor level of the East Wing of the White House.¹⁶ Condoleezza Rice, interviewed on the *PBS* show *Frontline* in July, 2002, explained that she had arrived at the command center, often referred to

as "the bunker," shortly after Flight 77 hit the pentagon at 9:43 AM¹⁷: "I turned around and a plane had hit the Pentagon. About this time, the Secret Service came and they said, "You have to go to the bunker, because we think something may be headed for the White House. The vice president is already there."¹⁸

The message was first received in the PEOC by the Vice President's military aide before being passed on to Dick Cheney and Condoleezza Rice. A modest timeline remains in an obscure 9/11 Commission document replete with withdrawal notices, receipts for national security based censoring. Contained in this timeline of events is the subject heading, "Threat to Air Force One", with the subheading: "Military aide spoke to watch stander in the Situation Room." ¹⁹

**Doug Cochrane
VP Military Aide**

- I. Awareness\Notification of Strikes on WTC**
- II. Meeting up with VP in Tunnel**
- III. Time into PEOC**
- IV. Events in PEOC**
 - Inbound Aircraft**
 - Shoot Down**
language used
 - Working out the Rules of Engagement with DoD**
 - SVTS with Situation Room**
 - Decision to go to Defcon 3**
 - Andrews Scramble**
 - Threat to Air Force One**
Military aide spoke to watch stander in the Situation Room;

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The Vice President's military aid at the time was Naval Commander Douglas Cochrane. Commander Cochrane had received the message from the "watch stander in the Situation Room." The Situation Room is found, for the most part, on the ground floor of the West Wing of the White House. This series of rooms, including a conference center and a watch center, is used to both

monitor and field "breaking news" to the President and Vice President, as well as the White House staff.²¹ The watch stander of the Situation Room, so far unnamed, would most likely have been the senior duty officer in charge that morning.

The Situation Room watchstander had received the threat from the Secret Service. The Uniformed Division of the Secret Service (UD) had received the threat to Air Force One in the form of an "anonymous call" to their Joint Operations Center (JOC) located on the White House grounds. Classified Secret Service pager messages released by Wikileaks to the press, time stamped 10:30 AM, refer to messages sent to Secret Service officers after the threat had been relayed to the Situation Room (And, subsequently, to the PEOC):

2001-09-11 10:31:03 Skytel [005354263] B ALPHA

UD REPORTS ANONYMOUS CALL TO JOC REPORTING ANGEL IS TARGET

2001-09-11 10:31:03 Skytel [005344000] A ALPHA

UD REPORTS ANONYMOUS CALL TO JOC REPORTING ANGEL IS TARGET

2001-09-11 10:31:16 Skytel [005344008] C ALPHA

UD REPORTS ANONYMOUS CALL TO JOC REPORTING ANGEL IS TARGET

2001-09-11 10:32:33 Skytel [005202968] C ALPHA

UD REPORTS ANONYMOUS CALL TO JOC REPORTING ANGEL IS TARGET ²²

Ari Fleischer commented to the press that the threat had been received by the White House sometime during, "the flight from Sarasota to the first location," or after Air Force One had taken off at 9:54 AM. Condoleezza Rice remarked that the threat had been relayed from the Situation Room "a few minutes later" after she had arrived in "the bunker" with the Vice President (sometime shortly after 9:43 AM). According to Air Force General Mark Rosenker, who was on board Air Force One that morning, the threat was

relayed from the White House to Air Force One shortly after the presidential jet had taken off.

Only moments after this threat was communicated, pilot Colonel Mark Tillman informed the General that a plane, which was not communicating with local Air Traffic Control (ATC), was "coming at" them.²³ General Rosenker explained: "But it was just after Secretary Card had come up to the communications deck and talked to us about a series of options that we could take a look at, and indicated that it had been reported that Air Force One was a target. And within a moment or two after that, that we heard that, that's when Colonel Tillman had indicated to us that something was coming at us, it was not squawking, it was not turning..."²⁴

Q Coming out of Sarasota, you told us the story first and then Colonel Tillman confirmed it, there was an unidentified aircraft which had its transponder off and wasn't communicating - and that was the M.O. of all the other aircraft that attacked that day. Tell me a little bit about that; that must have made everybody a little nervous.

GENERAL ROSENKER: Well, it did. But we are clearly on probably the finest airplane in the world, so we were comforted

by knowing that we had the ability to out-run and out-climb anything that was going to get near us.

But it was just after Secretary Card had come up to the communications deck and talked to us about a series of options that we could take a look at, and indicated that it had been reported that Air Force One was a target. And at that moment, within a moment or two after that, that we had heard that, that's

when Colonel Tillman had indicated to us that something was coming at us, it was not squawking, it was not turning and we had a feeling that we were going to be able to get away from it -- but for a moment you ask the question, what could it be?

Q The threat that was conveyed from the White House, I think originally the Vice President contacted either the President or Secretary Card, that using the code name for the aircraft and saying: angel is next, that the plane had been targeted. Again, the fog of war, but what's everybody's reaction when that information comes on? It goes from being the abstract to the very specific.

AFI

Colonel Mark Tillman had been flying north from Sarasota, with the intention of carrying the president to Washington, D.C., when he received the warning from the White House. Shortly thereafter he encountered the

mysterious plane. From which direction was the plane coming? Early reports put the plane *in front* of Air Force One as it headed north. In a 2002 *CBS* article with David Kohn, the plane was described as being "dead ahead." In the same article Colonel Tillman described the plane as being "off our nose":

"It was serious before that but now it is - no longer is it a time to get the president home," says Tillman. "We actually have to consider everything we say. Everything we do could be intercepted, and we have to make sure that no one knows what our position is."

Tillman asked for an armed guard at his cockpit door while Secret Service agents double-checked the identity of everyone on board. The crew reviewed the emergency evacuation plan. Then came a warning from air traffic control – a suspect airliner was dead ahead.

"Coming out of Sarasota there was one call that said there was an airliner off our nose that they did not have contact with," remembers Tillman, who took evasive action, pulling his plane high above normal traffic. They were on course for Washington, but by now no one thought that was a good idea, except the president.

"I wanted to come back to Washington, but the circumstances were such that it was just impossible for the Secret Service or the national security team to clear the way for Air Force One to come back," says Bush."²⁶

In 2009, Colonel Tillman explained that as he was "heading over Gainesville," he turned toward the Gulf of Mexico, an evasive maneuver meant to put distance between Air Force One and the unknown jet "coming toward" them. Colonel Tillman, who relied heavily on information that was constantly changing, also highlighted the confusion, often referred to as a "fog of war," that permeated multiple communications channels that morning:

"Shortly after we left Sarasota, we got word that there was confusion amongst ourselves as well as the air traffic controllers," recalls Tillman. "There was an aircraft that they felt was coming towards us."

"In reality, just his transponder was off [and] he hadn't checked in

with the controller right afterwards," Tillman said. "But we kind of made our own scenarios that day where anything that could go wrong would go wrong."

"As we were heading over Gainesville with a plane coming at us - assumed to be a hijacked airliner - that's when we turned and headed out to the Gulf of Mexico to try to regroup and figure out where we could bring the president to keep him safe."

...

Looking back, Tillman said Air Force One was not really a target that day, but "we always treat it as though the president could be a target."²⁷

In 2011, the plane was reported as descending from behind, no longer described as off the "nose" of Air Force One. Not seen as a credible threat, the plane in question was described as a random encounter unrelated to the attacks. Colonel Tillman was informed by authorities that morning that the plane in question had either "shut off," or had a "malfunctioning," transponder. He was also informed that the plane was descending on Air Force One from *behind*:

We were over Gainesville when air-traffic controllers announced, "Air Force One, we have unknown traffic coming behind you. They've shut off their transponder and they're descending into you."

...

When controllers asked if we were aware of an unidentified plane bearing down on us, we didn't have a clue. I kept thinking that the sky is huge and the chances of one aircraft finding another are just infinitesimal. But I worried that maybe we were followed as we took off from Sarasota.

...

Air Force One has defenses to protect against attack, but no offensive capability. So I changed course. As we veered west, the other plane did not follow: It was simply an airliner with a

malfunctioning transponder.²⁸

One report in *The Daily Mail* states that Colonel Tillman had deliberately turned into the Gulf of Mexico to see if the plane would follow. Colonel Tillman repeats again what Jacksonville ATC informed him that morning; the plane was descending into Air Force One from *behind*. It is specifically described as originating from the "Southwest":

'As we got over Gainesville, Fla., we got the word from Jacksonville Center. They said, "Air Force One you have traffic behind you and basically above you that is descending into you, we are not in contact with them - they have shut their responder off".

'And at that time it kind of led us to believe maybe someone was coming into us in Sarasota, they saw us take off, they just stayed high and are following us at this point.

'We had no idea what the capabilities of the terrorist were at that point.'

Tillman said he flew the specially adapted Boeing 747 out into the Gulf of Mexico to see if the other plane would follow. When the other jet continued on its route he was later told it was an airliner that had lost its transponder -which sends out an electronic identification signal - and the pilots had failed to switch to a new radio frequency.²⁹

According to a 2002 *Aviation Week and Space Technology* article, the plane described as being behind Air Force One was intercepted by the 121st Fighter Squadron. The 121st Fighter Squadron is located at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland. On the day of the attacks, Lt. Col. Marc H. Sasserville was the "121st FS commander...the director of operations and air operations officer--the acting operations group commander under the 113th Wing." Col. Sasserville and his wingman "Lucky" were eventually called on to escort Air Force One. An AWACS controller informs them that a suspect plane is heading towards Air Force One. It is reported to be 60 nautical miles away, "descending" on Air Force One on a "cutoff vector" from the Southwest. Sasserville sends F-16's to intercept it. They find that it was a Learjet that had

still not landed well after the order was made by the FAA to do so. William B. Scott of *Aviation Week and Space Technology* reported the entire episode in great detail:

In the afternoon, Sasseville and Lucky were flying their second mission of the day--armed with AIM-9 missiles now--when they were told to contact an AWACS aircraft in the area and "expect special tasking." They were directed to fly a 280-deg. heading for 140 naut. mi.--almost due west of Washington. Unable to communicate by secure or encrypted means, the AWACS controller lowered his voice and told Sasseville via radio they were going to "escort Air Force One," President Bush's aircraft.

Two Langley F-15s offered to go along, and Sasseville concurred. Soon, an AWACS controller reported a fast-moving, unidentified aircraft southwest of Air Force One, approximately 60 naut. mi. away, but on a "cutoff vector" to the President's Boeing 747. It was above 40,000 ft. and the 747 was "in the 20,000-ft. range," but Sasseville sent the F-15s to intercept the unknown aircraft. It was a Learjet that hadn't yet landed after aircraft nationwide had been ordered out of the air.

Sasseville and the two F-15s later joined on Air Force One, while Lucky positioned her F-16 about 10 naut. mi. in front of the 747. With the SADL data link system, she was able to monitor her location relative to Sasseville's SADL-equipped F-16 positioned on Air Force One's left wing. Another flight of F-16s from Ellington AFB, Tex., were about 5 mi. in trail. They had escorted the President from Offutt AFB, Neb., according to 121st FS officers.

Why the Washington-based F-16s were sent to shadow the President's aircraft back to Andrews AFB has not been disclosed. Apparently, someone in the Norad or Secret Service command loop had received information about a potential threat to the 747, prompting a request for additional armed escorts.³⁰

Why was the Learjet first described as being *dead ahead* of Air Force One and then, subsequently, *behind it*? It is as if there were two different

planes being confused with one another. It is highly likely that the plane Air Force One had *first* encountered was Continental Flight 1078, which landed at the Daytona Beach International Airport at 10:15 AM, bearing it threatening message to the president.

A "Committee Sensitive" map shows that Air Force One had received the threat from the White House and had encountered a rogue plane within the first ten minutes of its flight, since the turn it subsequently makes into the Gulf of Mexico to evade the plane begins at 10:10 AM.³¹



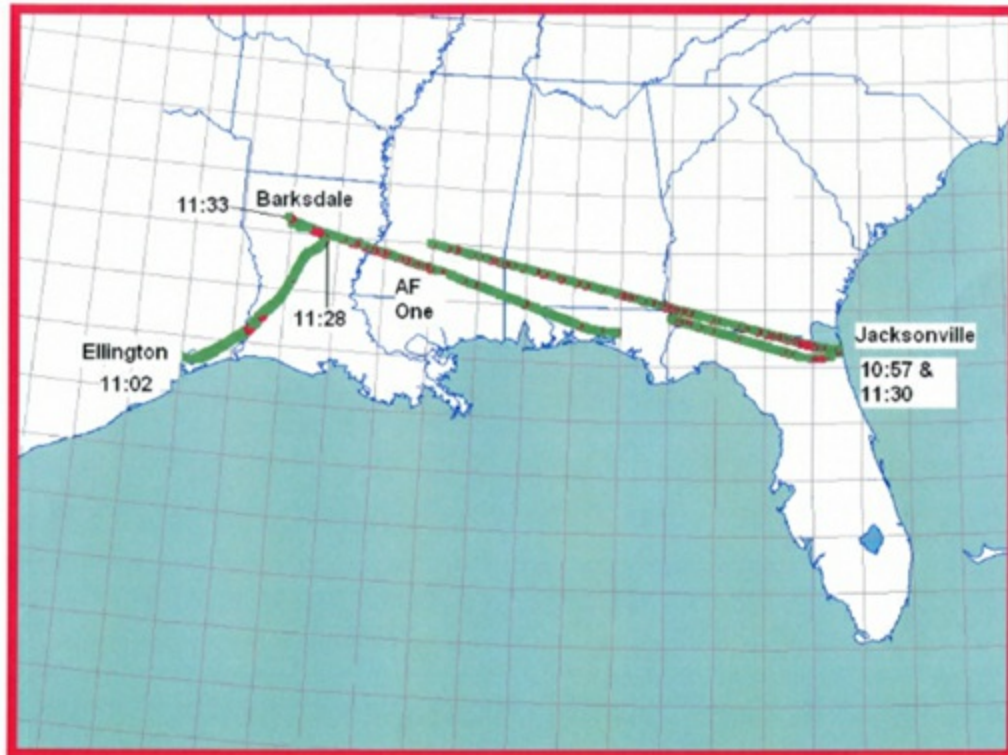
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By superimposing the "Committee Sensitive" map showing Colonel Tillman's progress from Sarasota with a map that includes county lines, it is clear that both Air Force One and Continental Flight 1078 were in the same general airspace at the same time:



According to another "Committee Sensitive" map, Fighter escorts were scrambled from Ellington Field in Houston, TX, and Jacksonville, FL nearly an hour after Air Force One had taken off.³³

Air Force One Fighter Escort



Committee Sensitive

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Early reports, such as a September 16, 2001 article from *The New York Times*, support the map data; Air Force One did not receive air cover until after 10:41 AM: "At 10:41, with Air Force One headed toward Jacksonville to meet jets scrambled to give the presidential jet its own air cover, Cheney was urging Bush to avoid a quick return to Washington."³⁵

Commission documents show Vice President Dick Cheney in conversation with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld around 10:37AM. At this time Defense Secretary Rumsfeld informs the Vice President that air cover had been ordered. Although it had been ordered before 10:37 AM, support from Ellington and Jacksonville will not arrive for some time more.

1037 (1:08) VPOTUS: Hello. Cheney here.

1037 (1:08) Sec Def responds: he and Myers in NMCC

1037 (1:08) VP: Talked to POTUS I know he is trying to reach you? Have you spoken to him?

1037 (1:08) SECDEF: Yes but eary. Right after Pentagon was hit.

VPOTUS: OK – he's going to relocate to another site. We received an anonymous call over here that Angel i.e. air force one was the next target and I assume he thought steps had been taken to provide protection for AF1.

(stopped at p.38)

ATC

1037 (1:08) SECDEF: Correct. That's been ordered

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Indeed, the Learjet does not appear to have been intercepted for over a half hour after Air Force One encountered a rogue plane "dead ahead":

1039 (1:10) FAA: Just talked to Jacksonville Center. The aircraft that is apparently close to AF1 is a primary target. Jacksonville Center is not working the aircraft. He's not under ATC control.

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There is an apparent symmetry between Continental Airlines Flight 50 (Newark, New Jersey to Frankfurt, Germany) and Continental Airlines Flight 1078 (Newark, New Jersey to Daytona Beach, Florida). Both planes were operated by the same carrier and shared the very same airport of origin. Both were direct flights. If the *London Guardian's* source was correct, multiple box cutters were found on both planes. In the case of Flight 50, there were more knives than what would be necessary for "muscle hijackers." Multiple box cutters would be needed later, however, for the dramatic staging of Flight 1078.

Was the plane vandalized before it took off, or after it had landed? Flight

1078 was not discovered until the next day. That is a considerable amount of time for the plane to be unaccounted for. It would seem, with the luggage that was left on board, and the reported staging of the scene, that whoever had control of the plane also had the ability to bypass normal landing procedures which would include cleaning and inspection.

Had the plane been commandeered or was it only manipulated once it had landed? Flight 1078 had landed only a few minutes earlier than its scheduled arrival time. If the plane had been hijacked, landing it on time would forestall suspicions, allowing for extra time to stage the scene. It is very significant that the plane thought to be threatening the presidential jet was reported to have disabled its transponder since this was done with every other hijacked flight that morning. If Flight 1078 was indeed the plane that local Air Traffic Control had warned Air Force One was not "squawking," or emitting a transponder signal, then it may very well have been compromised prior to landing. It would be prudent to withhold judgments until more information is made available.

While there are few "snapshots" left for the general public to help understand exactly what has happened, there are enough to make a few reasonable assumptions. Somehow, Continental Airlines Flight 50 (Newark to Frankfurt) was related to Continental Airlines Flight 1078 (Newark to Daytona Beach), either as a test for something that did or was at one time planned to take place. Flight 1078, in turn, was directly related to the widely documented "anonymous" threat against Air Force One.

This connects the threat to Air Force One to Frankfurt, Germany, a city reported to be the "logistical command post" for Osama bin Laden in Europe. In the eyes of United States authorities, there has been a lack of investigative rigor on the part of Germany in the past. The case of Flight 50 is illustrative of their seeming inability to communicate vital, actionable information to the United States in a timely fashion.

With the high degree of NSA activity in Frankfurt and Berlin after the September 11, 2001 attacks, it can be safely assumed that the United States intelligence establishment has taken an aggressive, clandestine approach in fully uncovering the networks that supported the 9/11 hijackers, as well as positioning themselves in such a way that they can identify potential threats. To fully understand not only the German State's interests in protecting suspects

widely reported to be affiliated with the al-Qaeda organization, such as Mamoun Darkazanli, as well as their questionable responses to events leading up to the September 11, 2001 attacks, the United States has opted to conduct intelligence gathering activities on their own terms. Simultaneously, they are attempting to forge a new and robust relationship with Germany's foreign and domestic intelligence services in the face of numerous setbacks, such as those brought on by the Edward Snowden disclosures.

Germany represents the largest national economy in the European Union, making it a powerful and influential partner for the United States. It is essential for the United States to cooperate with Germany in supporting a number of common interests, not the least of which includes using sanctions to curb Russian influence/intervention in Eastern Europe.

When Chancellor Merkel began making public speeches denouncing the United States for spying in Germany, she framed the issue as a falling out between friends, where a pre-existing trust was compromised:

"Spying among friends cannot be," German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Thursday in her first public comments since allegations emerged that U.S. intelligence may have been monitoring her cell phone.

"We need trust among allies and partners," Merkel said as she arrived to a European Union summit in Brussels. "Trust now has to be built anew. This is what we have to think about."³⁸

Much of the talk about "friends" and "trust" is, however, little more than political maneuvering; Germany was found to have spied on Turkey, a NATO ally, in August, 2014.³⁹ It was also reported that German signals intelligence had acquired communications of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton as well as her successor, current Secretary of State John Kerry.⁴⁰

While the politicians of the two super powers engage in a public dance of mutual support, careful to emphasize their shared interests, the essentially apolitical elements of their respective intelligence agencies continue their work in the dark. It would appear that healthy relationships between spy agencies have more to do with concrete results and consistency than empty

rhetoric. If the Federal Republic of Germany had been more cooperative in allowing access to suspects with known connections to the September 11, 2001 hijackers, if it had communicated potential threats in a timely fashion to their American counterparts and had stepped up their investigations, they could have expected in return a more cooperative atmosphere.

Josef Joffe, a research fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution and the publisher-editor of the German weekly newspaper *Die Zeit*, wrote an opinion piece in the *Wall Street Journal* that clearly explained the situation, offering a more reasonable stance for Chancellor Angela Merkel. Joffe explains that in the shadowy world of espionage, where platitudes and appearances can never be trusted, a state gets what it gives:

Berlin will certainly beef up its intelligence and counterintelligence assets. Stung by Handygate, Germans will want to make life harder for the CIA and NSA on their soil. They also will have tradable goodies in dealing with their comrades-in-snooping in the U.S., France and Britain. These are the eternal ways of spycraft. You have to be able to give in order to get—both in respect and rewards.

But having been caught doing to the U.S. what the U.S. has been doing to them, the Germans may also lower their Self-Righteousness Quotient. And they might take a cue from Hillary Clinton, who was recently asked by Munich's *Süddeutsche Zeitung* whether friends may spy on each other. The former secretary of state shot back: "Always. Forever. All over the world."

That is no satire. It's reality.⁴¹

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Appendix

Chapter 1

The incident on board Continental Airlines Flight 50 (Newark to Frankfurt):

BEGPRODNO : M-INT-00010123
BEGBATES : 265A-NY-280350-302-4216
DATE : 09/18/2001
FBIDESCR :
FULLTEXT : FD-302 (Rev. 10-6-95)

- 1 -

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 09/18/2001

[redacted] a white male, born [redacted] employed by Continental Airlines as a Boeing 777 and 757 Captain and simulator trainer.

[redacted] was advised of the nature of the interview and the identity of the interviewing agent. Also present was [redacted] spouse [redacted] [redacted] furnished the following information.

[redacted] advised that on 9/10/2001 he piloted a Continental Airlines flight from Newark, NJ to Birmingham, UK where he was laid over for approximately 3 days with Continental flight attendant [redacted] employee [redacted]. During that time, [redacted] related the following incident to [redacted].

[redacted] advised that [redacted] told him that she was working as a flight attendant on Continental flight #50, a Boeing 777 leaving Newark, NJ for Frankfurt, Germany on 8/20/2001 at approximately 8AM. The flight's captain was [redacted] employee [redacted] was working the mid-galley position and approximately 1-2 hours after takeoff, a middle eastern male came running forward up the aisle past her, with his head down and his face in his hands. [redacted] thought he might be about to throw up but he ran past the bathroom and began to pound on the cockpit door screaming that he wanted to go to Germany. [redacted] told [redacted] that after the middle eastern man did this approximately 2-3 times, once trying to open the cabin door, he was restrained by the flight crew and put in a window seat next to a United States Marine. The middle eastern man "cold coxed" the Marine and escaped over him coming forward toward her with a box cutter. At that time, a Continental captain traveling on vacation in civilian clothes with his wife, got up and put a full nelson on the middle eastern man. While the middle eastern man's hands were outstretched, someone was able to disarm him. The flight crew put flex cuffs on the middle eastern man and got him back into a seat. [redacted] remembers that whoever put the flex cuffs on the middle eastern man got them too tight and they had to be cut off and put on again.

[redacted] advised that [redacted] stated that the vacationing captain talked to [redacted] and tried to persuade him to land and take the middle eastern man off the flight. [redacted] refused and

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Investigation on 9/18/2001 at [redacted]

File # 265D-NY-280350-302
9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy

Date dictated 9/18/2001

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

[PDF page 1]

FD-302a (Rev. 10-6-95)

265D-NY-280350-302

Continuation of FD-302 of [REDACTED], On 9/18/2001, Page 2

[REDACTED] continued on to Frankfurt. [REDACTED] that the middle eastern man carried on a back pack which was searched and found to contain "bunches" of box cutters.

[REDACTED] advised that [REDACTED] stated that after the incident, 2 New York police officers identified themselves and said they saw what happened but did not want to get involved. The officers stated that they were available if the flight crew needed any more help.

[REDACTED] advised that [REDACTED] did not tell him what happened to the middle eastern man upon landing in Frankfurt. [REDACTED] encouraged [REDACTED] to report the incident to the FBI and to Continental corporate security. [REDACTED] did make a report to Continental corporate security and [REDACTED] does not know how far it went. [REDACTED] told [REDACTED] that the next day the person to whom she reported the incident, could not remember the facts and that prompted [REDACTED] to call the FBI.

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[PDF page 2]

September 4, 2003 5:16 pm

Page 2

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/14094191/T7-B11-FBI-302s-Box-Cutters-Fdr-FBI-302-S-Entire-Contents>.

Interview with Reggie Baumgardner (September 11, 2001 Director of Security for Continental Airlines):

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FULLTEXT

: M-INT-00020775
: 265A-NY-280350-NK-323
: 09/13/2001
: REGGIE BAUMGARDNER

09/13/01

REGGIE BAUMGARDNER, Director of Security, Continental Airlines, Newark Airport, Terminal C, Newark, New Jersey, telephone number [REDACTED] cellular telephone [REDACTED] was interviewed at his place of employment. After being advised of the identities of the interviewing agents and the nature of the interview he provided the following:

BAUMGARDNER advised that the security guards for Continental work for an outside contractor, HUNTLEIGH USA, Main Office, 45 Academy Street, Newark, NJ. SALLY SANDERSON, telephone [REDACTED] is the General Manager and GRACE ORTEGA, Newark Airport, Terminal C, C3 Checkpoint, telephone number [REDACTED] is the Security Operations Manager.

BAUMGARDNER stated that security regulations for the carrying of items such as box cutters was not considered to be a flight risk and therefore would be allowed to pass by security.

BAUMGARDNER stated that the gates by the metal detectors are digitally videotaped and they are archived for approximately 30 days. The digital system is run on LORONIX software system. The digital video system is being supervised by FRED CONOVER, Electronic Technologies Corporation, cellular telephone [REDACTED]. BAUMGARDNER advised that he would be providing the back-up recordings to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and would have a work station available early next week for agents to review the previous 30 days if needed.

BAUMGARDNER added that yesterday he received a voicemail from a Continental pilot out of Houston, Texas named GABRIEL VAISMAN. The message explained how VAISMAN had been approached sometime between 6-12 months ago by a Middle Eastern man when he was flying from Newark to Seattle. This man requested to sit in the "Jump Seat" of the cockpit. The man who made this request was denied the seat as VAISMAN did not recognize any of his credentials. The man became irate and VAISMAN's flight took off without the man aboard.

BAUMGARDNER accepted service of a United States

09/13/01 Newark, NJ

265D-NY-280350-NK-158

9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy

[PDF page 1]

265D-NY-280350-NK-158

Reggie Baumgardner

09/13/01

2

BAUMGARDNER added that he would be available for any

9/11
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9/11 Closed by
Statute

September 4, 2003 5:05 pm

Page 1

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/14094191/T7-B11-FBI-302s-Box-Cutters-Fdr-FBI-302-S-Entire-Contents>.

Interview with Robert Coda (September 11, 2001, Newark International Airport Security Director):

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Threat information/ Intelligence

[U] As the airport security director, Coda received information from the Information Circulars (ICs) and Security Directives (SDs) distributed by FAA. He also had direct contact with FAA Civil Aviation Security Field Office (CASFO). He didn't interface much with law enforcement officers, other than the Port Authority police unit at the airport, which was a visible presence.

[U] Other than from the FAA, the main opportunity for Coda to receive threat information was in regular security consortium meetings that acted as a forum for free exchange of information. To a limited extent, threat information was shared there, but since this was an open meeting, nothing specific or detailed was presented.

[U] Pre-9/11 Coda saw his job as one of compliance with FAA rules, and he felt there was an "invisible wall" between the civilian administration of the airport and the law enforcement side.

[U] Coda wasn't aware of the presence of terrorist cells in the vicinity of the airport. Looking back, if the FBI had knowledge about a threat, he thought from a common sense perspective they would have provided the information to the FAA, and then the necessary information would have "trickled down" to the airport operators and the air carriers.

[U] Coda was not that he is aware of any pre-9/11 suspicious incidents, such as unauthorized surveillance of the airport. He reported that those types of incidents would be referred to the port authority police at the airport; it was not the civilian authority's responsibility. He further indicated that the port authority police produce a log of all security incidents, and that he would send to the Commission the reports covering 1/1/01 to 9/11/01.

[U] Coda stated that ICs and SDs prior to 9/11 were vague and general. It was difficult for the airport to take effective action; "vigilance" was the watchword. The perception was that the FAA was making an effort to keep all parties in the large airport community "in the loop," but it was starting to seem like they were hearing "the same old stuff from the FAA." This in turn led to a reduced sense of urgency.

Credentialing and Airport Access Control

[U] Coda was not aware of any employees at the airport or any individuals that sought employment that were denied because of terrorist affiliation. He indicated that there was no way for the airport to adequately monitor terrorist activity. The airport does the fingerprinting, forwards that to law enforcement, and then receives back from law enforcement whether the individual should be disqualified. What they were looking for was a yes or no determination from the FBI. "If FBI rap-sheets indicate the person shouldn't be employed," the airport would comply.

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2

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/19987650/MFR-NARA-T7-Newark-Airport-Coda-Robert-5-6-04-00161>.

Interview with David Schurott (September 11, 2001, Supervisor of the Newark CASFU, the Civil Aviation Security Field Unit):

9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy

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Suspicious activities

[U] Schurott said that there was no indication of terrorist surveillance at Newark. Suspicious activities went to the Port Authority police. Other reports may have gone to the FSM or the FBI, but he didn't receive them.

[U] Schurott attended the monthly consortia meetings, as did [redacted] who was the FBI's liaison to the airport. Schurott said that he never received any information at the consortia or anywhere else about the presence of terrorist groups in the area. He was not aware that terrorists were present or active in the vicinity of Newark.

9-11 the Day

[U] Schurott said that a K-9 officer told him that he heard that either a Cessna or a helicopter hit the WTC. He and some of his colleagues turned on the television but the TV went out before the second aircraft struck. He called Nora Zaba at the CASFO office to see if she were aware of the situation. She told Schurott that she had heard reports about hijackings. Schurott spent the day collecting information as directed by Zaba. He obtained the manifest for UAL #93, checkpoint logs, and the list of CAPPS' selectees. In addition he conducted interviews with the fueling people, catering and others who serviced UAL 93. He said that none of the information he received in the interviews indicated anything abnormal or suspicious. He was not assigned to collect information on any flights other than UAL 93, and he doesn't know of anyone else who was asked to look at other flights.

[U] Schurott said that the UAL station manager was Terry Rizzuto. In retrospect he can't think of anything that stood out about security at Newark that would encourage terrorists to target the facility.

[U] He said that the only closed circuit television was in Terminal C of the airport (Continental) which was new. The terminal from where UAL #93 departed did not have CCTV.

Recommendations

[U] Schurott said that the notion of allowing passengers without carry-on bags to have an express lane at the checkpoint would be difficult to implement because of space restrictions at most airports.

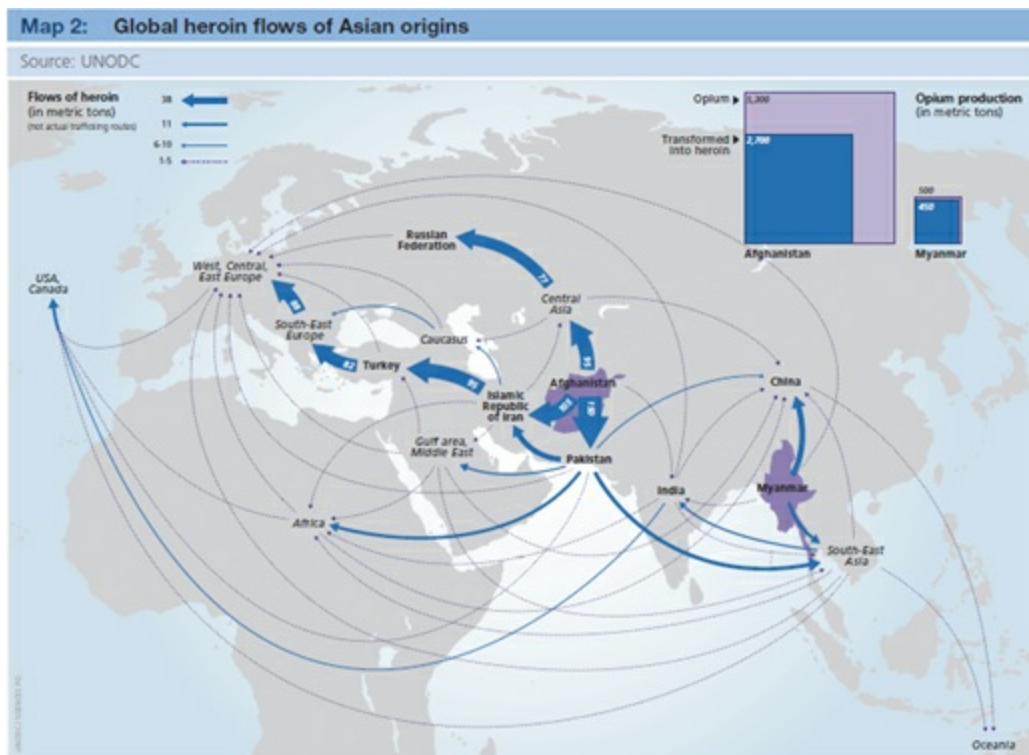
[U] He believes that TSA should not only test checked baggage for explosives with CTX machines, but should also exercise Positive Passenger Bag Match as a layered precaution.

[U] He thinks that eliminating carry-on baggage would be a significant aid to security.

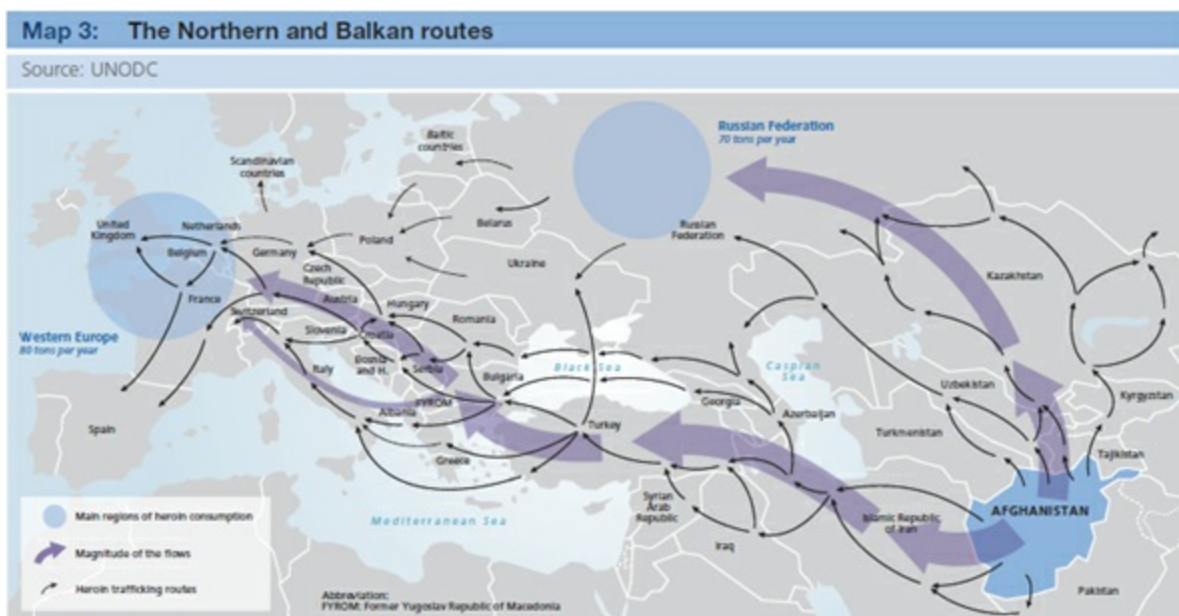
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The flow of heroin from Afghanistan, UN 2010 World Drug Report:



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Chapter3

The Longboat Observer article:

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WaybackMachine

http://www.longboatobserver.com/showarticle.asp?ai=1874

Go

SEP OCT DEC
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74 captures
1 Sep 02 - 12 Mar 14

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THE LONGBOAT OBSERVER

Oct, 2 2002 Longboat Key's weekly newspaper since 1978

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Possible Longboat terrorist incident

Is it a clue or is it a coincidence?
By Shay Sullivan, City Editor
Wednesday, September 26, 2001

By now, most everyone knows President George W. Bush began that fateful day, Sept. 11, on Longboat Key, but the FBI is now investigating whether terrorists also began that fateful day here on the island.

At about 6 a.m. Sept. 11, Longboat Key Fire Marshall Carroll Mooneyhan was at the front desk of the Colony Beach & Tennis Resort as Bush prepared for his morning jog. From that vantage point, Mooneyhan overheard a strange exchange between a Colony receptionist and security guard.



(photo details)

A van occupied by men of Middle Eastern descent had pulled up to the Colony stating they had a "poolside" interview with the president, Mooneyhan said. The self-proclaimed reporters then asked for a Secret Service agent by name. Guards from security relayed the request to the receptionist, who had not heard of either the agent or plans for an interview, Mooneyhan said.

The receptionist gave the phone over to a nearby Secret Service agent, who said the same thing — no one knew of an agent by that name or of any poolside interview.

The agent told the occupants of the van to contact the president's public relations office in Washington, D. C., and turned them away from the premises, Mooneyhan said.

In light of the attacks, Mooneyhan wonders if what he witnessed is related to the events of Sept. 11.

So does the FBI.

"That's very strange," said an unnamed agent with the Sarasota field office of the FBI, who directed agents to look into the matter.

Earlier, the FBI questioned a Longboat Key man who also had a strange run-in with a van occupied by men of Middle Eastern descent.

At 8:50 a.m. the man stood on the Sarasota bayfront waiting to watch the presidential motorcade pass. A dilapidated van passed him with two men of Middle Eastern descent "screaming out the windows, 'Down with Bush' and raising their fists in the air."

The Longboat Key resident later reported the incident to police, who turned the matter over to FBI agents who questioned him.

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