

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

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Participants – Commission: Scott Allan, Len Hawley, and Tom Dowling

**Overview**

(U) This interview focused on the South Asia Bureau's responsibilities for implementing national counterterrorism policy in the region from 1998 to early 2001, particularly with respect to Pakistan and Afghanistan.

(U) From 1984 to 1987 Alan Eastham served in Peshawar during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. From 1995 to 1997 he served as political counselor in New Delhi. From 1997 to 1999 he served as Deputy Chief of Mission in Islamabad. From 1999 to 2001 he served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs. He is now working in the African Affairs Bureau at State.

**Policy Issues In Question**

(U) What was the diplomatic strategy for pressuring the Taliban to release UBL? How did that strategy play out from 1998-2001 with Afghanistan and Pakistan? What were the driving issues at play in the region? How did the South Asia Bureau engage with the rest of the interagency on counterterrorism?

**INTERVIEW RESULTS****Islamic Radicalism in the 1980's**

(U) It is interesting to note that our language has taken a reversal over the last twenty years. In the 1980's we were all fighting a "jihad" against the Soviets. The United States associated itself with the jihad against the Soviets. Today's so-called Islamic radicals were our close allies in that period. There is not much difference between the people today who are opposing the U.S. from those who worked with us 20 years ago to expel the Soviets from Afghanistan.

### The Role of the ISI in Supporting the Afghan Resistance

(U) The ISI was the manager of the war against the Soviets. It handled the logistical details, the financing arrangements, and the operational targeting of Soviet units and facilities in Afghanistan. The various Afghan groups exercised considerable free will about their operations, but the ISI negotiated with about seven Afghan resistance groups that served as funnels for the assistance given by Saudi Arabia and others, including the United States. The ISI was essentially the executive agent for all those countries that were providing assistance to the resistance.

(U) I don't know precisely which countries provided military assistance. The equipment seemed to have been manufactured all over the world including the United States, Russia, Italy, China, Egypt, among others. The arms trade market was not selective. Saudi Arabia is reported to have funded a lot of this assistance.

(U) The ISI is a line organization of Pakistani military personnel from all military services. Within the Pakistani military structure, the ISI was considered to be somewhat apart from the Army. But they were serving military officers. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] My impression is that serving military officers interacted with Afghan mujahedin contacts in Peshawar.

(U) At that time, there was no civilian leadership of the Pakistani government. It was run by a military regime. There was an exercise in conducting elections in 1984-85, but they did not change the composition of Pakistan's government. Civilian officials of the Pakistani government were not well informed on national security matters including what was going on in Afghanistan.

(U) Although I have little understanding of Washington's debates about sending Stingers to Afghanistan, I do remember the day that the Stinger missile was first used. There was great joy in Peshawar that day. People knew that a new technology was used against the Soviets with good effect. At the Khost airport, the resistance shot down three Russian helicopters with one attack. That news ran through Peshawar like a surge of electricity.

(U) Prior to going to Peshawar, I had served in the office of counterterrorism. [REDACTED]

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### The Afghan Arabs

(U) In my time in Peshawar I never met an Afghan Arab. There were some Arabs in Peshawar who were working with some relief organizations. They had a lot of money to

spend and had the nicest cars and the nicest offices. I don't recall having a substantive conversation with any of those guys—they just talked about the weather with me.

(U) With respect to the fighters, the only information I got about the Afghan Arabs was relayed to me by Afghans. They described the Arabs as high-grade tourists who were a lot more trouble than they were worth. The Afghans had a sense of obligation that they had to take the Arabs into their villages as the sons of the wealthy who were providing financial support to the resistance. Many of the Arabs who went in were culturally insensitive to the Afghans. The Afghans saw the Arabs as ill-trained rookies, they said it was a major hassle if any Arab happened to get himself killed. They treated the Arabs with kid-gloves and were very reluctant to take them along in areas where there was actual fighting. The Afghans put up with this because they needed the money. Arab financing was what counted. They allowed these Arab men to spend time with them so the guys could go back home and tell their rich friends about their experiences in fighting Soviet troops. The rich Arabs would then send more money. My view may be somewhat skewed because this is what the Afghans told me as an American official.

#### **The Pakistani View of the Afghan Rebels**

(U) I never quite understood how the Pakistani's choose which rebel groups to support in fighting the Soviets. It was widely known that most of the support that was funneled through Pakistan was forwarded to Gulgadin Hakmetyar's group mostly because they would fight. His group was somewhat less corrupt than the others. Resources sent to this group would likely make it to the pointy end to fight the Soviets. [REDACTED]

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However, there were many Pakistani's who affiliated themselves with the concept of jihad—a religious war.

(U) Nonetheless, the Pakistani's sought to strengthen political cohesiveness among the factions. There are a number of stories about the Pakistani's working very hard to bring the Afghan factions together. They were not successful in creating a framework for an eventual Afghan government. The factions pretty much fought against the Soviets separately, without much cohesion among themselves.

#### **Role of the Madrassas in Supporting the Afghan War**

(U) In the mid 1980's this schooling system was not as highly developed as it is today. But the one prominent school in Peshawar produced many of the future officials that showed up in Kabul in the late 1990's.

(U) During the Soviet war the Madrassas were not known for producing Afghan fighters. Instead, the fighters were recruited among the many thousands of refugees in Pakistan. They did not have to look very hard to find young men who were willing to fight the Soviets.

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(U) I know very little about Saudi funding of Madrassas during that period. I don't have any hard facts on this issue. But we would hear from time to time about some Saudi donor giving support to particular Afghan resistance leader.

#### **The Obscurity of Bin Ladin in the 1980's**

(U) I never heard of Bin Ladin during the 1980's. The first time I heard of him was in 1996 after I returned to Pakistan when Bin Ladin issued his first fatwa.

#### **U.S. Priorities in the 1997 Timeframe**

[REDACTED] 9/11 Classified Information [REDACTED] But the terrorism issue was different than it is today—then it was always mixed up with the Kashmir conflict. I had come to Pakistan in 1997 from New Delhi where I had handled the kidnapping of the American in Kashmir. Terrorism then went straight through Islamabad. We were pretty sure that the kidnapers had gotten training in Afghanistan. Overall, the U.S. priorities with Pakistan were [REDACTED] support of terrorists, narcotics trafficking and heroin production, and democratization. Those were the main priorities.

(U) The kidnapping episode was part of a larger sordid story. Remember the hijacking of the commercial airliner? The airliner went to Kabul. One of those hijackers also kidnapped Daniel Pearl. The kidnapers were not part of al Qaeda, but the story is emblematic of the violence and chaos that makes up Pakistan, India and Afghanistan.

(U) Karachi was where we saw the most immediate terrorist threat. But it was everywhere. Peshawar and the Frontier province really take the prize on terrorism in the late 1990's.

#### **U.S. Priorities for Afghanistan**

(U) In 1997 the Taliban was consolidating its power in Kabul and the areas to the south. We sought to stop the war through some kind of settlement between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. We tried to create opportunities for them to talk to one another.

(U) Our agenda with Taliban did not change much over time. We pressed them about terrorists on Taliban soil, narcotics, and human rights (particularly women's rights). These issues kept coming up as we pressed them to end the civil war. Our primary concern was getting a peace process going.

(U) We did not follow the Pakistanis in recognizing the Taliban. We told the Taliban it would be recognized as a government when it behaved like a government. We said that responsible governments do not support terrorism, narcotics trafficking, and abuse women. Pakistan's recognition did not affect U.S. policy in any way.

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(U) Until August of 1998, we had regular engagements with the Taliban and Northern Alliance. The cruise missile strike of August 20, 1998 had a dramatic effect on our relations with both the Taliban and Pakistan.

(U) Pakistan's recognition of the Taliban government did not show us anything we did not know before. The typical conversation we had the Paks about the Taliban was very sterile. We would say these guys don't know what they are doing. The Paks would respond that we needed to give them a chance. We responded by highlighting all the bad things the Taliban were doing. They said that we should give them some money and maybe they will behave better. The conversation always went the same way.

### **U.S. Assessment of the Warring Factions**

(U) Bill Richardson's trip was an attempt to end the war. We did not have much to offer to the Taliban or the Northern Alliance. The Northern Alliance was attempting to engage the United States as an "ally" in the war against the Taliban. The Taliban were not nearly so clever. They behaved according to their principles regardless of what we thought. So we did not have much leverage with either side. We never embraced the objectives of the Northern Alliance because we viewed them as a minority faction within Afghanistan. Even if it were to win militarily (which was unlikely), the Northern Alliance could not govern the country. It would have had to be pasted together with a large coalition to run the country. On the other hand, the Taliban were so outrageous that there was little that could be done with them.

(U) The fact that the Northern Alliance had ongoing ties with Russia and Iran did not affect our assessment of the factions in the 1997 timeframe. It was really odd to see Masoud working with the Russians, especially after he had fought the Soviets so effectively during the Soviet occupation.

(U) The peace initiative caught me by surprise. It was something Richardson took upon himself. Indeed it did not stick. It fell apart after talks in Islamabad. The Taliban refused to lift its blockade of food relief to some isolated areas. The Northern Alliance wanted the blockade lifted and they demanded freedom of movement by all peoples of Afghanistan. The Taliban just refused to do it, and the talks ended.

(U) Our policy was to be evenhanded with all sides to the conflict. But I am not sure that is the way it played out in practice. Most of our humanitarian assistance, for example, went into the Taliban areas. It was hard to get to the Northern Alliance areas especially by any routes over the Pakistani borders, but those borders were controlled by the Taliban. The Northern Alliance was cut off geographically from Pakistan which was where our aid originated.

(U) Politically, we were sympathetic to the Northern Alliance because they were not as vociferous or offensive as the Taliban. The Taliban was "gifted" in doing dumb things to generate negative public reaction. It seemed almost calculated. The classic example is when the Taliban blew up the historical Buddhist statues. There was no reason to do that,

yet they defied all world opinion in destroying those historical and religious monuments. Their treatment of women, harsh rules of public behavior, and all the rest made it difficult for us to have any discussion with them other than to complain.

(U) The Taliban leadership was so isolated that it did not matter if some action offended anyone. Omar and his close advisors were so disconnected from the world that any public reaction just did not enter into their calculations on any decision. They did what they did for their own unique reasons. Sometimes it was impossible to understand why they did the things they did.

(U) Our stated policy was that "we would support no particular faction in Afghanistan." That is different from saying that "we are neutral." We talked to every Afghan faction that came in the door. We listened to everyone, but we said we did not back any particular group in the struggle for victory in Afghanistan.

(U) Here in Washington at the time, my understanding is that there was considerable ambivalence toward the Taliban when it popped up in Kandahar and began asserting itself toward Kabul. On the one hand, the various mujahedin tribal groups were fighting among each other and were shelling Kabul. It was clear that was not good for Afghanistan. But on the other hand, we had these radicals coming up from Kandahar, calling themselves "students" who looked like they might bring something new to a long civil war. So it was a real question as to how we should approach this new movement. The debate went on for some time. It hinged on whether the Taliban was viewed as malleable. At some point in early 1998, I came to the conclusion that the Taliban was not likely to be influenced by outsiders.

(U) I came to this conclusion after repeated experiences of stubbornness from those I met. When speaking for themselves, they demonstrated a certain degree of flexibility. They were open to some ideas. But once they got guidance from Omar, they shut down. They would lock on to a point of view and could not change. And often the point of view adopted was inimical to US interests. The main issue was harboring Bin Ladin, which after August 1998 the issue became very intense.

(U) The other debate before August 1998 was whether Omar had complete control over the Taliban, or moderates had influence. We just did not know. There might have been some "nice guys" in the Taliban leadership, but there were not any "moderates." No one was willing to challenge Omar. Even though we talked to some of the nice guys, there was not much flexibility even with them.

### The Importance of Afghanistan in Washington

(U) Before the embassy bombings, Washington's primary focus in the region was on Pakistan [REDACTED] 9/11 Classified Information [REDACTED] more significant than anything in Afghanistan in the 1996-1998 timeframe. We had no leverage with the Pakistanis, and our rhetoric counted little. The trade-off was obvious [REDACTED]

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trumped an issue in Afghanistan. Congressional sanctions meant that we would forfeit any leverage on the Pakistanis.

(U) I cannot comment on SCT's role in setting policy on Afghanistan at the time because I was in Islamabad. My impression was that SCT was a source of good ideas on counterterrorism initiatives. The office was a little bit too eager to go the hard question of imposing sanctions. After all, what more can you do to Pakistan once you cut off their assistance? By going to the hard question first, it tends to stop any dialog.

(U) When I came back to Washington in 1999, I had a very good and close relationship with SCT. They worked hard in finding creative ways to deal with Bin Ladin and the Taliban. None of us could figure out a way to crack the Taliban nut. The Pakistanis were not much help. They would just give us a recitation of the same reasons the Taliban would give us about it being so hard to hand over Bin Ladin. SCT was a real player in trying to find a breakthrough. Sheehan was active.

(U) There is a priority issue here. The seventh floor was clearly focused [REDACTED] [REDACTED] prior to the embassy bombings. An Afghanistan peace initiative by Richardson could not hurt. My guess is that Richardson's trip was not a Washington attempt to raise the priorities of the Afghan civil war. It was a personal effort by Richardson.

#### **Saudi Engagement with the Taliban in the Summer 1998**

(U) Prince Turki's visits to Omar in the summer of 1998 held hope that the Saudis were the best chance of cracking the Taliban nut. However, by this time Bin Ladin's views about the corruption of Saudi family began to soak into the Taliban. His view was that Saudi royal family had sold out to the Americans. So the last person the Taliban wanted to hear from was a Saudi prince. The Saudis had made a good run at the Taliban, but it was as stubborn with them and it was with us.

(U) There were real limits to what we could achieve with the Taliban. The Saudis had much more leverage. But Bin Ladin's view was that the Saudis were more wicked than the Americans. The Taliban internalized a lot of Bin Ladin's views.

(U) I never heard of anything that suggested Omar was blackmailing the Saudis.

#### **Quality of U.S. Intelligence on Afghanistan**

(U) The best reporting that came into Washington was State reporting. We knew what was happening in Afghanistan.

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(U) In early 1998, we were not doing specifically Bin Ladin. Our efforts against the Taliban were focused on the mujahedin training camps. The Kashmir issue played as well. After the embassy bombings we sharpened our engagement to focus on Bin Ladin. All of a sudden, our message went from "clean up your act" to "give us this man." This message got even sharper once the Security Council resolution 1267 was passed.

#### **The Policy Impact of the Nuclear Tests**

(U) When the Indians tested I was the Charge' on May 11, 1998. I had to take the heat from the Pakistanis. It was pretty ugly because they figured that we were in collusion with the Indians.

(U) There was little chance that we could have stopped the Pakistanis from testing. But we had to try. I told the Paks, on my own initiative, that they had a real opportunity here. They had the chance to win support by not testing. President Clinton called Sharif to urge him not to test—there was a lot of money put on the table as well. Sharif was so weak and public pressure was so strong that they had to go ahead with the test. Sharif would not have survived in office if he had not tested right away. He lasted another year and a half.

#### **The Embassy Evacuation**

(U) I was on leave following the testing. But when I got back, the east Africa bombings changed everything.

(U) I do not recall what was said between Pakistan and us right after the bombings. I do remember that as the manager of the evacuation of the U.S. embassy it virtually took all of my time. By August 15<sup>th</sup> I was totally involved with evacuation. I don't remember whether the Pakistanis asked for anything, including whether they asked us not to hit them.

(U) Then the Vice Chairman, General Ralston, visited Islamabad. He arrived on the 9<sup>th</sup> and stayed through the 20<sup>th</sup>. The embassy was pretty much in the dark on what was going on between the bombings and the strike. Tom Pickering was talking with the ambassador, but I was not part of those discussions. On the Sunday before the strike we got the instruction to evacuate, and so I worked to move out about 260 people. After the missile strikes it took five months to get people back. We had drawn down way too far. Most of the key offices were empty, except perhaps for one person.

(U) The Pakistanis were not happy. Apparently, when the strike took place, Sharif was holding a cabinet meeting during which it was interrupted by someone who said U.S. missiles had hit a Pakistani village. It was a completely false report, but it made them angry. Sharif went to the public, and President Clinton was trying to talk with him. Then

it turned out the report was wrong, and it became an embarrassment for Sharif. It was a real mess, and dialog was lost for a brief period of time.

(U) The strike was so closely held in Washington that we did not know anything. I learned about Ralston's trip when a sergeant in the attaché's office asked why a Gulfstream aircraft needed country clearance. His trip was so closely held that some inefficiencies emerged.

(U) The Pakistanis saw our unilateral action as relieving them of any responsibility for anything further that would happen. It was not helpful. There was no new or different reaction by the Pakistanis after the strike. Nothing really happened. Bin Ladin was still on the loose.

(U) The cruise missile strikes had the effect of encouraging mistrust between Pakistan's civilian leaders and the military. This eventually led to the coup of 12 October 1999. A factor in that untrusting relationship was the American effort to push Pakistan to get things done in Afghanistan. Our pressure in 1998-1999 was typical of the history of our relationship with Pakistan—when we needed the Paks, we were very active. Most other times, however, we were passive but harsh with them. It was very uneven.

#### **Engagement with the Taliban After the Strikes**

(U) We had a series of meetings with the Taliban after the strikes. There were several lines of dialog. One was the indictment. Another was the threat to hold them accountable. We did not have much leverage on the Taliban after the strikes.

(U) Their response was, "so you've destroyed a bunch of our buildings, what else are you going to do? They shrugged their shoulders. They became indifferent to anything further we might do, given that this was a big attack and it produced nothing. Sometimes a moderate would say that they wished we would take this problem off their hands. But they weren't willing to assist us in getting it done. We got no traction with the Taliban after the missile strikes.

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#### **ISI's Activities in Afghanistan**

The ISI worked with the Taliban, not with Bin Ladin. It would surprise me to hear that the ISI had any direct activities with the Bin Ladin. [REDACTED]

(U) I do not believe that the official Pakistanis would have had a relationship with Bin Ladin or any part of his organization. It would not surprise me to hear that some Pakistani official was seen with some al Qaeda operative, but such a meeting would have been incidental to Pakistani activities with the Taliban.

(U) The ISI rationale for its operations in Afghanistan was to give Pakistan strategic depth in a possible war with India. Strategic depth is an article of faith with the Pakistani military. The Taliban was the vehicle to achieve Pakistani aims. Another interest was the Pakistan-Afghanistan gateway into Central Asia for international trade. [REDACTED]

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(U) Regarding the many thousands of al Qaeda recruits coming through Pakistan to Afghanistan, I had little understanding of how that system worked. I amazed me that Arab volunteers could come in as easily as they did. Perhaps it was just easy to get around in Pakistan.

(U) Pickering was tough on the Pakistanis over its support to the Taliban.

#### **Other Options with the Taliban**

(U) We had put several options on the table. But I came to the conclusion that the Taliban's response was phony. Options included a U.S. trial, expulsion, and so forth. Their response was, "there is no way a Muslim could get justice from you guys." Then they said, "show us the evidence and we'll try him." Another version of that was to refer the whole matter to a Muslim council of elders to decide Bin Ladin's fate. But we could never hand over our legal system to a ULEMA council. So we ended up just giving the Taliban the indictment, but with great fanfare. In the end we did not get anywhere even with that because the Taliban said the indictment gave no evidence of wrong behavior.

#### **Impact of the Kargil Crisis on Counterterrorism**

(U) The Kargil crisis moved the terrorism issue off to the side. Kargil was the result of a miscalculation by the Pakistani army and a miscommunication between the army and the civilian leadership. It was symptomatic of what later led to the coup.

(U) By the middle of 1999, we were still talking to the Pakistanis and the Taliban about the problem of Bin Ladin. But there were other events and issues at play that pushed the entire agenda along.

(U) I think the reason the Pakistanis went beyond the Line of Control was that it could be done tactically. Previous encounters with the Indians led the Pak military to believe mistakenly that the Indians would not respond to an incursion. Sharif was briefed on the operation, but he may not have understood what it meant.

(U) Sharif came to Washington to negotiate the withdrawal of the Pakistani army. He then went back to tell the army that Washington told him to withdraw—but he did not tell the army himself, instead he sent someone else. This further frayed the relationship between Sharif and the army. This also set the stage for the “accidental coup” in October.

### **The Musharraf Coup**

(U) Musharraf had no intention of taking over. He was presented with a situation in which he had to finish it. He was feeling his way forward.

(U) Our first thoughts after the coup were not about seizing the opportunity for advancing our Afghan policy. Instead, our focus was on the loss of democracy in Pakistan. Given the splits within the army itself, Musharraf was not in a position to take on a new course regarding Afghanistan right away.

(U) Musharraf was chief of the army. I am not aware of how he was related to the ISI, if at all. He had a fairly conventional military career.

### **Internal Pakistani Politics**

(U) The Islamists in Pakistan fit into several different categories. There are the mainstream Islamic political parties which attempted to build their own broad political bases in Pakistan, but they also had ties to various unconventional groups for various reasons. For example, the JUI and the JUP had ties with some Kashmiri groups. Other parties had connections to various Afghan groups.

(U) Up until 9/11, none of these Islamic parties was able to elect national or regional candidates to political offices. They just did not have the support. They had some clout because they appeared to have “street power” in the sense that they were able to influence public opinion on some issues, but they could not build on that power to get enough votes to elect their candidates. Post-9/11 is a different story.

(U) Sharif and Musharraf, on the other hand, were part of the establishment. From 1987 to 1999, political confrontations were common between two large groups of the established parties.

### **A Shift in U.S. Policy in late 1999**

(U) About the same time as Musharraf's coup, we got tougher on Afghanistan by placing a travel ban and financial freeze on the Taliban and declaring al Qaeda a Foreign Terrorist Organization. However, we could not figure out how best to support anti-Taliban groups, both outside and in Afghanistan.

**Spring and Summer 2000**

(U) We were beginning to see Musharraf as being a person who saw things differently than Sharif. Sharif was not doing very well domestically. He did not seem to be in control. Although the coup was a "bad thing," the prospect of several years of Sharif had us all scared. When the coup came, it looked like someone was finally in charge in Islamabad.

(U) It was hard to get the President out there. The trip was doubtful right up to the moment it happened. I remember that after the President's trip, Musharraf went to Kandahar in May. I also remember that Musharraf returned just as frustrated as Prince Turki was after he visited Omar and found him to be completely stubborn. Musharraf got no traction with Omar either.

(U) I went with Pickering to the region in late May. He pressed Musharraf to keep up the pressure on the Taliban. We were at the end of diplomacy. We kept trying, but I thought the Taliban would never give him up.

(U) Then there was the Putin-Clinton summit in June. The Russians wanted to work with us on Afghanistan. It opened up some other possibilities. We were able to start discussions with Iran. The idea was that at one point we could open up contacts to the Northern Alliance via Iran. The approach was that if the Russians and the Americans could get Pakistan and Iran in the same room, perhaps there could be an opportunity to cut support for their clients in Afghanistan. However, we never did work with the Iranians on a bilateral basis; contact was always made through a multilateral mechanism.

(U) Recognition was a powerful carrot, but it was encumbered by many other issues. American women's groups would never allow recognition without other concessions, concessions that the Taliban would never make. The narcotics question was very much a competing issue against recognition. There were too many issues in play.

(U) The Taliban were very hard to read, and I believe their officials did not speak with one voice. They did not "get it" with regard to Bin Ladin. They did not understand how important he was to us. If they fully understood what would happen if he attacked our homeland, they would have been less stubborn. But no one anticipated that Bin Ladin would do a 9/11.

(U) I met with the Taliban on the first day of Ramadan in the fall of 1998. I commented on Bin Ladin and his people. I told him, "We know Bin Ladin is going to hit us again, and when he does God help you." I don't know if that ever got to Omar. Nobody ever even saw Omar. Our main link to the Taliban was through the foreign minister. I know they talked from time to time. But we have no way of knowing what Omar knew of our concerns.

(U) In one of these meetings, Taliban Deputy Foreign Minister Jalil asked for some kind of U.S. "gesture". I have no idea of what he believed was a sufficient action on our part.

We never figured out what sort of gesture could be made. He also seemed to be looking for some kind of assurance: are you just trying to get Bin Ladin, or are you really trying to destroy us? We did not know what signal could be given that would have made the difference. At the end, this was not any kind of opportunity to get Bin Ladin. We don't have any good insight into what the Taliban were thinking. There was a sense that the Taliban were internally paralyzed. After three years in Kabul, Omar was still in Kandahar. Nothing much was happening. They could not defeat the Northern Alliance. Some of the more worldly-wise Taliban were beginning to see the dead end of the Taliban agenda. This state of affairs continued until September 11.

### **Pakistani Reaction to the Sanctions Regime under UNSC Resolution 1333**

(U) I think the Pakistanis were surprised by resolution 1333. But they had no intention of abiding by it. At that point they were still looking at the Taliban as an ally, and they were not prepared to go down the road of sanctions against their friend. They were not prepared, on the ground, to implement the sanctions. We really did not get the resolution in play with the Pakistanis during the change of the administrations.

### **New Bush Administration Priorities**

(U) It was difficult to engage the officials of the Bush administration on South Asia. It was surprising to me how much we had to do to bring them up to speed on the situation. It took four months to get the new assistant secretary confirmed. The actual tenets of U.S. policy toward the region did not change before 9/11. They had a lot of other issues that seemed to take precedence. It wasn't until late spring 2001 that we were able to get the Indian foreign minister to come to Washington.

(U) There was great reluctance to engage with the Pakistanis. When we finally got the Pakistani foreign minister to come to Washington in the summer, it became kind of ugly. The secretary made the case at lunch with the Pak foreign minister about how important it was that Pakistan got on a path to constitutional democratic government. The very next morning Musharraf announced that he was going to hold onto power for a full presidential term of five years. Musharraf's announcement was a huge embarrassment for the foreign minister as well as our own people in the South Asia bureau. He was going to see Deputy Secretary Armitage that morning, and Armitage had to hammer him on Musharraf's decision to forgo democratic elections. The problem was it confounded the personal relationships at the beginning of the administration. Given all the many issues between the United States and Pakistan over the years, this episode did not help.

### **The U.S. – Russian Working Group in May 2001**

(U) The working group meeting held in May was really important in connecting the new folks on Afghanistan. It also enabled Armitage to learn about the Taliban and the Afghan situation.

**Ambassador Milam's Approach**

(U) I don't remember what Milam recommended. But I recall that we thought highly of his recommendations.

**The Omar - Bin Ladin Tie**

(U) It became clear that Omar was unwilling to lower the shield protecting Bin Ladin. It was part of Omar's paralysis. He could not win the civil war. He could not consolidate the tribes. He could not work with the outside world. He could not hand over Bin Ladin.

**Willingness of the U.S. Military to Use Force**

(U) In connection with considering military force, the whole process changed with the Bush administration before 9/11. In the Clinton administration General Zinni seemed to be involved. He was involved in the Pakistan part especially. In the new administration, the Joint Staff was more involved. From what I remember there was no real good proposal for the military to do anything in Afghanistan until after 9/11.

**Lessons from 9/11**

(U) I think about this all the time. I see it now. The United States did not recognize and deal with the problem. I've asked why? We knew Bin Ladin was going to hit us again. What we did not know was that the attack would be so spectacularly destructive. The attack demonstrated an astonishing vulnerability to the core of the United States of America.

(U) What worries me the most is that we tacitly accepted that he was going to attack the country. Until after 9/11 we were not genuinely "at war" with Bin Ladin. Although he was attacking, we really did not notice.

(U) What could we have done differently? I don't really know. Prior to 9/11, I don't think we could have mustered the political will to have sent 15,000 troops to Afghanistan to kill Bin Ladin.

(U) The same thing is happening today. You can ask the same question as to whether we are doing enough now to deal with the threat.

**Recommendation**

(U) I don't know how you fix it. There is no amount of reorganizing the federal government that would fix the problem. The tendency will be to try to fix what is fixable, not to fix what is broken. It is going to be tough to come up with recommendations that would prevent a 9/11. You do not fix the vulnerability by the Patriot Act. I don't think we need new laws. I don't think we need a domestic intelligence service. It's a human problem.

## [REDACTED] SECTION

**Alignment of NA Initiatives by CIA and State**

[REDACTED] My view on the covert operation involving the Northern Alliance was that it was impractical. The Northern Alliance had no capability to conduct any operation in southeastern Afghanistan against bin Ladin. There was no possibility that the Northern Alliance would do what had to be done [REDACTED]

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**State - CIA Coordination of Covert Operations**

[REDACTED] When I was in Islamabad I had some awareness. CIA had a [REDACTED] capture plan, but it never amounted to anything.

[REDACTED] When I got back to Washington the emphasis turned toward technological solution using the Predator armed with a Hellfire missile. I was in a meeting that was chaired by Hadley in the spring of 2001. The fascination with the armed Predator was that it seemed to solve the actionable intelligence problem. It solved both the information problem and timing problem in the same gadget.

[REDACTED] was uncomfortable with the concept. Even though there was this picture of a tall guy in a white robe walking around, we did not necessarily have confirmation that the image was bin Ladin. Before we put a missile on top of someone's head, we sure want to know who is being killed.

[REDACTED] This is before 9/11. You have to make that divide. Before September 11, there was a pretty high threshold that had to be achieved before we would shoot a missile. We would hesitate before action. Now, we would take action in a second.

[REDACTED] I am not sure State was even involved in these decisions. It was a very disorderly process. I would get snippets of the issue.

END

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