

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Mike Scheuer
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Location: 2100 K Street
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Non-Commission: Mike Scheuer 25X1

Scheuer was asked to brief the Commission on his recollection of the episode in February and March 1999, when the CIA located UBL as a desert hunting camp in Afghanistan.

Locating the Camp

~~(TS)~~ 25X1 Scheuer noted that the Intelligence Community had started looking for four different UBL desert camps back in 25X1 1998. The Shaykh Ali camp was not of these originally, but shortly after the New Year it started to come up repeatedly in reporting. It was not located until February 9, 1999, however, (i.e. references in the UBL Situation Reports to the Shaykh Ali camp before this date may be incorrect).

~~(TS)~~ 25X1 Scheuer recalled getting calls or emails the night of February 8 so that by the morning of the 9th they could confirm the location of the desert camp reported by the 25X1
25X1 Scheuer would have reported this information to C/CTC Geoff O'Connell, calling to tell him that they thought imagery had found the Shaykh Ali camp. He is not clear if any serious discussion of taking a shot at UBL took place at this time, or in the whole period between February and March. He did recall endless questions about various minutiae to do with the camp and UBL's location, movements, etc. He is not sure how serious the discussion was going on above O'Connell's level (--he reminded us that, as of 25X1 1998, he had been cut off from 7th floor discussions).

~~(TS)~~ 25X1 NF) Zelikow asked about communications from 25X1 on February 10 giving answers to various questions about the camp. Scheuer thought this was probably a result of the email exchange between Scheuer and COS Islamabad Gary Schroen, in which he had been asking Schroen: what information can you give us because we're probably going to get asked. He thought that both of the February 10 cables were probably responses to a cable he or 25X1
25X1 (his chief officer working the issue) sent on February 9 asking questions. Scheuer said the 25X1 should not be read as an indication that anyone was "spun up"—by this point, they had been through this kind of situation enough times that these kinds of questions

were standard operating procedure. Scheuer said he does not know whether the policymakers were in fact spun up yet.

~~(TS)~~^{25X1} NF) Zelikow read from an NSC note written on February 10 saying that UBL's camp had not yet been located, and that DOD would be in position by 0600 on February 11. At this point, Scheuer's understanding was that UBL's own camp (near the Shaykh Ali camp) had been located by HUMINT but not by ^{25X1}. He recalled that ^{25X1} on the nights of February 9 and 10. Scheuer noted that somehow all this information was getting communicated to DOD, perhaps via ^{25X1} (a DOD targeter who later came to work with Alec Station) or John Maher (the Vice J3).

The Emiratis

~~(S/NF)~~ Zelikow noted that the NSC memo said there were rumors about UAE officials being in Afghanistan. Scheuer said that the emiratis, Saudis, and to a lesser extent the Kuwaitis, all spent time in Afghanistan. According to Scheuer, the emiratis would use an C-130 as a supply plane to bring in their equipment for their hunting trips in Afghanistan. Pakistan was the point of transit for the emirati royals—they went to Pakistan first, then went to Afghanistan either overland or by small planes. Scheuer found the idea that the UAE officials had been in Pakistan on February 6 very plausible.

~~(TS)~~^{25X1} NF) Whenever they had information about the emiratis, someone in the CTC's front office (O'Connell, perhaps, or his deputy ^{25X1}) would always call Clarke because he was so interested. Scheuer thinks the CIA had an asset with access to information on the movement of the UAE C-130 and may have given information on the UAE officials going hunting. He thinks there may have been some discussion between ^{25X1} about the UAE officials coming to hunt (and the CIA had ^{25X1} reporting on this). Scheuer said he would not be surprised if Clarke had brought up the emiratis' visit to Afghanistan and had some information on it.

~~(S/NF)~~ Scheuer added that he thinks he must have known about Clarke and ^{25X1} being in the UAE ^{25X1} because he thinks the delegation went to the UAE to nag the emiratis about finances. Alec Station would have done talking points for them (which would end up as the DCI's notes to prime Clarke for the trip). (Scheuer noted that by late 1998 he had already concluded that he did not think it was worth pursuing the UAE on this issue anymore. In his opinion, the UAE was thoroughly lying to the U.S. about everything regarding militant Islam and narcotics trafficking).

~~(S/NF)~~ Zelikow asked about Clarke asking the emiratis if they were hunting in Afghanistan (i.e. revealing that the CIA might have known as much). Scheuer noted that the belief that the CIA knows everything is one of its greatest assets in the third world, and that Clarke exploited this belief. But everything the U.S. would say to the UAE ^{25X1} Scheuer commented, would openly or clandestinely be communicated to UBL. "If I knew Clarke was going to talk to the emirates about this, I would have forbidden it," Scheuer said.

What Happened to the Camp?

~~(TS^{25X1})~~ On February 12, there was reporting that UBL was in Herat. But Scheuer said his assumption was that as long as the desert camp was up and running, UBL was not going to leave the area altogether, i.e. although he had left the camp he might return at some point. In Scheuer's mind the operation was not over. He said that coverage devoted to the Shaykh Ali camp and trying to find the nearby UBL camp did not waver from February 9 until March 12, when they started to see the camp being dismantled. According to Scheuer, ^{25X1}

^{25X1} were still treating the camp as a target for a military strike. (He noted that his position was to wipe out the camp and set up an ambush to catch whoever might escape the strike).

~~(TS^{25X1})~~ Scheuer noted an email he sent to ^{25X1} about UBL being in Herat and that the U.S. should target him, because "doesn't this amount to eyes on target?"

~~(TS^{25X1})~~ On February 19, there was a CTC memo noting that UBL was involved in some sort of negotiations. Scheuer said that the source on this was probably one of their ^{25X1} assets, who was ^{25X1}

~~(S)~~ Scheuer received a copy of the March 7 memo Clarke had written about his conversation with an emirati official. The memo had come via fax from the NSC. Asked how he had obtained it, Scheuer said he would get "bootleg copies" of documents from "people" who were helping him to protect his assets. Blee consistently kept him informed, he added. The fax might have come to the DDCI, then and Blee (the DDCI's executive assistant) obtained a copy for Scheuer. (This was the same way that he had obtained information about the ^{25X1} ^{25X1}).

~~(C)~~ On the day that Scheuer received Clarke's memcon, he sent it to the DDO's office, the DDCI's office, and to the CTC's front office. Scheuer said he was told that it went all the way up to the DCI. Everyone came back to Scheuer telling him they had asked if the call was cleared by the CIA, and he got a positive negative: no one in the building said they had cleared it. It was after this that he sent cables ^{25X1}

~~(TS^{25X1})~~ At the point of Clarke's call to the UAE, Scheuer said that a strike was still actively under consideration if UBL did come back to the camp. In his opinion, the Shaykh Ali camp was a "magnet"—and the CIA had no other such magnets at that point (other than Kandahar city, and it was unpredictable when UBL went there). As long as the camp was there, however, the CIA had numerous sources ^{25X1} to locate him.

~~(TS^{25X1})~~ ^{25X1} regarding the complete dismantling of the Shaykh Ali camp. The CIA had had no reporting from its camp asset on intentions to pull out of the desert; there was no preparation for the dismantling (e.g. bringing in trucks). It caught ^{25X1} by surprise.

~~(C)~~ Scheuer said there could be an innocent reason for the dismantling—but given that it was done in less than 30 hours, he said he does not believe in coincidences. “Stuff doesn’t happen like this coincidentally.” Scheuer thinks that Clarke tipped off the emiratis, and that he made the decision because he thought the operation was still in play, not because it was over. By Clarke’s scale, he said, the F-16 sale was more important than catching UBL. He could be wrong, but “I would bet my pension that there’s a cause and effect relationship here.”

~~(TS~~25X1) There were lots of irate people at CIA Headquarters about Clarke’s alleged tip-off. Scheuer said that Pavitt was upset and was thinking of calling Clarke. Scheuer said 25X1
25X1

The episode caught everyone by surprise and was very disheartening.