

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Interviewee: **Moinuddin Haider**
Date: October 20, 2003
Location: U.S. Consulate, Karachi, Pakistan
Participants: Philip Zelikow, Mike Hurley, Brooke Darby (Embassy Islamabad representative)
representative)
Drafted by: Mike Hurley
Reviewed by: Philip Zelikow
Additional Info: Haider speaks fluent English

Background:

Moinuddin Haider is the former Minister of Interior for Pakistan. He left that post in November 2002. He does not currently hold a government position.

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Haider's Pre-9/11 Awareness of al Qaida and Contact with the Taliban:

Before 9-11, Haider said, he did not hear much about al Qaida, what information he did have about the organization was mostly connected to its presence in Afghanistan. He knew that the organization comprised the several thousand Arabs who flocked to Afghanistan during the anti-Soviet Jihad. He said that Pakistanis recruited for the organization seemed to come mostly from Peshawar and the Federal Tribal Area; at that time he was not aware of any strong al Qaida connection to Karachi.

Haider described a series of meetings he held with Taliban leader Mullah Omar between 2000 and 2001. The President of Pakistan, Haider said, dispatched him to Qandahar [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] One of the meetings took place just after President Clinton's March 2000 visit to Pakistan; another just before State Undersecretary Tom Pickering's May trip to Pakistan. Regarding the Pickering visit, Haider said that the American side came to provide evidence of al Qaida's responsibility

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for the 1998 East Africa Embassy bombings and to step up the pressure on the Pakistani government to rein in the Taliban. Pickering met with the Deputy Foreign Minister until well past midnight.

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Mullah Omar response to Haider's repeated warnings generally did not waver. Invariably, he said that he felt an obligation to the Arabs as "they had fought for Afghanistan but following the Jihad when they attempted to return to Egypt or their other homelands in the Middle East many were imprisoned or killed because they were regarded as destabilizing elements." To spurn those who had fought bravely, Mullah Omar believed, was a sin. Haider described a feeling held by many within Afghanistan that the Americans, following the expulsion of the Soviets, had left the country "high and dry", without financial aid or other forms of assistance.

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Comments on How the War Against Terrorism Is Going:

Haider expressed optimism that Pakistan, despite all its problems and limitations, was winning the war on terrorism, although he acknowledged the country has a long way to go. As an example of progress, he said that in a seven year period extremists had murdered 65 physicians; but in the last year and a half, no physicians have been killed. He said that anti-Western banners and collection boxes to support jihad have been prohibited from Mosques, and these incendiary calls-to-arms are no longer in evidence, a consequence which he regarded as significant. More equipment and training is needed for Pakistani officials involved in combating terrorism. Shortages need to be addressed.

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