

D.C. Crash Meant for White House

The Associated Press

The White House and Air Force One, two potent symbols of the American presidency, were targets of Tuesday's suicide bombers, government officials said Wednesday.

Sketching a scenario that is normally the stuff of Hollywood thrillers, White House press secretary Ari Fleischer cited "real and credible information" that the hijacked airplane that slammed into the Pentagon was originally intended to hit the White House.

Air Force One, which was with Bush in Florida at the time of the attacks, also was in the terrorists' sights, Fleischer said Wednesday. He refused to say what kind of attack might have been aimed at the presidential jet.

Asked if evidence pointed to an assassination plot that went awry, Fleischer said he would tell reporters only what he knew about the prospective targets, "and I think you can draw your own conclusions."

Federal authorities have identified more than a dozen hijackers of Middle Eastern descent in Tuesday's bombings and gathered evidence linking them to

Osama bin Laden and other terrorist networks, law enforcement officials said.

The massive investigation stretched from the Canadian border, where officials suspect some of the hijackers entered the country, to Florida, where some of the participants are believed to have learned how to fly commercial jetliners before the attacks. Locations in Massachusetts and Florida were searched for evidence.

The names of two men being sought by authorities emerged in Florida.

Officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, told The Associated Press that multiple cells of terrorist groups participated and that hijackers had possible ties to countries that included Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

The identities of more than a dozen of the men who hijacked four planes with knives and threats of bombs has been ascertained, the officials said.

Several hijackers had pilot's licenses.

Authorities detained at least a half dozen people in Massachusetts and Florida on unrelated local warrants and immigration charges and were questioning them about their possible ties to the hijackers. No charges related to the attacks, though, had been filed.

Search warrants were executed in Florida, New Jersey and Massachusetts. "We're attempting to recreate the travels of each of the hijackers on the planes - either the hijackers themselves or their associates," FBI Director Robert Mueller said.

For some of the suspected accomplices, "we have information as to involvement with individual terrorist groups," Mueller added.

Officials said authorities were gathering evidence that the terrorist cells may have had prior involvement in earlier plots against the United States, and may have been involved with bin Laden. That includes the USS Cole bombing in Yemen and the foiled attack on U.S. soil during the millennium celebrations.

Officials said some of the hijackers may have crossed the border from Canada en route to Boston. Authorities in Maine and Nova Scotia searched vehicles for possible ties to the suspects. A third car found at the airport in Boston, where one flight was hijacked, also was searched and an Arabic-language flight manual was discovered, officials said.

"This could have been the result of several terrorist kingpins working together. We're investigating that possibility," one law enforcement official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Sen. Charles Grassley, the top Republican on the Senate Finance Committee, said the briefing he received Wednesday from law enforce-

ment left him with the same impression. "Most of it today points to bin Laden but the speculation at the end of the road is that he and his network were very much involved with Hezbollah, Faiah and other" terrorist organizations, Grassley said.

The FBI in Miami issued a national bulletin for law enforcement agencies to look out for two cars.

Attorney General John Ashcroft said numerous promising leads were being followed up. "The Department of Justice has undertaken perhaps the most massive and intensive investigation ever conducted in this country," he said.

Ashcroft said between three and six hijackers, armed with knives and box cutters, seized control of the four commercial jets. Two hit New York's World Trade Center, a third smashed into the Pentagon and a fourth crashed in Pennsylvania.

Some 4,000 special agents and 3,000 support personnel are assisting in the investigation, and 400 FBI laboratory specialists are at the crime scenes in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania.

Law enforcement officials said that the FBI on Wednesday afternoon searched two hotel rooms in the Boston area believed to have been used by the hijackers.

The officials found information linked to a name on the manifest of one of the hijacked flights.

They declined to identify the man.

Family Weekend Still Planned Sans Football

Staff Reports

Despite Tuesday's tragic events, UNC's annual Carolina Family Weekend will continue as planned - almost.

In light of terrorist attacks in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania, ACC officials decided Wednesday to postpone UNC's home football game against Southern Methodist University, a main feature of Family Weekend.

"We're continuing with Family Weekend with or without the ball game," said Sheila Hrdlicka, parents' programs coordinator. Other activities planned include informational seminars for parents, concerts, a barbecue and a brunch.

Hrdlicka said 1,500 tickets have been sold to parents who planned to attend the game, adding that all money for tickets will be refunded.

Although Tuesday's attacks stopped the game, they have not dampened parents' eagerness to take part this weekend. Hrdlicka said the Carolina Parents' Association received 50 registrations between Tuesday night and Wednesday morning. Sue Kitchen, vice chancellor for student affairs, said families' desire for closeness was why administrators opted not to cancel the event. "We're keenly aware that this is a time for families to

want to be together," Kitchen said. But the Federal Aviation Administration had not yet reopened airports Wednesday night, meaning some parents might be unable to make it to UNC. "I'm sure some people won't be able to attend because they can't get to the campus," said Melissa Jessen, chairwoman of the Family Weekend committee.

Kitchen encouraged parents to expand their definition of family for the weekend. "I'd like to suggest a new meaning for Family Weekend," she said. "I ask you to look around and find that person who is a part of the Carolina family and include them in your activities this weekend."

But some events other than the football game planned for the weekend have been affected by the attacks. The Slavic language department is considering altering its performance scheduled for Saturday night, said Beth Holmgren, chairwoman of the Slavic languages and literature department. "Some students are just worrying about their relatives," she said.

But most of this weekend's events are still planned. "We've registered 750 parents and families, and they're not just bringing themselves," Hrdlicka said. "We're promoting this not just as parents' weekend, but Family Weekend."

The University Editor can be reached at udesk@unc.edu.

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Heather: crider@unc.edu or Shelley: srdougl@unc.edu

Campus Calendar

Today

10 a.m. - Donate blood, time and money to the victims of the terrorist attacks.

Come by the Pit for information on blood drives and volunteer efforts.

7 p.m. - UNC's General Alumni Association will host "Understanding the Attack on America: A Public Forum." Guests include experts in defense,

political science and Middle East studies.

7 p.m. - Invited by the Campaign to End the Death Penalty, Gretchen Engle, the lawyer of death row inmate Robert Bacon, will speak in 209 Manning Hall.

Centers for International and Area Studies

Open House and Information Fair

Thursday, September 13
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm
223 East Franklin Street
(across from Morehead Planetarium)

Refreshments and Music

Information:
919-962-3094



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For further information on the fund and the application process:

- visit www.robertsonscholars.org/fund.shtml, or
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For more information on this and upcoming events please visit our website at <http://www.unc.edu/depts/jacw> or call 966-5110

The Johnston Center is located in Graham Memorial Hall, on Franklin Street, next to the Morehead Planetarium.