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U.S. National - AP

Report: FAA Had 52 Pre-9/11 Warnings



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WASHINGTON - The Federal Aviation Administration ([news - web sites](#)) received repeated warnings in the months prior to Sept. 11, 2001, about al-Qaida and its desire to attack airlines, according to a previously undisclosed report by the commission that investigated the terror attacks.



[AP Photo](#)

The report by the 9/11 commission that investigated the suicide airliner attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon ([news - web sites](#)) detailed 52 such warnings given to FAA ([news - web sites](#)) leaders from April to Sept. 10, 2001, about the radical Islamic terrorist group and its leader, Osama bin Laden ([news - web sites](#)).

The commission report, written last August, said five security warnings mentioned al-Qaida's training for hijackings and two reports concerned suicide operations not connected to aviation. However, none of the warnings pinpointed what would happen on Sept. 11.

FAA spokeswoman Laura Brown said the agency received intelligence from other agencies, which it passed on to airlines and airports.

But, she said, "We had no specific information about means or methods that would have enabled us to tailor any countermeasures."

Brown also said the FAA was in the process of tightening security at the time of the attacks.

"We were spending \$100 million a year to deploy explosive detection equipment at the airports," she said. The agency was also close to issuing a regulation that would have set higher standards for screeners and, for the first time, give it direct control over the screening work force.

Al Felzenberg, former spokesman for the 9/11 commission, which went out of business last summer, said the government had not completed a review of the 120-page report for declassification purposes until recently.

The unclassified version, first reported by The New York Times, was made available by the National Archives Thursday.

According to the report:



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Aviation officials were "lulled into a false sense of security" and "intelligence that indicated a real and growing threat leading up to 9/11 did not stimulate significant increases in security procedures."

Of the FAA's 105 daily intelligence summaries between April 1, 2001 and Sept. 10, 2001, 52 mentioned Osama bin Laden, al Qaida, or both, "mostly in regard to overseas threats."

It notes that the FAA did not expand the use of in-flight air marshals or tighten airport screening for weapons. It said FAA officials were more concerned with reducing airline congestion, lessening delays and easing air carriers' financial problems than thwarting a terrorist attack.

A proposed rule to improve passenger screening and other security measures ordered by Congress in 1996 had been held up by the Office of Management and Budget and was still not in effect when the attacks occurred, according to the FAA.

Information in this report was available to members of the 9/11 commission when they issued their public report last summer. That report itself contained criticisms of FAA operations.

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