

~~TOP SECRET~~ 25X1

MFR 04017364

Event: Interview of George Tenet

Type of Event: Interview

Date: January 28, 2004

Special Access Issues: Treat as ~~TOP SECRET~~ 25X1

Additional notes: The witness was placed under oath at the start of his first interview on January 22, 2004. At the start of this interview, he was reminded that he was still under oath

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Reviewed by: Gordon Lederman

Team Number: Three

Location: DCI Conference Room, CIA HQs

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

Participants – Commission: Commissioner Richard Ben-Veniste, Philip Zelikow, Dan Marcus, Mike Hurley, Alexis Albion, Gordon Lederman

The Kuala Lumpur (KL) Story

(S) Tenet noted that he had not reviewed the material on this story, (and Zelikow acknowledged that the DCI is not a first hand witness for this episode). But the DCI observed that the good news about the KL story is that CIA was tracking Al Qaeda operative Khalid al Midhar. In Tenet's opinion, the Joint Inquiry's report misinterpreted all of this; there is a misconception that CIA and FBI were not talking to each other, but FBI was, in fact, far more aware of the Kuala Lumpur meeting than has previously been made public. If you go back and review the reporting, he said, it is clear that the information about the meeting did not just go to CIA but to other institutions as well. (Tenet added that he also thinks the Joint Inquiry exaggerated the importance of the New York meeting). [Zelikow noted that the Commission had evidence that FBI was informed of this matter by CIA, former FBI Director Freeh has briefed the Commission on this subject twice, and the Commission noted this in its staff statement at its January 2004 public hearing].

(S) Ultimately, the meaning of the KL story comes back to the watchlisting issue, and questions of systems, people, and training. Tenet asked, what is the responsibility of other institutions as far as watchlisting is concerned? It is, he replied, to make sure that you do not get just one bite of the apple. We now have the Terrorist Threat Integration Center and other mechanisms; but previously, how many people understood a lot about watchlisting issues? On an operational level, Tenet said that watchlisting is not foolproof in terms of stopping people with either false or real documents, but it did keep some people out of the country. He proposed that we need to have a capability throughout government such that those who read this kind of traffic have an equal responsibility to make sure the appropriate people are watchlisted, and that a certain amount of redundancy is built into the system.

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(C) Tenet noted that CIA is now reviewing every file going back 25X1 to see if the people involved in this meeting can be identified. All the agencies have been asked to create focal point to do the same thing, including the FBI. Tenet observed, however, that given the virtual environment we know work in, it is probably not realistic to think that we can catch all information on this issue; though CIA has pressed staff to only use formal, paper traffic, there is a lot on email that is hard to capture.

(TS) Russo added two further factual points on the management of this transnational case: 1) in response to the finding that CIA did not look broadly enough to get information on the KL suspects—i.e. did not ask the National Security Agency (NSA) to search its database, he reminded the Commission that 25X1 the Agency's information retrieval system, included disseminated NSA traffic, and this was the perspective CIA operators had when they queried 25X1 2) CIA asked NSA to put Midhar on a watchlist. In other words, in their own way, CIA was setting up a way to manage this case and to follow Midhar after he left KL. 25X1 25X1 added that, having put individuals on the NSA tipper, CIA would have been counting on NSA to pass on additional undisseminated information without CIA having to ask for it.

(C) Zelikow noted that the Commission's perspective on the KL story is to see it less in terms of a watchlisting blunder and more as a failed intelligence operation that opens a window onto systemic problems at CIA in managing transnational operations. Tenet noted first, that there are 25X1 other intelligence operations going on simultaneously. Second, a place like the Counterterrorist Center (CTC) works on a hub and spoke concept. CIA drives resources very hard from the center; the hub at CTC performs traces and analysis, sometimes gives direction on cases, sets priorities, and drives resources to various, disparate people. But at the end of the day, the hub has to rely on others to inform it. The field, however, cannot be expected to absorb the "fire hose" of information that headquarters receives, and headquarters cannot simply shoot the fire hose out to the field or officers will be flooded. There needs to a collaborative effort between HQs and the field. Moreover, you cannot simply focus on one issue and neglect the rest of the pie, or you are just hurting yourself in the long-run, Tenet observed. 25X1 added that it is not unusual for there to be a delay on receiving a response from the field, especially when dealing with foreign liaison).

(S) In the absence of a lot more staff at CTC, and given the high operational tempo at which it was performing in the late 1990s, Tenet acknowledged that roles and missions may have been an issue; it might not be expected that C/CTC Cofer Black and C/Alec Rich Blee, should remember every case. Instead, it was always, "on to the next thing." A decision always needs to be made as to which cases to manage yourself and which you let the hub and spoke deal with. In this time frame, Tenet said, Black and others were involving him in a lot of cases at a detailed level of granularity. But Tenet does not recall the KL case being highlighted for him; the case did not leap out at him.

(C) Zelikow noted that Deputy Director of Operations (DDO) Jim Pavitt had described managing an intelligence case by using the analogy of how the victim of a car accident is brought to the hospital by way of a chain of people, where an attending physician is responsible for his case overall. Tenet observed that, "you better make sure you have enough attendings." CIA did not

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have enough: "it's people—people's the issue," he said, adding that CIA could not recruit and train new people fast enough. Money is important here on the front end as a strategic investment, especially for handing operations overseas, but well trained people who know the target is the real answer. "We're building it," Tenet said, but creating a cadre of officers is simply one of those things that you need to work your way through. Tenet said that it was important to note that well-trained people are required at both HQs and in the field—if you have one, and not the other, the case falls flat. This tension between HQs and the field is real and live today. Tenet is still trying to push for more people out in the field.

The Millennium After-Action Review

~~(C)~~ Tenet noted that he wished to correct his statement from his earlier interview with the Commission (January 22, 2004) that no homeland security mechanism was part of the Millennium after-action review. The March 10th, 2000 after-action report at NSC had four issues on its agenda, one of which was immigration, and another US-Canadian border security. The meeting thus covered issues broader than simply CIA's areas of responsibility, and there was attention to domestic security.

~~(C)~~ According to Tenet, a four-step process was envisioned for directing more resources toward the Al Qaeda threat coming out of this meeting. On March 12th, Tenet met with National Security Adviser Sandy Berger regarding counterterrorism (CT) funding, which had been item number 3 on the after-action review's agenda. But asked whether CIA did in fact receive a CT supplemental, the DCI was himself unsure; he said that he did not recall whether a supplemental had actually come out of this meeting, and when he reviewed the material on this he lost the thread: "I don't know what happened." He did not recall if a request for a supplemental even moved out of CIA to downtown, and referred the Commission to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to find out what happened. (Bonk added here that he recalled there being a series of meetings on this below the level of the DCI, and that CIA received a CT supplemental of 25X1 in two-year money around August 2000). Tenet said that it was his impression at the March 10th meeting, however, that all the agencies were putting their money needs on the table, such that "it choked the horse." How this translated into CIA's needs, however, he did not know. *[The Commission's General Counsel, Dan Marcus, remarked that Team 2's Kevin Scheid is investigating this matter at CIA].*

Predator

~~(TS)~~ 25X1 Tenet recalled that the 25X1 program was a joint CIA-DOD (Air Force) effort, originating from the need for more eyes on targets, and that Predator flew 17 times over Afghanistan in 2000 in reconnaissance mode. A tall man in a white robe was spotted, and the DCI said that this could have been UBL, though he also said that he had seen other images of tall men in white robes striding around, and there was no corroboration that this was indeed UBL. At the time, Tenet thought that the Predator platform clearly had enormous promise. The timeliness of the instrument was very interesting if it could be armed. He also noted the advantage to having fusion of data all occurring in one place in real-time; from a bureaucratic point of view it was "one-stop shopping."

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(TS 25X1) As 2000 wound down 25X1, X4 precluded further UAV flights. At least by the autumn of 2000, Tenet remembered that a position began to emerge at CIA that Predator had to be weaponized before it flew again.¹ There had been at least one instance during its reconnaissance flights when the UAV had been videotaped by the Taliban, and from CIA's perspective continuing to fly recon. flights might jeopardize the possibility for using Predator in the armed mode. Furthermore, previous experience had shown that if a target were spotted in Afghanistan, it took at least an hour to spin-up the TLAMs—Tenet seemed to be implying here that the likelihood of using the UAV to effect a cruise missile strike was low. He added that, even in September 2000, the Air Force was not yet sure whether the armed UAV would work against the targets, in terms of the fragmentation ability of the munition to penetrate targets.

(TS 25X1) In late 2000, the issue arose of whether Predator should be brought back 25X1 25X1 Tenet thinks both he and Berger made the decision to do so. Tenet did not recall the question of deploying armed Predator until his first meeting with National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice.

(TS 25X1) Bonk recalled that impediments to further development of the Predator program began early on. For example, the NSC had told CIA that DOD had agreed to absorb the cost of any lost UAVs, but this turned out not to be the case: it was clear that DOD expected to be reimbursed. Funding problems were underway almost from the very first flights over Afghanistan, when an extra 25X1 was needed for a Predator airframe. But according to Tenet, he does not think that these funding issues slowed down progress on the program. The DCI recalled that on July 25, 2001, he told NSC that he had to go to the Hill to explain to the Appropriations Committee what was behind his request for more money [presumably for Predator]. Bonk added that the wrangling over money on this issue "was more aggravating than delaying," and if it was delaying it was only by days, not weeks (and this was also Tenet's recollection).

(TS 25X1) According to Tenet, the return of Predator 25X1 was delayed after the attack on the Cole in case it was needed for intelligence gathering or to do a BDA for strikes on Afghanistan.

Community Management: Working with DOD

(C) Regarding the DCI's working through community management issues with the Secretary of Defense, Tenet said that he established the predicate before 9-11 of meeting with the Deputy Secretary of Defense rather than the Secretary himself, but met frequently with Deputies John Hamre or Rudy de Leon. Currently, the channel is directly to Secretary Rumsfeld, with whom he meets once every two weeks "religiously", and this is very effective. Tenet noted, however, that either the Secretary or Deputy's level is fine, and who he meets with depends on how

¹ (TS 25X1) According to Bonk, the Air Force had a long-term program to arm UAVs after a couple of years. After CIA learned of this, the Agency started to look into the idea of weaponization with the Air Force, to see if the program could be speeded up to meet CIA needs. Therefore, there was a weaponization effort underway before fall 2000, but the timeline was beyond CIA's needs.

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responsibilities are broken up and who gets the intelligence portfolio. He added that he finds the new position of Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence, currently held by Steve Cambone, to be very helpful because there is not a place to talk about defense intelligence issues at one place at the CJS level.

~~(C)~~ Tenet recalled little about his meetings with Sec Def Rumsfeld on May 4th and July 27th 2001m, but noted that DDCI/Community Management Joan Dempsey would have attended. (CIA will check to see if there are MFRs for these meetings).

Responding to the Attack on the U.S.S. Cole

~~(S)~~ Tenet was not aware of any warning about the attack on the Cole in October 2000, though he noted that in hindsight there had been report of a coming attack on the 5th or 6th Fleet. The DCI said that his recollection of the CIA's investigation into the attack was entirely dependent on the documents in his briefing book, from which he noted that CTC's first briefing on responsibility for the Cole was on November 10; he presumed this was a briefing for the CSG, but is not sure. Reading from the slides prepared for the briefing, Tenet remarked that the findings were quite impressive—"it ain't bad!" It was his impression that the information in this briefing did not change very much thereafter.

~~(C)~~ Tenet was surprised at the notion that the NSC was awaiting his conclusive judgment on responsibility for the Cole attack before taking action against al Qaeda. [*Note: In his interview with the Commission, National Security Adviser Sandy Berger said that the USG was essentially waiting for such a judgment from his DCI before taking responsive action*]. Both Tenet and Moseman joked that the DCI was not "the Oracle at Delphi." He had no recollection of anyone telling him that there were not going to act until he delivered a judgment on responsibility. He simply kept bringing the NSC what the CIA had found, and briefing the same findings.

~~(C)~~ It was Tenet's position that it was up to him to present the case, and then it was up to the Principals to decide if this was good enough to justify use of military force; the DCI cannot decide what information is "good enough" to call in the military. Tenet's response to the Principals who were waiting for a final word from him would have been, "the ball's in your court...It's not like this stuff is getting any richer."

~~(C)~~ Tenet's sense was that by late November, CIA's findings were "pretty good," and that the intelligence was not going to get any better than that. Once Nashiri was identified as a link between the Cole and the East Africa Embassy bombings, it was all wrapped up, Tenet said. He does not think that they had much on the question of central command and control of the operation linking back to Afghanistan, however.

~~(C)~~ In hindsight, Tenet noted, "it's hard for me to believe this wasn't Bin Ladin, slam-dunk." But he did not recall Berger or anyone else telling him, "we're just waiting for the magic words." Tenet also did not remember having any conversation with Berger on the subject of responsibility for the Cole, any discussions on the state of evidence with either Berger or the President, or any discussions about retaliation for the attack. He had no recollection of anyone

saying that the issue should be left for the new administration. Nor did he recall telling his officers in CTC to tamp down information coming out of the Cole investigation. Tenet did not remember a Principals Committee meeting on December 21st 2000, nor the account of this meeting given by Richard Miniter (in *Losing Bin Ladin: How Bill Clinton's Failure Unleashed Global Terror*), and Zelikow's description of exchanges in the meeting rang no bells.

The Blue Sky Memo

~~(C)~~ Tenet recalled that the Blue Sky memo was a response to the question: what would you do about the problem in Afghanistan in an unstructured policy and resources environment? He does not recall whether he saw the memo before it went to NSC, though he thinks DDCI McLaughlin did. He does not remember any conversations with Berger about the memo, and believes the administration simply ran out of time to address the issues the memo brought up.

The Transition

(U) The DCI did not recall any details about the briefings he gave to incoming officials for the new Bush administration during the transition period. He said that DDO Pavitt has told Tenet that he did do these briefings, but he himself does not remember what he said. He knows that he did speak with President Bush for about an hour at Blair House before the inauguration (the Vice President and Pavitt were also present), but again does not know what he told him, and has no script from the meeting. Tenet also did not recall whether or not he briefed Rice at this time. He noted that transitions are chaotic, turbulent periods—and added that he himself was in some limbo as well, waiting to find out if he would be kept on as DCI.

~~(S)~~ Tenet did not recall whether he briefed incoming officials on the status of the Cole investigation, although he did note that a January 25th, 2001 PDB item did do this. He does not remember if he did or did not tell them about the ambitious ideas for confronting UBL that had been put on the table via the Blue Sky memo, nor whether the Blue Sky memo was even in his head at this time. He did recall that some time in January DDCI McLaughlin reviewed all the MONs with Rice and her deputy, Steve Hadley, and that the Blue Sky memo manifested itself that year in the March 2001 draft MON. He thought it would be interesting to find out what Dick Clarke had done about the ideas that were presented in this memo. Tenet added that there were briefing books for the transition (which have been provided to the Commission).

(U) Tenet's position as DCI was clarified definitively in 2001, though not straight away. On January 20th, he was told something along the lines of, keep going and we'll let you know what happens later—we'll try this and see if it works. He does not recall there being any official announcement that he would continue as DCI, but simply that he kept working.

The President's Daily Briefings

~~(S)~~ Tenet gave dual briefings (to both Bush and Gore) for a period before the election had been resolved. But soon after the inauguration, President Bush made it clear that he wanted to see the DCI every day before the brief. This was a dramatic change from the previous administration.

As compared to President Clinton, the way President Bush absorbs data is "profoundly different." According to Tenet, Bush likes to receive his intelligence face-to-face, and so provides the DCI with opportunities for exchange and real-time feedback. The PDB has been overhauled to accommodate this difference, and the quality of the briefings is improving. Tenet noted that he has to prepare not only for the President, but for a sophisticated group of policymakers with previous experience of the PDBs.

~~(TS)~~ Tenet had no recollection of a conversation with the President about the PDB item on January 25th 2001. *[According to Zelikow, this PDB item flagged current view on responsibility for the Cole attack and is said to have prompted the President to ask a question about what the consequences might be of killing UBL]*. He could not talk to either the content or context of the conversation, what he said to the President or how the President responded. Tenet did add, however, that he is sure that he and the President talked about UBL.

(U) Tenet never conducted his daily briefings with the President alone. The Vice President, Rice, Chief of Staff Andrew Card, and a CIA briefer (usually Mike Morrel during this period) were also present. After 9-11, Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge and Director of FBI Robert Mueller would come to a follow-up session on homeland security.

(U) Asked how often he had conversations with the President about the UBL threat, Tenet noted that it is important to remember that this was a new administration, and consequently everything was new. Moreover, we need to recall the pre 9-11 mindset. In the context of this period, everything was as important as everything else; it was a dramatic, dynamic time. "Everything's kind of up in the same place, for some period of time."

The New Administrations' CT Policy

~~(TS)~~ 25X1) In the first few months of the new administration, Tenet recalled that there were discussions about UBL, the Predator program, and the Taliban. From his point of view, there was a slow build-up on the UBL issue, with Predator as a front-door entry point for talking about the topic, and with the administration becoming focused on the issue in March.

~~(TS)~~ 25X1 There was discussion on Predator "right out of the block." On January 24th, 2001, Tenet had a meeting with Rice where Predator was discussed (also overtures from Taliban minister Jalil); on February 7th, his discussion with Rice prompted a wider debate, so the DCI later brought her a series of papers to read on various aspects of the Al Qaeda problem (given to Rice at an early March meeting). The pressing question at the time was whether to arm the Northern Alliance. Tenet talked with both Powell and Rice on this topic, though he recalls nothing about the content of these discussions. (He said that CIA would hunt down information on these Powell meetings for the Commission).

Using TLAMs

~~(TS)~~ According to Tenet, as far as he knew the TLAM option was still on the table in 2001, though he added that there were no opportunities to use it. He was unaware of opportunity after May 1999 when the Principals considered using TLAMs against UBL. Tenet assumes that if

CIA had come forward with locational data on UBL that it would have considered; after all, he said, Dick Clarke was still at the CSG. Although the DCI was not sure whether there was a protocol in place for taking a shot at UBL, his working assumption was that there would have been a way to do this if the data had been generated.

The Draft MON and Finding

~~(TS)~~ Tenet was not aware if he had met with Rice on the subject of a draft MON and Finding on March 15th or 17th (and Muller added that CIA has not been able to find a MFR for this meeting). Nor did he recall discussing the new authorities with Rice or Hadley, though said that it was possible. In the back of his mind, the DCI recalled having conversations with someone at NSC about consolidating the existing MONs into one place—but he does not know when or with whom. Tenet acknowledged that it was entirely possible that, having been asked to consolidate the MONs, CIA interpreted this as an opportunity to write a clearer document; since no new Finding had been written since 1986, “it was not inconceivable that our guys said, let’s run this down and see how it flies.” That being said, Tenet said he did not know how this all originated, but noted, “it doesn’t just come out of the ether.” He does have the paper that came to him from CIA’s Executive Director on the tasking for the MON and Finding, however.

~~(TS)~~^{25X1} Bonk recalled CIA raising issues in early 2001 as to what the administration’s CT policy was going to be. A tasking came from downtown for what would become the policy background paper to allow the policymakers to discuss CT issues. He remembered sitting down with CTC/Legal’s ^{25X1} and deciding that they would put everything into this new document and see what happened. Bonk said that he never saw their tasking as consolidating previous MONs. Similarly, Moseman noted that he felt CIA had had a series of “mother may I documents”, and that this was a way around them—a way to get away from the ‘mother may I’ and narrow approach of the previous MONs. This new MON would be worldwide. The document needed to authorize direct kill authority in order to make use of armed Predator, Bonk noted. (Moseman agreed with this reading of what authority the MON was looking for).

~~(TS)~~ Tenet himself did not review the new authorities before handing them over to NSC. Reading the cover note to the MON and Finding written by EXDIR Krongard (from his briefing binder), Tenet observed that the note said this was an expansion of CIA’s authorities, as well as registering that the preparation of these documents was backwards (that CIA should not be driving a policy initiative but responding to one). Tenet did not know what happened to the MON and Finding after March 2001. But he believes they were subsumed into the policy process taking place through the spring and summer of 2001, so that the new administration could work out where they wanted to come out in all of this.

Predator

~~(TS)~~^{25X1} Tenet said the question of whether to fly reconnaissance or weaponized UAV flights over Afghanistan went on for a long time, anticipating a policy decision. The CIA favored the armed option, but according to Tenet it was the Air Force’s assessment that the weaponized UAV was not yet ready to fly in early 2001 because of technical issues: the airframe needed to be modified, and weapons had to be tested. According to Bonk, weapons’ demonstrations were underway, though not a full test schedule, and all showed that if armed Predator was to fly its use

would be very constrained. 25X1, X4
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The opportunities to use armed Predator at this point were "incredibly small," Bonk said. Table-top exercises were going on, and a concept of operations being developed simultaneously as testing proceeded, but Predator was still not ready to fly. Tenet's impression was that the development of the armed UAV was not slowed down by arguments over money or anything else.

~~(TS)~~ 25X1) On the issue of command and control of armed Predator, Tenet noted that "this was new ground." There were a number of legitimate questions that needed to be answered by the policymakers: What is the chain of command? Who takes the shot? Are you comfortable with CIA doing this? Do you understand that this is not something that the CIA is usually asked to do, and if so, then you are going outside of the normal military command and control procedure? Bonk said that the process of trying to get answers to these questions began in 2000 after the first Predator flights, but started to heat up in the spring and summer of 2001. These sorts of issues were built into the March 2001 draft MON.

~~(TS)~~ 25X1) At the same time, ADCI/MS General Campbell was leading an effort to work out what level of confidence would be necessary in order to use armed Predator to take a shot at UBL. He developed a list of criteria. This was going on while technical and authority issues were all being resolved.

~~(TS)~~ Tenet had no recollection of whether Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld was supportive of the Predator project or not, though he said that Rumsfeld's position was no obstacle to him and never pushed back saying this should be a military issue.

Funding

~~(TS)~~ Tenet noted that a figure of 25X1 for offensive operations was mentioned at his May 29th 2001 meeting with Rice, also attended by both Clarke and Black. (He thought this figure probably reflected calculations coming out of the March 15th 2000 after action Millennium review rather than from the Blue Sky memo). According to Tenet, a transition report by Rich Haver told the administration all about CIA's money problems, and led to a more than 15% increase from the previous year for the FY 2002 budget, (though noting that the initial FY 2002 budget was inherited from the Clinton administration). What was different here was that increased funding for CIA was done through a budget submission, 25X1 and that this money therefore went right to CIA 25X1. Tenet praised the Bush administration on this issue: "They got the money story cold. Cold."

The Summer of Threat

~~(S)~~ Tenet said that CIA was finding threat reporting "worrisome" by late May, 2001. On July 10th, he briefed Rice, telling her that she had to hear the reporting that was coming in indicating that a significant terrorist attack was coming in weeks or months. The nature of 25X1 reporting was very disturbing, he told Rice, suggesting an Olympic-sized attack, while simultaneously HUMINT was saying there would be multiple attacks with many casualties. "In

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our world, the system was blinking red," Tenet explained, and by late July, "it doesn't get any worse than that."

~~(S)~~ Given the context, the DCI's attention quickly shifted to 'Millennium threat mode', engaging with foreign liaison and disruption operations around the world. During the summer, there was a ton of activity, including CSGs and FAA advisories. There were 25 possible overseas targets, and CIA thwarted threats to US Embassies 25X1. The CIA was clearly on top of things overseas, Tenet said, "because that's what we're supposed to do." He noted that throughout the threat period the focus was almost exclusively overseas based on the reporting CIA was receiving.

~~(S)~~ By the late July/early August period, intelligence suggested that whatever terrorist activity had been originally planned had been delayed. 25X1

25X1 There was a feeling of great frustration at the Agency at that time: an attack was delayed, but no one knew where it was going; there was a sense that the attack might be coming to the United States, but no one knew for sure. According to Tenet, what had been planned was a major Al Qaeda attack on U.S. interests; he thought it was possible that the spectacular attack 25X1. In retrospect, the DCI said he is quite confident that CIA's 25X1 efforts overseas did in fact delay terrorist activities.

~~(S)~~ 25X1 noted that, after September 11th, CTC looked back to see if any of the information CIA was picking up during the summer of 2001 related to the 9-11 attacks, and concluded that it was a separate and unrelated stream of intelligence—though it was possible that some 25X1 was related to the murder of Northern Alliance leader Masood. According to Russo, at this time UBL and others were talking about an attack coming, possibly related to 9-11. But although the 9-11 plot was in fact delayed on July 8th, this was not because of CIA's disruption efforts; instead, the planning went at Mohammed Atta's tempo and the attack was shifted to a time after the Congressional recess.

~~(C)~~ It was Tenet's view that during the summer threat period the policy machinery worked in a rather orderly fashion. He noted that the principle relationship he worked with was between CIA and FBI, and that—having lived through this kind of experience before—no one needed to tell him what to do. Yes, the threat was managed differently, he said, but so what? He did not know whether it might have been more fruitful for the Principals to have met on the issue as they did during the Millennium threat period, or whether, for example, the Attorney General's greater involvement would have made a difference, noting that he cannot compare and contrast like that. Tenet's sense was that officials at the White House had the sense of urgency that he intended to communicate to them, and understood what the DCI was going through. In living through this unique experience, Tenet's only recollection is that we were doing everything we knew how to do, pushing all the buttons. "Now you're asking me, if I went to another meeting would it have made a difference?" Tenet said, adding, "this is painful...I don't know." He added that, in hindsight, one could say that if someone had done a credit card check on one of the hijackers we would caught the terrorists, but noted that you did not need a Principal to do this. Overall, Tenet said that he did not know what more the Principals could have done for him.

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The September 4th 2001 Principals Committee Meeting

~~(TS-25X1)~~ Tenet believed that the technical judgment at the September 4th Principals' meeting with regard to the armed Predator program may have been that the armed capability was not yet ready. He recalled that a decision was made to go forward with the weaponized UAV 25X1

25X1 "and we'll figure it out when we get there." This was also Bonk's recollection, who added that permission to fly the UAVs still needed to be obtained 25X1

[Note: Bonk was not present at the September 4th meeting].

~~(TS-25X1)~~ The context for this decision, Tenet noted, was that he was really trying to force the question of command and control for armed Predator in a very tough way. Tenet said that he was intentionally provocative with this issue at the meeting. He put the limitations of the DCI's role on the table and emphasized the fact that putting military strike authority in the DCI's hands was something very new, "out of the realm of what we normally do for a living...not normal business," said Tenet, telling the Principals that he was perfectly willing to do it, "but you need to get your minds around this." In his opinion, the Principals took this all very seriously, and "we were moving forward." No decision was made on the question of who fired the armed UAV, however.

~~(TS-25X1)~~ Tenet made clear that, in his own mind—though this was different from the institutional view of CTC—he did not see a real difference between flying Predator in the reconnaissance-only mode or flying it weaponized. After all, reconnaissance was going to be necessary if the armed UAV was to be used. In this sense, Tenet said he was never really against reconnaissance flights.

(U) Tenet did not recall his September 5th meeting with Rice, and there appears to be no memo capturing the meeting.

A New MON

~~(TS-25X1)~~ Tenet could say little about Hadley's September 10th, 2001 memo to him requesting a new MON. He can only guess that the request was the culmination of decision-making from all the Deputies' Committees. The process was working the way it was supposed to, he surmised: having come to a policy conclusion, and having approved a draft NSPD, the NSC was now coming back to CIA to formally draw up new authorities. Tenet did not know why the memo did not refer to the earlier draft MON that CIA had prepared in March, and he did not recall what he thought of the memo at the time. (Moseman noted that the DCI may not have received the memo until the following day). He has no recollection of having had any side conversations with either Rice or Hadley about this matter. Tenet noted, however, that Annex A (the covert action annex to the NSPD, the ideas from were to be embodied in the new MON) was floating around at CIA in mid-July; he remembered both Black and Clarke talking about making modifications to it at the time.

Moussaoui

~~(C)~~ Tenet recalled hearing about the arrest of Zacarias Moussaoui in August in the context of the daily UBL update. He was not aware of exactly when CIA learned of the arrest, but thinks that there was no known connection with Al Qaeda at this point, only the basic information that he

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was a French citizen and Islamic extremist. 25X1
25X1

25X1

Russo noted that the sequence of events for this case (what CIA knew when) can be documented, and CIA will go back recreate this story for the Commission.

Managing Today's CT Intelligence Effort: Lessons Learned and Recommendations

(C) In terms of time and attention spent on the Al Qaeda threat, Tenet thought he was not doing his job very differently now than before 9-11. Currently, however, there are bigger actors on the scene, namely CENTCOM and Special Operations Command, making for a very different set of relationships between CIA and the military. Being able to cooperate with another partner, with sizeable capability, is a major contrast to CIA's pre-9-11 effort.

(C) The Intelligence Community now has a very robust analytical effort, and collection process is much more integrated. There is synergy^{25X1} and a lot more data is coming in, due not only to the provisions of the PATRIOT Act but also to the fact that more people are now in the fight. Overall the increase in funds has given the Intelligence Community enormous impetus in its CT efforts. Tenet said that there is also a difference in the scope of CIA's relationship with the FBI. The Agency is involved in joint operations with the Bureau, and each offers more support for the others' operations. "It's all bigger," Tenet observed. A much bigger cadre of people is now working the CT problem, and this includes^{25X1} (whose efforts have also been ramped up, there being more money available).

(C) According to Tenet, it is the DCI who drives this new, increased CT effort. "All the moving parts are here [at CIA]," he noted, and the knowledge of the target at CIA surpasses that of all others. The Agency is both the operational and analytic driver of the CT war. Tenet pointed to the daily 5 pm meeting in the DCI's conference room as an example: this is a large, interagency meeting chaired by the DCI, where the discussion centers on what the USG is doing in the Global War on Terror, what we are doing operationally tomorrow, and this includes joint planning with SOCOM and CENTCOM. For Tenet, "the management moral of the story is: whoever sits in this chair is going to be in the middle of it for the rest of their lives."

The Terrorist Threat Integration Center (TTIC)

(C) TTIC is where the threat matrix is now briefed (previously, this was done at the 5 o'clock meetings); although TTIC's primary responsibility is to relate threat information to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), it must also be informed about what CIA is doing operationally. According to Tenet, no one wanted to be in charge of TTIC originally; the DCI said he would take it, but in that case "I own it." CIA has the methodology, training, and experience to make sure TTIC's analytical quality is up to standard, Tenet said. It is FBI Director Mueller's job to make sure the domestic piece of TTIC works properly.

(C) Eventually, TTIC will need to build a new information architecture so that information from different agencies can be synthesized. TTIC will then sit astride both CIA's CTC and FBI's

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Counterterrorism Division (CTD), as the overriding threat analyzer. The domestic-foreign divide will come down in TTIC, according to Tenet; FBI Mueller has said there is nothing at FBI that TTIC will not be able to see, and Tenet sees TTIC as having the responsibility to be intimately knowledgeable about what CIA does. 25X1

25X1 "This is not hard to slice," said Tenet, so that everyone feels that their turf is protected.

~~(C)~~ In Tenet's opinion, TTIC will also have to task collection. Just as the DCI has a foreign intelligence requirements process, laying out priorities, Tenet noted that the USG needs this capacity for domestic collection as well. Presently, there is no set of domestic intelligence requirements to drive priorities, and no dissemination or sharing capability. "Before you get transnational," Tenet said, "you need to focus on fundamentals." The USG needs a centralized management structure for information to come in easily and naturally, and a center where a broad, synoptic view of what is going on in the U.S. can be pieced together. (Tenet noted that Director Mueller apparently has such a model in the works).

~~(C)~~ Tenet is confident that TTIC is going to get the job done properly—though it will need constant "pinging." John Brennan, who Tenet appointed to direct TTIC, is someone he is close to and who has walk-in rights to both the DCI and the Director of FBI.

Organizing for the Global War on Terror

(U) Tenet was questioned on his views of the current, bifurcated interagency process for handling CT policy—the division between the NSC and Office of Homeland Security. His response was that he did not care. "You build it, we'll show up," was Tenet's attitude, "I don't worry about that stuff." Tenet said he has not focused on whether the system should be structured differently, but will think about it. He does not believe this is a turf issue.

~~(C)~~ It is imperative, however, to educate people about what the threat means, something that Tenet thinks is currently not well understood. We need to know that there is an enemy out there with a known, strategic targeting doctrine, and to apply this awareness to ongoing operations against the enemy rather than racing from threat to threat. Tenet stressed the fact that there needs to be an understanding that "just because it didn't happen doesn't mean it isn't real" or that we should not do more to protect an infrastructure that has been a suspected target, because, he noted, "they always come back to it." Overall, the threat is not about any one place or individual, Tenet observed, and people need to understand that it is not going away, it is not going to change: it will be with us for the next 20 years.

~~(C)~~ This is most true for urban areas, where terrorist operatives can hide and therefore have operational advantages. Tenet pointed toward the need for prioritizing threats, and getting away from the red, orange and yellow threat indicator levels. DHS is improving, Tenet said, but the department needs to improve even more, and become more seamless and more sectorial in its focus. Moreover, we need to reach a point where there is constant talk and education about the threat. There are hundreds of collectors out there, Tenet noted, and we need to give them a set of requirements, and data—this information does not need to be top secret but simply along the lines of: here's what you need to look for.