

April 26, 2005

## The Confirmed Fact and Its Denials

### Part 1: The "Fact": There was credible evidence that Air Force One was targeted on September 11, 2001.

Excerpts from Attorney General John Ashcroft's statement to the news media on September 12, 2001:

This is a highly coordinated effort.

...  
Immediately after the first report of a plane crashing into the World Trade Towers, numerous Federal agencies, coordinating with the White House, mobilized their resources.

...  
Both the President and the Vice-President presided over a number of cabinet and subcabinet meetings and video conferences. Continuity of government plans were put into effect.

...  
The response of the federal government across the board has been, I believe, from the president of the United States to the rescue workers, magnificent. I'll now turn to the information that the response we have been making has developed.

I'll give you the information that we can give you. However, we will give you only facts that we can confirm.

You may be hearing things that we have not told you, but some people have the luxury of speculating. We won't speculate, but will only give you confirmed facts.

...  
The four planes were hijacked by between 3 and 6 individuals per plane, using knives and box cutters and in some cases, making bomb threats.

**Our government has credible evidence that the White House and Air Force One were targets.\***

A number of the suspected hijackers were trained as pilots in the United States.

The Department of Justice has undertaken perhaps the most massive and intensive investigation ever conducted in America.

...  
Throughout the day and into the night last night, Deputy Attorney General Larry Thompson, and Assistant Attorney General Michael Chertoff, who is not with us at this moment and I were present at the FBI's Strategic Information and Operations Center (SIOC) together, of course, with the director, and a number of other individuals.

The Justice Department is working closely with investigators, the FAA, and the intelligence community, including the CIA, the NSA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Defense Department.

...  
These agencies have a presence at the SIOC, here in the FBI, 24 hours a day and are coordinating efforts both in the United States and worldwide around the clock.

...  
The crime scene at the WTC has been secured but is not yet a crime scene accessible to investigators.

...  
**\*Note:** An inexact transcript of this media briefing by John Ashcroft appears on the website of the US Department of State at:

[http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive\\_Index/Ashcroft\\_Investigators\\_Reviewing\\_Intelligence\\_Have\\_Credible\\_Leads.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive_Index/Ashcroft_Investigators_Reviewing_Intelligence_Have_Credible_Leads.html) .

The State Department's transcript omits entirely the statement in bold print above. It can be heard in the audio recording at the Public Broadcasting Service's website at:

[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/military/terroristattack/mueller\\_ashcroft\\_text\\_9-12.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/military/terroristattack/mueller_ashcroft_text_9-12.html) .