

**STATEMENT OF J. T. CARUSO
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Good morning Mr. Chairman, Ms. Harman, and Members of the Subcommittee. On behalf of the men and women of the FBI, I would like to commend you for your leadership in combating terrorism and to pledge the full support and cooperation of the FBI in your efforts.

Like all Americans, I am deeply saddened by the tragic events of September 11th. The terrorist attacks we witnessed are among the most horrific crimes ever committed against the citizens of this country. As you know, the FBI, in conjunction with law enforcement and intelligence agencies throughout the United States and the world, is in the midst of the largest, most complex and perhaps the most critical criminal and terrorism investigation in our history.

Mr. Chairman, I am limited in what I can discuss today in an open forum. I do not want to reveal any strategies planned, actions taken, or information received by the FBI which may jeopardize the pending investigation. Numerous Committees of the United States Congress, including this one, however, receive frequent updates on the investigation from the FBI and other agencies. These updates are provided in closed session which allows us to speak candidly about the sensitive and classified aspects of this investigation. The FBI will continue to work with you and your staff in this regard.

Within minutes of the September 11th attacks, the FBI's Command Center, called the Strategic Information and Operations Center, or SIOC, was operational. Our efforts began as a search and rescue mission, with SIOC providing multi-agency

analytical, logistical and administrative support for the teams on the ground in New York, Pennsylvania, and at the Pentagon. Sadly, as days passed, the hope of finding survivors amid the debris began to wane. The crash sites became crime scenes and the tedious process of evidence collection began. The focus in SIOC shifted from rescue efforts to a large scale, global terrorism investigation

Members and staff of this Subcommittee have had the opportunity to visit SIOC and to observe our operations in action. You were able to witness firsthand the cooperation and coordination of every aspect of this investigation by and between FBI Headquarters, our 56 field offices, and 32 other government agencies present in the Command Center.

The SIOC currently operates with more than 500 personnel representing these 32 different agencies and their components. Criminal Division lawyers from the Department of Justice are also working in SIOC both to facilitate obtaining warrants and to continuously evaluate evidence.

The FBI recognizes that each agency represented in SIOC plays a critical role in this investigation. We are all working side by side in the Command Center setting investigative leads, responding to inquiries, and tracking the hijackers' activities and contacts prior to September 11th. We have enlisted the professional assistance of our state and local law enforcement partners across the nation in two ways: first, through our 35 joint terrorism task forces and regional task forces where federal, state and local law enforcement agencies partner together on terrorism matters; and, second, through the electronic dissemination of threat warnings and law enforcement intelligence to

police agencies across the nation. In this way, we reach approximately 18,000 law enforcement agencies instantly.

In addition, the FBI has dedicated significant resources to this investigation, including 4,000 Special Agents and 3,000 support personnel. Over 250 Laboratory personnel and related field personnel are deployed at the Pentagon and New York crash sites. Thirty of the FBI's Legal Attache offices overseas are pursuing leads and coordinating investigation with their foreign counterparts. This is truly an investigation of global dimension. Attorney General Ashcroft and FBI Director Mueller are present in the SIOC on a daily basis, actively overseeing and directing this investigation.

To date, more than 238,000 tips and potential leads have been generated in this investigation. Over 100,000 of those tips were received through the FBI's Internet information form available on our website "www.ifccfbi.gov." Another 20,000 tips were received on the FBI's toll-free hotline at 1-866-483-5137. The remainder have been generated through the dedicated efforts of the FBI field offices.

As you know, the FBI has identified at least 19 hijackers aboard the four airliners that crashed on September 11th into the North and South Towers of the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon, and Stony Creek Township, Pennsylvania. Last week, the FBI released a letter handwritten in Arabic found in three separate locations: the first, in a suitcase of hijacker Mohammed Atta which did not make the connection to American Airlines Flight #11 that crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center; the second, in a vehicle parked at Dulles International Airport belonging to hijacker Nawaf Alhazmi; and the third at the crash site in Pennsylvania. Translations of

the letter indicate an alarming willingness to die on the part of the hijackers.

We have also located some of the flight recorders and voice data recorders and are in the process of analyzing them for insights into what took place on board those flights. With respect to United Airlines Flight #93 that crashed in Pennsylvania, I can confirm that the passengers engaged in a fight for their lives with their four hijackers and most likely saved the lives of unknown individuals on the ground.

In addition to potential evidence collected at the scenes of these attacks, the FBI is working tirelessly to "follow the money" associated with the 19 hijackers. In the investigation of any terrorist organization, identifying and tracing funds used to finance and fund the organizations is a critical step. "Following the money" plays a key role in identifying those involved in criminal activity, establishing links among them, and developing evidence of their involvement in the activity. Locating, seizing, and/or freezing assets tied to terrorist organizations plays a key role in cutting off the financial lifeblood of these organizations and in not only dismantling the organization, but in preventing future terrorist acts. Due to the international nature of terrorist organizations, these investigations require considerable coordination with foreign authorities as well as the CIA and the Intelligence Community to ensure that the criminal investigation does not jeopardize or adversely impact sensitive national security matters. This requires careful adherence to restrictions separating criminal investigations from those involving national security and classified intelligence matters.

In the course of this investigation, the level of cooperation by U.S. financial institutions has been extraordinary. In all respects, the financial institutions have gone

to considerable lengths to provide subpoenaed information as expeditiously as possible and have done everything possible within the legal framework to provide any cooperation requested. To date, the federal government has frozen approximately \$6 million in assets both at home and abroad.

One of the inherent difficulties the FBI faces in high-profile investigations such as this is the plethora of news article accounts -- some accurate, some partially accurate, and some not accurate at all. I would like to comment on some of the more prevalent reports regarding the September 11th attacks.

- ◆ Early in the investigation, reports emerged that the FBI had detained two Middle Eastern males found wearing Delta Airlines pilots' uniforms, carrying false pilots' licenses as well as box cutters. These reports were untrue.
- ◆ According to some media reports, two of the hijackers were on a so-called "FBI Watch List" and were under active FBI surveillance at the time of the attacks. Prior to the events of September 11, the FBI did not maintain a "watch list" and none of the 19 hijackers were under surveillance. In the aftermath of the attacks, the FBI compiled a list of those individuals who the FBI, through investigation, determined may have some information about one or more of the hijackers or about related activities. This list has grown to over 400 names. It is important to note that these are persons the FBI is interested in interviewing; they are not 400 suspected hijackers.

- ◆ Just days ago, the FBI was reported to have foiled a terrorist plot to fly a hijacked plane into the Sears Tower in Chicago. The FBI is unaware of any such plot.
- ◆ Media reports also contend that the FBI had advance warnings since 1995 of the plot to hijack U.S. airliners. The FBI had no warnings about any hijack plots. There was a widely publicized 1995 conspiracy in the Philippines to remotely blow up 11 U.S. airliners over the Pacific Ocean but that plot was disrupted. As is the practice, the information obtained during that investigation was widely disseminated, even internationally, and thoroughly analyzed by multiple agencies. It does not connect to the current case.
- ◆ Most recently, the media has focused on an individual in Minneapolis who has been detained since August 17 on immigration charges. It has been suggested that this individual, Zacarias Moussaoui, was training to be the fifth hijacker on the flight that crashed in Pennsylvania. Media accounts also suggest that the FBI did not actively investigate Moussaoui until after the September 11th attacks. The FBI conducted vigorous investigation of Moussaoui upon learning of his detention in mid-August, to include seizing his computer, contacting foreign officials for additional information, and seeking a number of authorities under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) to conduct further investigation. In addition, information about Moussaoui was shared throughout the Intelligence

Community prior to September 11th. Although there was insufficient evidence to establish that Moussaoui was an "agent" of a foreign power or terrorist group as required for a FISA warrant, the FBI pursued all reasonable and lawful investigative steps since mid-August.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you and the Subcommittee for this opportunity to address some of these media reports and to describe the extraordinary interagency cooperation in this investigation. The FBI and its sister agencies are literally working around the clock to determine the full scope of these terrorist acts, to identify all those involved in planning, executing, and assisting in the commission of these acts, and to bring those responsible to justice.

Even so, we at the FBI are clear as to our mission. Director Mueller has forcefully and repeatedly articulated our number one priority: to do everything in our power to prevent the occurrence of any additional terrorist acts. Mr. Chairman, you and the American people can be assured that the FBI is committed to this fight. To honor the memories of those who perished on September 11th, we must, and we will, win this war on terrorism.