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SORTS	RARE	CASE
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CLOD	NEAL	ERS
SCHEMER	MRED	
ELO	BLUEBERRIES	
WAKE	IDLE	KARMA
EVEL	NEAR	EMAIL
DESK	ERNS	DANTE

Government heads had attack warnings

By Jodi Enda and Jonathan S. Landay
Knight Ridder Newspapers

WASHINGTON (KRT) — President Bush was told weeks before the Sept. 11 attacks that Osama bin Laden's terrorist network might try to hijack U.S. planes, and the administration passed the warning to federal agencies, White House officials confirmed Wednesday night.

White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer said the president was told in August that bin Laden was interested in hijacking an airplane.

"Concerns about hijackings have been around for decades," Fleischer said, confirming a report by CBS News. "The president ... received information that Osama bin Laden was interested in hijacking an airplane in the traditional pre-9-11 sense of hijacking an airplane. The president did not receive information that bin Laden wanted to use airplanes for suicide bombers or use airplanes as missiles."

The information was then shared with the appropriate domestic agencies, he said. "Keep in mind that's exactly why we have metal detectors at airports."

Nevertheless, the revelation is the latest evidence that U.S. intelligence and law enforcement analysts failed to connect pieces of information that could have alerted them to the terrorists' plans. Both the CIA and the FBI have tried to deflect the mounting criticism, but on Capitol Hill pressure is mounting for a thorough investigation of what both agencies knew, when they knew it and what, if anything, they did with it.

In hindsight, some warning signals were obvious.

It was reported earlier this month that FBI headquarters failed to act

on a memo last July from its Arizona field office warning a number of Arabs seeking pilot, security and airport operations training from at least one U.S. flight school.

A section of that classified memo cited bin Laden by name, speculating that al-Qaida and other groups could organize such flight training.

In Minnesota, officials at another flight school alerted law enforcement officials last summer that Zacarias Moussaoui, a French man of Moroccan heritage, was taking flying lessons but didn't want to learn how to take off or land. Officials believe Moussaoui was supposed to have been the fifth hijacker of United Airlines Flight 93, which crashed in Pennsylvania. He will go on trial Sept. 30 in Alexandria, Va., on six conspiracy counts, including committing acts of international terrorism.

U.S. intelligence officials, meanwhile, knew that in 1995, two associates of bin Laden had discussed crashing a plane into CIA headquarters outside Washington. A group affiliated with bin Laden tried and failed to crash a hijacked jetliner into the Eiffel Tower in Paris, and Egypt and Italy had warned the CIA that bin Laden was plotting to fly an airplane into last June's economic summit in Genoa, Italy.

Other evidence pointed to the World Trade Center as a possible target. Bin Laden's al-Qaida organization had already tried and failed to blow up the New York landmark with a truck bomb, and his associates had a pattern of learning from their mistakes and trying again.

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Laboratory

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students as a teaching assistant in the Green Lab last term. She said she noticed "real differences" between her organic chemistry experience as a University sophomore five years ago compared with the way today's sophomores experience the same course.

"Now (the curriculum) pays special attention to hazard, which is nice, because even in a controlled setting, there are still exposure issues," she said.

Organic Chemistry instructor Leif Brown has observed that the new lab has helped to generate more excitement and positive learning experiences for students.

"Green chemistry students have been a lot more enthusiastic than traditional chemistry students," Brown said. "A large part of that is being in a state-of-the-art environment. They definitely feel like a happier group than in the last few years."

Brown also noted that the Green lab brings an entirely new and more open structure to the study of organic chemistry, leading to greater feelings of comfort for students.

"In a traditional lab, there are haz-

ardous chemicals and inhalation is a concern, so you need more ventilation systems. Those take up a lot of lab space," Brown said. "With a Green lab ... we're not dealing with all the hazardous materials. We've removed all that clutter, added floor-to-ceiling windows and created a very open environment, so that our students can see each other and feel less isolated when they work. The new lab has a much more open, laid-back feeling to it."

As a first-year graduate student, Huffman said she appreciates the distinct emphasis of the University curriculum on real world applications of Green concepts.

"Our faculty tries to emphasize the way the lab or experiment is usually done in industry — the traditional way — and then explain why we have made changes, in a greener, safer way," Huffman said. "It's cool because it gets kids thinking about environmental and safety issues. And this is more like the real world, because, in order to survive, industry will need to be more concerned with environmental sustainability and being a good global citizen."

Gail Eisen is a freelance reporter for the Emerald.

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