



DCI
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Intelligence Report

DCI Counterterrorist Center

27 March 2001

Afghanistan: An Incubator for International Terrorism

Afghanistan plays a key role in harboring, training, and sponsoring international terrorists, including Usama Bin Ladin. The country's Taliban leaders—sympathetic to Islamic extremist causes—allow more than two dozen training camps to operate in their territory and provide logistics support to members of various terrorist organizations and mujahidin engaged in jihads in a variety of locations, including Chechnya and Kashmir.

- *The camps provide an opportunity for Islamic militants to forge long-lasting ideological, logistical, and personal ties with colleagues around the world.*

We estimate that [redacted] mujahidin [redacted] have received training in Afghanistan since 1979. The current training curriculums include religious indoctrination and instruction in the use of small arms and guerrilla tactics [redacted]

[redacted] some camps provide instruction in special tactics for carrying out terrorist operations, including courses in explosives, [redacted]

The nurturing of Islamic extremism in Afghanistan has international implications. In the past two years, terrorist plots in North America, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia link back to Afghanistan. Militants who receive training there often are sent afterwards to fight in jihads [redacted] When they return home to resume their normal lives or migrate to other countries, they constitute a ready supply of manpower for terrorist operations.

- *Afghanistan provides Bin Ladin a relatively safe operating environment to oversee his organization's worldwide terrorist activities. He would be hard-pressed to find another location offering the same security and freedom of action.*

This Intelligence Report was prepared by the DCI Counterterrorist Center and the Office of Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Analysis. Queries and comments are welcome.

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The Taliban will support terrorist groups in Afghanistan as long as it is dominated by Mullah Omar's more hardline faction and locked in a struggle to gain control of the territory still in Northern Alliance hands. The Taliban is not likely to succumb to international pressure to alter its policy, given the limited leverage outsiders can bring to bear.

- *Pakistan—as the Taliban's principal foreign patron—would appear to have the most influence over the Taliban but would face a domestic backlash and logistical hurdles if it tried to apply significant pressure on the Taliban.*

Origins of Afghanistan's Terrorist Links

Afghanistan's ties to international terrorism are rooted in the Afghan-Soviet war of the 1980s and its aftermath. Muslims from around the world participated in the anti-Soviet resistance, created an infrastructure to support the insurgency, and helped lay the groundwork for Afghanistan's continuing role as a training ground for *mujahidin* involved in terrorist groups and in later jihads¹ in other locations. Much of the infrastructure, including the training camps, remained after the Soviet withdrawal, buttressed by the presence of a large cadre of war veterans well versed in guerrilla tactics and willing to pass on their experiences and skills.

- Afghanistan—at the crossroads of the Middle East, South Asia, and Central Asia—is close to much of the Islamic world and is a convenient location for militants to train for operations planned in other countries. Afghanistan's mountainous terrain, moreover, provides a natural defense against law enforcement and counterterrorism actions.

Political instability and civil war in Afghanistan following the fall of the Communist Government in 1992 contributed to the favorable environment for terrorist-related activities. Even before the Taliban emerged, some Afghan leaders provided logistic support to the Islamic militants who helped them defeat the Soviets; others provided more significant assistance because it was financially profitable and boosted their Islamic and leadership credentials.

- Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, for example, promoted militant training in camps under his control as a way to establish himself

¹ Jihad: Literally, holy war; used to designate either a war against unbelievers or a personal struggle to overcome one's imperfections. Extremists tend to broaden the concept of unbeliever, justifying terrorist violence as a jihad against anything or anyone perceived as anti-Islamic. (U)

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- Another warlord, Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, oversaw training operations [redacted]

Terrorist Activities in Afghanistan Today [redacted]

The Taliban's origins, composition, and brand of highly orthodox Islam predispose the group to supporting worldwide Islamic extremist causes. The Taliban's senior leaders, including Mullah Omar and most of his close subordinates, are former *mujahidin* from the war against the Soviet Union and staunchly support the concept of jihad. They even refer to the ongoing Afghan civil war as such, notwithstanding that the Taliban's opposition is composed largely of fellow Sunni Muslims.

- To fight its own civil war, the Taliban relies heavily on foreign *mujahidin* from camps in Afghanistan as well as Pakistani and Afghan students recruited directly from Pakistan's religious schools—some of which are widely regarded as breeding grounds for Islamic militancy. [redacted]

Training Camps (U)

A wide variety of reporting indicates that over two dozen training camps exist in Afghanistan [redacted]

[redacted] The camps provide instruction in military and terrorist tactics and religious indoctrination. The graduates often go directly to fight in the Afghan war or to jihads in Kashmir, Chechnya, or elsewhere before returning to their own countries, where many await instructions for participation in terrorist operations, according to multiple sources.

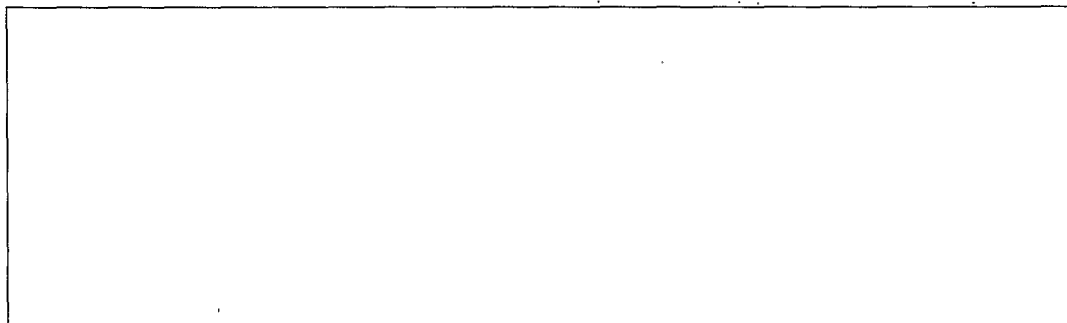
- The camps form the foundation of the worldwide *mujahidin* network by allowing Islamic militants from diverse locations to forge longstanding ideological, logistical, and personal ties [redacted]

[redacted] have received training in Afghan camps since 1979. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

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- An estimated 15,000 to 20,000 fighters have trained in Bin Ladin-supported camps since Bin Ladin's return to Afghanistan in 1996 [redacted]

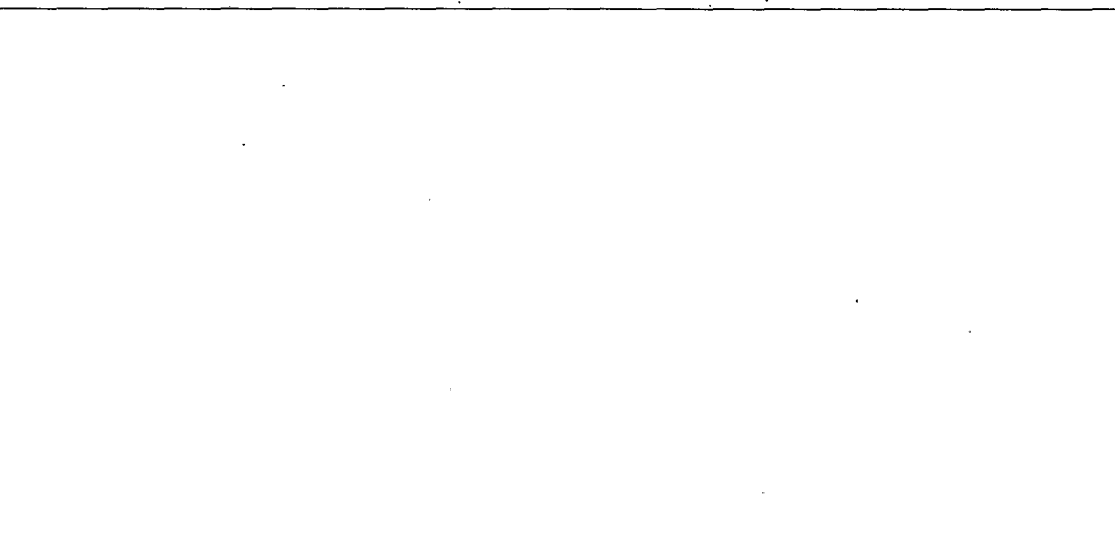
Camp Financing. Financing for the camps is varied, including public and private charitable organizations, individual supporters of Islamic causes, and "tuition" paid by camp attendees, according to a variety of sources. Islamic militant groups raise money directly from wealthy donors—primarily in the Persian Gulf states and Western Europe—to support terrorist training, and they funnel money through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) [redacted]

[redacted] suggests Bin Ladin also provides substantial funds, directly and through NGOs, to most of the training camps in Afghanistan. [redacted]

Military and terrorist training. [redacted]

receive basic training in the use of small arms and guerrilla tactics. [redacted]

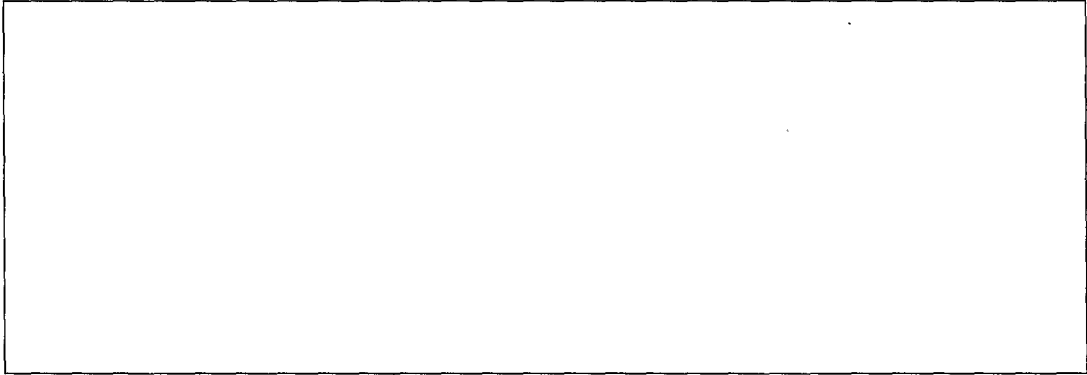
[redacted] advanced and specialized training in subjects such as explosives [redacted]




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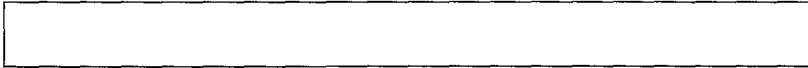
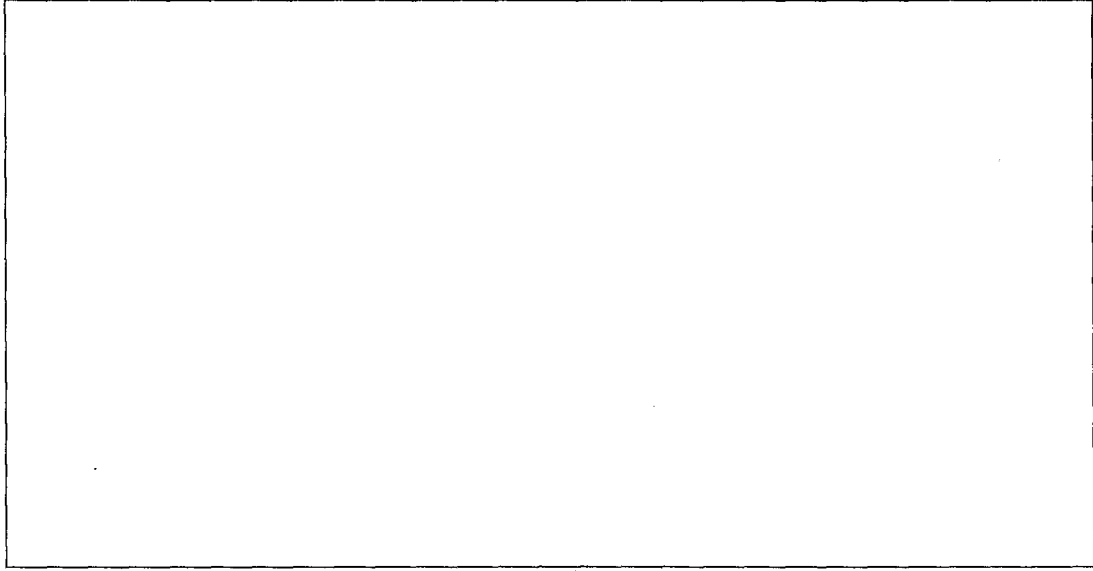
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In addition to military and terrorist tactics, training in the Afghan camps emphasizes religious indoctrination. Trainers frequently use the religious training to select militants whose religious fervor qualifies them for more specialized terrorist training. The religious instruction includes repetition of the ideas that the United States and Israel are evil and that the regimes of Arab countries are not true believers in Islam

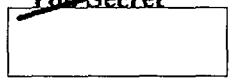


Training in nonconventional weapons. Terrorists experiment with nonconventional weapons  In Derunta  militants  have received instruction



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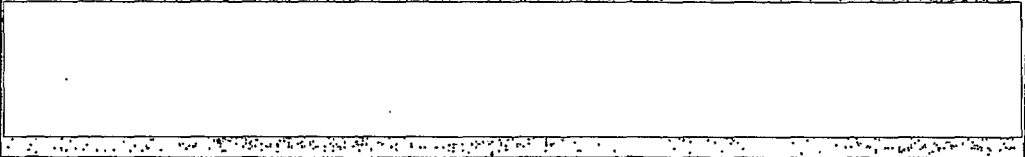


Afghanistan as Safehaven for Terrorists (U)

Afghanistan has served as a place of refuge for international terrorists, such as Bin Ladin and his associates, since the 1980s. The Taliban aids Bin Ladin by assigning him guards for security

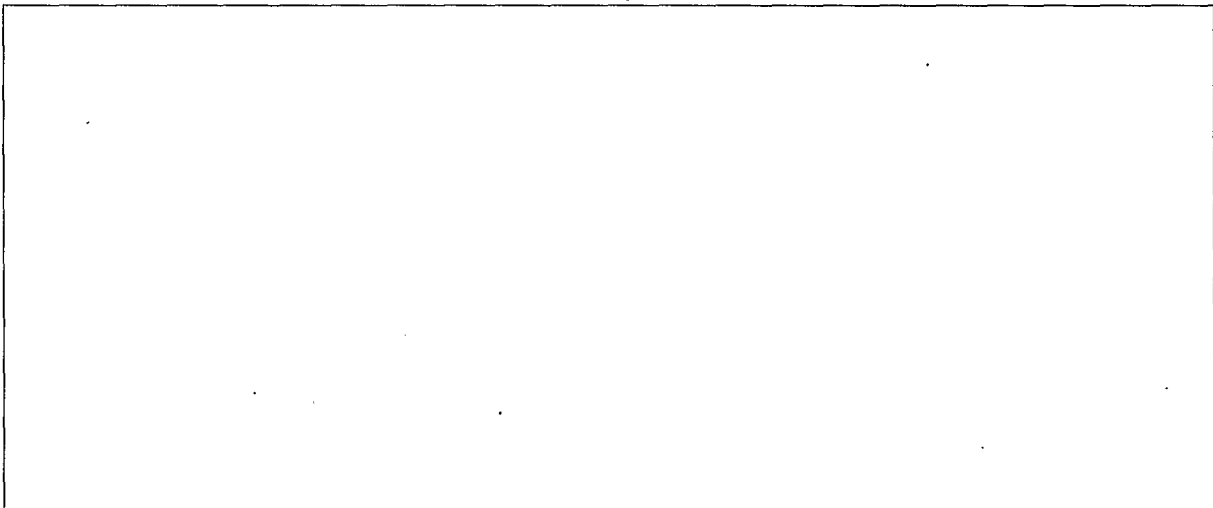
_____ and refusing to cooperate with extradition efforts _____

- Mir Amal Kansil, perpetrator of the 1993 killings outside CIA headquarters, and Ramzi Yousef, mastermind of the World Trade Center bombing, also received safehaven in Afghanistan.



Key Hub for Mujahidin Network (U)

The *mujahidin* network—an informal collection of fighters and support pipelines first established during the Afghan war against the Soviet Union—has continued to grow over the last two decades. The network takes advantage of lax security along Afghanistan's borders to move militants, funds, and supplies on behalf of Bin Ladin and other Islamic extremist groups. Many of these men and materiel are "exported" from Afghanistan to fight in *jihads* in Chechnya and other locations.



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- In September 2000, hundreds of men were training in Afghanistan [redacted]

International Repercussions of Afghanistan-Based Terrorism [redacted]

Islamic extremism nurtured in Afghanistan creates ripples throughout the world. The arrests in December 1999 of an Islamic extremist cell in Jordan and of an Algerian member of an extremist network in Canada attempting to smuggle explosives into the United States highlight the linkages between Afghanistan and Islamic extremist threats to US interests worldwide. Although both networks consisted primarily of locally-based extremists who lacked formal affiliations with other terrorist groups, available intelligence suggests that operatives of al-Qa'ida—Bin Ladin's organization headquartered in Afghanistan—directed both operations, and many of the cell members had received training in Afghanistan.

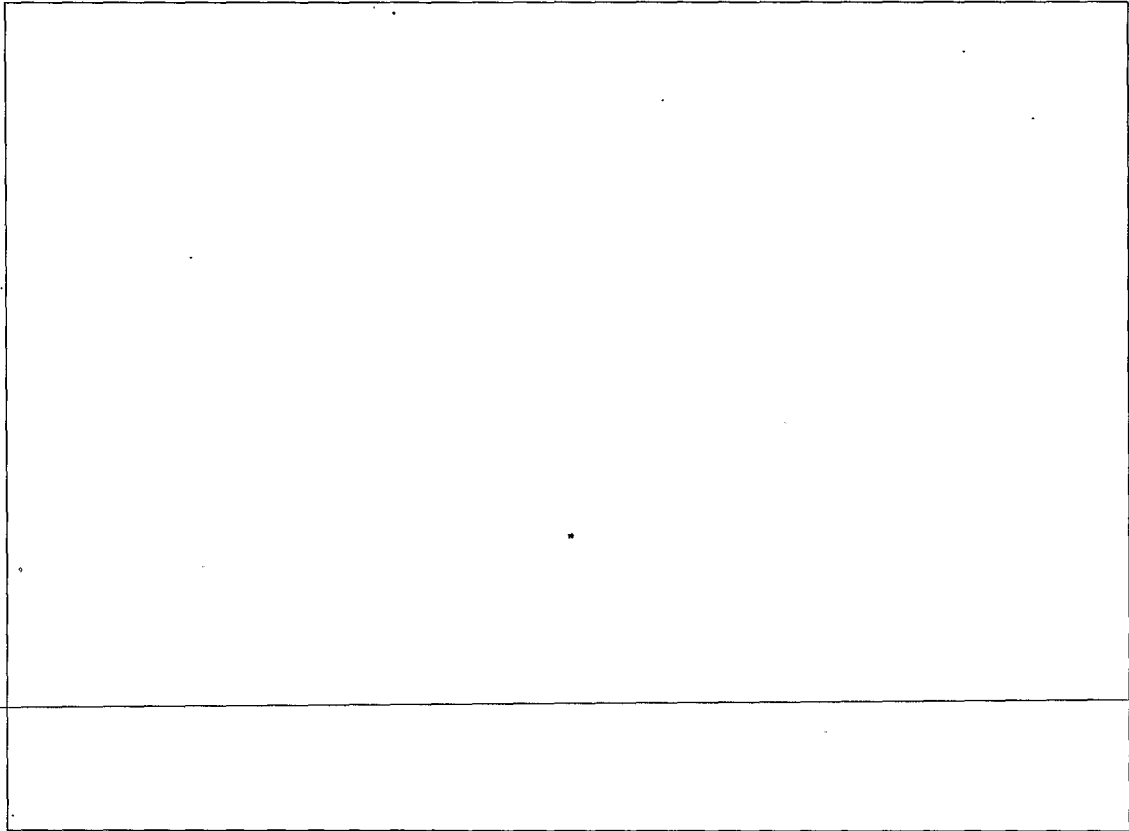
- [redacted] the Jordan cell members, and particularly [redacted] Khadr Abu Hawshar—an Afghan veteran who belonged to al-Qa'ida—were in contact with Abu Zubayda, an al-Qa'ida member involved in the training and movement of *mujahidin* into and out of Afghanistan, and Khalil Deek, a well-known figure in the *mujahidin* network based in Pakistan, who may also be a member of al-Qa'ida.

- Ahmed Ressam—a former Montreal resident who tried to smuggle over 100 pounds of explosives and timing devices into the United States—had trained at Bin Ladin's camps in Afghanistan [redacted] Subsequent investigation indicated that Ressam's associates in Montreal—a network of North Africans involved in criminal activities and support to various extremist groups, including the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) [redacted] were preparing for terrorist attacks [redacted] al-Mohammedou Ould Slahi.

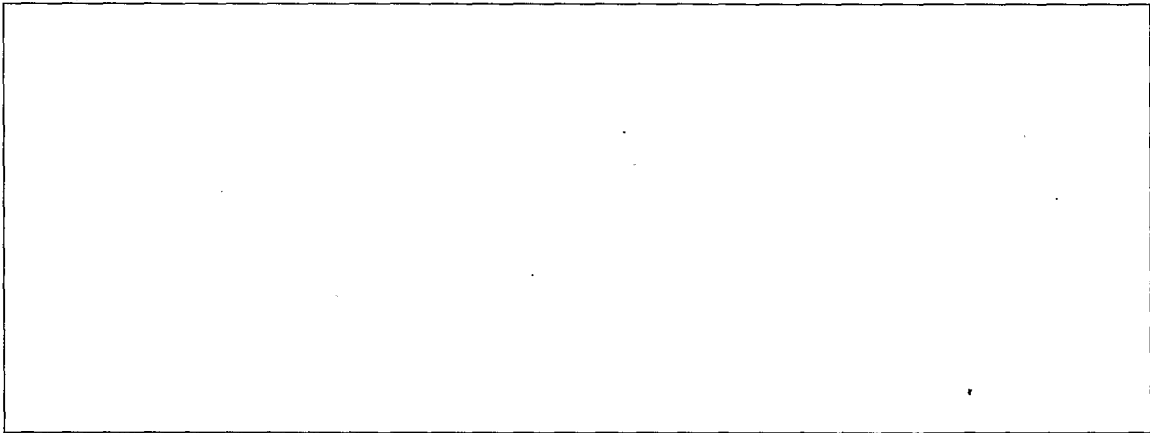
- Several suspects in the Canada plot had contact with Abu Zubayda and others in Afghanistan responsible for orchestrating the movement and training of *mujahidin*, [redacted] Financial and logistics support for the Canada operation also may have come from extremist elements in Afghanistan.

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The Algerian and Egyptian Islamic extremist movements have benefited from the leadership and military skills acquired by some of their members in Afghanistan.



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The Taliban, Bin Ladin, and other extremist groups benefit from the narcotics network in Afghanistan. [redacted] the Taliban earns substantial revenue from taxing opium poppy cultivation, licensing drug labs, and collecting fees for drug shipments. In many cases the Taliban facilitates drug trafficking and receives payment [redacted] Bin Ladin has taken advantage of the situation in Afghanistan to encourage the Taliban and drug barons to increase narcotics output and expand trafficking activities to support his war against Western interests. Bin Ladin also has encouraged associated extremist groups to traffic in narcotics to support their causes and operations.

- Bin Ladin participates in a range of legitimate and illicit business activities and encourages affiliated extremist groups and the Taliban to finance their activities in a similar manner, thereby reducing the financial burden on his organization.
- Afghan traffickers may view Bin Ladin's support as a religious and political justification for their involvement in the narcotics trade. [redacted]

- The Taliban, Bin Ladin, and regional traffickers often use the same networks of regional moneychangers to conduct international financial transactions—the Taliban, to circumvent international sanctions; Bin Ladin, to support his terrorist apparatus; and the traffickers, to launder the proceeds of drug sales [redacted]

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The terrorist presence in Afghanistan has fanned anti-American sentiment and activities in Pakistan and other parts of South Asia. Leaders of three extremist groups in Pakistan and Bangladesh signed Bin Ladin's 1998 anti-US *fatwa*, publicly declaring their intention to retaliate for any US attack on Bin Ladin.

- Former President Clinton's trip in March 2000 to India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan [redacted] reports that local Islamic extremists were targeting him for assassination.
- Anti-US fervor in Pakistan peaked in November 1999 when the US Embassy and American Center in Islamabad were the targets of rocket attacks [redacted]

The Future of Taliban Support for International Terrorism [redacted]

Bleak prospects for fundamental change in Taliban policy. The Taliban gives every indication of continuing to support terrorist groups in Afghanistan. Intelligence reporting highlights that the Taliban's fortunes on the battlefield have an impact on the group's dependence on Bin Ladin's al-Qa'ida organization.

- The Taliban probably calculates that it gains more in terms of support for the war effort by allowing foreign terrorists to operate within its territory than it loses from international sanctions and the absence of international recognition.
- Even if the Taliban were to successfully complete its military conquest of Afghanistan [redacted] Omar is firmly committed to Bin Ladin's continued stay in Afghanistan despite the negative impact the terrorist's presence has had on the Taliban's ability to gain international recognition. Bin Ladin would probably become an important provider of infrastructure and development assistance in the likely event the Taliban does not receive it from the international community.

Even in the unlikely event the Taliban broke apart or was defeated on the battlefield, the factional infighting that probably would ensue as Afghanistan's displaced warlords

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returned would benefit Bin Ladin and other Islamic extremists in the country. At least two of the warlords, Sayyaf and Hikmatyar—the most extreme Islamists among the factional leaders—operated terrorist camps before the Taliban came into existence and probably would try to court Bin Ladin to gain an edge in the struggle for ascendancy.

[Redacted]

Factors that might cause the Taliban to reduce support to terrorism. The Taliban might, at least temporarily, temper its support for terrorism—for example, by closing down some of the training camps [Redacted]

[Redacted] in two independent scenarios:

- *The Taliban consolidates control over the rest of the country.* [Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted] The Taliban may expect a military victory would bring them closer to international-recognition and reconstruction aid, concluding that some anti-terrorism measures could make a difference with the international community.

- *The Taliban's leadership dynamic changes.* [Redacted]

[Redacted]

Leverage Over the Taliban is Limited [Redacted]

The Taliban's stomach for enduring the consequences of international and bilateral sanctions makes applying effective pressure difficult. A variety of reporting indicates that the imposition of US and UN sanctions has had no significant impact on the Taliban's terrorism policies.

[Redacted]

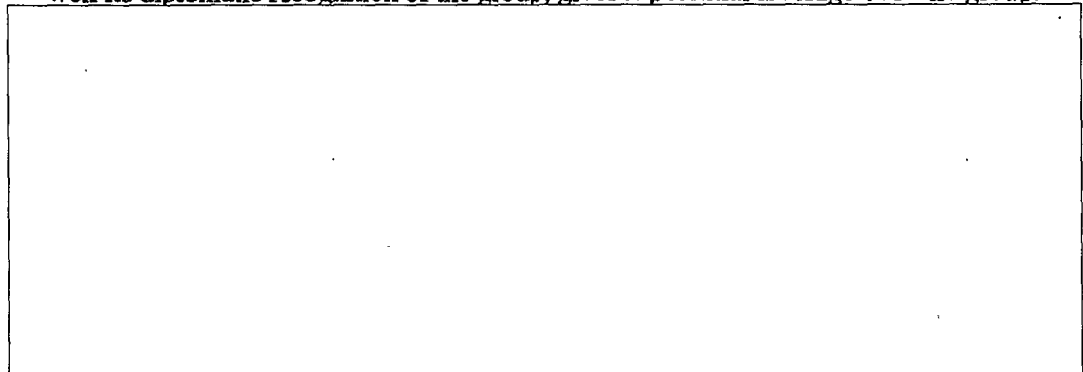
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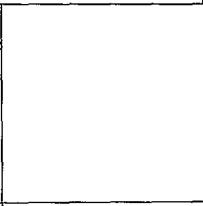
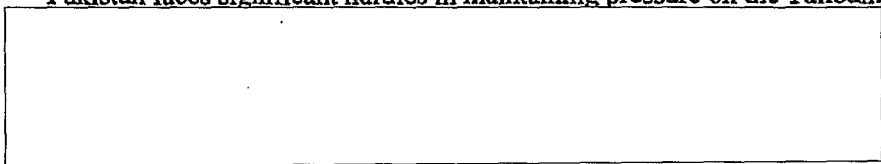
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Pakistan's longstanding financial, logistical, and operational support for the Taliban, as well its diplomatic recognition of the group, gives it potential leverage over the group.



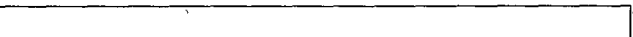
Pakistan faces significant hurdles in maintaining pressure on the Taliban.



- The porous nature of Afghanistan's borders pose a serious logistical challenge.

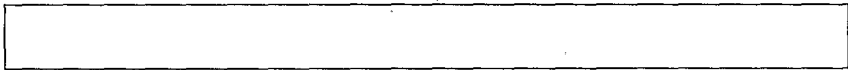
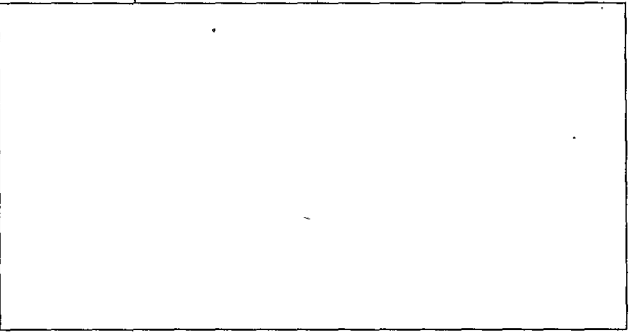
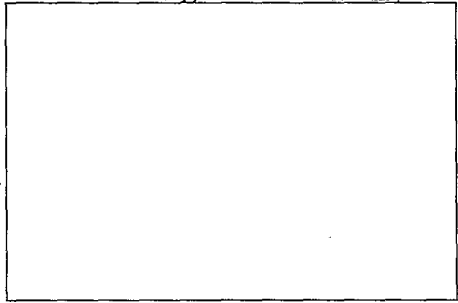


The Taliban also has supporters



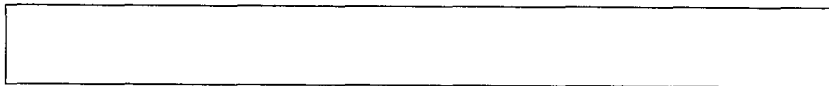
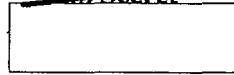
who would work to undermine punitive

measures against the Taliban.

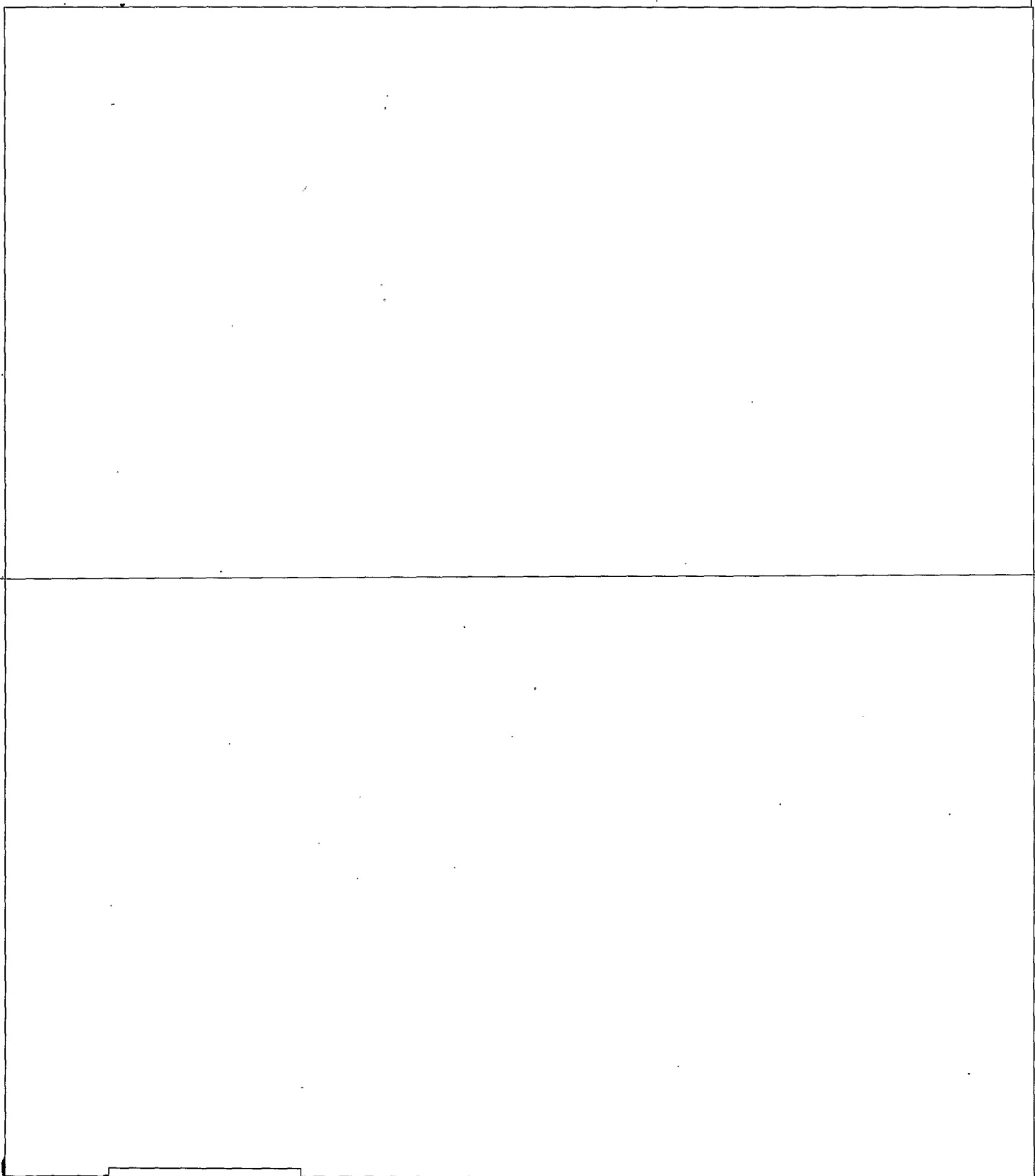


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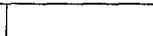
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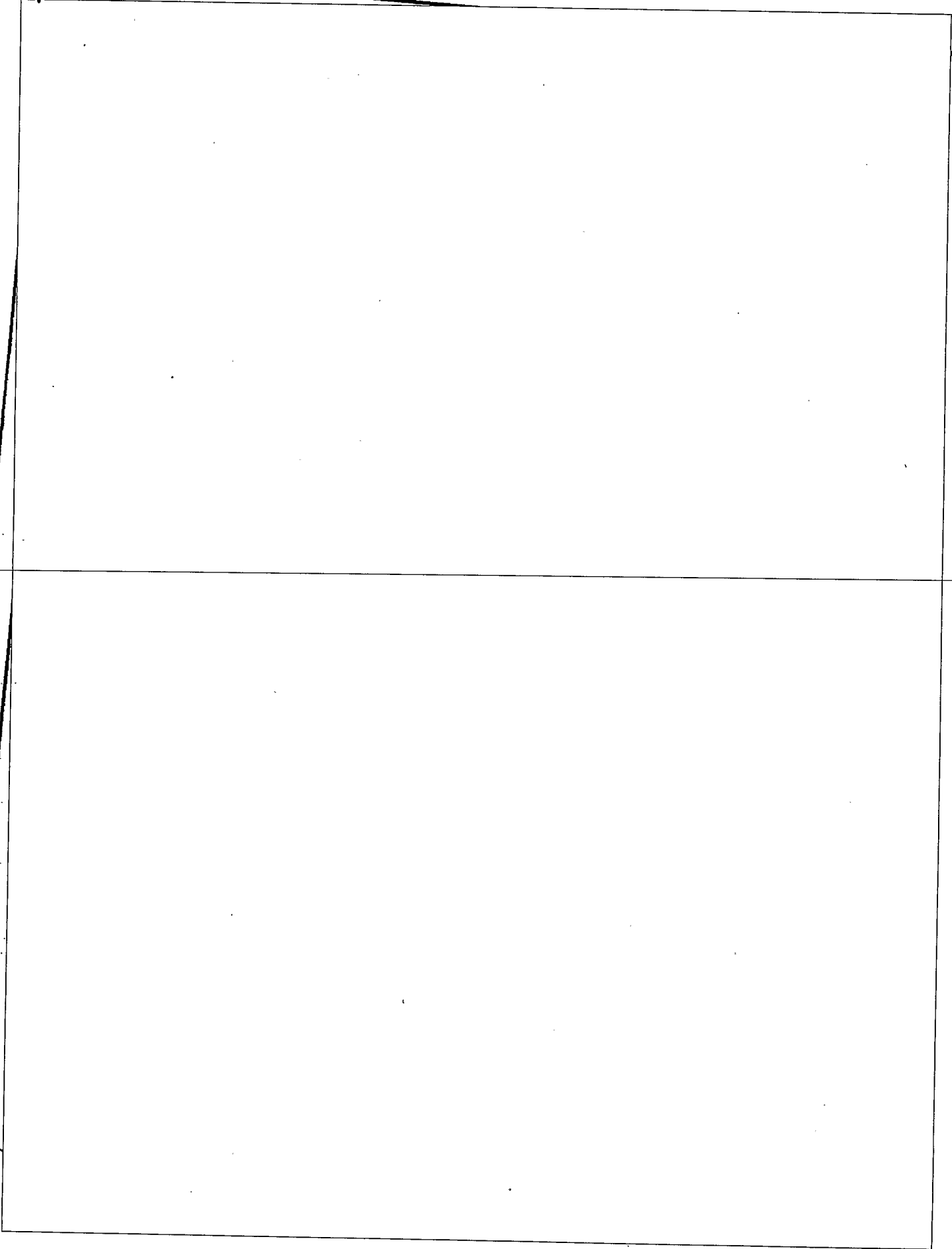
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Fugitives



Osama Bin Laden
Indicted
Africa Bombings



Mohammed Abuf
Indicted
Africa Bombings



Ayman al-Zawahiri
Indicted
Africa Bombings



Abu Mohamed al-Hewi,
Indicted
Africa Bombings



Faisal Abdulrahman Mohamed
Indicted
Africa Bombings



Mervin Mohamed Fadhil
Indicted
Africa Bombings



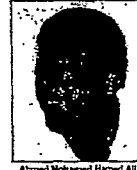
Ahmed Ibrahim Ghaleb,
Indicted
Africa Bombings



Fahid Mohammed Ali Miskin
Indicted
Africa Bombings



Saif al-Adil
Indicted
Africa Bombings



Ahmed Mohamed Hamed Ali
Indicted
Africa Bombings



Amal al-Liby
Indicted
Africa Bombings



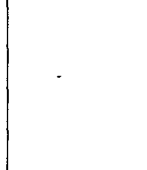
Sheikh Ahmed Salim Swedan
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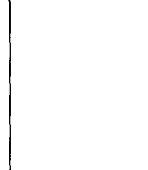
Mohsin Khata Mahawi Alwanh
Indicted
Africa Bombings



Abed Al-Rahman Hameed
Suspected involvement
USS Cole attack



Tariq Mohamed Salih Bin
Rasheed Bin Atlas
Suspected involvement
USS Cole attack



\$75 Million In Reward Money