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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY



DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

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3 June 2005

# Detainee Reporting Pivotal for the War Against Al-Qa'ida

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**Detainee Reporting Pivotal for the War  
Against Al-Qa'ida (S//NF)**

**Key Findings (U)**

Since 11 September 2001, detainee reporting has become a crucial pillar of US counterterrorism efforts, aiding intelligence and law enforcement operations to capture additional terrorists, helping to thwart terrorist plots, and advancing our analysis of the al-Qa'ida target. In addition, detainees have been able to clarify and provide context for information collected from other sources; they also have provided unique insights into different aspects of the terrorist organization, including its leadership, attack strategy and tactics, and CBRN capabilities and ambitions. [redacted]

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[redacted] the reporting is disseminated broadly within the US Government [redacted]

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Detainees have given us a wealth of useful targeting information on al-Qa'ida members and associates; in fact, detainees have played some role [redacted]

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[redacted] in nearly every capture of al-Qa'ida members and associates since 2002, including helping us unravel most of the network associated with the now detained 11 September mastermind Khalid Shaykh Muhammad (KSM). KSM provided information that set the stage for the detention of Hambali, lead contact of Jemaah Islamiya (JI) to al-Qa'ida, and most of his network.

- Detainee information was also key to wrapping up such important al-Qa'ida members and associates as operative Issa al-Hindi, facilitator Abu Yasir al-Jaza'iri, shoe bomber Richard Reid's one-time partner Sajid Badat, and US operatives Jose Padilla and Lyman Faris.

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One of the gains to detaining the additional terrorists has been the thwarting of a number of al-Qa'ida operations in the United States and overseas. Jose Padilla was detained as he was arriving in Chicago with plans to mount an attack. Similarly, Walid Bin 'Attash (a.k.a. Khallad) was captured on the verge of mounting attacks against the US Consulate in Karachi, Westerners at the Karachi Airport, and Western housing areas.

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Since 11 September, the capture and debriefing of detainees also has transformed our understanding of al-Qa'ida and affiliated terrorist groups,

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providing increased avenues for sophisticated analysis. Before the capture of Abu Zubaydah in March 2002,

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Within months of his arrest, Abu Zubaydah provided details about al-Qa'ida's organizational structure, key operatives, and modus operandi. It also was Abu Zubaydah, early in his detention, who identified KSM as the mastermind of the 11 September attacks.

- In the nearly four years since 11 September 2001, successive detainees have helped us gauge our progress in the fight against al-Qa'ida by providing updated information on the changing structure and health of the organization, its preferred safehavens,

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[Redacted] (S/ [Redacted] NF)

Despite the unquestionable utility of detainee reporting, uncorroborated information from detainees must be regarded with some degree of suspicion. Detainees have been known to pass incomplete or intentionally misleading information; moreover, we assess that each detainee very likely has information that he will not reveal, in order to protect an at-large associate or an operational activity that was underway at the time of his arrest.

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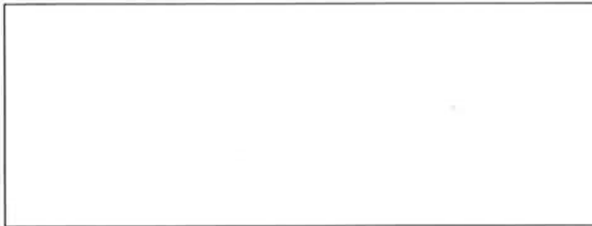
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**Detainee Reporting Pivotal for the War Against Al-Qa'ida**

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Since 11 September 2001, reporting from high value al-Qa'ida detainees has become a crucial pillar of US counterterrorism efforts, contributing directly and indirectly to intelligence and law-enforcement operations against the al-Qa'ida target. In addition, detainees have been able to clarify and provide context for information collected from other sources; they also have provided unique insights into different aspects of the terrorist organization, including its leadership, attack strategy and tactics, and CBRN capabilities and ambitions.

**High Value Detainee (HVD):** A detainee who—in large part due to his having held a position in or in association with al-Qa'ida before detention that afforded him significant information about the group—has advanced our understanding of terrorism on multiple fronts.

**Medium Value Detainee (MVD):** A detainee whose reporting advanced our knowledge of al-Qa'ida, but only on a limited range of issues.

**Low Value Detainee (LVD):** A detainee who may have provided some information on a specific issue, but whose overall reporting has not advanced our knowledge of al-Qa'ida. ~~(S//NF)~~

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- Detainee reporting since early 2003 has been a major foundation for much of the Intelligence Community's analysis on al-Qa'ida, both in terms of current intelligence publications and of more in-depth intelligence assessments.

**Helping Target Other Terrorists (S//NF)**

High and medium value detainees have given us a wealth of useful information on al-Qa'ida members and associates, including new details on the personalities and activities of known terrorists. Detainees also divulge, either wittingly or unwittingly, details about terrorists who are unknown to us. As is information from other collection streams, detainee reporting is often incomplete or too general to lead directly to arrests; instead, detainees provide critical pieces to the puzzle, which, when combined with other reporting, have helped direct an investigation's focus and led to the capture of terrorists.

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[Redacted] detainee reporting is disseminated broadly among US intelligence and law-enforcement entities [Redacted] ~~(S//NF)~~

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**Defining al-Qa'ida Detainees (S//NF)**  
Detained members and associates of al-Qa'ida fall into three basic categories, based on their position and access and the reporting they have provided.

- A key al-Qa'ida facilitator provided information about the location in the Shkai valley, Waziristan, Pakistan, of safehouses of specific al-Qa'ida senior leaders. Although we had a body of reporting [Redacted] [Redacted] indicating that senior

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This assessment was prepared by the DCI Counterterrorist Center's Office of Terrorism Analysis. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, [Redacted]

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al-Qa'ida targets were congregating in the Shkai valley in 2004, the detainee's confirmation and critical narrative helped counterterrorism officers focus their efforts on this area.

successor prioritized his capture. Information from multiple detainees, including KSM, narrowed down 'Abd al-Hadi's location and enabled his capture in Karachi in September 2003.

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- Detainees have been useful in identifying photos of al-Qa'ida figures, [redacted]

- Bringing the story full circle, 'Abd al-Hadi identified a cell of JI operatives whom Hambali had sent to Karachi for training. When confronted with his brother's revelations, Hambali admitted that some members of the cell were eventually to be groomed for US operations—at the behest of KSM—possibly as part of KSM's plot to fly hijacked planes into the tallest building on the US west coast. <sup>1</sup> (~~S//NF~~) [redacted]

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[redacted] Given the high use and frequent changes in *noms de guerre*, a name alone is insufficient for determining a terrorist's identity. (~~S//NF~~) [redacted]

**Unraveling Hambali's Network**

**Identifying the "Other" Shoe Bomber**

In March 2003, al-Qa'ida external operations chief Khalid Shaykh Muhammad (KSM) provided information about an al-Qa'ida operative, Majid Khan, who he was aware had recently been captured. KSM—possibly believing the detained operative was "talking"—admitted to having tasked Majid with delivering a large sum of money to individuals working for another senior al-Qa'ida associate.

Leads provided by KSM in November 2003 led directly to the arrest of shoe bomber Richard Reid's one-time partner, Sajid Badat, in the UK. KSM said that Badat—whom he knew as "Issa" (a.k.a. Issa al-Britani, a.k.a. Issa al-Pakistani)—was the operative slated to launch a simultaneous shoe-bomb attack with Richard Reid in December 2001.

- In an example of how information from one detainee can be used in debriefing another detainee in a "building block" process, Khan—confronted with KSM's information about the money—acknowledged that he delivered the money to an operative named "Zubair" and provided Zubair's physical description and contact number. Based on that information, Zubair was captured in June 2003.

- Using the intelligence from KSM on Badat, debriefers queried KSM's nephew, detainee Ammar al-Baluchi—a key operative in KSM's US, UK, and South Asia plots and facilitator for the 11 September attacks—who provided additional information about the UK operative.

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- During debriefings, Zubair revealed that he worked directly for Hambali, who was the principle Jemaah Islamiya (JI) conduit to al-Qa'ida. Zubair provided information [redacted]

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[redacted] we used the information Zubair provided to track down and arrest Hambali.



- Next, KSM—when explicitly queried on the issue—identified Hambali's brother, 'Abd al-Hadi (a.k.a. Rusman Gunawan) as a prospective successor to Hambali. Although we were previously aware of 'Abd al-Hadi, KSM's identification of his role as Hambali's potential

**Bringing New Targets to Light**

A variety of detainee reporting has provided us initial information about individuals having links to al-Qa'ida and has given us insight into individuals about whom we had some reporting but whose

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A: Capture of Al-Qa'ida's Southeast Asian Chief Hambali (~~S//NF~~). (~~S//NF~~)

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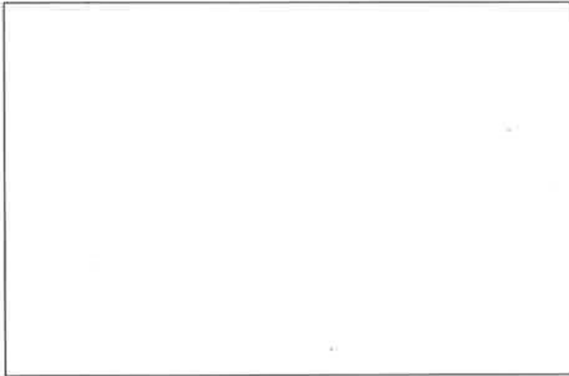
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al-Qa'ida involvement was unclear. For example, detainees in mid-2003 helped us build a list of approximately 70 individuals—many of whom we had never heard of before—that al-Qa'ida deemed suitable for Western operations. We have shared this list broadly with US intelligence and law enforcement, and nearly half of these operatives are now detained themselves.<sup>2</sup>



- KSM also provided the first lead to an operative known as **Issa al-Hindi** (a.k.a. Dhiren Barot) while other detainees gave additional identifying information.<sup>3</sup> Issa al-Hindi—who was arrested in 2004—was involved in plots in the UK and in early 2004 briefed casing reports on US targets to al-Qa'ida senior leaders in Pakistan. Issa was well known in jihadist circles because he penned a book about his time fighting in Kashmir under his "al-Hindi" *nom de guerre*.
- **Ja'far al-Tayyar** first came to the FBI's attention when Abu Zubaydah named him as one of the most likely individuals to be used by al-Qa'ida for operations in the United States or Europe. Key al-Qa'ida 11 September facilitator and Heathrow Airport plotter Ramzi Bin al-Shibh and KSM provided additional details, such as a description of



Ja'far's family in the United States, that was key to uncovering Ja'far's true name. (S/ [redacted] NF)

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**Aiding US Law Enforcement Efforts (S/NF)**

Many actionable leads provided by detainee reporting have assisted the efforts of the FBI, local law enforcement, and the Department of Defense. Such information has led to arrests, helped in questioning suspects, and may ultimately be used in a judicial process. (S/ [redacted] NF)

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Soon after his arrest, KSM described an Ohio-based truck driver whom the FBI identified as **Iyman Faris**, and who was already under suspicion for his contacts with al-Qa'ida operative Majid Khan. The FBI and CIA shared intelligence from interviews of KSM, Khan, and Faris on a near real-time basis and quickly ascertained that Faris had met and accepted operational taskings from KSM on several occasions. Faris is currently serving a 20-year sentence for conspiracy and material support to a terrorist organization. (S/ [redacted] NF)

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KSM's revelation in March 2003 that he was plotting with **Sayf al-Rahman Paracha**—who also used the name Saifullah al-Rahman Paracha—to smuggle explosives into the United States for a planned attack in New York prompted the FBI to investigate Paracha's business ties in the United States. The investigation also involved questioning Paracha's son, Uzair Paracha, in New York and resulted in designating in May 2003 Sayf al-Rahman Paracha an enemy combatant. Sayf al-Rahman Paracha entered into US custody in July 2003, and Uzair was indicted in the Federal Court in Manhattan. Sayf al-Rahman Paracha remains in detention at Guantanamo Bay. (S/ [redacted] NF)

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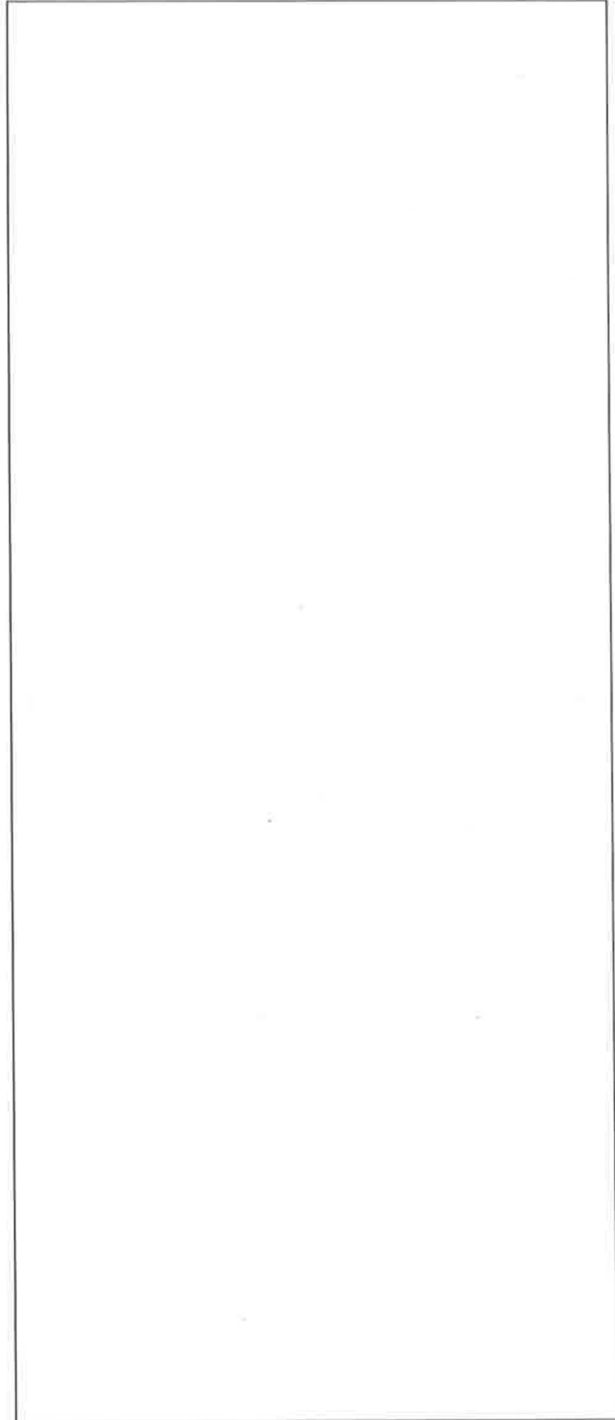
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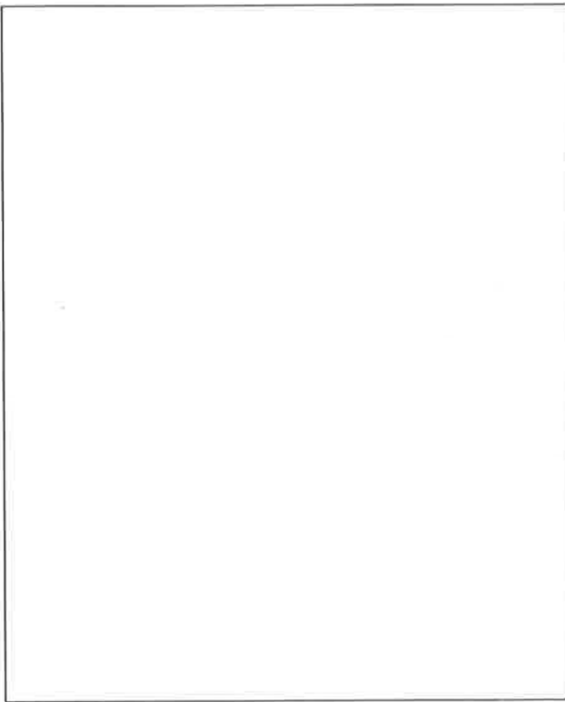
**Revealing Plots, Potential Targets (S//NF)**

Detainee reporting has helped thwart a number of al-Qa'ida plots to attack targets in the West and elsewhere. Not only have detainees reported on potential targets and techniques that al-Qa'ida operational planners have considered but arrests also have disrupted attack plans in progress.

- Information on al-Qa'ida's modus operandi is particularly important, since the group's past behavior suggests a preference for returning to pre-established targets and attack methods when planning new attacks. (~~S~~ ~~NOFORN~~)

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- A key Somali operative working with al-Qa'ida and al-Ittihad al-Islami in East Africa, Hassan Ahmed Guleed (a.k.a. Hanad) told his US debriefer soon after his capture in March 2004 that East African al-Qa'ida leader Abu Talha al-Sudani planned to attack the US military at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti using explosive-laden water tankers.



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In response to questions about al-Qa'ida's efforts to acquire WMD, KSM also revealed he had met three individuals involved in al-Qa'ida's program to produce anthrax. He apparently calculated—incorrectly—that we had this information already, given that one of the three—JI operative and al-Qa'ida associate Yazid Sufaat—had been in foreign custody for more than a year for unrelated terrorist activity.

- After being confronted with KSM's reporting, Sufaat eventually admitted his principal role in the anthrax program and provided fragmentary information on his at-large assistants. Ultimately, the information from Sufaat and KSM—when added to our other holdings—led to the capture of Sufaat's two assistants in the anthrax program.

- Both [redacted] and Hanad enabled us to identify a number of Somalis in Mogadishu directly supporting Abu Talha al-Sudani's cell and deepened our understanding of al-Qa'ida's presence in Somalia and East Africa. (S [redacted] NF)

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**Heathrow Airport Plot**

Shortly after his capture in March 2003, KSM divulged limited information about his plot to use commercial airliners to attack Heathrow Airport and other targets in the United Kingdom. He discussed the plot probably because he suspected that key al-Qa'ida 11 September facilitator and Heathrow Airport plotter Ramzi Bin al-Shibh, who had been detained six months previously, had already revealed the information.

**US Targets Here and Abroad**

Abu Zubaydah was the first of several detainees to reveal a significant quantity of general threat information against targets abroad and in the United States—including the White House and other US symbols.

- Reporting from Abu Zubaydah has been used as a baseline for debriefing other senior detainees, such as KSM and senior al-Qa'ida operative Khallad, who have shed additional light on al-Qa'ida's probable targets and methods for attacks in the United States. (S [redacted] NF)

- Debriefers used KSM's and Bin al-Shibh's reporting to confront Walid Bin 'Attash (a.k.a. Khallad) and Ammar al-Baluchi, who were caught two months after KSM. Khallad admitted to having been involved in the plot and revealed that he had directed cell leader Hazim al-Sha'ir to begin locating pilots who could hijack planes and crash them into the airport. Khallad said he and operative Abu Talha al-Pakistani had considered some 10 countries as possible launch sites for the hijacking attempts and that they narrowed the options to the [redacted]

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Debriefings of mid-level al-Qa'ida operatives also have reported on specific plots against US interests.

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- Khallad's statements provided leverage in debriefings of KSM. KSM fleshed out the status of the operation, including identifying an additional target in the United Kingdom— [redacted] (S [redacted] NF)

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**Revealing the Karachi Plots**

When confronted with information provided by Ammar al-Baluchi, Khallad admitted during debriefings that al-Qa'ida was planning to attack the US Consulate in Karachi, Westerners at the Karachi Airport, and Western housing areas. (S [redacted] NF)

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**Aiding Our Understanding of Al-Qa'ida (S//NF)**

Since 11 September, the capture and debriefing of HVDs has significantly advanced our understanding of al-Qa'ida and affiliated terrorist groups. Before the capture of Abu Zubaydah in March 2002, we had significant gaps in knowledge about al-Qa'ida's organizational structure, key members and associates, capabilities, targeting doctrine, and its presence around the globe. Within months of his arrest, Abu Zubaydah provided details about al-Qa'ida's organizational structure, key operatives, and *modus operandi*. Early in his detention, his information on al-Qa'ida's *Shura* Council and its various committees added to what we were learning from [redacted] other detainees.

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- In addition, Abu Zubaydah's identification early in his detention of KSM as the mastermind of 11 September and al-Qa'ida's premier terrorist planner and of 'Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri as another key al-Qa'ida operational planner corroborated information [redacted] (S [redacted] NF)

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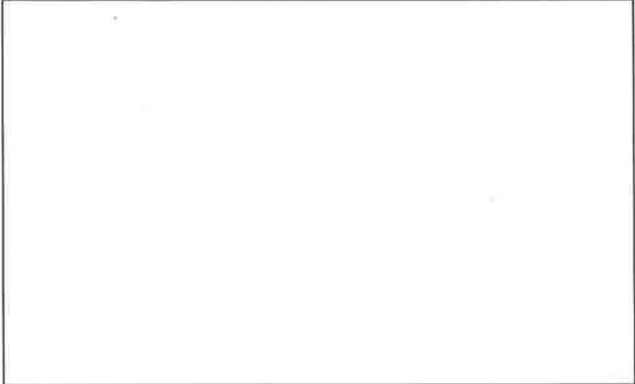
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Since 11 September, successive detainees have helped us gauge our progress in the fight against al-Qa'ida by providing updated information on the changing structure and health of the organization. KSM, Hassan Ghul, and Sharif al-Masri chronicled al-Qa'ida's handling of its financial problems, beginning in 2003 and continuing throughout 2004. [redacted]

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After his capture in early 2004, Hassan Ghul provided considerable intelligence on al-Qa'ida's senior operatives in Waziristan and elsewhere in the tribal regions of Pakistan. Ghul's reporting about his months spent with al-Qa'ida military commander 'Abd al-Hadi al-Iraqi in the Shkai valley provided us our clearest view, at the time of his arrest, of the senior al-Qa'ida leadership's activities. Ghul divulged precise location information on mid- and senior-level al-Qa'ida members—including al-Qa'ida's finance chief Shaykh Sa'id, operations chief Abu Faraj al-Libi, and external operational planner Hamza Rabi'a— [redacted]

- Ghul has not provided—and probably was not privy to—specific location information on Bin Ladin and Ayman al-Zawahiri, but his reporting on couriers and other individuals with access to the two leaders is assisting the hunt for them. (S [redacted] NF)

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Ghul's debriefings brought instant credibility to a body of fragmentary information from multiple sources and at least one other detainee identifying the Shkai valley as a safehaven for al-Qa'ida and associated mujahidin before his capture and added minute details to what had previously been a murky, nascent picture. Ghul helped us assess that this valley, as of December 2003, was not just one haven for al-Qa'ida in Waziristan, but the home base for al-Qa'ida in the area and one that al-Qa'ida was reluctant to abandon.

- Ghul also provided our first knowledge of Pakistani operatives trained in seclusion at the behest of [redacted]

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Hamza Rabi'a in a safehouse in Shkai. Ghul then supplied detailed insight into the nature of their training, including the al-Qa'ida trainers involved and the location of two training facilities in Shkai. We learned later through debriefings of Abu Talha al-Pakistani—who helped recruit the Pakistanis—that one of the operatives, Affan Leghari, was attempting to apply for a US student visa in October 2004.

the organizations until his arrest in July 2004, he has reported on how he forged passports and to whom he supplied them.

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Sharif al-Masri also provided invaluable insights in more than 150 reports that have aided our analysis of al-Qa'ida's current organization, the personalities of its key members, and al-Qa'ida's decisionmaking process. His reporting has contributed to our understanding of the enemy, how al-Qa'ida members interact with each other, how they are organized, and what their personal networks are like.

Ghailani has revealed details about meetings in Shkai, Pakistan, and the presence there of senior leaders and operatives. He has provided information on operative Abu Munthir al-Maghrabi, Abu 'Abd al-Rahman al-Muhajir, associates of Abu Faraj al-Libi, and others, including a group of Pakistani al-Qa'ida trainees. Ghailani also has reported on possible candidates for an al-Qa'ida Shura council in Waziristan, Pakistan and provided insights into the contact procedures for Hamza Rabi'a.

- Sharif revealed several aspects of al-Qa'ida's top explosives expert Abu 'Abd al-Rahman al-Muhajir's potential operational plans, providing new insights into his burgeoning role as a manager of operations aimed at the US Homeland.
- A long-time mujahid with professional and personal ties to some of al-Qa'ida's most prominent members, Sharif also has provided unique reporting on senior leaders and associated individuals. In particular, he was able to give insight into the mental state, security, and counterintelligence measures of operations chief Abu Faraj al-Libi, that assisted in our targeting the now detained al-Qa'ida senior manager. He also provided details about al-Qa'ida's paramilitary structure and relations with the Taliban and other non-al-Qa'ida fighters, and about Iran's detention of al-Qa'ida members.

- Ghailani also provided details on the bombmaking materials he observed at the residence of al-Qa'ida trainer Abu Bakr al-Suri, Muhajir's interest in the design of electrical circuit boards, and Muhajir's attempts to detonate gas cylinders, aiding our analysis of al-Qa'ida's recent operational interests.
- Ghailani's information on Muhajir's travel to Mir Ali, Pakistan in March 2004 to meet with Hamza Rabi'a helped [redacted] importance of Mir Ali as a replacement for Shkai as a nesting area for al-Qa'ida.
- He has also described the activities of the East African al-Qa'ida cell, including the letter he translated for Hamza Rabi'a from operative Saleh Nabhan that mentioned unspecified training camps in Somalia and explosives, which Ghailani surmised were meant for a terrorist attack.

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Ahmed Khalfam Ghailani (a.k.a. Haytham al-Kini, a.k.a. Fupi) a Tanzanian al-Qa'ida member who was indicted for his role in the 1998 East Africa US Embassy bombings, has provided new insights into al-Qa'ida's skills and networks. As a facilitator and one of al-Qa'ida's top document forgers since the 11 September attacks, with access to individuals across

Detained al-Qa'ida technical experts—some of whom had very focused roles in the organization—have provided unique insights into the origins of the group's efforts to develop conventional weapons and the technical limitations of key al-Qa'ida personnel. Recent examples include mid-level al-Qa'ida facilitator Saud Memon and al-Qa'ida bomb expert

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'Abd al-Bari al-Filistini, who along with Sharif al-Masri, [redacted]

in confronting detainees to persuade them to talk about topics they would otherwise not reveal.

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• For example, lists of names found on the computer of Mustafa al-Hawsawi—a key al-Qa'ida financial operative and facilitator for the 11 September attacks—seized in March 2003 represented al-Qa'ida members who were to receive funds. Debriefers questioned detainees extensively on the names to determine who they were and how important they were to the organization. The information—along with comments from other detainees, such as Khallad, on additional seized al-Qa'ida payroll lists—helped us to better understand al-Qa'ida's hierarchy, revenues, and expenditures, [redacted] as well as funds that were available to families.

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• Memon and Sharif al-Masri also reported that [redacted] trained the bombmakers responsible for the bombing of the US Consulate in Karachi, Pakistan, in June 2002 and the assassination attempt against President Musharraf in early 2002. [redacted]

• The same computer contained a list of e-mail addresses for individuals KSM helped deploy abroad who he hoped would execute operations; most of the names were unknown to us, and we used the information in debriefings of KSM and other detainees to unravel KSM's plots and track down most of the operatives mentioned. (S/[redacted]NF)

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• 'Abd al-Bari al-Filistini reported that al-Qa'ida military commander 'Abd al-Hadi al-Iraqi employed engineers associated with Pakistani militant groups to attempt to overcome the efforts by Coalition forces to jam the more reliable improvised explosive devices. (S/[redacted]NF)

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**Illuminating Other Collection (S/NF)**

**Challenges of Detainee Reporting (S/NF)**

Detainees have been particularly useful in sorting out the large volumes of documents and computer data seized in raids. Such information potentially can be used in legal proceedings [redacted]

Detainees, by virtue of their circumstances, have an adversarial relationship with their debriefers; they often try pass incomplete or intentionally misleading information, perhaps hoping that the volume of the reporting will make it difficult to sort out the truth. Khallad admitted outright that there were some topics—most likely those regarding terrorist operational activities—he would not discuss.

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elaborated on his plan to crash commercial airlines into Heathrow Airport; he may have assumed that Ramzi Bin al-Shibh, who was captured in December 2002, had already divulged this plan.

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**Refusing To Budge on Certain Topics (S//NF)**

We assess that each detainee very likely has information that he will not reveal to protect either an at-large associate or an operational activity that was underway at the time of his arrest.

• KSM has alleged that al-Qa'ida, at the time of his arrest, had neither active operatives nor sleeper cells in the United States. He has denied knowing "Haji Adam," who Abu Zubaydah insisted— [redacted] —has served as a deep-cover operative for KSM in the United States since the early 1990s.

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• No detainee has provided actionable information on Usama Bin Ladin's location, although we have assessed that some detainees—such as KSM, who was Bin Ladin's top subordinate in Pakistan—had such information. ~~(S//NF)~~ [redacted]

3.5(c)

Detainees sometimes provide sensational, false information, [redacted]

• In June 2003, KSM admitted that he fabricated his earlier statements that he tasked operative "Issa" (a.k.a. Issa al-Britani) to recruit black American Muslim converts in Montana. [redacted]

[redacted]

Detainees' information must be corroborated using multiple sources of intelligence; uncorroborated information from detainees must be regarded with some degree of suspicion. Sometimes the detainee gives information he calculates—rightly or wrongly—that the debriefers already know.

• Uncharacteristic for most detainees, KSM almost immediately following his capture in March 2003

1.4(c)

3.5(c)

3.5(c)

~~SECRET~~ [redacted] ~~NOFORN//MR~~