

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: **Richard A. Clarke**

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Participants – Commission: Commissioner Tim Roemer, Philip Zelikow, Chris Kojm, Dan Marcus, Michael Hurley, Warren Bass, Alexis Albion

Note: Clarke was placed under oath by Commissioner Roemer at the start of the interview.

Interviewee Background

Richard A. Clarke was the key NSC official handling counterterrorism policy in both the Clinton and Bush administrations, up until November 2001. He was the country's first counterterrorism (CT) czar and one of the longest-serving NSC officials in U.S. history. (U)

Clarke served as assistant secretary of state for political-military affairs from 1989-92. In 1992, he moved over to the NSC, where he held several jobs, including becoming the lead NSC official on CT. Clarke was head of the International Programs Directorate, which was later renamed the Transnational Threats Directorate (TNT). From the time PDD-62 stood up the office of National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection, and Counterterrorism in May 1998, Clarke held the job. He was also chair of the CSG. In November 2001, he left the CT portfolio and became President Bush's special adviser for cyberspace security. He resigned that post on January 31, 2003. Clarke is now chairman of Good Harbor Consulting LLC. (U)

The George H.W. Bush Administration and CT

CT was a very low priority for George H.W. Bush's administration, Clarke said. It issued no presidential decision directive on CT in its four years. The administration enjoyed a late 1980s lull wherein there was very little specifically anti-US terrorism. President Bush himself had headed a CT commission as vice president and knew the

issue well—but it was “a second-order issue” nevertheless. President Bush declared war on drugs, not on terrorism. (U)

Indeed, the NSC directorate that we know now as TNT was then known as the International Programs Directorate (often referred to as “drugs and thugs”), which handled all issues that didn’t fall into a regional basket. That included U.N. issues and, ridiculously, Africa. The administration did use the CSG, which began under President Reagan under another name, as the Coordinating Sub-Group of the Deputies’ Committee (DC). The CSG convened occasionally, largely to respond to incidents. It did coordinate U.N. issues related to Pan Am 103 and occasionally handled other policy matters. (U)

In the last week of George H.W. Bush’s presidency, he signed^{25X1} which authorized^{25X1, X5} if the US or another state had a warrant. ~~(TS)~~

The one major CT issue the administration faced was Pan Am 103, which was destroyed in December 1988. It was very unclear at first who the perpetrator was, Clarke said; the leading theory^{25X1} But phenomenal forensic work by Scotland Yard and the FBI—literally reassembling the plane piece by piece—found the bag in which the bomb had been held, which turned out to have been bought by a Libyan intel agent. (S)

The Bush administration thought it would look odd to attack Libya so long after the attack took place, so they decided to work through the British, the French, and the UN Security Council for sanctions instead. Clarke suspects that this—along with the Reagan administration’s pull-out from Beirut after the 1983 suicide attacks—was part of the chain of events that made jihadists like UBL think they can hit the US and get away with it. (U)

The Clinton Administration and CT: First Encounters

Coming into office, the Clinton administration held “very similar” views on terrorism to its Republican predecessors. It assumed CT wouldn’t be a high priority and didn’t ask for a briefing on terrorism during the transition—and Clarke knows, he said, because he would’ve been the one who conducted it. This typified the wider USG attitude toward terrorism at the time. (U)

That was changed by two events in the first days of the new administration: the Kansi shootings at the CIA and the World Trade Center bombing. For both attacks, Clarke convened the CSG. So by the end of February 1993, it was clear to President Clinton and National Security Adviser Anthony Lake that terrorism was a real issue. Moreover, the form of the attacks led to a paradigm breakthrough and to the active consideration of the prospect of attacks inside the US. President Clinton, Lake, and White House Chief of Staff Mack McLarty began considering whether such events were the NSC’s job—and who should be handling them if not the NSC. They quickly

concluded that the National Security Act of 1947 gave the job of domestic security to the NSC and let the CSG coordinate domestic CT—insofar as it involved foreign threats, not insofar as it related to domestic groups like the KKK or ultra-right militia movements. The CSG had all the right people for this. So Clarke didn't have to worry about Waco—which he said was “a good thing.” (U)

The 1993 World Trade Center Bombing

The FBI and CIA came to the CSG on both the WTC bombing and the “landmarks plot” and said they could not find an organization behind them, as opposed to an individual. “None of us [at the NSC] believed that one,” Clarke said. From looking at the names of the suspects alone, it was clear that the terrorists came from several different countries; Clarke asked if the FBI and CIA really expected him to believe that this “pick-up basketball team” met at a YMCA. There had to be something bringing these people together. At the working level, FBI and NYPD investigators knew from the assassination of the extremist Rabbi Meir Kahane that there was a radical Islamist presence in northern New Jersey and New York City. From the start, Lake and Clarke told the FBI, “We don't believe you.” There was an organization, they said; keep trying. ~~(LES)~~

The rest of the USG agreed with Clarke and Lake that it *looked* like a foreign organization had been responsible; they just couldn't prove it before a jury. Clearly, there was a financing mechanism, which was traced to UBL's brother-in-law Khalifa. Moreover, the perpetrators called UBL from New York. So the UBL link was clear, even though the CIA and FBI missed its importance. One paper seized at the time referred to an organization as al-Qa'ida, although it may have been mistranslated at the time. ~~(LES)~~

The FBI: Limits of Law Enforcement

Clarke rejected the notion that he shifted CT into a law-enforcement mode; he merely took full advantage of some of the FBI's strengths, both at home and abroad—such as forensics, the ability to interview hundreds of people abroad, the ability to move 400 people to Aden after the Cole bombing, the software to merge information from an event scene, even the ability to work better with local police (where the FBI agents “talked cop” to the locals). Law enforcement has some tools that nobody else has, including the intelligence community. Nobody but the FBI could glue Pan Am 103 together and find the bag containing the bomb, Clarke said. After the WTC attack, Clarke asked FBI to operate abroad more. (U)

The NSC received TDs regularly on Clarke's computer—often before the CIA received them. But Clarke *never* got anything in writing from the FBI whatsoever. Clarke was pressing for 302 files early on, to no avail. Lake, Berger, Clarke, and NSC Legal went early on to Attorney General Reno and told her they can't do CT without access to FBI information. But the FBI said the White House couldn't see it because of Federal Rule 6E, the grand jury rule. Reno said the FBI should then just show it to

the NSC before the grand jury saw it. She also suggested changing the law if necessary; Reno wanted the information shared. (U)

This led to an ongoing series of talks about a NSC-DOJ memorandum of agreement on who could see such information; Clarke wanted the national security adviser, the deputy national security adviser, and himself to be on the list. But this went into perpetual negotiations and was never finished. Neither the White House General Counsel's office nor Lake and Berger cared enough to push to get it done. (U)

On the other hand, the FBI had little to give. Its 302s are turgid and long—simply reporting what a subject said. They are akin to case-officer reports from CIA, but FBI has no reports-officer mechanism for analytical comment. Occasionally, you might get a good 302. Clarke recommended oral reporting from FBI senior officers, but the problem here was that he often did not know what was going on in the FBI because there was no mechanism for reaching into the bureau. Clarke added that he never felt that people at the FBI at his level held back; they just didn't give him the information in writing. ~~(LES)~~

The Bojinka Plot

The arrests in Manila in January 1995 came when the USG was already looking as hard as it could for the WTC plot's recognized ringleader, Ramzi Yousef. He was finally found in Manila not because of brilliant intel work but because he "set his apartment on fire" and the Philippine police and fire department came to put it out. The Philippine cops then called the CIA and FBI, who arrived quickly; fairly soon, the plan to blow up aircraft was clear. (U)

In Washington, the NSC heard about Yousef's capture and the evidence of the plots. Clarke asked the FAA urgently to ground all US-flagged aircraft in the Pacific until they were checked for bombs; rather than worrying about which plane might be a risk, it was easier to just ground them all. Lake asked for the secretary of transportation, the deputy secretary of transportation, and then the FAA administrator; for what Clarke called a horrifyingly long time, nobody could be found. Finally, they went to White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta, and Clarke asked for a presidential order to ground the planes. Panetta said President Clinton agreed. The FAA was ordered to get all US-flagged planes to a ground halt; those in the sky were to turn around; and those already in the sky and beyond the point of no return were to check for the bombs in the air, including checking the bathroom cabins for things mentioned in the documents, like Seiko watches. ~~(S)~~

The episode showed Clarke the clear need to have someone with the authority to move faster in an emergency. Beyond that, the scare had a limited policy impact, although it did strengthen NSC's hand with OMB over FAA funding. ~~(C)~~

PDD-39

The Clinton administration's first PDD on CT predated the Manila arrests. PDDs on policy and turf were very tough to negotiate, Clarke said; it took 18 months to finish PDD-25, on peacekeeping. It took a year for PDD-39, and he wouldn't have been surprised to see a first draft dated in late 1993.

Clarke, who was involved in this process, was shown a copy of PDD-39, dated March 1995, by Commission staff. He noted that it defined terrorism as a "potential threat to national security" as well as a "criminal act." ~~(TS)~~

Point 1 of PDD-39 was about reducing vulnerabilities. One couldn't get all the terrorists, Clarke noted, so you had to think about this. For the first time, this started a process of accountability and responsibility, laying out who was in charge of different areas (DOT for planes, State for embassies, and so on), which sounded obvious but hadn't been done before. ~~(TS)~~

Point 2 told the CIA and others to reduce terrorist capabilities before attacks, not just to respond afterward (as had been envisioned previously). Point 2(c) regarding nuclear and biological weapons was the first reference to WMD in a presidential directive. ~~(TS)~~

Point 3 dictated prevention, not response. It also cleaned up the CSG mechanism and laid out, for the first time, who was responsible for consequence management. ~~(TS)~~

Clarke said he insisted on Point 4, which said there was "no higher priority" than stopping terrorists from getting WMD. PDD-39 was the first PDD to refer to terrorist acquisition of WMD, which it called "unacceptable." This made the issue a four-alarm fire of a presidential priority, something that you'd drop everything else to pursue. "It let us blow up al-Shifa, among other things," Clarke said. People thought he was crazy at the time to demand its inclusion because they thought the threat was so remote. ~~(TS)~~

The PDD also called for more collection and for more units to seize and disarm WMD already in the hands of terrorists. Few people in the USG knew the design of Soviet nuclear weapons. If one showed up in Detroit, as Clarke put it, very few people knew whether to "cut the red wire or the green wire." ~~(TS)~~ 25X1

Point 4(c) called for strengthening the ability to use the FEST and asking DOD to assist in emergency response. Funding was a problem here. Whenever DOD was asked to do anything, they would "ask for my MasterCard number," Clarke said. This point was designed to stop this by having the president direct DOD to take on this responsibility. ~~(TS)~~

PDD-39 also contained an annex that expanded the CSG beyond its usual five agency participants and laid out which others should be involved, including OFAC, HHS,

OMB, and so on. Other agencies had to be responsible for CT duties. The CSG clearly operated on a higher level of representation than a normal IWG. Indeed, Clarke insisted on this; if agencies sent too low a representative to the CSG, the agency was disinvited until they sent someone of appropriate rank. In time, the CSG stopped reporting to the DC altogether. ~~(TS)~~

PDD-39 made the attorney general responsible for key homeland vulnerabilities, which led to the Marsh Commission. That would up focusing on cybersecurity, thus identifying a whole new area of emerging vulnerability. ~~(TS)~~

The OPM-SANG Attack

Clarke wasn't sure he knew who perpetrated the November 1995 OPM-SANG bombing, and he did not recall being told who was responsible. The USG asked the Saudis for access to the suspects, but the Saudis were uncooperative. Clarke believes the USG also asked Saudi Arabia not to behead the suspects; the Saudis quickly beheaded them anyway. ~~(C)~~

Enter UBL: The Sudan Period

By 1994, the name UBL was appearing in CIA reporting ^{25X1}
~~25X1~~ As the NSC was looking for the organizing force behind the WTC bombing, Lake, the NSC's Nancy Soderberg, and Clarke were also asking who UBL was. Clarke wanted to know why CIA almost reflexively described him as "terrorist financier Usama bin Ladin," as if it were a phrase unto itself. It didn't "sound like this guy was just writing checks," Clarke said. UBL was "popping up in too many places." Alec Station, the CIA's virtual UBL station, was created because Lake kept demanding to know who UBL was, not because CIA thought they needed it. Indeed, Alec Station was first called Terrorist Financing Links because UBL was so consistently referred to as a terrorist financier. ~~(S)~~

^{25X1} signed at the very end of George H.W. Bush's term, authorized ^{25X1, X5} if the US or another state had a warrant; President Clinton reaffirmed this. As UBL was first appearing on Clarke's radar screen, neither the United States, ^{25X1}
^{25X1} had such a warrant out on the supposed terrorist financier.
^{25X1} said they would not take UBL in even if he fell into their hands. ~~(TS)~~

The press has reported two bumbling, non-USG attempts to kill UBL in Sudan—perhaps by the Saudis, although Clarke said he did not know who was responsible. But from 1995 or 1996 on, the NSC was also looking at USG efforts against UBL, ^{25X1, X5}

^{25X1, X5} In particular, the USG considered a ^{25X1, X5} attack on a housing complex for "Afghan war veterans" being used by many UBL-associated mujahedeen. The USG also considered a missile attack on a ^{25X1}

25X1 but it was not clear this would even destroy UBL. 25X1
~~(TS, 25X1)~~

These options were considered at the principals level; Clarke recalls a PC. Moreover, 25X1 briefed Lake in his office about force options, but Clarke said that 25X1 DOD said they could not do anything. DOD, as usual, said that they could only do it if they used thousands of troops, Clarke said. 25X1, X5
25X1, X5
25X1, X5 it was the White House that was blocking the mission.
~~(TS, 25X1)~~

In the absence of a US indictment or a foreign host who wanted UBL, there was little talk of a snatch operation. The NSC did, however, ask DOJ to take a close look at whether UBL could be indicted. But this effort took a long while. By the time Mary Jo White's grand jury convened in 1997, UBL was already in Afghanistan, and the Sudan options were moot. Clarke said they did not care about the legal proceedings; in an age before the use of Guantanamo Bay as a detention facility, there was no convenient place to take UBL. They did look at 25X1 which would have raised legal issues 25X1. In the mid-1990s, the USG needed a country that was willing to take UBL. ~~(TS, 25X1)~~

Moreover, UBL hadn't yet done much to the US that we knew about, Clarke said. So there was no talk of having him killed. As it was, DOD and CIA thought Lake and Clarke were "insane," Clarke said, for wanting to get someone who had done so little to us. Although his culpability was clear to Clarke and some others, UBL was not yet clearly identified with the WTC bombing, the 1992 attack on the Aden hotel, OPM-SANG, the landmarks plot (which was then attributed to the "Blind Shaykh," Umar Abd al-Rahman, whose ties to UBL weren't yet known), or the "Black Hawk Down" battle of Mogadishu (which Clarke still isn't sure UBL had a hand in). If there was a failure at this point, Clarke said, it was the failure of the IC and law enforcement to say, "There's a lot of smoke here; there must be a fire." ~~(TS, 25X1)~~

So Lake pushed for the creation of Alec Station. As far back as 1994, Clarke saw UBL as dangerous. Clarke also thought at the time that UBL probably had an organization behind him; after all, even major philanthropists stateside often want control of the organizations they're funding. ~~(TS)~~

TNT wanted to try to hack into banks and see if UBL had any money there—and perhaps then change his balances. Treasury Secretary Rubin objected, noting that the bank would probably restore his money if the USG sent it off somewhere. Moreover, Rubin warned that word that the USG was changing the asset values in bank accounts would undermine the international banking system. So they compromised: 25X1

~~(TS)~~

Clarke dismissed others' theories that Sudan might have expelled UBL as "fantasies." Turabi, the acting head of the Sudanese government, was as big a nut as UBL, if not bigger, Clarke said. Turabi and UBL were reportedly spending a great deal of time together. It was fanciful to think Sudan would have ever turned UBL over. (U)

Indeed, Clarke said that UBL left Sudan because UBL and Turabi mutually concluded that bin Ladin's departure would help reduce international pressure on Sudan. After the 1995 attempt to assassinate Egyptian President Mubarak, even the UNSC put sanctions on Sudan's government. The country was a basket case already, and its military badly wanted to loosen the sanctions. So the Sudanese government and UBL collectively decided that he would leave for the wider Islamist good. Far from being booting out, UBL left Sudan voluntarily. (U)

Clarke said he would not have been shocked to hear that Sudanese government representatives who couldn't deliver had mentioned the idea, but Clarke recalled no offer to give the USG bin Ladin's "head on a plate," and no policy-level belief in this process. After all, Sudan knew exactly how to do this sort of thing if it was so inclined; Sudan had put Carlos the Jackal in handcuffs and turned him over to the French. Nor would the absence of an indictment have been a barrier; if the USG had believed that Sudan would give up UBL, Clarke suspects that Washington would have come up with something. Clarke does not recall discussing Sudan issues with President Clinton. (U)

Khobar Towers

Clarke dismissed the theory that Khobar was a unilateral, purely UBL operation as "just wrong." After the June 1996 attack on Khobar Towers, the FBI, CIA, and NSC all followed their standard procedure of trying to find out who'd perpetrated a major terrorist attack. They considered all options. Clear evidence from the day of the attack linked one of the perpetrators 25X1

25X1 Clarke was satisfied early on that the culprit was Qods Force, directed by senior levels of the Iranian government. (S)—

The question of some UBL cooperation with the Iranian attackers is stickier. Clarke never got a definitive answer from the IC about possible UBL involvement with the Khobar attack. Information on UBL-Iran ties was hard to come by. TNT knew that EIJ had offices in Tehran, that AQ personnel regularly transited Iran, and that AQ was in contact with the IRGC. Clarke said that 25X1 personnel may have known AQ operatives 25X1 and he mentioned the possibility that those AQ operatives might have offered some logistical support to the Khobar plot. But he thought Khobar was definitely not a pure AQ operation. (S)—

The USG's military retaliation options for Khobar looked "terrible," Clarke said. He explored them with CJCS Shalikashvili. If the USG hit Iranian naval and air-force facilities along the coast, the strikes wouldn't dissuade further Iranian attacks.

Moreover, the Iranians would probably respond—perhaps by hitting the UAE, Bahrain, and other US friends in the Gulf. Saudi Arabia's critically important Ras Tanur refinery was within range of Iran's Scud missiles. Iran had recently tried to topple the Bahraini government, and the mullahs could also mine the Gulf's waterways, as they had done in 1988. If the USG struck back again to respond to such Iranian moves, Clarke said, "that's called war with Iran." The Pentagon's invasion plan looked like it had been drawn up for an early Cold War crisis circa 1945. ~~(TS)~~

The USG also considered "escalation dominance"—25X1, X5
25X1, X5

25X1, X5 to show America's willingness to go to war and its ability to destroy things valuable to the Iranian regime the next time. But it was unclear this would work. 25X1, X5
25X1, X5

25X1, X5

Clarke would not have been shocked to learn of Iranian ties to AQ; we could not afford to assume that the Sunni-Shia divide would prohibit such strange bedfellows. But ~~25X1~~
meant that we don't know. ~~(TS)~~

The Move to Afghanistan

Clarke said the USG couldn't act against UBL in Sudan, so the move to Afghanistan couldn't make America's CT situation worse. He did not think the UBL network was hurt in the move. At the time, UBL claimed to have liquidated his Sudan investments and incurred a significant financial loss, but Clarke doubts this. UBL already had some infrastructure in Afghanistan, and the Arab Afghans moved with him. ~~(S)~~

In Afghanistan, UBL soon started writing checks to the Taliban. (UBL had also been helping them from Sudan.) He also either created or strengthened the 55th Brigade, a unit of the Afghan army made up of Arab fighters that became the best force the Taliban fielded against Masood. Early on, the USG asked the Taliban to either control or evict UBL. That dialogue—accompanied "with lots of tea and crumpets"—lasted until October 2001. (U)

CIA personnel from ~~25X1~~ soon went into Afghanistan to look for dirt strips to land a plane for a potential covert capture operation. Clarke saw no need for an

indictment to proceed here, noting that one can arrest people who have not been indicted. Nor did he think another finding was needed; the overall 25X1 MON, under the 1986 CT finding, would suffice. Location also was not a problem. "If we could get him," Clarke said, "we'd find somewhere to stash him—even if that meant New York City." ~~TS~~ 25X1

How Large a Threat?

Attacks in the US and WMD

By 1997, Clarke said, the CIA clearly understood that AQ existed—a network with both resources and reach. The CIA imparted that threat perception to the PC, the DC, and the CSG a year or more before the East Africa attacks—even without a formal NIE. After Kansi, WTC 1993, the landmarks plot, and Oklahoma City, the threat to the US itself was also known. ~~(S)~~

Clarke used PDD-39's language about WMD to make intelligence collection on doomsday weapons a high priority. The IC agreed on the issue's importance, but they were never able to get more than "low-grade smoke." In the summer of 1998, they were told of an operative at Derunta experimenting with poisons. They "photographed the hell out of" Derunta, Clarke said, and 25X1 there was evidence of training with CW, but they never found the chemicals. ~~(S)~~

There was also a lot of reporting about AQ's interest in nuclear material, including numerous reports that AQ was getting ripped off in scams from ex-Soviet ruffians selling red mercury. But the USG never got a good lead on this—with the exception of late 2001 reports that personnel working on the 25X1 nuclear program were talking to AQ. But we had nothing at the level where we thought that UBL had a nuclear program or a nuclear weapon. ~~(TS)~~

Clarke said he has read everything that his nuclear expert, Lisa Gordon-Hagerty, has read; Gordon-Hagerty has told the Commission she believes UBL has the bomb, including one inside the US. Clarke, however, does not see any evidence that AQ has nuclear arms. He does see lots of evidence that UBL wants one, would pay for one, and even thinks his organization might be capable of making one themselves. But there is no evidence that they ever did make one. ~~(TS)~~

Clarke noted that President Clinton was acutely aware of the possibility of WMD terrorism. Clarke took the guidance in PDD-39 and PDD-62 literally; preventing a terrorist group from getting WMD was the government's highest priority. "If we had plausible evidence they had WMD," Clarke said, "I'd have been in the Oval Office in 30 seconds." He'd have done the same if he'd have seen evidence of a sustained campaign to acquire WMD. (U)

Like President Clinton, Clarke said, he spent a lot of time on planes reading cheap fiction. The president read books like *The Cobra Event* [Richard Preston's 1998 medical thriller about bioterrorism] and *Rainbow Six* [a 1999 Tom Clancy potboiler about a SWAT-style antiterrorist squad] and gave them to Clarke. In every speech from 1996 onward, President Clinton mentioned WMD terrorism; it wasn't just me, Clarke said. It's not often, he added, that the president drives a personal concern into a policy program. But because of Clinton's personal interest, Nunn-Lugar-Domenici began as a tiny program and became a very robust and expensive one. (U)

The Atlanta Olympics

Clarke had also read another Tom Clancy thriller, *Debt of Honor*, which ends with a 747 hijacked out of Dulles Airport smashing into the U.S. Capitol. [The pilot was from Japan, though.] Clarke said he'd also seen a movie about a dirigible crash, which Zelikow identified as *Black Sunday*. Clarke didn't need the FBI to tell him about the threat of aircraft as missiles, he said. That threat was very much on Clarke's mind before the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. (U)

Clarke's NSC team sat down with the security organizers for the Olympics and came away worried and unimpressed. Gordon-Hagerty noticed a nuclear research reactor in the middle of the Olympic Village; others noted that train tunnels carrying hazmat cargoes ran hourly underneath the Olympic stadiums downtown. ~~(S)~~

When Clarke asked the FBI and the FAA about the threat that a plane might hit the stadium during the opening ceremonies, the FBI said it wasn't in charge of planes and passed the issue off to the FAA. The FAA replied that if the plane had a transponder, they could track it. The FAA wasn't planning a no-fly zone but said that if one was imposed, they could radio incoming aircraft to tell them to turn back. Clarke asked DOD if it would handle air defense for the games, but they declined, saying they were equipped to ward off incoming Soviet bombers, not handle homeland defense. (U)

Clarke began trying to stitch a solution together. The army was ordered to put Patriot radar on the mountainside outside Atlanta and feed information into the Air Force base; meanwhile, the Treasury provided a Customs AWACS and unarmed chase planes. They hooked the AWACS and Patriot feeds together. If a bogey was spotted and would not respond, the Secret Service had put snipers on Customs Black Hawk helicopters who could try to bring the plane down before it plowed into the stadium. ~~(S)~~

Treasury resisted this, despite its huge law enforcement capacity; it did not see such issues as its responsibility, preferring instead to focus on things like bailing out Mexico. Clarke said that Treasury viewed its own law-enforcement capabilities as an alien organism in its own body, citing Waco as an example. The Treasury secretary went into "cold sweats" at the thought of shooting down planes. For the Atlanta

Olympics, Clarke got an AWACS plane by asking Vice President Gore to run an FBI table-top simulation on security issues. The vice president then asked for air defense. (U)

Zelikow said that the threat of planes as missiles did not appear in the Gore Commission report. Clarke replied that the trigger for that commission had more to do with airline safety issues in the aftermath of the ValuJet crash in Florida and the crash of TWA 800. The Gore Commission also had security recommendations, but it was largely convened because the public was losing confidence in aviation at the time. At the time, they thought TWA 800 was a terrorist attack. John O'Neill took Clarke to the hanger where the FBI was rebuilding the plane; within two weeks, it was clear it was not a terrorist attack. (U)

The same improvised Atlanta system was also used for NATO's 50th anniversary summit in Washington, DC, in New York City, and for other large events, Clarke said. But there was always a fight with Treasury. (U)

Defending the White House

Treasury also resisted efforts to put up defenses at the White House. Clarke got 25X1, X7, X8
25X1, X7, X8

—onto one USSS screen. This very expensive system was working before 9/11. (~~TS~~ 25X1)

Clarke also wanted armed helicopters near the White House, as well as Stinger missiles and Phalanxes on the roofs and treetops by the White House. He never got this approved. (~~TS~~ 25X1)

Clarke had another idea for White House security: a massive Ops Center and shelter built under 25X1, X7, X8 This bunker would be sturdy enough to 25X1, X7, X8
25X1, X7, X8 Clarke developed a major proposal for this and managed to get the money for this up to the level of President Bush, but then Rep. Young of the House Appropriations Committee pulled Bush aside in 2001 and called the shelter wasteful. President Bush then dropped the program—after years of effort by Clarke. This program, which would *not* have been ready before 9/11, would have given the White House a 25X1, X7, X8 better command-and-control than the current “rinky-dink” Situation Room. In the current situation, the Secret Service is ordered to throw the president into the East Wing PEOC—a 1948 bomb shelter—if a plane is inbound. Even if the president survived an attack on the White House 25X1
25X1, X7, X8

(~~TS~~ 25X1)

On 9/11, Clarke turned to Vice President Cheney and asked, "Now do you understand why I wanted to do this?" ~~(S)~~

Clarke added that the project is now set to go ahead as soon as Rep. Young's no-funds hold expires at the end of calendar year 2003. It will take two or three years, if done covertly. ~~(TS~~ 25X1)

After Oklahoma City, a engineering study was done on what would be done to the White House complex from three different-sized Ryder truck bombs at eight different points. 25X1, X7, X8

25X1, X7, X8

This was the basis for closing Pennsylvania Avenue.

~~(TS~~ 25X1

Handling Hijackings

Standard operating procedure was that if the FAA received a plane's hijack code (7600, as Clarke recalls), an Air Defense Conference would be convened, including representatives from the White House, DOD, NORAD, FAA, and FBI. This happened from time to time. ~~(S)~~

On one occasion—Clarke thinks it was probably in 1999—such a conference was convened and NORAD scrambled F-15s after a Northwest jet bound for Amsterdam began transmitting the hijack code. The plane did not respond; when it landed, it turned out that it had not been hijacked. Clarke wanted the pilot's license revoked. (U)

The FBI tried to kill the air marshal program, Clarke said. If a plane was hijacked, they said, it will land, whereupon a hostage-rescue team could move in. The FAA warned that the hijackers might not land the plane. (U)

KSM in Qatar

The USG had a warrant for Khalid Shaykh Muhammad's arrest in 1993, Clarke said. Clarke knew KSM was involved in the 1993 WTC bombing, so once they heard that KSM was in Qatar in 1996, the CSG went into 25X1, X5 mode. ~~(TS)~~

But there was no 25X1. Instead, State ensured USG representation in Qatar under its Special Embassy Program (SEP), which ensured there was a U.S. embassy in each "pissant country" (as Clarke put it) by setting up smaller facilities without 25X1 and other expensive items. ~~(TS)~~

When Clarke asked DOD and CIA if they could 25X1. KSM, he said, it was like Sudan all over again. DOD suggested sending hundreds of troops to snatch KSM, after first sending in 25X1 to do collection on his whereabouts. CIA warned that it had no snatch capability and no permission from the government of Qatar; it thus considered the proposed 25X1, X5 very risky. ~~(TS~~ 25X1)

25X1, X5

Neither the FBI nor CIA thought KSM was a such a gifted operative at this point. They simply knew of his links to WTC 1993 and the Bojinka plot. Five years later, Clarke was shocked to hear the CIA say KSM was the mastermind of 9/11. (U)

President Clinton and CT

After the 1993 WTC attack, President Clinton had a personal interest in CT and its links with WMD. He was also personally interested in UBL and regularly discussed CT issues with Clarke, Lake, and Berger. By 1996, Clarke said, President Clinton was seized on the issue. (U)

Clarke used the CSG to lay out budget priorities and take them off-line to President Clinton. Otherwise, CSG representatives' recommendations on CT spending would die at the assistant secretary level, the CFO level, or the OMB level. President Clinton repeatedly told Clarke, whatever you need, tell me, and you're going to get it. So Clarke would ask CSG representatives what they'd requested and then get President Clinton to reinsert those budget requests if their home agency had axed a CT program. Clarke said that channel produced the 400 percent rise in FBI's CT budget, DOE's nuclear-safety program, and so on. (U)

This totally circumvented the budget process, Clarke said. One time, they managed to get an ~~25X1~~ in three weeks flat. They also got ~~25X1~~ ~~25X1~~ or so within weeks of the 1998 embassy bombings. (C)

Clarke once wrote a CT insert for a speech by President Clinton; thereafter, the president did it himself. President Clinton also did a "theme day" on CT and laid out the rationale for new-threat programs in January 1999 (or perhaps 1998, Clarke said) in a Naval Academy speech. (U)

Clarke noted an evolution: the WTC 1993 attack, the landmarks plot, and the Kansi shootings all bumped CT up on the Clinton administration's agenda. Those attacks also heightened concerns about foreign terrorists inside America. Then the 1995

attacks in Oklahoma City and the Tokyo subway and the 1996 attacks on Khobar Towers and the Atlanta Olympics kicked CT up to being President Clinton's number-one priority. (U)

From 1994 on, Clarke spoke to Lake or Berger several times a day. The standing rule was that when he showed up at the NSC Front Office, he went in. Lake and Berger almost always took his calls immediately, almost without regard to who else was in with them and might be dislodged. Clarke also emailed their executive assistants frequently to pass messages along. (Berger didn't believe in email.) (U)

Berger wanted a "roadmap" for each Small Group meeting. Often, these documents were not emailed. Those roadmaps should be in Lake or Berger's personal files. Clarke usually either handed his notes from a Small Group back to his staff or threw it out. (U)

Clarke never had a problem getting in to see President Clinton. He needed presidential support on some things, and others were time-sensitive. The CIA treats you differently if they know you have a personal relationship with the president, Clarke said. (U)

PDD-62

Clarke did not want a CT czar, but Berger and others in the White House did. A host of commissions after Oklahoma City and Aum Shinrikyo's 1995 sarin attack on the Tokyo subway all argued that there was no coordination of CT policy; Clarke told them that the policy was indeed coordinated, but because Clarke didn't have a big title or do press, Congress and think tanks didn't believe him. Moreover, Berger feared legislation creating a CT czar on terms that the White House had not designated. (U)

All of this led toward a new PDD creating a CT czar. PDD-62 also assigned specific lead agencies for 10 program areas, something that Clarke *did* want. Beyond the organizational issues, PDD-62 just elaborated on PDD-39. (U)

One of PDD-62's 10 program areas is the foreign terrorist presence in America, which was tasked to the FBI by the president. It didn't help, Clarke said, but we meant it to. Changing the FBI was like "turning around an aircraft carrier," Clarke said. It was hard to get field offices to take on priorities set by FBI headquarters. (U)

PDD-62 did not create a czar akin to the drug czar. The national coordinator had only six staff members reporting directly back to him. The czar had no money at all—not even a travel budget. He did not require Senate confirmation; since he was a special assistant to the president (SAP), the White House forbade him from testifying to Congress on separation-of-powers grounds. (U)

Clarke opposed the change in his position. He feared wasting time, getting a bigger title without more muscle, and eroding the CSG's trust in him. Clarke did not do press. He feared that a reputation as a publicity hound would hurt his interagency effectiveness. The CSG was made up entirely of career government employees; the CIA and FBI trusted him more because he kept a lower profile, and that produced more information sharing. Predictably, the agencies would resist having a czar ordering them around. (U)

The one useful change in Clarke's position was that it formally granted the national coordinator a PC seat. Clarke had sat at the table at PCs on CT anyway even before PDD-62—not just against the wall like a staffer—but this formalized the arrangement. This was rolled back by the Bush administration. (U)

Clarke never saw it as a problem that the Clinton-era CSG did not report directly up to the DC and then to the PC. If we ever felt that an issue needed to go via the DC or an IWG, it did, Clarke said. He added that the current Bush administration made much more of the issue of where the CSG fit in the NSC organizational chart. Clarke said he could not recall any problems coordinating with the DC under DAPNSA Jim Steinberg in the Clinton administration. Nor was coordination with the NSC's regional staff an issue; Bruce Riedel, who handled Middle Eastern and South Asian affairs, saw CT in terms "identical to me," Clarke said. (U)

In this period, Clarke had a three-pronged strategy: use the tribals to get UBL in Afghanistan; use diplomacy to drive a wedge between UBL and the Taliban; and use the IC to find, handle, or render cells abroad. (~~TS~~25X1)

Prong One: The Early 1998 Capture Plan

Once UBL moved to Afghanistan, the initial plan was to have local, CIA-employed Afghans grab UBL as he drove by, take him to an air strip, and fly him out of the country. But this never happened, and Clarke said the NSC never really understood why. The Afghans apparently told CIA it was too hard to time the moments when UBL drove past. NSC pressured CIA, so CIA suggested that the local assets go to UBL's home, grab him, and then fly him out. (~~TS~~25X1)

But UBL had several houses, and the closest one to the dirt strip was in Tarnak Farms, which had a high wall around it. The CIA briefed the CSG on this plan, but the CSG thought the plan sounded imprecise and asked for better photos of the complex. When they got it, they saw that Tarnak was a large, heavily fortified complex protected by two tanks and mounted machine gun nests; it also contained women and children, and we did not know which house UBL was in. (~~TS~~25X1)

Clarke figured the tribals would get slaughtered before they got over the Tarnak wall. The DO had developed what he thought was a crazy plan, which was nevertheless briefed in the White House. The DCI did not approve of the DO plan; up the CIA's

chain of command, more senior officials “laughed at it,” called it ill-considered, and refused to sign off on it. Berger asked Tenet (at a PC or Small Group meeting) if he approved of this plan, and Tenet said no. “It would have succeeded only in getting all of the CIA’s limited assets in the country killed,” Clarke said. (TS 25X1)

They continued hoping that the local Afghans would luck out, spot UBL driving by, and grab him. At least twice, the USG received reports that the CIA’s assets had attacked a convoy, although Clarke was dubious about whether such attempts were even made. Tenet would not endorse TLAM strikes on the basis of the tribals’ reports, and Clarke also doubted the quality of their intel. (TS 25X1)

Prong Two: Diplomacy with the Taliban

It was logical to try using Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the UAE—the only three countries who recognized the Taliban as Afghanistan’s government—to pressure the Taliban, Clarke said. Moreover, State was keen to do something, and they had leverage; the Saudis gave the Taliban money and assistance, and the Pakistanis gave them arms. Being able to tell the public we’d exhausted all options might also be helpful if it ever came to more forceful steps. Presidential letters went out to heads of government urging them to pressure the Taliban, and diplomatic channels were established; Clarke himself was the channel to the UAE. (U)

The 25X1 knew UBL was a threat, Clarke said. They may have tried to kill him in Sudan. In 1997, 25X1 uncovered a plot—perhaps by UBL—to smuggle heavy arms 25X1 and found that the suspects had diagrams of 25X1. As usual, Clarke said, 25X1 tried to pay the problem away. It didn’t work. (S)

On the 25X1 track, their diplomats repeated USG talking points to the Taliban, but 25X1 kept up its ties. The 25X1 meanwhile, sent similar messages, cut their aid, and finally cut ties entirely. All this had no effect. By 1997-99, the Taliban were relying on AQ—especially the 55th Brigade. Moreover, UBL himself often personally bought warlords out to bring them over to the Taliban side. (S)

A CIA analysis warned that if Mullah Omar expelled UBL, he would risk a coup from both the 55th Brigade and possibly also rank-and-file Taliban. Clarke tended to agree. Moreover, Omar and UBL were “ideological bedfellows,” and perhaps even family; UBL may have married one of Omar’s daughters. So the strategy of driving a wedge between UBL and the Taliban never worked, and Clarke did not think it would. (C)

Prong Three: Tackling the Network Elsewhere—A Success in Bosnia

The third prong of the strategy before the 1998 bombings was attempts to counter UBL elsewhere—especially Bosnia. UBL was out to insert mujahedeen into the Balkan wars, create a military unit within the Bosnian army, take down the Christian Serbs, and ultimately take over the Bosnian government. Some AQ fighters even

married Bosnian women and acquired Bosnian citizenship. And UBL's men did not take orders from Bosnian President Alija Izetbegović. ~~(S)~~

Bosnia was a success in the fight against UBL, Clarke said. They pressured Izetbegović to evict jihadists and break up the mujahedeen unit. Meanwhile, peacekeepers did raids; French troops did a particularly effective job rounding up one cell. Moreover, the Dayton peace accord required that foreign fighters be expelled, Clarke said. [*Commission comment:* Annex 1A, Article III of Dayton does indeed stipulate this.] All in all, Clarke concluded, they stopped AQ's attempt to take over Bosnia. ~~(S)~~

Clarke added that, during this period, they often referred to the "UBL network" in documents rather than al-Qa'ida. But Alec Station's 1997 reports established that there was a network out there, consisting of a core group and then two types of local affiliates: pre-existent groups whose capabilities UBL improved, and UBL-created groups. ~~(S)~~

25X1, X5

Infinite Reach: Responding to the 1998 Embassy Bombings

Clarke was not surprised when UBL destroyed the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on August 7, 1998. He neither believed that the simultaneity of the attacks made AQ into supermen nor was surprised to see how skillful they were. Still, AQ had now crossed a line and directly attacked the United States. This had a major effect on the USG. (U)

In June 1998, before the bombings, a sealed indictment of UBL had been issued. Clarke knew about the indictment, but he stressed again that it had little policy effect and that the absence of an indictment had not been hindering covert action against UBL. Clarke does not remember if the indictment was discussed at a June 22, 1998 PC for which he deliberately declined to write an SOC. ~~(S)~~

The PC disagreed in August 1998 about what type of force to use in response to the embassy bombings, although it was clear that the PC wanted a military response. DOD wanted to fire cruise missiles. ~~(S)~~

A few days after the embassies were bombed, Clarke received a CIA report saying that AQ was planning a large meeting on August 20. Sitting next to Tenet in the Cabinet Room, Clarke showed the DCI a copy of that CIA report and asked, "You thinking what I'm thinking?" Tenet said, "Yes." The PC quickly reached a consensus on striking the terrorists' August 20 conference. ~~(S)~~

DOD came back with a pure TLAM package. A targeting cell was formed from CTC, NIMA, and the J-2; their list included al-Shifa, the UBL leather factory, and Jalalabad. Clarke wanted to take out Tarnak and other targets. That may have raised issues of the TLAMs' capacity. For tactical surprise, they wanted to avoid sending too many ships, which might have been noticed. Moreover, it would have taken days to get B-52 bombers to Diego Garcia, and that might have pushed past the August 20 deadline. ~~(TS)~~

The target cell's list was passed to Berger, Tenet, and Cohen, and then to President Clinton. After a meeting or a series of calls, President Clinton approved the package, including the leather factory. Late at night, President Clinton called Tenet and dropped the leather factory from the target list; the president thought it looked silly and didn't really hurt UBL. In effect, the USG ran the same process as it had in 1993, when it struck Iraq after the attempted assassination of former President Bush. ~~(TS)~~

Clarke said that the quotes about President Clinton's political troubles in August 1998 in Jane Mayer's *New Yorker* piece were accurate. "Don't you fucking tell me about my political problems, or my personal problems," Clarke recalled President Clinton telling him. "You tell me about national security. Is it the right thing to do?" Clarke said it was. "Then fucking do it," President Clinton said. (U)

Clarke was not surprised at the time to hear allegations that the Clinton administration was "wagging the dog"—manufacturing a foreign crisis to distract attention from the Lewinsky scandal. Clarke was contemptuous of such charges. But he knew there was some overall price to be paid if CT was seen in such jaundiced terms. (U)

Clarke does not know how close Operation Infinite Reach came to hitting UBL. But Clarke certainly knew the risk of missing UBL and then not striking again. If the USG missed UBL this time, CIA and DOD were tasked to let the White House know when they found him again. (U)

One way we screwed up on August 20, Clarke said, was that four Navy ships fired TLAMs—and ~~25X1~~ saw something unusual going on with the U.S. Navy off their coast. It's easy for him to believe that ~~25X1~~ tipped off UBL, thereby letting him flee. So Clarke insisted that follow-on strikes against UBL be done by submarines, not ships that could be spotted. ~~(TS)~~

Clarke has heard that serving ~~25X1~~ were killed during Infinite Reach. He believed that AQ was training Kashmiri jihadists linked to ~~25X1~~ in its camps—or that ~~25X1~~ were training Kashmiris in UBL-owned camps. ~~(S)~~

Clarke also told the press that the Taliban would be held responsible for further attacks launched from their territory. This statement was not run past the usual interagency process, Clarke says, but he put it out well before the USG formalized this position in 1999. He also told the UAE to give this message to the Taliban. (U)

Clarke is still sure that al-Shifa was the right target—that the plant was a CW facility. He thinks that Tenet probably also still thinks the intel about al-Shifa was right, but President Clinton came to have some doubts. (U)

Follow-On Strikes

The August 20 attack was not necessarily an isolated strike, Clarke said. CIA and DOD were tasked to look for follow-on strikes that they could recommend. The military was also asked to keep refining the target decks and consider both AQ and Taliban targets. (S)

President Clinton also asked later to develop SOF options for Afghanistan, Clarke said. He has a very vivid recollection of a conversation between President Clinton, CJCS Shelton, and himself in which President Clinton wanted to send a commando team to rip up UBL's camps. Shelton and Defense Secretary Cohen told the president that they couldn't stage from ~~25X1~~ (which was too unstable) or ~~25X1~~ (which was too remote). Moreover, the Pentagon was worried about getting its troops out. Clarke said that DOD would also tell President Clinton that, if he forced them to do a raid at the end of the earth like Carter did, it might be another Desert One debacle, which would hurt the administration. (S)

After August 1998, DOD had a written plan for force options in Afghanistan, including three main tiers: TLAMs; heavy bombing from B-1s, B-2s, and B-52s, for targets like Tamak that would be hard to flatten with cruise missiles; and nonspecific commando options. Clarke does not know whether SOCOM was tasked on producing commando options. DOD did not do a formal Planning Order, but Shelton could have simply called his own successor at SOCOM and asked for Delta Force options. Moreover, JSOC was less keen on paperwork than other commands. Clarke said that DOD recommended against boots-on-the-ground options. He does not recall any comments from President Clinton or Berger (who was very careful about handling the Pentagon) pushing for ground-troop options. (TS)

Clarke added that Dan Benjamin and Steve Simon probably got the memorable quote on p. 318 of *The Age of Sacred Terror*—in which President Clinton tells an appalled Gen. Shelton, “You know, it would scare the shit out of al-Qaeda if suddenly a bunch of black ninjas rappelled out of helicopters into the middle of their camp”—from Clarke's debrief to his TNT colleagues about the above conversation. (U)

Clarke also asked for a formal process to target UBL. They worked hard to shorten the time for a strike. The process was as follows: a message went from the asset in the

field to the CIA Ops Center and then to the C/CTC, who would call the JCS, the J-3, and Clarke. The J-3 would move the subs while Clarke convened the CSG, probably by SVTS. If the CSG recommended a strike, their recommendation would be taken to Berger, who would convene a PC. If the PC approved a hit, assets would already be moving into place with the target locations already preprogrammed into TLAMs. (JCS was doing locational planning to feed directly into the process. The idea was to use quantitative analysis of CIA data on UBL's location over time to establish patterns of movement.) If President Clinton approved, Berger would tell the JCS. If it all worked perfectly, it would take 25X1, X4 from the time the CIA's Afghan assets saw UBL enter a house to the time a "cruise missile enters the house," Clarke said—about 25X1, X4 to launch, then about 25X1, X4 of flight time. A lot of work went into this system, which was activated two or three times. (TS, 25X1)

The PC wanted another triggering event before further strikes; Clarke wanted to strike seriatim, when the intel was ripe. The PC had been stung by the "wag the dog" reactions and the criticism over al-Shifa. This bad learning experience made the PC "less likely to conduct follow-on strikes," Clarke said, without a triggering event or a very high likelihood of getting UBL. (U)

The PC discussed whether, if the USG tried again to hit UBL and missed, the AQ leader would hold a gloating press conference—"the groundhog pops his head up and says, 'You missed,'" as Clarke put it. Such a failure would make the superpower look feckless. Clarke urged the PC to get past this concern by saying that the USG was targeting the network's infrastructure, not just one man. (U)

After Operation Desert Fox and the Kosovo war, some in the PC—especially State—worried that the USG was "getting an international reputation as mad bombers," Clarke said. After the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, Tenet wanted to be sure we had the intel right. (U)

The USG had a source in the 25X1 who often told the IC where he thought UBL was. The new CTC chief, Cofer Black, was shocked to hear that the CIA had 25X1 Clarke said. Black demanded more sources and refused to take "no" for an answer. Black insisted that any organization can be penetrated and wanted to develop a strategy to get 25X1 albeit probably low-level ones. A year or so from his demand, the USG began getting some 25X1 (TS)

Working with the CIA

Clarke said he had a close relationship with Tenet; it was "not unusual to walk into my office and see the DCI sitting at my desk," Clarke said. He also said he had good ties with his counterparts at CTC, who, for the most part, reflected Clarke's activist tendencies. But between the DCI and CTC lay the institutional CIA, career officers

who had vivid memories of "hard-charging assholes" in the White House who got the CIA in trouble, ended officers' careers, and moved on—a clear Oliver North reference. (U)

Some CIA leaders, like Robert Gates, felt that covert action was both stupid and risky. Several senior managers, such as DO head Jim Pavitt, had worked for Gates when Gates was on the NSC. Pavitt's job then was to block covert action, Clarke said, on the grounds that the risks were too large and the payoffs too small. (U)

This attitude was typified by Pavitt's initial reaction to the Predator idea, which was, Not if it's my money. If it was Pavitt's money, he wanted it spent on HUMINT. To Pavitt, covert action was the "third rail," Clarke said. ~~(TS)~~

Clarke recalled that under DCI Deutch, the USG had, with NSC participation, looked at creating a 25X1 capability within CIA, which at the time was seen as much weaker than 25X1, X5 Clarke said Deutch was talked out of this by CIA personnel; Deutch then took the proposal off the table, saying it would take years to develop such a capability. Clarke never asked Tenet to revive this idea, noting that 25X1, already had similar abilities. But as Deutch had noted, the problem was getting the military to use its capabilities. ~~(TS)~~

The CIA was also cagey about its budget. Clarke got OMB to summon the CIA comptroller and forced the numbers out. He looked at several years of the CTC budget, the percentage of the CTC budget being spent on AQ, and the amount of non-CTC funds being spent on AQ. Looking at this total, he was able to work out how much of this was within the usual CIA budget and how much came from 25X1 Clarke found that, over a three-year period, almost all the CIA money being spent on AQ came from 25X1 A one-page chart of this was drawn up, and both OMB and the CIA comptroller signed off on this. Clarke took this to mean that the CIA had never seen the UBL issue as important enough to warrant taking money out of the agency's hide. Clarke also noted that, although Black talked to Tenet several times a week, Black was absolutely unwilling to go directly to Tenet with funding issues, preferring instead to go through the regular chain of command leading past the balky DDO. ~~(S)~~

[Commission note: on March 3, 2001, Clarke emailed Rice to urge that CIA's funding on AQ be raised sharply—a note that seems to draw upon the budget exercise mentioned above. He wrote that CIA spent 25X1 fighting AQ, almost all of it drawn from White House 25X1 Clarke added that figure made up about 20 percent of CIA's CT spending and about 2 percent of the overall CIA budget.] ~~(S)~~

Clarke's Access under the Bush Administration

Clarke said he had the same access to Rice as he'd had to Berger, although he did not see Rice as often as he'd seen Berger. When asked by Commissioner Roetner if he could just go in to see the national security adviser, Clarke replied, "I could. I didn't, but I could." If Clarke called, he got through. Clarke thought Rice wanted issues worked through the DC and Hadley. (U)

Clarke said he never discussed CT with President Bush in ten months. Clarke briefed Cheney, Powell, and Rice before the inauguration; he was ready to give the same briefing to the president but was told to wait until after the DC met on the issue. (U)

Clarke sent memos to Rice and Hadley asking urgently for PC decisions early in the Bush administration to show that he didn't want meetings for philosophical discussions; rather, he needed decisions made. "A lot of this stuff was ready," Clarke said, and he was trying to make that clear. He was frustrated. (U)

The Loss of Clarke's PC Seat

The Bush administration kept the national coordinator's title but took away what little power the national coordinator was given in PDD-62, Clarke said. The Bush administration weakened the national coordinator in two ways, he said: he was no longer a principal on CT issues, and he now had to report everything to the DC. PDD-62 let CSG issues go up to the PC, Clarke said. But the new administration did not see the CSG as a DC surrogate and wanted the DC to approve everything. Rice wanted him to go through the DC. (U)

Clarke was frustrated with this on policy questions, but not on operations. The second layer of review obviously slowed things down. Moreover, the administration had to wait until they had confirmed deputies in office to start the DC process. Then they had a whole list of other issues to tackle, starting with organizational issues about how to run the DC and then moving on to prioritized policy issues. (U)

Clarke also lost his CT budget process, which had been enshrined in PDD-62. (U)

There were no UBL Small Group meetings in the Bush administration, Clarke said. (U)

Westfields

Clarke and Charlie Allen convened all the people in the USG who could contribute to a discussion of AQ's WMD capabilities at the March 2001 Westfields conference to "read 'em the riot act." After asking for years for actionable intel on the critical issue of UBL's WMD capabilities, the IC was not producing it. Participants were split into two groups: one group red-teamed what AQ would do to hide WMD, and another group looked at what signs the USG should look for that would hint that AQ had WMD and was attempting to hide it. Westfields reenergized the effort to look for UBL's WMD capabilities and fostered some new creativity, but the IC never found

anything. Multiple TDs referred to Tora Bora, but NIMA wasn't even sure where that was. ~~(TS)~~

Clarke's September 4, 2001 Note to Rice

After sending an impassioned personal note to Rice the day of the September 4, 2001 PC, Clarke said he held a one-on-one with Rice in her office. The point of the note, Clarke said, was to tell Rice to "shit or get off the pot." If you think AQ is just a nuisance that's killed a total of around 100 Americans in two days in 1998 and 2000, Clarke said, if you believe that AQ is just the cost of doing business, fine, just tell me that, and I'll quit. But if you think AQ is an existential threat, a lot flows from that. You have to move AQ up the priority chain, spend a lot of money, and make changes. But let's decide this now, Clarke said. (U)