

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Interview with Ali Soufan

Type of event: Interview

Date: November 12, 2003

Special Access Issues: Secret clearances

Prepared by: Tom Eldridge

Team Number: 5

Location: GSA Building SCIF

Participants – Non-Commission: Ali Soufan, FBI – NY-JTTF, Pat O’Brien, General Counsel’s Office FBI

Participants – Commission: Susan Ginsburg, Doug MacEachin, Tom Eldridge, Janice Kephart-Roberts, Yoel Tbin, Nikki Grandrimo, Deiter Snell

Background

Mr. Soufan’s background was described in earlier MFRs. This is a follow-up.

JKR questions late in the afternoon

Kahtani. Soufan debriefed Kahtani. “his lies ended in a confession. I never asked for a detailed debriefing of his interview by Mr. Melendez-Perez, the inspector who had Kahtani removed from Orlando Int’l Airport August 4, 2001. Kahtani did say he told the inspector he was a used car salesman. Kahtani was deeply religious. Kahtani said he wore all black to the US so Atta would know who he was. Everyone is Mohammad to Kahtani, although in the instance of who was meeting him at Orlando, the information is correct.

GMTO questioning. There was a standard litany of questions that were put to all detainees originally, but doesn’t believe that is now the case. I move in and out of the detainee interrogations, and the work is run by DOD, so you should ask them. I never asked specific travel related questions as a matter of course.

Evidence of Al Qaida guidance on getting past US border security. In Pennsylvania, there was found a notebook. One set of entries is what to say to an immigration inspector. That’s in evidence in the Concordance system. Some of the guesthouses had a tremendous amount on CDs on American history, maps, computers, and cultural training. KSM was training on these things.

The role of border security in the war on terror. Help and assist governments who are suffering from their own bad documents. DOS did this in Yemen, and has worked well. The Yemenis were told all the problems with their travel documents. Yemen then established a computer system and a national id card that is hard to get. This id card is also an electoral id. Need the national id to get other ids, like a passport. Thinks INS is doing a good job; the best they can.