

Statement of SA Mary Deborah (Debbie) Doran
FBI-New York
Before the 9/11/2001 Commission
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Good morning. My name is Debbie Doran and since 1996 I have been a Special Agent of the FBI assigned to the New York Division's Counterterrorism Division, where I have focused on USAMA BIN LADIN and AL QAIDA investigations. As a "street agent," I am removed from the policy and administrative decision-making processes that have defined the scope and conduct of the FBI's investigation into AL QAIDA, both historically and currently and therefore cannot speak to those issues. What I can speak to is how we, at the "street-agent" level, pursued AL QAIDA and some of what we have learned.

Let me begin by telling you that I am proud to be a Special Agent of the FBI and that I am particularly proud of the work done by the Counterterrorism Division in New York. I have been privileged and honored to work with and learn from my colleagues in the FBI, as well as those in other government agencies. Prior to 9/11/2001, it was primarily the New York office, together with AUSAs from the United States Attorney's Office in the Southern District of New York, supported by a handful of dedicated analysts at FBIHQ, in conjunction with our colleagues at CTC, that constituted the majority of the United States government's institutional knowledge about AL QAIDA and the threat it posed to the United States. The dedication and sacrifices made in this cause by these people is incalculable. I hope today that we who sit before you can do justice to their efforts which since 9/11/01 have been supplemented with literally thousands of additional people in both civilian and military capacities. Clearly this is indicative of the responsibility with which we were charged prior to 9/11/01.

The FBI is, and has been, an integral part of the United States Intelligence Community working to prevent acts of terrorism. The FBI is not new to countering terrorism against United States' interests, whether here or abroad. Included in the FBI's mission has always been the proactive identification and disruption of potential terrorism threats. The FBI's first Joint Terrorist Task Force (JTTF) was formed in New York over 20 years ago. We have long understood that a successful prosecution after a terrorist attack is only second-best.

The FBI is extremely effective in putting together both criminal and intelligence cases, all built upon information obtained through detailed and thorough investigations that are factually substantiated and corroborated. The fundamental objective of our investigations, both criminal and intelligence, is to reach the highest level of proof -- truth -- about that which we investigate.

It is the FBI agents' training, under the rule of law, that has led to the FBI's successes in such cases. FBI investigators seek to pursue all leads to their logical end, and follow those leads wherever they may take us. While leads can undoubtedly be developed in the wake of terrorist attacks, the real goal is to develop them through proactive investigation so as to be able to

disrupt the potential terrorist act before it occurs. In numerous instances FBI investigations have disrupted planned attacks against the United States and have contributed to the disruption of planned attacks abroad. Beyond merely disrupting specific plots, FBI generated intelligence has significantly contributed to the identification of AL QAIDA's leadership, its organizational structure, methods, training, finances, geographical reach and intent.

The early development of operational sources and cooperators, dogged pursuit of leads and the factual substantiation of information all exemplify the ways that the FBI was proactive in the fight against terrorism, long before 9/11/2001. Through good operational sources, the FBI identified the first seeds of Islamically-justified terrorism in the United States in approximately 1989. The FBI utilized all the intelligence and investigative techniques available to identify potential terrorist subjects and to attempt to determine their goals and objectives. These FBI investigations bore fruit and photographs taken later gained significance as some of those surveilled and photographed were subsequently identified as subjects in early terrorism cases. For example, individuals photographed at a shooting range in the United States in the late 1980s were later identified as subjects in the 1990 murder of MEIR KAHANE, head of the JEWISH DEFENSE LEAGUE, a proscribed terrorist group, and as subjects in the first World Trade Center bombing case in 1993, and as subjects in the investigation into plans to bomb various New York City landmarks disrupted in 1995.

It was through these early investigations that the name USAMA BIN LADIN ("UBL") first surfaced. Initially he was identified as an organizer and financier of military training camps in Afghanistan. The fact that UBL's name first surfaced through FBI New York investigations connected to the 1993 World Trade Center Bombing and the 1995 New York City landmarks case was the reason why the UBL investigation was assigned to the FBI's New York office. This early era yielded yet another important name, KHALID SHEIKH MOHAMED. KSM first surfaced as evidence was developed that indicated that he had wired money to Ramzi Youssef and another coconspirator in 1992.

Pursuit of fugitives indicted in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, namely RAMZI YOUSSEF, led to the identification of another terrorist plot against United States interests, namely MANILA AIR. New sources were developed out of that investigation, without whom YOUSSEF might still be at large. Investigation in Manila revealed that the plot to blow up twelve American airliners, while in the air, over a two-day period was planned by RAMZI YOUSEF and KHALID SHEIKH MOHAMMED (KSM). The arrest of YOUSSEF in Pakistan contributed greatly to the FBI's then-new, but growing, institutional knowledge of UBL and his network.

The FBI's intelligence investigation into USAMA BIN LADIN (UBL) was opened in February 1996, and the criminal investigation was opened in September 1996. Perhaps the most significant factor in the progress of the UBL investigations, from the FBI perspective, came with the arrival of an AL QAIDA defector, JAMAL AL FADL, nicknamed "JUNIOR."

JUNIOR had offered his information to a number of different countries before being

brought in by the CIA in 1996. Subsequently the CIA allowed him to meet with the FBI. In December, 1996 JUNIOR was established as a FBI cooperating witness against AL QAIDA. Information provided by JUNIOR spurred a continuing effort to target and apprehend AL QAIDA associates, wherever they might be found, including those willing to act as informants. JUNIOR was only one of a series of cooperators developed by the FBI. Like JUNIOR, they continue to be debriefed and to this day continue to provide the FBI with new and relevant information. Through them, the FBI gained valuable insights into AL QAIDA's leadership, organization, methods, training, finances, geographical reach, and intent.

Utilizing sources like Junior and others, UBL was identified as the head of AL QAIDA. Information these sources provided also allowed for identification of his top lieutenants and the structure of the AL QAIDA organization. The AL QAIDA organization can be likened to that of a corporation, headed by a CEO, with a number of subsidiaries, the directors of which all sit on the corporate board. In AL QAIDA's case, UBL is the CEO, and his board of directors is called a *majlis al shura*, or consultative council, which forms the core of the group's command and control structure. The *majlis al shura* discusses and approves major undertakings, including the terrorist operations of AL QAIDA. Each member of the *majlis al shura* heads a committee: these committees include those for the military operations, information and propaganda, *sharia* (Islamic law), finance and security of AL QAIDA; each has its own specific purpose and responsibilities.

Through its sources, the FBI has also gained a more comprehensive picture of the training camps, methods, tradecraft and intent of AL QAIDA. Throughout the 1990s, thousands of men were recruited to come and fight on behalf of the Taliban against the Northern Alliance in order to establish an Islamic state in Afghanistan. Those who came were sent into basic training camps; those who excelled were approached about the possibility of joining the larger jihad targeting the United States and its allies. Those who accepted that offer were sent on for advanced training, and sometimes for specialized training, such as in explosives. We learned that AL QAIDA studies American military manuals and has set up its own internal security system, and that its operatives are selected, in part, on their ability to assimilate into other societies and cultures, including our own. AL QAIDA operatives travel to other countries to marry into local society and to set up front companies. This is done for the dual purpose of trying to earn money to sustain themselves and to use those front companies to further their jihad efforts. The FBI has learned that UBL does not trust banks and that money is often hand-couriered by trusted associates as required to support operations. The FBI has also seen AL QAIDA's evolutionary abuse of non-governmental organizations for its own ends. It also became clear that UBL was more than simply a financier; rather, he was the spiritual leader of virulently anti-Western interpretation of Islam who was adored by those who followed him.

By early 1996 and continuing until today, the FBI and CIA were working together in the targeting of UBL and AL QAIDA, first via ALEC Station, which was founded for this purpose, and now through the CIA's Counter Terrorist Center and the FBI's Counterterrorism Division. The FBI contributed significantly to this joint effort to fight terrorism. The FBI continued to examine AL QAIDA's presence across the United States and around the globe. Long before

9/11/2001, FBI agents briefed countless foreign law enforcement and intelligence agencies about UBL and AL QAIDA.

Eventually, the amount of factually substantiated and corroborated information developed by the FBI was such that in June 1998, UBL was indicted in the SDNY (under seal). This was a significant legal tool to have in hand in the event an opportunity to capture Bin Laden arose. This indictment was unsealed and superceded after the attacks on the U.S. embassies in East Africa in August 1998.

This Commission has been provided unprecedented access to FBI personnel, FBI information, and FBI records in order to inform yourselves about the FBI's counterterrorism efforts, past and present. The fact this Commission was able to draft the statement it has for this panel is and of itself a small testament to the work done by this dedicated band of public servants, including those in the FBI, in the years prior to 9/11/2001.

On behalf of the United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, Pat Fitzgerald, and Executive Assistant Director of the FBI, John Pistole, we thank the Commission for inviting us to these proceedings, and providing the opportunity, in some small way, to contribute to history. We understand the responsibility with which you have been charged and will do our best to answer your questions.