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CIA denies seeking pact with bin Laden

PARIS

The CIA rejected as fantasy claims it tried to negotiate a non-aggression pact with Osama bin Laden just two months before the September 11 attacks.

Richard Labeviere, author of the Corridors of Terror, says the CIA's Dubai chief approached bin Laden while the al Qaeda leader was being treated for a kidney complaint in the United Arab Emirates.

He said the meeting took place in the American Hospital in Dubai on July 12, eight weeks before the attacks.

"Such an allegation is sheer fantasy, no such thing occurred," said Mark Mansfield, a CIA

spokesman, echoing an earlier rebuttal of French reports of the meeting.

Labeviere said a contact in the hospital told him of an encounter, which was later confirmed by a Gulf prince.

The second contact told him the meeting had been set up by Prince Turki al-Faisal, head of Saudi intelligence.

"Turki thought he could start direct negotiations between the Saudi millionaire and the CIA on one fundamental point: that bin Laden and his supporters end their hostilities against American interests," he says.

In exchange, the CIA and the Saudi (intelligence)

services undertook to allow bin Laden to return to his native country. The meeting was a failure, Labeviere said.AP

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