

~~TOP SECRET~~ 25X1

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Event: Interview of George Tenet

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Additional notes: The witness was under oath

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Team Number: Two and Three

Location: DCI Conference Room, CIA HQs

Participants – Non-Commission: George Tenet, CIA Chief of Staff John Moseman, CIA General Counsel Scott Muller, Rudy Rousseau, Ben Bonk, 25X1 and the DCI's assistant 25X1

Participants – Commission: Commissioner Richard Ben-Veniste, Commissioner Tim Roemer, Philip Zelikow, Chris Kojm, Ernest May, Dan Marcus, Mike Hurley, Alexis Albion, Gordon Lederman

(U) Commissioner Roemer administered the oath to DCI Tenet at the start of the interview.

Background

(U) Tenet served as Staff Director of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI), and as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Intelligence Programs at the National Security Council (NSC) before taking the position of Deputy Director of Central Intelligence (DDCI) in July 1995. In December 1996, he became Acting DCI. Since July 11, 1997, Tenet has served as DCI.

Understanding the Threat

(U) Zelikow asked how Tenet's perceptions of the terrorist threat changed when he became DCI. Tenet responded with what essentially constituted an opening statement. *[Tenet said that he would provide the Commission with the detailed timeline to which he was referred].*

(S) UBL came to the forefront when Tenet was DDCI. In 1996, CIA created an issue station (what would become Alec Station), dedicated solely to tracking Usama Bin Ladin (UBL), who was perceived to be principally a financier until 1996. It was at this point that UBL's salience as a terrorist leader was disclosed by an al Qaeda operative (likely el Fadl, 25X1 although Tenet could not remember his name), who identified UBL as a key player and al Qaeda as his core organization. He cited the existence of al Qaeda's Shura Council, warned that UBL's intent was to target U.S. soil, and said that he was seeking to acquire chemical and biological weaponry. This operative's disclosures were a "watershed" for U.S. understanding of UBL. Thus, UBL was already someone to whom CIA was paying attention when Tenet became DDCI. After the 1998 East African embassy bombings, CIA had a strategic framework to address the elements of the al Qaeda threat, but in 1999, a new strategic plan was required ('The Plan').

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(C) Tenet stressed the fact that there are no parallels with other issues in terms of the way the U.S. Government (USG) was organized regarding counterterrorism (CT): the Counterterrorism Security Group (CSG) gave constant focus on this issue in all departments and agencies and met daily or more. The Government needed to be organized differently on this issue because (1) CT was intensely operational, (2) there was a constant flow of new data, and (3) the President was constantly issuing new covert action authorities. (Tenet noted that there is a 20-volume set of documents concerning U.S. Government activity in this area). Tenet himself chose to spend an enormous amount of time on both strategic and tactical issues related to terrorism; it has been his constant focus. During the Millennium threat period, for example, there were constant meetings—daily or twice-daily—in the DCI conference room. He also took every opportunity to raise the topic 25X1

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(S) That being said, Tenet emphasized the fact that the historical context surrounding this focus on al Qaeda must be taken into account. Although terrorism was “number one” there were also other issues to contend with, notably the Balkans and Kosovo, and there were severe problems with resources. Finally, there was the overriding context of having to rebuild the CIA. Compared to 1991, “we [CIA] were not in good shape in 1997,” having lost 25X1 in funding and 25X1 personnel. The DO had basically stopped recruiting; the training program at 25X1 was in disarray; and the National Security Agency (NSA) was also trying to modernize its systems. According to Tenet, if you divorce this reality from CIA’s CT activities, then you are not seeing the full picture. Instead of focusing just on what resources CIA was allocating for CT, it is important to look at resources as a whole; despite problems in other areas, CT resources continued to grow. This was because, in Tenet’s opinion, there was no more dangerous threat to the U.S. than terrorism.

Khobar Towers

(S) Tenet cited the Iranians—or more specifically the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) working together with Saudi-Hezbollah—as having been behind the 1996 attack on Khobar Towers. He did not remember when that conclusion was reached, however, but recalled that UBL received a congratulatory message in Sudan after the attack. (Ben Bonk thought that all the evidence was pulled together rather conclusively by late 1998 or early 1999). Tenet also mentioned that there were sealed indictments related to this case, but he does not know when they were issued.

(C) Zelikow asked why the U.S. did not retaliate after Khobar Towers. Was it because (1) there was a lack of evidence, (2) there were links to high-level officials in the Iranian government, or (3) the DCI never concluded who was responsible for the attack, and this inability to determine culpability inhibited policy deliberations on retaliation? Tenet responded that he did not remember and would have to check the record.

(C) Tenet added, however, that the question of what to do about Iran is an enormously difficult one, “a tough nut to crack.” Retaliation against Iran involves a qualitatively different target set

than, for example, Afghanistan, because the consequences of such an action are very different. Hezbollah, he explained, is very difficult to go up against—it is the “A Team” of terrorism and has a world-wide asymmetric response capability. In the case of Khobar Towers, Tenet noted that U.S. consulate officials in Karachi had been killed in 1995, and this needed to be kept in mind. Moreover, planning a military raid against Iran is extremely complicated, including the question of exactly which Iranian officials would be hit.

(S) Finally, Tenet does not think that a “tit-for-tat” response to terrorism was the mantra of the day (i.e. the idea of automatic retaliation for a terrorist incident). In 1998, the principles in operation regarding how to deal with the terrorist threat were essentially: capture, rendition, and detention. He outlined the ways in which CIA was operating against UBL/al Qaeda overseas: hitting the terrorist infrastructure; breaking up cells (Tenet noted that by September 10, 2001 there had been over 70 renditions of al Qaeda operatives to foreign custody); looking at finances; listening to communications; recruiting assets and exposing operations; and looking at ways to bring UBL to justice. The 1998 budget submission to Congress spoke of “direct action” to intervene to render terrorists to justice, and this could be seen in a mutual and simultaneous relationship between covert action and law enforcement. (Tenet noted that CIA had an intimate relationship with the prosecutors of the Southern District of New York or SDNY).

(U) DCI Tenet did not remember whether UBL’s possible connection to the OPM/SANG bombing was investigated.

CIA’s Evolving CT Strategy

(TS) 25X1 Tenet noted that we did not know where UBL was right after he left Sudan in 1996, before it was determined that he had moved to Afghanistan. Thereafter, CIA’s foreign intelligence (FI) strategy was as he described above. In terms of authorities, there was a Memorandum of Notification (MON) 25X1 but it was the August 1998 MON that started off more aggressive actions as a reaction to policy guidance.

The 1998 Capture Operation

(TS) 25X1 Zelikow noted that, even before 1998, planning was underway for an effort to capture UBL, with the possibility of a SDNY indictment of UBL (which likely would have influenced what could have done with UBL had he been captured), and Tenet added that the 25X1 said that they were willing to take UBL. Tenet said that the capture operation was elaborately planned with the military and FBI, and involved use of the Afghan tribals and planes on airstrips in Afghanistan. When a decision point was reached as to whether to proceed with the operation, however, it was the strong and unanimous recommendation of Deputy Director of Operations (DDO) Jack Downing, Chief of the Counterterrorist Center (CTC) Geoff O’Connell, and Chief of Near East Division 25X1 that the operation be cancelled due to all kinds of operational impediments and the risk of collateral damage.

(TS) 25X1 Tenet recalled talking about this issue for a long time—he “probed on the operations side,” and noted that the operation’s prospect of success as described to him was less than 30% (the figure agreed upon 25X1). But it was on the basis

of the operational judgment and recommendation of his DDO, C/CTC and C/NE that the DCI decided to "turn off" the operation. After all, his three senior operational officers were telling him, "this is ridiculous."

~~(TS)~~ Tenet then called National Security Adviser Samuel 'Sandy' Berger to relay the news that he had cancelled the operation. He did not ask for Berger's opinion as to whether to proceed but rather called Berger to inform him of his operational decision—not to debate the issue, (that is, he did not offer Berger a choice). Tenet did not indicate that Berger pushed back at all on the decision. Tenet did not tell the Principals' Committee why he cancelled the operation because, in his opinion, it was not worth their time to hear operational details for something he considered operationally unsound. He did not recall whether there was a memorandum memorializing his decision or the three CIA officers' recommendation. The decision was a matter of discipline and judgment; no one wanted to 'get' UBL more than CIA.

The Saudis

~~(TS)~~ Tenet remarked that his contemporaneous trip to Saudi Arabia (May 1998) was entirely unrelated to the cancellation of the capture operation. U.S. interaction with Saudi Arabia regarding UBL was a long and convoluted matter, extending over a period of years. Tenet described the relationship as involving "lots of push and shove engagement." (He suggested the Commission talk to Ambassador Wyche Fowler on this subject).

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~~(C)~~ In the summer of 1998, Tenet did not think the USG was putting much faith in the Saudi initiative to persuade the Taliban to give up UBL—at least no more faith than in any other opportunities that presented themselves. Rather, he saw the U.S. as "pushing every button it could" to get access and information across the board, including from the Saudis. Tenet noted, for example, that the U.S. worked with the 25X1 knowing that they would probably not deliver: "You're doing everything you know how to do." There were a lot of governments with different views on terrorism – the only solution was engagement, not to shun them: "you just keeping pushing the buttons."

(C) In 1998, Tenet thought that Crown Prince Abdullah was certainly sincere about helping the U.S.; he distinguished the Crown Prince as someone who was always helpful, but the Saudi royal family was opaque. (He noted that this attitude changed dramatically on May 9, 2003). But from Tenet's perspective, it was not productive to characterize liaison relationships as good or bad, since we need to work with liaison partners regardless: "You keep pushing the rock up the hill."

(C) Tenet noted that we now know about Saudi funding of suspect charitable organizations that were in fact supporting al Qaeda, but was not sure about the extent of what the U.S. knew about this at the time. It was certainly no secret that Saudi Arabia was a veritable "aircraft carrier" for terrorist financing, but while many Saudi individuals are prominent fundraisers, does this mean that the Saudis in general are financing terrorism? Saudi Arabia is not a tightly-run society, and Wahabism allows certain activities to occur; but Tenet also noted that UBL was opposed to the Saudi royal family.

(C) Overall, Tenet saw the Saudis as very concerned about UBL, but he was not always convinced that they gave the U.S. everything they knew about him. Saudi societal elite must have known that donations to charities were going to UBL, but Tenet cannot prove it. He could not remember whether he talked to Turki about this issue; he usually went to the Saudis on specific operational issues—other people in the U.S. Government were talking to Saudi Arabia about other issues. Tenet said that he has a clear sense in his mind that there is something deeper that prevented the Saudis from taking direct action against UBL, perhaps related to the bin Ladin family and its construction business, or perhaps it is simply that the Saudis tend toward being accommodating.

(C) Tenet had no recollection on the issue of U.S. access to the al Qaeda treasurer Madani al-Tayyib (to whom the Saudis had given sanctuary), but noted that getting direct access to people used to be a constant problem with the Saudis (though no longer). Bonk added that the Saudis were concerned that anything they gave the U.S. would be leaked to the media.

The Struggle for Access

(TS)^{25X1} Tenet noted that, in the context of using surrogate forces and people you did not know—and with no track record of being operationally adept—it simply made no sense to go forward with the capture operation in the spring of 1998. He explained that "the whole game" for CIA until 2001 was to increase its assets in Afghanistan, and thus its collection capabilities, with the hope of increasing the probability of 'getting' UBL. There is a dynamic involved in covert action. Simply because policymakers write a MON does not mean that CIA can carry out a covert action program if it lacks FI. Authorities are important, Tenet said, but it is the day-to-day activities of penetration and collecting intelligence that are critical to the success of covert action. He added that the reason why the military was so successful in Afghanistan after 9/11 was because of the intelligence preparation of the battlefield that had taken place beforehand.

(TS) Tenet argued that the charge that 'the administration gave the CIA authorities and the CIA did not execute' is deceiving — you cannot exercise authorities in the absence of FI and real people with capability. "FI is the basis for covert action," he maintained, and though authorities

may make everyone feel better, execution of covert action depends entirely on access: "Struggle for access is the story."

~~(TS)~~ 25X1 One of the problems here was that, even before CIA started to use Predator as a reconnaissance platform, it was clear that it was necessary to have U.S. eyes on the target—otherwise you are relying on people who you pay to provide information but do not control. Historical context is also relevant here; Tenet recalled the finding after the 1986 Beirut bombing, that CIA was sponsoring a group of locals who had bombed a hospital. "Authorities play out in a continuum of history, knowledge, predicate [such as the executive order against assassination], previous experience, and the DCI's ability to protect the institution," Tenet explained. These were very difficult issues to wrestle with, especially given the additional predicate, imposed by the MONs, that covert action against UBL was to be carried out in the context of capture and rendition—and not kill. "We were never put in a position to say; go kill this guy," Tenet said: CIA did not have the ability to kill UBL.

CIA's CT Strategy

~~(C)~~ Commission Roemer asked whether DCI Tenet developed a strategy for deploying resources across the Intelligence Community (IC) to increase opportunities once the capture operation was cancelled. DCI Tenet responded that planning continued after that operation was cancelled. He added that 1999 was a critical departure point internally for USG CT policy: "we" needed a new strategic plan, and CIA called it "the Plan."

~~(TS)~~ 25X1 The Plan emphasized a multifaceted approach to doing FI collection against UBL and his chief lieutenants. First and foremost, this strategy recognized that, to some extent, "we were victims of our own success": having 25X1 so many people, CIA had not developed the close 25X1 We needed to get close to him. 'The Plan' aimed to track and gather intelligence on al Qaeda, focusing on 25X1 and most importantly Afghanistan. 25X1 in Afghanistan, and making use of the Northern Alliance, 25X1 There was also a whole methodology for training the next generation of CI officers and to recruit the right people for CTC.

~~(S)~~ The foreign piece of this new approach was very important. Tenet stressed the point that the U.S. cannot fight terrorism alone, but needs to work with 25X1 provide training and education, and get foreign partners to exercise their will against terrorism. 25X1 25X1

~~(TS)~~ 25X1 To emphasize the argument that struggling for more access was the whole focus of CIA efforts, Tenet brought out a map of Afghanistan showing the culmination of these efforts on September 10 2001 25X1 25X1

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~~(S)~~ All the while when CIA was making these efforts, there were three very difficult periods of significant threat reporting: (1) the Millennium (approximately November 1999 to February 2000); (2) Ramadan (fall of 2000); and (3) the summer of 2001. These periods were "absolutely all-consuming" from an operational perspective. CIA was coordinating with ~~25~~ countries, (during the Millennium threat period Tenet talked to ~~25X1~~ partners personally), and extensive disruption efforts thwarted plots against a number of U.S. facilities. As a result, FI collection may have suffered. This is part of the context for understanding how CIA was trying to put itself in a better position for countering the terrorist threat.

~~(C)~~ When Tenet issued his "declaration of war" memorandum in December 1998, ADCI/Collection Charlie Allen began to get the IC together to coordinate collection efforts, convening daily meetings to drive collection. Allen "drives this boat every day," Tenet commented, adding that there was "an almost obsessional pace" to these collection efforts.

Responding to the East Africa Embassy Bombings, August 1998

~~(C)~~ Tenet recalled that evidence of UBL and al Qaeda's links to the embassy bombings emerged very quickly after the attacks, and that there were "a lot" of meetings—perhaps 3 to 5—to decide how the U.S. should respond. The military was charged with developing retaliatory options, but Tenet could not recall that 'boots on the ground' was one of these. A set of targets were developed ~~25X1~~ that there was going to be a meeting of the senior al Qaeda leadership at Khost (which the U.S. strike missed by a few hours). Targets in Sudan were also considered, including a UBL business and tannery.

~~(C)~~ The Sudanese targets engendered a lot of discussion. A decision was eventually made to separate the economic targets (such as the tannery and UBL business) from the al-Shifa target (he did not recall why the tannery was taken off the target list). Tenet remembered receiving a call at 2 a.m. from President Clinton to talk about this decision. Tenet summarized their discussion thus: the President asked him what he thought about the target set, Tenet told him, the President made his decision, "and that's that." Regarding the decision to target the al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant (where CIA had evidence that al Qaeda was developing a VX precursor), Tenet said that he still feels good about this decision, and nothing has ever changed his view on this. The targets chosen seemed reasonable to him at the time, and he thought the decision-making behind them was rational.

~~(C)~~ Tenet dismissed the notion that political concerns entered into discussions on whether to retaliate for the embassy bombings. He said that all the deliberations he sat in on were serious, and no political consideration ever showed up. But obviously this was a difficult political time, "that's the way it was." Tenet only saw President Clinton once during this period, but found him very engaged on this matter and not distracted at all by his personal problems; the issue was handled very professionally.

~~(C)~~ Tenet was not aware of whether there had been joint planning between CIA and the military on a target list before Operation Infinite Reach, nor whether the military had previously prepared contingency plans for such an attack. But he did know that ^{25X1, X5}

^{25X1, X5}

^{25X1, X5} there was active military engagement with CIA throughout this period through the Associate DCI for Military Support (ADC/MS). He thought that there probably was a lot of planning going on in the military. Tenet had no recollection of debates about further military strikes beyond the August 20th strikes (nor had Bonk) or of a Principals Committee meeting on the subject, and had not heard of Clarke's Delenda plan.

~~(TS)~~^{25X1} In Tenet's opinion, the objective of Operation Infinite Reach was to decapitate the al Qaeda leadership through military strikes. ^{25X1} al Qaeda's Khost meeting had "raised the bar" on U.S. objectives, and "made it more interesting." After the attacks failed to achieve this goal, however, CIA's next step was to return to covert action options and continue down that path.

Eyes-On Opportunities

~~(TS)~~^{25X1} Tenet related that there were three separate instances following the August 1998 strike when the gyros on TLAMs were spun in preparation for a shot at UBL. On all three occasions, Tenet recalled prudent, collective decision-making on the part of the policymakers. Tenet himself would provide the Principals with his own take on what was known and not known: "this was very straight up." He added that these were very difficult, time-sensitive decisions, and in no instance were the policymakers relying on American eyes on the targets. In one case, CIA only corroborated UBL's presence at the target site after the fact. (Tenet did not identify which instance provided the best opportunity to target UBL).

~~(TS)~~^{25X1} Tenet read from a CIA staff paper prepared to brief him for this interview (which will be provided to the Commission) to describe these three occasions which, he noted, were always "serendipitous"—and sometimes happened on a weekend, when Principals were not in their offices. He noted that at some point all the Principals had been given principle target sets ^{25X1} ~~25X1~~ (places where UBL was likely to be), so that when the opportunity arose a decision could be made quickly as to whether or not to launch the missiles.

~~(TS)~~^{25X1} The first instance occurred during the period from November through to late December, 1998. [*Others have discussed this as a December 23, 1998 sighting*]. There was concern about the veracity of the source and also about the risk of collateral damage to a nearby mosque.

~~(TS)~~^{25X1} The second instance occurred in the February to March, 1999 period, and focused on UBL's sighting near a UAE hunting camp ^{25X1} Tenet himself did not recall exactly what had happened on this occasion, but read from his briefing paper that a policy decision was made regarding the UAE in early March, the camp was dismantled, and ^{25X1} ~~25X1~~ UBL had been warned. Rousseau noted that in this case there was a serious foreign policy concern about collateral damage to the Emirate princes at the nearby hunting

camp, and that, according to diplomatic cable traffic, the UAE had consequently been warned by the NSC's Dick Clarke. Rousseau also mentioned a State reporting cable (written by the Ambassador) recounting how a UAE official was in a car with the Secretary of Defense and an Ambassador, and that the official thanked the USG for the warning call. As to whether Clarke's call happened before or after a decision had been made whether to strike UBL, Rousseau's impression was that the call was made before the decision. Tenet said he had no recollection of having given clearance to anyone to call the UAE.

~~(TS)~~ 25X1 The third instance occurred in May 1999 in the Kandahar area, where UBL was tracked for almost a week. No strike occurred, however, because the military was concerned about the precision of the source's reporting and the risk of collateral damage.

~~(TS)~~ 25X1 Tenet could not remember each of these instances specifically, but recalled that in all cases the same predicates prevented a strike: the intelligence was single-threaded, there was a risk of collateral damage, or the target was too dense. These were complicated decisions to make because a lot of data was involved, but at the end of the day Tenet found the decisions rational and reasonable, and there was not a lot of disagreement among the decision-makers. On the first and third instances, the TLAM option was rejected outright, and the second never came to a clear decision point.

Actionable Intelligence

~~(TS)~~ 25X1 Tenet did not remember a proposal for forward deploying AC-140s to minimize the risk of collateral damage in the case of a TLAM strike. He noted that the military brings targeting expertise to the table, and is traditionally very conservative—and for good measure; before committing military force, a high degree of confidence in the quality of intelligence is required. This was true in the case of UBL with regard to both the accuracy of the target's location (is he where these people say he is?) and the reliability of the 25X1 assets (what was their motive and agenda? Were the tribals penetrated by Al Qaeda operatives?) Tenet noted that in the decision-making process, it is the DCI's responsibility to point out shortfalls and gaps in the intelligence. But in none of the three instances when a military strike was considered was there a case when Tenet had high confidence in the intelligence and no one acted. In fact, he pointed out that there was no light between the DCI and the policymakers (including the President) in any of these instances.

~~(C)~~ Tenet did not support the argument that the policymakers' decisions on making strikes against UBL were affected by the fact that the U.S. was contemporaneously bombing Serbia and Kosovo. Tenet thought that the Kosovo war was irrelevant—the decision not to attack UBL in May 1999 was made on its own merits.

~~(TS)~~ 25X1 Tenet did not recall another instance after May 1999 when there was an opportunity to launch a TLAM strike against UBL. 25X1
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Legal Authorities

~~(TS)~~^{25X1} Tenet noted that these three opportunities to strike UBL were military operations, and not covert action programs, and thus entailed a very different set of authorities despite the fact that the intelligence issues were similar. While military action involves U.S. assets, covert action policy toward UBL was using surrogates, and these two sets of activities engendered very different levels of confidence in terms of who was doing the shooting. He stressed that there is not symmetry between these two policy tools.

~~(TS)~~^{25X1} On the issue of what authorities CIA had for conducting covert action programs against UBL, Tenet explained that, other than the authorities outlined in the July 1999 MON (which allowed ^{25X1} his instructions were plain: the MONs stated the clear predicate and preference of capturing or rendering UBL, and killing was only allowed in the context of a capture operation. It was understood, Tenet said, that the likelihood of actually detaining UBL was low while the probability that he might be killed in this context was high. But capture was the predicate for the operation.

~~(TS)~~^{25X1} Tenet noted that operational planning for a capture and a kill operation is very different. But the point is *not* that CIA only had authority to capture, but rather that the predicate throughout was that the basis for proceeding on a covert action program against UBL was a well-detailed capture operation. There was clear understanding that those carrying out the operation would encounter lethal action, and in the context of self-defense everyone recognized that UBL would be killed. But this was a very different context than that required for hiring snipers to hide in a tree and kill UBL.

~~(TS)~~^{25X1} According to Tenet, the reason why successive MONs were issued from 1998 to 1999 was in order to give CIA more latitude to capture/detain/render UBL. He noted that MONs are a matter of operation, law and policy. Before CIA sends an operational matter like this downtown there are internal deliberations about what CIA wants to achieve; then the CIA's draft goes to the NSC's lawyer's group, and then to a Deputies' Committee. After that, in the Principals' Committee, the Attorney General is very important and active in the review process. As Tenet explained, everyone was trying to work out how to 'get' UBL within the context of what was allowable by law.

~~(TS)~~^{25X1} Asked whether CIA received the covert action authority that he wanted, Tenet replied yes. He said that he never pounded the table to demand that Executive Order 12333 banning assassination be revoked—and no one in CIA asked for this. Tenet added, however, that he assumed that if CIA had had a good chance to kill UBL, then he would have asked for that authority and for EO 12333 to have been waived.

~~(TS)~~^{25X1} Tenet said that no one (neither Clarke or Berger) ever told him that the President wanted UBL dead. "We all wanted him dead," Tenet observed, but as a practical matter this was irrelevant without putting it down on a piece of paper. "The fact that we wanted him dead had nothing to do with the practical matter of getting him," he explained, and "the paper's what guides what we do. The paper's what matters. I don't care what anybody says... The paper's what guides operational planning and guidance."

~~(TS)~~ 25X1 Tenet noted that early on in the new Bush administration, DDCI McLaughlin met with National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice and her deputy, Steve Hadley, to walk them through the MONs.

The February 1999 MON

~~(TS)~~ 25X1 Tenet read out loud the original language in the February 1999 MON that had been replaced by the President's hand, that "if a successful capture operation is not feasible, we would request that you undertake offensive operations to kill Bin Ladin with his principal lieutenants."

~~(TS)~~ 25X1 According to Tenet, what CIA was trying to say with this language was, "we want a little latitude here." He saw the original text as indicating that CIA was asking to design a kill operation from the offset, or as General Counsel Muller explained, CIA sought the authority to kill UBL. That being said, Tenet was not aware of what internal discussions within CIA were behind this MON. Therefore, he could not speak to what CIA wanted to achieve from the MON, nor whether, for example, new intelligence or access had stimulated it (as was the case for the July 1999 MON). He said that he needed to find CIA's notice of transmittal of the draft MON to the NSC and CIA's internal papers produced 25X1 concerning this draft MON, and would get back to the Commission with more information. Tenet also noted that he did not know what the Attorney General's perspective had been on these draft authorities.

~~(TS)~~ 25X1 President Clinton hand-edited this MON, and replaced the language previously cited with his own: "We understand that capture may not be possible and that Bin Ladin and his lieutenants may be killed in the confrontation." According to Tenet, the President's language kept the policy consistent. It took the MON back to the previous 'capture preferred' authority, that is, giving less latitude than the original language would have authorized. He read from a note sent by the NSC 25X1 regarding the new MON, stating that EO 12333 was still in force and giving clear operational direction that a capture/rendition was required. [Note: Commissioner Ben-Veniste said that he would interpret the NSC's note differently, i.e. that killing was still allowed]. Muller said that the President's changes made it clear that CIA could not tell Masood to kill UBL. After this MON was issued, the DCI said that "we were plowing the same ground."

~~(TS)~~ 25X1 Tenet said that he did not talk directly to President Clinton about the handwritten edits on the February 1999 MON either before or after the MON was approved, and could not recall if he had spoken to Berger about them. He felt that the President is the commander-in-chief, that the MONs go through a long and laborious process, and that the language was clear and did not require clarification. Tenet thought that the new language might have come from NSC Legal's Jamie Baker and the NSC; Muller said that he could speculate about a legal reason for such language. Tenet added here that it is easy in 2004 to say how the process of determining new lethal authorities should have been back in 1998, but we need to look at the situation as it was at the time, and here context is key. Hence he needs to review CIA's history of the document. Tenet could not speak to the question of whether the President's amendment to the

MoN actually inhibited operations, for example, without being able to address questions regarding Masood, capability, and access at that time.¹

The July 1999 MON

~~(TS, 25X1)~~ Regarding the July 1999 MON, Tenet noted that the President granted CIA expanded authorities to shoot down aircraft because CIA had new intelligence that UBL was using helicopters to travel. When CIA could provide more intelligence about UBL, it received more authority, and in this instance, the new authorities were commensurate with new intelligence and thus a new opportunity. But the MON still had the predicate of capture. Thus perhaps the end state that was being authorized through this MON was different from previous MONs, but not the guidance as to what CIA was being asked to do. CIA never received authority to tell its 25X1 assets or other groups on the ground, "go kill him."

Covert Action

~~(TS, 25X1)~~ Tenet noted that clearly covert action against UBL was not successful before 9-11. The probability of success was about 10%, but Tenet added that there was also the possibility of "serendipity." "You don't prejudge these things," he explained, commenting that CIA had not expected to capture Khalid Sheikh Mohammed either 25X1
25X1 Ultimately, you are always simply trying to put yourself in a position to try to get the operation done. Tenet did not know how much the policymakers should have bet on covert action solving their terrorist problem, but noted again: CIA might get lucky.

~~(TS, 25X1)~~ Afghanistan was, however, an enormously difficult operational environment—and the Pakistanis did not help. (Tenet commented that the Pakistanis could have delivered ½ of UBL's lieutenants if they had wanted to, but were cooperating with UBL). Tenet judged CIA's odds of success in Afghanistan as probably 10-20%, but he did not put much stake on probability for "you could get really lucky on any given day." The only course was to be constantly thinking of ways to maximize your probability of success. According to Tenet, Berger understood this, and knew that covert action "wasn't a silver bullet."

Assets

~~(TS, 25X1)~~ Tenet recalled looking at lots of briefing charts in 1998 and 1999, showing that UBL was traveling toward the northern border with Uzbekistan, 25X1
25X1

¹ ~~(TS, 25X1)~~ In the DCI's follow-up session with the Commission, on January 28th, 2004, Tenet again spoke to the President's edits to the February 1999 MON, saying that once the President makes a determination it is done. Bonk added that one did not challenge the President's decision, and that no one recalled relaying to the White House that CIA thought the MON inhibited their ability to carry out a covert action using Masood. He would raise issues regarding Masood and the capture of UBL with the NSC along the lines that Masood was more interested in fighting the Taliban than capturing UBL or helping the U.S.

~~(TS, 25X1)~~ The Northern Alliance also held promise, although they had limited geographical access. In 1999, CIA met up with Masood 25X1 but Masood was being beaten militarily by the Taliban. Tenet described Masood as "a player", a man who was smart, respected, and had good contacts, though he was always "his own man." From Tenet's perspective, Masood was the most interesting of the CIA's options, because of his capabilities.

~~(TS, 25X1)~~ Tenet did not recall that there had been a flap within CIA when the Northern Alliance rocketed al Qaeda's Derunta training camp in late December 1999 without authority. But he noted that CIA had never asked for such authority and Tenet did not know why exactly. He explained, however, that these issues were tied to Afghan tribal politics and relationships, and raised large policy issues regarding choosing sides (Taliban vs. Northern Alliance). "It played inside the big Afghan dynamic," Tenet said, and affected major players such as 25X1 "this is big policy stuff! Bigger than just, go get this guy." He recalled policy discussions on these kinds of issues during the Clinton administration, but no one could conclude what to do. As for the Derunta attack, Tenet commented that since this occurred at the height of the Millennium threat, when he was in the middle of "the biggest asses to elbow" effort he had yet seen, this was no doubt just "a blip" on his screen. "Stuff happens at the lowest levels of every organization," he commented.

~~(TS, 25X1)~~ Asked why the CIA never put its own officers on the ground in Afghanistan, Tenet noted that the CIA did send in teams to meet up with the Northern Alliance on three occasions. But going into the south, and getting people into Kandahar, was not a trivial problem. 25X1

25X1

however, that he certainly looked into trying to send more people into Afghanistan, 25X1

25X1, X5

~~(TS)~~ Tenet said that he did not remember anything about a 25X1 becoming available to CIA in February 1999, nor a Small Group meeting on February 2nd about the need for the U.S. to be able to act quickly 25X1

25X1

The DCI's Role in the Policymaking Process: "I am not a policymaker"

~~(C)~~ Tenet clearly stated that he is not a policymaker. He found his role in the policymaking process to be clear: the DCI presents the intelligence, briefs what he is doing on FI collection and covert action, offers operational judgments—and then the policymakers debate the policy options. He himself does not make policy. (Tenet noted, however, that he would opine on a policy option that seemed particularly stupid or interfered with his own operations). He summed up his role in policy meetings as spending 99.9% of his time listening to policy questions. On

² In the Commission's January 28th 2004 interview with DCI Tenet, DC/AQ/CTC 25X1 is some misconception about a 25X1 supplement the information they had with 25X1

From her research, she thinks that the 25X1 noted that there tried to but none was forthcoming.

foreign trips, Tenet explained that he travels as an emissary of the policymakers, and always clears what he will say with the policy community. His talking points are always scripted in conjunction with the USG, unless he is talking about security and intelligence on which he is allowed free latitude.

(C) According to Tenet, there is "a very clear, bright red line" between the role of the DCI and that of the policymaker which is not crossed unless the President asks the DCI for his opinion. There must be discipline in CIA. Otherwise, "you cross that line and you're in Iran-Contra," Tenet said, adding, "we've had people who've gone to jail!" CIA initiates operations only to support the policy directives, and Tenet said that this is well understood by the Principals he has worked with and for, who know that you do not consciously cross over into others' responsibilities. Besides, he has enough to do without getting involved in policy issues. How did CIA react to the NSC's Dick Clarke pushing the CIA to initiate an MON or Finding? Tenet said that his response is to examine operational feasibility, like a mechanic. Policymakers must decide how intelligence fits into the entire structure: "it is their job to figure out where I fit into their puzzle." According to Tenet, intelligence is just one instrument of policy. "I know what I'm responsible for. I've got my box covered."

Resources

(S) Tenet noted that he could have had more flexibility on covert action if he had received more resources. Although from a foreign policy perspective there was never anything through both the Clinton and Bush administrations that he needed to do and was not able to, money was a big issue for him, and one that he did not think was satisfactorily resolved before 9-11. He cited terrorist financing, for example, as a covert action issue where more money would have been useful operationally.

(S) Ben Bonk noted that in 2000, after the Millennium threat had subsided, CTC had to scale back activities as it waited for supplemental money to arrive. (He did not recall raising this issue with the DCI, but rather CTC simply had to wait for the money to work its way through the system. 25X1 Moseman added that there was a "color of money" problem, that is, the question of whether money allocated for FI could be used for covert action and vice versa (funds were generally not able to be mixed and matched). The DCI said that if operations were measurably affected by these resource issues, he had not been aware of it.

(U) Commissioner Roemer asked for more specificity regarding where opposition to CIA's requests for more money came from. Tenet was well-prepared with a response. He said that the Commission should look at his Congressional testimony to the Joint Inquiry. CTC was increasing in resources while the rest of CIA was decreasing. Tenet recalled intense negotiation with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on his need for more money, and he wrote to the President twice asking for additional resources. (He will provide the Commission with this correspondence). In 1998, he took the unprecedented move of going out of channels by speaking directly to Speaker Gingrich to get the necessary supplemental—explaining that this was the only way he knew to get the money he needed. The resulting 25X1 was "a lifesaver for terrorism" and other programs (not just for CTC). Tenet also recalled telling Senator Kyl (or

possibly Senator Roberts) in his Congressional testimony that he needed an additional 25X1 each year over several years. According to Tenet, he did everything that he could to secure the necessary funding. This included reprogramming money (though he noted that reprogramming requires the support of six Congressional Committees, raises larger questions regarding the National Foreign Intelligence Program base, and also inhibits his operational flexibility). Tenet added that the money after 9-11 was "a big, big plus" 25X1 25X1

~~(C)~~ Tenet remarked that supplementals are "great"—CTC's money was a result of supplementals, for example—but they only pay for certain things. What is needed above all is to add to the base. In this sense, it is not possible to separate CT funding specifically (CTC and Alec Station) from the broader picture of, for instance, the efforts of CIA's case officers around the world. No single metric will suffice for understanding how much CIA was spending on its CT efforts, because this is not how the business works. (Tenet noted, however, that there were about 25X1 people working CT, but there were also 25X1 people working the Balkans issue in CIA, i.e. CIA did not have enough personnel on CT).

~~(S)~~ To really understand how all of CIA's funding was being reflected in CT activity, Tenet said that he needed to take off his CIA hat and put on his DCI hat, because he had so many things to fix across the Intelligence Community: SIGINT, recruitment, training, languages and so on. According to Tenet, the base is what energizes the CT effort, and in this respect he had a lot of work to do. 25X1 25X1

attrition in the DO when Tenet became DCI in 1997 was astounding. Shame on CIA for letting it happen, he said. As a result, CIA launched an effort to recruit case officers, and through 'The Plan', a unique training program for CT officers 25X1

To do that recruiting and training, CIA needed to invest in infrastructure, rebuilding the system from the ground up. As a senior manager, this was what Tenet thought was necessary: to rebuild across the board.

~~(C)~~ Tenet noted that at the time he understood that the DO was not going to be able to meet the requirements of its Strategic Plan 25X1 but said that this was all the money he had; he also knew that if he set the bar lower, the DO would recruit even fewer people, so he chose a number that was larger than was possible. To find a resource plan to support the new capabilities that Tenet wanted to build, he directed the Commission's attention first, to the CIA's budget submission to Congress, and second, to the fact that ADCI/C Charlie Allen was "driving the Community nuts" in terms of collection against terrorism. Tenet did not recall Dick Clarke complaining to him about the CIA's budget numbers, and was also unaware of Clarke's budgetary exercise involving the CIA's Chief Financial Officer. No one at the NSC ever told him that they were unhappy with his performance.

(U) On the question of Congressional interest in Tenet's efforts, he noted that between 1997 and 2001 he was only invited once by the House Permanent Select Intelligence Committee (HPSCI) to give testimony on the subject of his strategic CT program (as opposed to budgetary matters), despite the fact that he was delivering warning after warning on terrorism. *[It should be noted that, in the Commissioner/Commission-staff luncheon that day, Commissioner Roemer noted that*

(a) Senator Shelby, Chairman of the SSCI, opposed DCI Tenet and likely refrained from inviting him in order not to give DCI Tenet a platform to look good, and (b) DCI Tenet was familiar with how Congress worked and knew that if he had something that he wanted to share with Congress, such as a CT strategy, he could have worked with Congress to secure an opportunity to testify.]

~~(C)~~ If CIA had had more money, would this have made a difference in preventing the 9-11 attacks? Tenet responded that the question raised the issue of what effect on the plot capturing or killing UBL would have had. He noted that al Qaeda plans for a long time. (the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Kenya was planned for five year), has impressive operational security, is careful, compartmentalized, and decentralized regarding its command and control. The clear implication of Tenet's words was that it was unlikely that greater resources would have prevented the attacks.

The DCI's Declaration of War, December 1998

~~(TS)~~ On the morning of December 4, 1998, the President's Daily Briefing (PDB) reported that there was a heightened threat environment, and that UBL and his allies were moving closer to implementing an attack on U.S. interests—the following week there would be a similar report referring to imminent attacks. Thus the DCI's mindset when he issued his 'declaration of war' against UBL was focused on the need to better manage internal mechanisms within the Intelligence Community to make sure that analysis and collection on UBL were on track. His memo had specific taskings, and subsequently ADCI/C Charlie Allen began to hold daily meetings. According to Tenet, his memo was a reflection of what was on his mind at the time, and an instruction to "let it rip."

~~(S)~~ This was a period when the DCI was meeting regularly with CTC on the UBL problem. And, contrary to the Joint Inquiry's conclusions, Tenet insisted that there was a plan for ramping up war-like activities. His memo was the beginning of an educational process as to how to attack the threat differently, that ultimately resulted in 'The Plan.' From this point, CTC and the DDO were pushing everyone to work harder, and Allen was driving the collection community. (Zelikow also noted that this was the point when daily Situation Reports began to be sent to the White House, which were probably the same as the briefings being prepared for the DCI).

~~(S)~~ Tenet did not recall a proposal discussed in the Small Group to fly a U2 over Afghanistan in February 1999 (and recommended the Commission talk to Charlie Allen about this), but noted that this was probably part of a constant struggle for better collection over Afghanistan. [Tenet said he would check on this issue for the Commission].

Terrorist Financing

~~(TS)~~ 25X1 Expansive authorities were not in place to allow CIA to pursue UBL's finances.

25X1

25X1

Mid-1999

~~(S)~~ Zelikow cited a June 1999 memo from Berger (though most likely written by Clarke) to President Clinton, which summarized CT activities and concerns at the time. According to the memo:

- (1) The U.S. was doing disruptions, 25X1 had deferred action on the Northern Alliance, was pushing targeting on UBL via 25X1 in order to "capture" him, had no luck with a missile attack – and the threat was continuing. More attacks were a certainty and could come in the U.S. and involve WMD.
- (2) We will not get better intelligence.
- (3) We cannot wait around.
- (4) The next step is preemption—such as going after Derunta—or waiting to be attacked, but by then the camps will be empty.
- (5) Covert action was not fruitful.

Tenet said that he believed this was a fair state of events for that period, and agreed with Clarke's characterization, (though not on the point that the U.S. would not get more information on WMD).

~~(S)~~ Regarding the turn-over in CTC's leadership at CIA in mid-1999, Tenet said that he did not recall Clarke talking to him about C/CTC Geoff O'Connell and noted that if he did, any concerns expressed by Clarke would not have mattered to him: he did not care whether Clarke did not like O'Connell. [Note: Clarke has told the Commission he asked Tenet to fire O'Connell]. Tenet said no concerns were involved in the changes at CTC other than the normal, routine rotation of officers. He found C/Alec Mike Scheuer to be an enormously talented individual who he liked very much, and O'Connell was also very good. He was aware that there was tension within CTC

(between Scheuer and the management), and noted that this no doubt affected the chain of command and how Scheuer was viewed.

~~(S)~~ By the summer of 1999, Tenet noted that CT efforts against UBL may not have looked as if they were on a good track, but worldwide—and outside of Afghanistan—things were always getting better from an operations tempo perspective. Disruptions and recruitment were continuing; the U.S. “was playing offense and defense simultaneously.” Tenet tried to convey a sense of how much activity was going on at CIA— that CT efforts were not static—saying that unless you “lived” here (at CIA), you could not understand just how much was happening. Everything was moving along, Tenet explained, and things were always getting better.

~~(S)~~ Tenet did not recall another Saudi initiative to put pressure on the Taliban to expel UBL in the summer of 1999, nor a meeting of the Small Group to discuss it. He also did not remember intelligence indicating that the Saudis had sent the Taliban money via the UAE (as reported in the PDB in May and July 1999).

The Northern Alliance

~~(TS)~~ 25X1 According to Tenet, Masood looked as if he had capabilities that were worth investing in; he had access on the ground and territory, he might well be able to generate networks, and 25X1

25X1

Yet Masood was not *our* man—his issue was fighting the Taliban, that is, he had broader interests than the U.S.’s UBL-focus. 25X1
25X1

~~(TS)~~ 25X1 CIA had no authority to talk to Masood about bringing the fight to the Taliban because this was a policy issue. There were policy discussions about arming the Northern Alliance against the Taliban, but this was a complicated matter for the USG because it was not a straight-up CT issue but was woven into the geopolitics of the region, and thus tied up with policy toward Pakistan, India, Russia, and so on. The USG never came to a conclusion on the subject. Tenet did not recall exactly what he said at these policy discussions, but believes he was an advocate of giving lethal assistance to Masood (though he needs to check on this). This was certainly the clear position at lower levels of the USG, but he is not sure how it played out at upper levels.

Learning from the Millennium Threat

~~(TS)~~ Tenet recalled the Millennium threat as an exhausting period of time (November 1999 through February 2000). Cooperation was exceptional during this period; he had daily consultations with Berger, the Attorney General, and the Director of the FBI, there was good interaction with the FBI at all levels, and more FISAs were processed during a short period of time than ever before. CIA was working across the world: 36 targets (al Qaeda personnel) were identified, and 21 individuals were caught, and there were disruptions “all over the place.” Tenet

described this as probably the most difficult operational environment CIA had ever faced, and CIA was exhausted by it.

(C) According to Tenet, there were a number of takeaways from this experience. First, Ressam was stopped from crossing the border into the U.S. 25X1

25X1 here was the plot against LAX and the Seattle target—two domestic targets. Retrospectively, these were important examples of the potential for domestic attack, and this may have been a time to focus on the domestic threat they represented. In March 2000, Berger held a resource meeting on the Millennium, to discuss how to do this better. Agencies came to the table asking for a lot of money, and the meeting never went anywhere—he is not sure why.

(C) Looking back now, Tenet recognizes that at this time the country was absolutely unprotected. Although the U.S. was under attack, border, visas, and watchlists were not thought about, because all of the focus was on reporting and disrupting abroad with little thought for the connection back to the homeland. Hindsight is perfect, however, and Tenet noted that during the Millennium threat period everyone was doing what they could with the best of intentions, racing from threat to threat.

(C) This was particularly salient regarding the airline threat. He noted that there were 25 very good threat reports disseminated to FAA at this time, 25X1 But there was no mechanism in place to forcibly close the security loopholes on the domestic front. This was despite the fact that the Gore Commission and the Pan Am 103 disaster had provided evidence of the threat from hijackings. (Zelikow noted here that the Gore Commission said nothing about hijacking, and Pan Am 103 was not evidence about hijacking)]. Tenet continued that there was no homeland security mechanism to take the lessons from what did *not* happen and subsequently to raise defensive barriers. [Note: Tenet noted for the record in his December 28, 2004 interview with the Commission that the March 2000 Principals Committee meeting on lessons from the Millennium Threat did, in fact, address homeland security issues].

(C) Tenet observed that the Millennium threat was followed by the Cole bombings, and then the Ramadan threat at the end of 2000, which was another intense period. “You’re running like hell” throughout this entire timeframe, he said, at least this was how the DCI thought of it. The Principals, the NSC, the CSG—all these individuals lived through these threat periods and were heavily involved and experienced with the threat they faced. Tenet again observed that, unless you live through it you do not know what you are talking about.

Working with the FBI

(C) During the Millennium threat period, Tenet and Director Freeh talked on a daily basis, but there was, in fact, nothing categorically different about this period in terms of the CIA-FBI relationship. Freeh and Tenet sat down with the Gang of Eight at least once a month to review intelligence priorities, including counterintelligence and counterterrorism—there was top-level interaction between CIA and the Bureau. On a working level, CIA and FBI worked specific cases overseas, such as the Kansi rendition, and when the FBI expanded overseas there were

meetings 25X1
different cultures.

in order to understand each other's roles and

~~(C)~~ The iron-clad wall between intelligence and law enforcement was a large impediment, however. Limitations on the CIA-FBI working relationship included the fact that the Bureau had no CT headquarters (but ran their CT efforts out of their New York headquarters), and the FBI lacked reports officers, the ability to link cases, spot trends and do analyses, and did not disseminate intelligence. There were also cultural issues between intelligence and law enforcement, and this wall also existed within FBI. In Tenet's opinion, the SDNY is the body that was really running terrorism.

~~(C)~~ That being said, there was direct contact between FBI and CIA at senior and personal levels, and they were working together within the U.S. (although there was uneven cooperation there), 25X1

It was hard to access FBI's 302s, and Tenet said that he may have been involved episodically in trying to address this problem. (According to Bonk, the 302 issue would have been worked at Bonk's level on a case by case basis). There were, of course, always limitations on what CIA could obtain from the Bureau, but "within the system we lived in," there was steady progress.

Working with NSA

~~(TS)~~ Tenet noted that NSA would complain that it was not receiving CIA's operational traffic; but he said that no one brought to his attention complaints from CTC about non-disseminated NSA material. [*This was in reference to the complaint made by C/Alec Mike Scheuer that NSA was not responding to CTC's requests for raw SIGINT*]. For these kinds of issues to be resolved by the DCI, Tenet noted that they have to be put on the DCI's table. If Tenet did in fact tell his DDCI General Gordon to "take care of it", he said that he just assumed that it was taken care of. He does not recall any conversations with Director of NSA Mike Hayden about this. The problem was fixed after 9-11 (or possibly earlier, according to Rousseau). [Rousseau noted that he would research this issue for the Commission]. According to Bonk, 25X1

25X1

~~(TS)~~ Overall, Tenet described the CIA's relationship with NSA as very strong throughout the pre-9-11 period. 25X1

25X1

25X1 and there were only "minor perturbations" in the relationship. On Scheuer's problem with NSA, 25X1

25X1

and noted that there is clearly a NSA side to the story.

Collection and Management Authority

~~(C)~~ Was there a community-wide collection strategy against the terrorism target? Tenet directed the Commission to talk with ADCI/C Charlie Allen, who carried out an IC collection strategy in accordance with Tenet's directive in the December 1998 'we are at war' memo. According to Tenet, Allen was attacking the problem of community collection every day since 1999, and Tenet believes that Allen had both the necessary clout and authority, and got the responses he needed from the IC.

~~(C)~~ There is bigger piece of this strategy, for example language capability. Tenet noted that there was no programmatic concept at CIA to support building language capability, but a language program has now been built into recruitment and training, with incentives for maintaining language capabilities and building language skills. This programmatic approach was adopted at CIA and then shared with the rest of the IC, and is now in place—but he acknowledged that "we were late."

~~(C)~~ Asked whether he thought that the DCI has sufficient management authority over the IC, Tenet wished to reserve his comments for the future so that he could provide thoughtful input. He did say, however, that he was not in favor of the creation of a Director for National Intelligence (DNI), arguing that by separating the DNI from operators and analysts, the DNI is powerless and you will instead have merely a figurehead that does not do much.

~~(C)~~ Tenet added that there is a meeting in the DCI Conference Room at 5pm five days a week, with DIA, FBI, NSA, the Terrorist Threat Integration Center (TTIC), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Information Operations Center (IOC)—"everyone is there." In Tenet's opinion, it is the most important meeting in Washington, and all major issues are discussed.

Concluding Comments

~~(C)~~ Tenet noted that on the CT issues, he is currently acting on autopilot: he does not need a lot of policymakers' time in order for him to do his job, he simply keeps the Principals informed (and he added that the continuity of the CSG is useful in this respect). But the problem with the issue is, "unless you live it, you don't know it." He explained that before 9-11 there were sometimes questions as to whether the threat warnings were disinformation, but for those who lived with this issue there was an intuitive, gut feeling that told them that this was not deception. This insight is a result of having spent time on the target, and Tenet said that, unfortunately, a new set of policymakers had to live the threat in the worst possible way.

~~(C)~~ Tenet himself has made a personal choice to become extremely involved in the terrorist issue on an operational level, giving him both the high-level and the low-level perspective. 25X1
25X1

25X1

Working on CT demands a lot of time, and it is important to choose the right people and put them in the right places, since the rest of the IC works off of what CIA does. (Tenet noted that "'central' means something in this context").

~~(C)~~ According to Tenet, the PATRIOT Act has been the single best thing that has happened, giving the IC very powerful tools that it did not have before. In hindsight, he noted that the IC probably did not sit down after the Millennium threat experience and think strategically about all the domestic issues that should have been addressed, such borders problems, visas, watchlists, tip-off, and so on—no one was thinking that these problems were occurring every day, despite the fact that the pace of events was not as elevated.

~~(C)~~ Bonk added that, after the Millennium threat, CTC had to spend time convincing people ^{25X1} that there was actually a threat and that the entire alert had not been a hoax—this was especially true because of the contemporaneous Y2K threat. Tenet agreed, commenting that 1/2 of foreign partners “thought we were crazy”, from 1998 onwards ^{25X1} where there was an attitude that “it was not their problem.” ^{25X1} Tenet noted that this attitude was a little like, “if it doesn’t happen to you, it doesn’t count.”

Issues that DCI Tenet did not recall and/or said he would look up:

- (1) Whether the U.S. did not retaliate after Khobar Towers 25X1
25X1
- (2) Whether UBL's possible connection to the OPM/SANG bombing was investigated.
- (3) 25X1
- (4)
- (5) The circumstances surrounding 25X1 refusal to give the CIA access to al Qaeda
25X1
- (6) Why the tannery was taken off of the 1998 retaliatory targets list.
- (7) Did DCI Tenet participate in debates regarding military strike options after the retaliation for the East African embassy bombings.
- (8) The sequence of events as to when Dick Clarke called the UAE about the possible strike near the hunting camp, and whether DCI Tenet specifically or CIA generally cleared the call before it happened.
- (9) CIA's transmittal letter and internal documents 25X1 concerning the draft MoN authorizing "offensive operations" against UBL, and any notes by DCI Tenet or other CIA employees reflecting what the AG's position was on this draft.
- (10) Whether CIA's request for the draft MoN authorizing "offensive operations" against UBL reflect that the CIA actually had assets in place who could carry out such an operation.
- (11) Did the MoN with the President's handwritten edits actually help CIA?
- (12) Why the CIA did not ask for authority to attack the Derunta camp.
- (13) Issues surrounding the availability of the 25X1 and USG preparation for a response.
- (14) Why the U2 flight did not happen.
- (15) The story behind CIA asking for authority 25X1
- (16) Examine the strike package regarding the May 1999 incident in which UBL was placed at a location 25X1
- (17) Why didn't CIA insert anyone into Afghanistan?
- (18) The nature of contacts with the Saudis after Clarke's memo of June 1999.
- (19) Two articles (PDB?) in May-June 1999, one entitled "Saudi backsliding on terrorism" and that the Saudis had been blackmailed to send 25X1 to the Taliban via UAE.
- (20) Whether DCI Tenet was an advocate of giving lethal aid to the NA so that the NA would go after UBL.
- (21) Whether DCI Tenet talked with Hayden about information-sharing issues between CIA and NSA 25X1
- (22) Whether Scheuer's problem 25X1 NSA was an isolated problem and how it was fixed.
- (23) Whether DCI Tenet has sufficient authority over the IC.

TO OBTAIN FROM CIA

- (1) All of the DI products
- (2) The binder done by DCI Tenet's staff to prepare him for this interview. This includes:
 - a. A detailed CIA timeline
- (3) The memo by Charlie Allen concerning what he had accomplished in driving collection after the 1998 declaration of war memorandum.
- (4) DCI Tenet's correspondence with OMB regarding more money.