

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Final

Event: Interview of Patrick J. Fitzgerald
Date: March 11, 2004
Special Access Issues: ~~SECRET/LES/OC/NF~~
Prepared by: Yoel Tobin
Team Numbers: One & Six
Location: Department of Justice Command Center
Participants: 9-11 Commission: Lance Cole, Yoel Tobin, Chris Healey
Justice Department: Faith Burton

OVERVIEW

(U) This is the second part of a two-part interview. The first interview session took place on January 28, 2004, and was conducted by Teams One and Four. A classified MFR for that interview is in the file. Mr. Fitzgerald was reinterviewed on March 11, 2004, by Teams One and Six. Team 6 has filed an unclassified MFR relating to its portion of the interview. This MFR is prepared by Team 1 and covers the portion of the interview devoted to the activities of al Qaeda.

(U) SOMALIA

(U) Mr. Fitzgerald clarified al Qaeda's involvement in "Black Hawk Down" in Somalia in 1993. He believes that al Qaeda's involvement in attacks on American troops amounted to "training the trainers" rather than doing the killing themselves or directly training those who did the killings. He said a document found on Wadi el Hage's computer in Nairobi contains a detailed report on this topic.

(U) Al Qaeda Links with Arab Governments

(FOUO) Mr. Fitzgerald has a general sense that there is some penetration by terrorist groups of security services in the Middle East.

(LES) Mr. Fitzgerald noted that Saudi Arabia had refused to grant American officials access to al Qaeda financial official Madani al Tayyib. (*Staff note: Tayyib was detained by the Saudi government in 1997*). He also noted that the Saudis were not doing anything about Jamal Khalifa, who is bin Laden's brother-in-law, and whom Fitzgerald described as a "player." However, Mr. Fitzgerald did not know if the Saudis should be blamed for not taking action against Khalifa, because he did not know how much evidence the Saudis had.

(S) When asked about possible al Qaeda ties to Yemen, Mr. Fitzgerald said that there was some suspicion that a Yemeni [redacted] might have been involved in the 1992 bombing in Aden of two hotels housing US troops.

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(U) Al Qaeda Links with Iran and Hezbollah

(Staff note: See prior MFR for initial discussion of this topic.)

~~(S/NF/OC)~~ Mr. Fitzgerald believes that the training that Hizballah and Iran provided to al Qaeda improved al Qaeda's ability to build car bombs and engage in suicide bombings.

(U) Mr. Fitzgerald said that we do not know the significance of the meeting between Usama bin Laden and senior Hezbollah operative Imad Mugniya, because the source for the meeting, Ali Mohamed, arranged security but was not actually present during the discussion. Mr. Fitzgerald said he did not know if there was direct corroboration from another source of Mr. Mohamed's assertion that the meeting took place. Other statements of Mr. Mohamed during his change-of-plea hearing were corroborated.

FUTURE THREAT

~~(S/NF/OC)~~ When asked why al Qaeda had not hit American targets since 9/11, Mr. Fitzgerald said it was a combination of luck and good work by the US Government. Also, al Qaeda itself is weaker than it was. Nevertheless, al Qaeda still constitutes a threat, and sees itself as involved in a long-term struggle against the US. Both al Qaeda and Hezbollah do extensive surveillance of targets and develop attack plans that can be executed years later. For example, in the 1995 assassination attempt against President Mubarak by the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (which is a part of the al Qaeda network),

E.O. 13526, section 1.4(c)

(U) Mr. Fitzgerald added that al Qaeda is not the only threat. There are other terrorist networks and groups that also want to attack us. The US has to take a long-term view and realize that we are in a long-term struggle. At this point, the death or capture of Osama bin Ladin may not help us that much.