

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Interview of John Kingston

Date: November 17, 2003

Special Access Issues: none

Prepared by: Quinn John Tamm, Jr.

Team Number: 1A

Location: FBI San Diego Field Division, San Diego, CA

Participants-Commission: Dietrich Snell, Hyon Kim, Rajesh De, Michael Jacobson, Quinn John Tamm, Jr.

FBI Representatives: Randle Blair, Richard Kelly

~~(S)~~ John Kingston, Assistant Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), has been assigned to the San Diego (SD) Division for four and one half years. He joined the FBI manages the counter-terrorism program at the San Diego Division. Prior to September 11, 2001, the San Diego Division had one squad assigned to counter-terrorism investigations. Since reorganization in late 2001, the Division now has three squads assigned to counter-terrorism investigations. The SD Division also continues to operate a Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF). This task force pre-existed the terrorist attacks on 09/11/2001. The JTTF presently has 77 personnel assigned, of which 47 are from agencies other than the FBI. Prior to 09/11/2001, only three other agencies, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service and the San Diego Police Department had representatives on the JTTF.

(U) Mr. Kingston then noted that the U.S. Government had Usama bin Laden located in 1996, but for policy reasons chose not to capture bin Laden. Had bin Laden been captured the terrorist attacks of 09/11/2001 would have most likely not occurred. Mr. Kingston made the point that terrorism can only be controlled at the strategic level. Mr. Kingston believes that the FBI must deal with the challenges of terrorism from a macro perspective. The removal of the barriers between intelligence investigations and criminal investigations has improved the efficiency of counter-terrorism investigations.

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~~(S)~~ The SD Division has also devoted most of that division's technical surveillance resources to counter-terrorism. This has led to significant criminal prosecutions of terrorism targets or subjects.

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(S) The investigation of Nawaf al-Hazmi and Khalid al-Mihdhar immediately after the 09/11/2001 attacks was managed by ASAC Richard Lambert. Mr. Kingston was not directly involved in the direction of the initial investigation. After Mr. Lambert's transfer to Washington, D.C., the counter-terrorism program was reassigned to Mr. Kingston. Mr. Kingston reorganized the counter-terrorism program at the SD Division. [REDACTED]

9/11 Classified Information

Mr. Kingston

provided no additional information at this time.

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