

Warning Timeline

Tick-Tock of Warnings, Threats Before Sept. 11



May 16 — What did the Bush administration and other parts of the federal government know about possible threats to U.S. interests before Sept. 11? And when did officials know of warnings? Below is a timeline of key dates.

April 18, 2001: Federal Aviation Administration issues an advisory. "The FAA does not have any credible information regarding specific plans by terrorist groups to attack U.S. civil aviation interests ... Nonetheless some of the current active groups are known to plan and train for hijackings ... The FAA encourages U.S. carriers to demonstrate a high degree of alertness."

June 22, 2001: FAA issues an information circular to private air carriers. "Although we have no specific information that this threat is directed at civil aviation, the potential for terrorist operations, such as an airline hijacking to free terrorists incarcerated in the U.S., remains a concern."

June 26, 2001: State Department issues a worldwide caution to Americans traveling or living abroad.

End of June, 2001: Counterterrorism Security Group (CSG) meets to discuss possible threats.

July 2, 2001: As a result of the CSG meeting, the FBI releases a memo about threats overseas. In a message to law enforcement agencies, FBI says there were threats to American interests overseas and that a domestic strike could not be ruled out.

July 2, 2001: FAA issues an internal communication that says a terrorist convicted in a plot to disrupt the millennium had intended to use explosives in an airport terminal.

July 5, 2001: Bush asks National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice to see what was being done about various concerns.

July 6, 2001: Counterterrorism Security Group meets again and suspends nonessential travel of U.S. counterterrorism staff because of concern about potential attacks in Paris, Turkey and Rome.

Mid July, 2001: Concern addressed about specific threat against President Bush at G-8 summit in Genoa, Italy, which brought together eight countries with the most powerful economies.

July 10th, 2001: FBI's office in Phoenix sends memo to FBI headquarters alerting of an increase in flight school interest by Arab nationals, and suggesting inquiry of similar activity in other states.

July 18, 2001: FAA issues an internal communication suggesting a "high level of caution" on the part of the airlines. It refers entirely to concern about attacks in the Arabian Peninsula.

July 18, 2001: FBI sends advisory reiterating its July 2 message. "We're concerned about threats as a result of the millennium plot conviction," the advisory says, referring to a July 13 conviction of an Algerian accused of being part of a plot to detonate a suitcase bomb at Los Angeles International Airport.

July 31, 2001: FAA issues an internal communication encouraging airlines to be on high level of alert, says terror groups are known to be planning and training for hijackings.

Aug. 1, 2001: FBI issues advisory noting the third anniversary of the deadly bombings of two U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

Aug. 6, 2001: Bush receives a report that does not have warning information but does discuss Osama bin Laden's methods of operation. It also mentions a concern of a traditional hijacking.

Aug. 16, 2001: Zacarias Moussaoui is detained in Minnesota. Moussaoui was arrested after he sought flight training at a Minnesota flight school.

Aug. 16, 2001: FAA issues warning about disguised weapons. Officials were concerned about some reports that the terrorists had made breakthroughs in cell phones, key chains and pens as weapons.

Aug. 28, 2001: Information is received from French intelligence that Moussaoui has links to bin Laden's al Qaeda network.

Aug. 28, 2001: FAA issues advisory about possible violence against U.S. carriers flying in and out of Israel.

Sept. 11, 2001: Four planes are hijacked in the United States and are crashed into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and in a Pennsylvania field. http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/DailyNews/warnings_timeline.html