

Early 1998: CIA Ignores Ex-Agent's Warning KSM Is 'Going to Hijack Some Planes,' Visiting Germany

In December 1997, former CIA agent Robert Baer, newly retired from the CIA and working as a terrorism consultant, meets Hamad bin Jassim bin Hamad al Thani, who was Qatar's minister of the economy and chief of police until he was deposed and exiled the year before, and whom he calls the "black prince." Al Thani tells Baer that Khalid Shaikh Mohammed (KSM) was being sheltered by then Qatari Interior Minister Abdallah bin Khalid al-Thani in 1996 (see January-May 1996). However, the black prince knows other details, based on what Qatari police and intelligence learned when KSM was in the country. He says that KSM is chief of al-Qaeda's terrorist operations (see Early 1998). KSM was leading an al-Qaeda cell in Qatar together with Mohammed Shawqui Islambouli, the brother of the Egyptian who had killed Anwar Sadat. They also were linked to bomber Ramzi Yousef. But what worries the black prince is that KSM and Islambouli are experts in hijacking commercial planes. He tells Baer that KSM "is going to hijack some planes." Further, he says that KSM has moved to the Czech Republic, and has also traveled to Germany to meet bin Laden associates there. In early 1998 Baer sends this information to a friend in the CIA Counterterrorist Center, who forwards the information to his superiors. Baer doesn't hear back from the CIA. He says, "There was no interest." [BAER, 2002, PP. 270-71; VANITY FAIR, 2/2002; UNITED PRESS



Robert Baer. [Source: Publicity photo]