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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

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Location: Secretary's Suite at Harry S. Truman Building
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State Department: Mark Wong, Jamie Borek, & Jim Thessin

Interviewee Background

As a career foreign service officer, Under Secretary ("U/S") Grossman served as the Deputy Chief of Mission in Istanbul from 1988-1992. From January 1993 – September 1994 he served as the Executive Secretary of the State Department ("State"). In November 1994, he was appointed US Ambassador to Turkey where he served until June 1997. From August 1997 – May 2000 he was the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs. He became Director General of the Foreign Service and Director of Human Resources from June 2000 – February 2001. In March 2001, he was appointed to his current position as the U/S for Political Affairs. [U]

Priorities in Turkey

When U/S Grossman was Ambassador to Turkey, counterterrorism was a top priority. The mission's main counterterrorism focus was ensuring the security of the Embassy and American citizens. U/S Grossman stated that Turkey's indigenous terrorist group, the Kurdistan Workers' Party ("PKK"), was the main concern, not al Qaida. [U]

USS Cole

U/S Grossman stated that he was never presented with any conclusive evidence that al Qaida conducted the bombing of the *USS Cole*. He said that all the evidence was circumstantial. He noted that the FBI's continued investigation led him to believe that the investigation was ongoing and not conclusive. He remembers receiving documents cautioning senior officials "not to rush to judge" who had committed the attack. U/S Grossman did not believe that the issue was one of legal versus intelligence standards. He stated that the standard was the proof needed to take the case to the international community where any retaliation could be sanctioned. He did not see any evidence that would warrant taking the case to the international community. [U]

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US Government's ("USG") Approach to Terrorism: March 2001

U/S Grossman stated that terrorism was one of the top five priorities of the USG. He noted that the focus was not solely on al Qaida. Other priority terrorist groups included the Abu Sayaa Group ("ASG") in the Philippines, which was holding Americans hostage, and the Revolutionary Armed forces of Colombia ("FARC"). Other priorities at the time included the military personnel being held by the Government of China as a result of their P-3 colliding with a Chinese fighter jet, NATO alliance relationships, missile defense, and the Middle East. [U]

U/S Grossman commented that his job in the area of counterterrorism was to ensure that the regional Assistant Secretaries ("A/S") of State were focused on the threat and Embassy security. In addition, he ensured that State was ready to respond to an act of terrorism. He said that in general, State's Coordinator for Terrorism, Ambassador Francis X. Taylor, reported directly to Deputy Secretary ("D/S") of State, Richard Armitage. However, he noted that he consistently assembled the regional A/S's, the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, the A/S for Diplomatic Security, and the A/S for Consular Affairs to discuss the threat and response options, and ensure coordination and communication amongst relevant bureaus at State. [U]

USG's Approach to Pakistan

U/S Grossman said that, upon entering office, President Bush's strategic goal was to radically improve relations with India and Pakistan. He recalls a move in April/May of 2001 to increase engagement with India and Pakistan.

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For example, he stated, on April 24, 2001, he met with Pakistan's Ambassador to the US, Maleeha Lodhi, at her request. They discussed Afghanistan and the Taliban, the GOP's response to United Nations Security Council Resolution ("UNSCR") 1333¹, and the Pakistani nuclear program.

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¹ UNSCR 1333 prohibited all military and lethal force security assistance to the Taliban and demanded that all States freeze the assets of UBL. [U]

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USG's Approach to Afghanistan

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On June 27, 2001, U/S Grossman instructed Ambassador Milam, US Ambassador to Pakistan, to demarche the Taliban. The demarche stated that the USG had evidence that UBL was involved in something and the USG would hold the Taliban responsible for any acts committed by al Qaida that harmed US citizens or interests. U/S Grossman said that he also instructed Ambassador Milam to inform the GOP of the message conveyed to the Taliban. U/S Grossman said that this demarche was the USG's way of putting the Taliban on notice that the USG believed that something bad would happen and the Taliban was responsible for preventing it. [S]

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When asked about Saudi Arabia's efforts to pressure the Taliban, U/S Grossman stated that the Saudis agreed to terminate all assistance to the Taliban except humanitarian assistance.

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Increased Engagement with Pakistan

U/S Grossman stated that the USG's increased engagement with Pakistan in the summer of 2001 was a response to the increase in the threat level. He commented that the long term effects of increased engagement were a significant corollary, but the USG's priority was the threat. He stated that the DC's he attended on June 29 and July 9/10, 2001 were both due to the threat. However, when asked about his meeting with Pakistan's Foreign Secretary, Inam ul-Haque, in July 2001, U/S Grossman stated that the meeting was about allowing international observers at an election, not counterterrorism.

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When asked whether the USG could have used removal of the Pressler and Glenn Amendments² as a "carrot," U/S Grossman stated he did not recall a willingness on behalf of the Executive Branch to ask Congress to remove the sanction prior to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. He commented that the USG did not have enough connections to Pakistan at the time, and Congress would have never supported such a movement. However, after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Executive Branch went to Congress twice, on September 16 and 20, 2001, in order to get sanctions lifted. At this time, Congress criticized the Executive Branch for not wanting to lift all of the sanctions on Pakistan. [U]

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² The Pressler and Glenn Amendments provided nuclear non-proliferation conditions on assistance to Pakistan. Pressler Sanctions were applied to Pakistan for the first time in 1990 and Glenn Sanctions were applied to Pakistan for the first time in May 1998. These sanctions were lifted on September 22, 2001, after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. [U]

In addition, said U/S Grossman, those attacks eliminated all debate within the USG about the necessary and proper ways to counter the threat. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] When asked whether this same effect would have occurred if more persons were killed in the attack on the *USS Cole*, U/S Grossman said no. He believes that the American public viewed diplomats and military personnel as expendable in that they were not considered innocent victims in the same way that Americans going to work on September 11, 2001 were. He commented that the American people were conditioned to believe that the USG did not do anything to respond to the deaths of diplomats and military personnel as evidenced by the response or lack thereof to terrorist attacks against such persons in the past. Furthermore, those attacks occurred overseas so the American people did not feel the impact. [S/NF]

U/S Grossman's Role on September 11, 2001

U/S Grossman said that on September 11, 2001, he was in a meeting with D/S Armitage when they were informed that the first airplane crashed into the World Trade Center. He recalls that D/S Armitage said immediately that it was terrorism. U/S Grossman began working on the protection of Americans and American Embassies abroad. However, when he and his staff saw the third airplane crash into the Pentagon, he focused on evacuating the main State building. He and D/S Armitage moved to State's Operations Center where they continued to work. They established a Task Force at State and tried to create an alternate Task Force at the Foreign Service Institute but heavy traffic in the area prevented staff from getting there. [U]

His three main functions became: supporting Vice President Richard Cheney in organizing the USG; communicating with the Government of Russia to ensure they understood the increase in the US threat condition; and cabling Embassies abroad to apprise them of the day's events. He recalls the cable explaining that: a terrible attack occurred and the USG did not yet know who conducted it; the main State building was safe; and posts might not hear from him or the D/S for a while but both were counting on Embassy staff to "do right by America." Following that, U/S Grossman began calling as many Ambassadors to US as he could in order to inform them that the USG was still operating. He then recalls seeing on CNN that a car bomb had exploded outside of the main State building. Though the message proved to be false, he and D/S Armitage went floor-by-floor to ensure that all non-essential staff had evacuated. [U]

In addition, he was involved in the decision to ground all flights and the deliberation over whether to shoot-down a [REDACTED] flight that officials later learned was unaware that the US had closed its airspace. Later, the D/S went to Andrews Air Force Base to meet and brief Secretary of State Colin Powell, who had been out of the country at the time of

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the attacks. The Secretary went directly to the White House and the D/S and U/S Grossman began to focus on the protection of Americans abroad, the security of main State, and organizing an international coalition to fight the Global War on Terrorism ("GWOT"). [S]

The GWOT

U/S Grossman said that Pakistan is crucial to the GWOT not only because of geography, but also because it needs to be transformed in order to win the war (e.g. madrassa reform).

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U/S Grossman commented that the success of the Department of Homeland Security ("DHS") is also critical to the GWOT. He stated that DHS's efforts on visas, intelligence, border security, etc. is important to the USG's ability to "extend" its borders and fight terrorism offshore. [U]

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He believes that State's role is ensuring the high morale and physical security of State personnel so that they can continue to do their job. In addition, he said that it is State's job to ensure coordination of the interagency's international actions and policies. State utilizes tools such as cooperation from international and multilateral organizations, and free trade. He commented that every tool State employs must be formed with the goal of defeating terrorism and protecting the homeland. [U]

He further stated that curtailing terrorism financing is critical to the GWOT. U/S Grossman stated that the USG is working with the United Nations to revise the UNSCR 1373 Committee so that the international coalition can more effectively reach terrorists' money. He said that the coalition cannot "drain the swamp" in only one way. It will require a concerted, all-around effort such as madrassa reform and public diplomacy in countries with a Muslim majority. [U]

Finally, he emphasized that the US must succeed in Iraq. He stated that success in Iraq is key to draining the swamp. He believes that a democratic revolution in Iraq will cause Iraq's neighbors to change their environment similarly. [U]