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KSM's West Coast Airline Plot

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A NEFA analysis of the Library Tower Plot
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Masterminds – Senior Al-Qaida Leadership

During a March 2007 hearing at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, 9/11 planner Khalid Sheikh Mohammed admitted, "I was responsible for planning, training, surveying, and financing the New (or Second) Wave attacks against the following skyscrapers after 9/11:

- a. Library Tower, California
- b. Sears Tower, Chicago
- c. Plaza Bank, Washington state
- d. The Empire State Building, New York City"¹

While KSM references a broader operation, with multiple targets, President George W. Bush² and a top White House counterterrorism official³ asserted in February 2006 that the plot had narrowed to a focus on the Library Tower, which is the tallest building in the U.S. west of the Mississippi River.⁴

In a February 2006 speech, President Bush stated, "Rather than use Arab hijackers as he had on September the 11th, Khalid Shaykh Muhammad sought out young men from Southeast Asia – whom he believed would not arouse as much suspicion. To help carry out this plan, he tapped...Hambali,"⁵ the one-time operational head of Al-Qaida's Southeast Asian affiliate Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), now being held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba."⁶

¹ Verbatim Transcript of Combatant Status Review Tribunal Hearing for ISN 10024, U.S. Department of Defense, Revised as of March 15, 2007,

http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/Barot/DOD_KSM.pdf.

² "President Discusses Progress in War on Terror to National Guard," White House Press Release, February 9, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Bush_02-09-2006.pdf.

³ "Press Briefing on the West Coast Terrorist Plot by Frances Fragos Townsend, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism," White House Press Release, February 9, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Townsend_02-09-2006.pdf.

⁴ "U.S. Bank Tower," <http://www.emporis.com/en/wm/bu/?id=usbanktower-losangeles-ca-usa>.

⁵ "President Discusses Progress in War on Terror to National Guard," White House Press Release, February 9, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Bush_02-09-2006.pdf.

⁶ "Press Briefing on the West Coast Terrorist Plot by Frances Fragos Townsend, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism," White House Press Release, February 9, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Townsend_02-09-2006.pdf.

The Operatives – Four Jemaah Islamiyah Members

In pursuit of their plan, KSM and Hambali recruited four others,⁷ who, according to the White House, "had been training in Afghanistan."⁸

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) reveals that two of the JI operatives recruited to hijack the plane were Malaysians Mohammed Nazir Bin Lep (a.k.a. Lillie)⁹ and Mod Farik bin Amin (a.k.a. Zubair).¹⁰ The DNI describes Lillie as "one of Hambali's key lieutenants"¹¹ who "had considerable operational experience" and who "was particularly interested in the ideas of martyrdom."¹² Similarly, Zubair "served directly under...Hambali" and was one of his "trusted associates."¹³ The two men reportedly met while Zubair was "earning his degree in electronics telecommunications in Malaysia."¹⁴

The 9/11 Commission Report provides insight into the identity of the third cell member. Referencing the interrogations of KSM and Hambali, the report establishes that one of the "Al Qaeda operatives identified by KSM" as a candidate "for the second wave of attacks" was Zaini Zakaria (a.k.a. Mussa). Zakaria was "a Jemaah Islamiyah member who worked in Hambali's Malaysia stronghold and was directed by [Al Qaeda military commander Muhammad] Atef to enroll in flight training sometime in 2000, according to KSM."¹⁵

In February 2006, the Associated Press, quoting Malaysian security officials, confirmed Zakaria's involvement.¹⁶ And, citing a transcript of Lillie and Zubair's interrogation summaries, Time magazine asserts that the leader of the cell was Masran bin Arshad,¹⁷ also a Malaysian.¹⁸

⁷ "Press Briefing on the West Coast Terrorist Plot by Frances Fragos Townsend, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism," White House Press Release, February 9, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Townsend_02-09-2006.pdf.

⁸ "President Discusses Progress in War on Terror to National Guard," White House Press Release, February 9, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Bush_02-09-2006.pdf.

⁹ "Biographies of High Value Terrorist Detainees Transferred to the US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay," Biography of Lillie, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, September 16, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Lillie_Bio.pdf.

¹⁰ "Biographies of High Value Terrorist Detainees Transferred to the US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay," Biography of Zubair, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, September 16, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Zubair_Bio.pdf.

¹¹ According to the Department of Defense, the men even "shared a house during basic explosives training." See: Verbatim Transcript of Combatant Status Review Tribunal Hearing for ISN 10022, U.S. Department of Defense, March 20, 2007, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Lillie_Transcript.pdf.

¹² "Biographies of High Value Terrorist Detainees Transferred to the US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay," Biography of Lillie, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, September 16, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Lillie_Bio.pdf.

¹³ "Biographies of High Value Terrorist Detainees Transferred to the US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay," Biography of Zubair, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, September 16, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Zubair_Bio.pdf.

¹⁴ "Biographies of High Value Terrorist Detainees Transferred to the US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay," Biography of Zubair, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, September 16, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Zubair_Bio.pdf.

¹⁵ The 9/11 Commission Report, p. 531.

¹⁶ "Malaysian Said Involved in '02 Terror Plot," *Associated Press*, February 10, 2006. **Note:** "Zaeni's" involvement is also referenced at: Simon Elegant, "The Terrorist Talks," *Time*, October 5, 2003.

¹⁷ Simon Elegant, "The Terrorist Talks," *Time*, October 5, 2003.

Plan to Use Shoe Bombs to Breach the Cockpit Door

In his February 2006 speech, President Bush stated that KSM planned "to have terrorist operatives hijack an airplane using shoe bombs to breach the cockpit door, and fly the plane into the tallest building on the West Coast."¹⁹ Following President Bush's February 2006 speech, Frances Fragos Townsend, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, provided a supplemental briefing on the plot in which she asserted that "KSM, himself, trained the leader of the cell in late 2001 or early 2002 in the shoe bomb technique."²⁰

Notably, KSM has also admitted masterminding the Richard Reid-Sajid Badat plot to utilize shoe bombs to down two U.S. bound flights shortly after 9/11.²¹ (Note: See the NEFA "Target: America" report "KSM's Transatlantic Shoe Bomb Plot.") When queried on a connection between the two cells, Townsend answered, "we don't have the intelligence to tell us whether the cells...knew each other or had contact with one another."²²

The Operatives Met Usama Bin Laden and Swore Bayat

In the February 2006 teleconference, White House official Frances Townsend stated that, in preparation for the operation, "the cell leader and the three other operatives went to Afghanistan where they met with bin Laden and swore biat – that is an oath of loyalty to him..."²³ During his March 20, 2007 hearing at Guantanamo Bay, Lillie admitted, "I was sworn by Usama bin Laden to participate in attacks on the United States."²⁴

Time magazine, referencing the interrogator's summary of Lillie's interrogation, also noted: "Lilie stated that bin Laden discussed their commitment to Allah with the group and told them that their duty was to suffer."²⁵

According to Townsend, the intelligence community believes that the bin Laden meeting occurred in October 2001, after which the cell members returned "to Asia, where they continued to work under Hambali."²⁶

¹⁸ Simon Elegant and Andrew Perrin, "Asia's Terror Threat," *Time*, October 6, 2003.

¹⁹ "President Discusses Progress in War on Terror to National Guard," White House Press Release, February 9, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Bush_02-09-2006.pdf.

²⁰ "Press Briefing on the West Coast Terrorist Plot by Frances Fragos Townsend, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism," White House Press Release, February 9, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Townsend_02-09-2006.pdf.

²¹ Verbatim Transcript of Combatant Status Review Tribunal Hearing for ISN 10024, U.S. Department of Defense, Revised as of March 15, 2007, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/Barot/DOD_KSM.pdf.

²² "Press Briefing on the West Coast Terrorist Plot by Frances Fragos Townsend, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism," White House Press Release, February 9, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Townsend_02-09-2006.pdf.

²³ "Press Briefing on the West Coast Terrorist Plot by Frances Fragos Townsend, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism," White House Press Release, February 9, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Townsend_02-09-2006.pdf.

²⁴ Verbatim Transcript of Combatant Status Review Tribunal Hearing for ISN 10022, U.S. Department of Defense, March 20, 2007, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Lillie_Transcript.pdf.

²⁵ Simon Elegant and Andrew Perrin, "Asia's Terror Threat," *Time*, October 6, 2003.

Prior Attendance at Al-Qaida Training Camps

Supplementing President Bush's comment that the cell members "had been training in Afghanistan,"²⁷ the DNI provides additional information on two of the operatives' prior training. According to the DNI, "Lillie spent time in Kandahar, Afghanistan, in 2000, where he trained at al-Qai'da's al-Faruq camp in weaponry and explosives."²⁸ The Department of Defense also states, "computer media recovered at the Detainee's apartment after his capture contained documents that described how to make bombs, grenades, dry ice bombs, and vest bombs. The recovered computer media also contained documents with information on the high explosive, pentaerythrite terannitrate (PETN) and information on making nitric acid."²⁹

Likewise, according to the DNI, Zubair attended the al-Faruq camp, receiving "small arms and combat tactics training" there in 2000 and again in 2001.³⁰

Additionally, the Associated Press reports that Zaini Zakaria visited Al-Qaida Afghan camps in 1999, secured a license to fly small planes, and inquired about flight training on jets in Australia.³¹ Not surprisingly, it reportedly was his flight training experience that made Zakaria appealing to Hambali.³²

The Date of the Attack/The Airline

When asked about the timing and the targeted carrier, Frances Townsend acknowledged, "we don't know when it was planned to actually be executed" or "what plane or what flight."³³ (*Note: See below for a different perspective on the progression of the plot from KSM's interrogation.*)

The Disruption of the Plot

In her briefing, Frances Townsend stated that "the cell leader was arrested in February of 2002, and...at that point, the other members of the cell believed that the

²⁶ "Press Briefing on the West Coast Terrorist Plot by Frances Fragos Townsend, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism," White House Press Release, February 9, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Townsend_02-09-2006.pdf.

²⁷ "President Discusses Progress in War on Terror to National Guard," White House Press Release, February 9, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Bush_02-09-2006.pdf.

²⁸ "Biographies of High Value Terrorist Detainees Transferred to the US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay," Biography of Lillie, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, September 16, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Lillie_Bio.pdf.

²⁹ Verbatim Transcript of Combatant Status Review Tribunal Hearing for ISN 10022, U.S. Department of Defense, March 20, 2007, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Lillie_Transcript.pdf.

³⁰ "Biographies of High Value Terrorist Detainees Transferred to the US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay," Biography of Zubair, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, September 16, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Zubair_Bio.pdf.

³¹ "Malaysian Said Involved in '02 Terror Plot," *Associated Press*, February 10, 2006.

³² Simon Elegant, "The Terrorist Talks," *Time*, October 5, 2003.

³³ "Press Briefing on the West Coast Terrorist Plot by Frances Fragos Townsend, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism," White House Press Release, February 9, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Townsend_02-09-2006.pdf.

West Coast plot...was not going forward."³⁴ As mentioned previously, Masran bin Arshad has been identified in open source reporting as that captured cell leader.³⁵

Zakaria, whom the U.S. Treasury Department named a "Specially Designated Global Terrorist" in September 2003,³⁶ reportedly surrendered in December 2002³⁷ and is being held in Malaysia.³⁸ The Associated Press, referencing unidentified "Southeast Asian security officials," reports that Zakaria withdrew from the plot after 9/11, telling interrogators he "didn't want that kind of jihad" and "was not prepared to die as a martyr."³⁹

Thai police arrested Zubair in June 2003, Lillie in August 2003,⁴⁰ and Hambali in August 2003.⁴¹ According to former CIA Director George Tenet, Zubair "provided fragmentary information that led us to capture... 'Lillie,'" who then "provided information that led to the capture of Hambali."⁴²

KSM was captured in Pakistan in March 2003.⁴³ Lillie, Zubair, Hambali, and KSM are all currently in U.S. custody at Guantanamo Bay.⁴⁴

Townsend affirmed that all of the cell members are in custody and credited two countries in South Asia and two in Southeast Asia with helping to thwart the plot.⁴⁵

A Derivation of KSM's Original 9/11 Plan

According to The 9/11 Commission Report, KSM's initial plan for 9/11 included attacks in California and Washington: "KSM describes a grandiose original plan: a total of ten aircraft to be hijacked, nine of which would crash into targets on both coasts—they included those eventually hit on September 11 plus CIA and FBI headquarters, nuclear power plants, and the tallest buildings in California and the state of Washington."⁴⁶ However, again quoting The 9/11 Commission, "KSM concedes that this proposal received a lukewarm response from Al Qaeda leaders skeptical of its scale and

³⁴ "Press Briefing on the West Coast Terrorist Plot by Frances Fragos Townsend, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism," White House Press Release, February 9, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Townsend_02-09-2006.pdf.

³⁵ Simon Elegant, "The Terrorist Talks," *Time*, October 5, 2003.

³⁶ "Recent OFAC Actions," U.S. Treasury Department Press Release, September 5, 2003, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Treasury_Zakaria.pdf.

³⁷ Sean Yoong and Eileen Ng, "Officials: Terrorist Pulled Out of Plot," *Associated Press*, February 10, 2006.

³⁸ "Malaysian Said Involved in '02 Terror Plot," *Associated Press*, February 10, 2006.

³⁹ "Malaysian Said Involved in '02 Terror Plot," *Associated Press*, February 10, 2006.

⁴⁰ Simon Elegant, "The Terrorist Talks," *Time*, October 5, 2003.

⁴¹ "Press Gaggle by Scott McClellan and a Senior Administration Official," Transcript, August 14, 2003, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/WhiteHouse_10-14-2003.pdf.

⁴² George Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm*, HarperCollins, 2007.

⁴³ "Al Qaeda Suspect Under Interrogation," *BBC*, March 2, 2003.

⁴⁴ "Biographies of High Value Terrorist Detainees Transferred to the US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay," Office of the Director of National Intelligence, September 16, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/DNI_Bios.pdf.

⁴⁵ "Press Briefing on the West Coast Terrorist Plot by Frances Fragos Townsend, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism," White House Press Release, February 9, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Townsend_02-09-2006.pdf.

⁴⁶ The 9/11 Commission Report, p. 154.

complexity. Although Bin Ladin listened to KSM's proposal, he was not convinced that it was practical."⁴⁷

Adding more details in her February 2006 briefing, Frances Townsend said, "It was bin Laden who decided that it should just focus on the East Coast, and that the West Coast should be held in abeyance...as a follow-on attack. It's our understanding now that it was too difficult to get enough operatives for both the East and West Coast plots at the same time."⁴⁸

When explicitly asked whether this plan was "the West Coast part of the 9/11 plot that was moved to later," Townsend replied: "Absolutely."⁴⁹

Further highlighting the continuity with 9/11, the U.S. government has confirmed that Hambali, a key player in the Library Tower plot, "was videotaped in a January 2000 meeting in Malaysia with two of the September 11, 2001 hijackers of AA Flight 77 - Khalid al-Midhar and Nawaf al-Hazmi."⁵⁰

Additional Information – KSM's Interrogation Reveals Numerous Problems with the Plot

During court proceedings involving Zacharias Moussaoui, the U.S. government submitted a 58-page "Substitution for the Testimony of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed" which contained a summary of key revelations KSM has made during interrogations.⁵¹

In interrogation, KSM admitted that French passport holder Zacarias Moussaoui and Canadian passport holder Abderraouf Jdey (aka Faruq al-Tunisi) were also initially slated to participate in the "second wave" of "9/11 style strikes in the United States."⁵² KSM tasked Moussaoui, who met with Hambali in Malaysia in mid-2000,⁵³ "to take flight lessons in preparation for the second wave attacks."⁵⁴ And, according to The 9/11 Commission Report, Jdey "may have trained in Afghanistan with Khalid al Miidhar and Nawaf al Hazmi and received instruction from KSM with [Mohammed] Atta and [Ramzi] Binalshibh... A videotape of Jdey's martyrdom statement was found in the rubble of [Mohammed] Atef 's house near Kabul following a November 2001 airstrike."⁵⁵

⁴⁷ The 911 Commission Report, p. 154.

⁴⁸ "Press Briefing on the West Coast Terrorist Plot by Frances Fragos Townsend, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism," White House Press Release, February 9, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Townsend_02-09-2006.pdf.

⁴⁹ "Press Briefing on the West Coast Terrorist Plot by Frances Fragos Townsend, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism," White House Press Release, February 9, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Townsend_02-09-2006.pdf.

⁵⁰ "Statement by the Treasury Department Regarding Today's Designation of Two Leaders of Jemaah Islamiyah," Treasury Department Press Release, January 24, 2003, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/WestCoast/Treasury_JI.pdf.

⁵¹ U.S. v. Moussaoui, (E.D. VA.), Cr. No. 01-455-A, "Substitution For The Testimony of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed," Defendant's Exhibit 941.

⁵² U.S. v. Moussaoui, (E.D. VA.), Cr. No. 01-455-A, "Substitution For The Testimony of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed," Defendant's Exhibit 941.

⁵³ U.S. v. Moussaoui, (E.D. VA.), Cr. No. 01-455-A, "Substitution For The Testimony of Riduan Isamuddin ("Hambail")," Defendant's Exhibit 946.

⁵⁴ U.S. v. Moussaoui, (E.D. VA.), Cr. No. 01-455-A, "Substitution For The Testimony of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed," Defendant's Exhibit 941.

⁵⁵ The 9/11 Commission Report, p. 527.

For KSM, Moussaoui, Jdey, and Zaini Zakaria⁵⁶ were ideal candidates because he knew that after 9/11 "he would no longer be able to use operatives from the Middle East." Instead, "Al Qaeda wanted the second wave operatives to carry French, Canadian, Malaysian, or Indonesian passports..."⁵⁷

Despite KSM's strategic thinking, the plot was stymied by a number of problems in its early stages. For one, Jdey contacted KSM "from Canada during the summer of 2001 to back out." Moreover, Moussaoui "was a problem from the start." The "Substitution For The Testimony of Riduan Isamuddin ('Hambali')," which was also submitted by federal prosecutors in the Moussaoui case states:

"According to Hambali, Moussaoui managed to annoy everyone he came into contact with. Hambali had many arguments with Moussaoui because he was criticizing JI for sitting around and reading the Quran instead of conducting operations. He said Moussaoui was constantly suggesting operations which the rest of the them thought were ridiculous, such as kidnapping local Chinese businessmen and holding them for ransom, and robbing motorists. Hambali told Moussaoui that if he wanted to do such things, he should do it in Europe, and not cause trouble in JI's neighborhood. He said Moussaoui constantly complained...Hambali did not task Moussaoui with anything, as he did not trust him."⁵⁸

When Moussaoui was arrested in Minnesota in August 2001, "the earlier plan for a second wave attack ended..." At this point, KSM "had to start over from scratch" because he was "without candidate pilots or operatives." Even when Moussaoui was undergoing flight training, he "had no idea of his target. This was because al Qaeda was not at the stage of selecting targets, as they needed to identify and train additional pilots, select and transport the supporting operatives into the U.S. and allow them to train and do any necessary surveillance."⁵⁹

Additionally, KSM "said that he was consumed with the responsibilities of managing the 9/11 operation, and thus was unable to direct much attention to the second wave plot." Following 9/11, KSM admits that he "he did not plan on the U.S. responding to the attacks as fiercely as they did" and that he "was impressed by the security measures implemented in the U.S. in the immediate aftermath of the attacks." These developments "led to the next phase being postponed." In the same document, KSM describes the second wave attack as being on the "back burner" and the prospects for the operation as "dismal."⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Zakaria is identified as "Mussa" in the KSM document. Notably, the text states, "Sheikh Mohammed said he asked Hambali to find a Malaysian or Indonesian pilot to participate in a second wave of attacks inside the U.S. along with Moussaoui and [faruq al-Tunisi]...Hambali never provided such a candidate." Additionally, "Hambali had provided an initial installment of \$20,000 (U.S.) in late 1999 or early 2000 to recruit pilots for future operations."

⁵⁷ U.S. v. Moussaoui, (E.D. VA.), Cr. No. 01-455-A, "Substitution For The Testimony of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed," Defendant's Exhibit 941.

⁵⁸ U.S. v. Moussaoui, (E.D. VA.), Cr. No. 01-455-A, "Substitution For The Testimony of Riduan Isamuddin ('Hambali')," Defendant's Exhibit 946.

⁵⁹ U.S. v. Moussaoui, (E.D. VA.), Cr. No. 01-455-A, "Substitution For The Testimony of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed," Defendant's Exhibit 941.

⁶⁰ U.S. v. Moussaoui, (E.D. VA.), Cr. No. 01-455-A, "Substitution For The Testimony of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed," Defendant's Exhibit 941.

Additional Information – Former Attorney General John Ashcroft Alleges Involvement of A Current Enemy Combatant

In his book, former Attorney General John Ashcroft alleged that "KSM had planned to use [Ali Saleh Kahlah] Al-Marri to help facilitate this next wave of attacks focused on Los Angeles."⁶¹ Al-Marri, currently detained as an enemy combatant in the Navy Brig in Charleston, allegedly was "directed by Al Qaeda to enter the country as a sleeper agent."⁶² Other law enforcement officials dispute this claim and documents filed in connection with Al-Marri's case make no reference to these allegations.⁶³

Additional Information – Zubair's Ties to a Baltimore, MD Resident

In his book, *At the Center of the Storm*, former CIA Director George Tenet writes that "KSM told us that Majid Khan...provided fifty thousand dollars to operatives working for a major al-Qa'ida figure in Southeast Asia known as 'Hambali.' When confronted with this allegation, Khan confirmed it and said he gave the money to someone named Zubair, and he provided the man's phone number."⁶⁴

According to the DNI, Khan, a Pakistani national who lived in Baltimore, had gained access to KSM "because of his excellent English and extensive knowledge of the United States."⁶⁵ Khan also assisted KSM in probing the feasibility of blowing up gas stations in the U.S., poisoning U.S. reservoirs, and recruiting an operative to scout the Brooklyn Bridge for an attack.⁶⁶

Additional Information – Al-Qaida's Desire to Bankrupt the U.S. Economy

According to a section of KSM's interrogation cited in the media, California provided such an appealing target because "it was America's richest state."⁶⁷

In its targeting strategy, Al-Qaida has continually sought to strike targets of economic significance, in large part due to Usama Bin Laden's belief that his efforts in Afghanistan in the 1980's bankrupted the Soviet Union and led to the collapse of the Russian Empire. In remarks broadcast in November 2004, Bin Laden said, "We, alongside the mujahedeen, bled Russia for 10 years until it went bankrupt and was forced to withdraw in defeat."⁶⁸

⁶¹ Richard Serrano, "Book Ties Enemy Combatant to L.A. Plot," *The Los Angeles Times*, December 10, 2006.

⁶² Declaration of Mr. Jeffrey N. Rapp, Director, Joint Intelligence Task Force for Combating Terrorism," 2:04-cv-02257-HFF-RSC, Filed April 5, 2006.

⁶³ Richard Serrano, "Book Ties Enemy Combatant to L.A. Plot," *The Los Angeles Times*, December 10, 2006.

⁶⁴ George Tenet, *At the Center of the Storm*, HarperCollins, 2007.

⁶⁵ "Biographies of High Value Terrorist Detainees Transferred to the US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay," Biography of Majid Khan, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, September 16, 2006, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/Bklyn/DNI_Khan.pdf.

⁶⁶ "Summary of Evidence for Combatant Status Review Tribunal – Khan, Majid," U.S. Department of Defense, Office for the Administrative Review of the Detention of Enemy Combatants at U.S. Naval Base Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, March 28, 2007, http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/Bklyn/Gitmo_Khan.pdf.

⁶⁷ Paul Martin, "Chicago, L.A. Towers Were Next Targets," *The Washington Times*, March 30, 2004.

⁶⁸ Transcript of Usama Bin Laden Tape, November 2, 2004.

In publicly released statements, Bin Laden has also stressed his "policy" of "bleeding America to the point of bankruptcy."⁶⁹ And an excerpt from the Al-Qaida publication *Sawt al-Jihad* states:

"If the enemy has used his economy to rule the world and hire collaborators, then we need to strike this economy with harsh attacks to bring it down on the heads of its owners. If the enemy has built his economy on the basis of open markets and free trade by getting the monies of investors, then we have to prove to these investors that the enemy's land is not safe for them, that his economy is not capable of guarding their monies, so they would abandon him to suffer alone the fall of his economy."⁷⁰

It was New York's role as the heart of the U.S. economy that captivated KSM when planning 9/11. The 9/11 Commission declares, "KSM reasoned he could best influence U.S. policy by targeting the country's economy. KSM and [1993 World Trade Center bomber Ramzi] Yousef reportedly brainstormed together about what drove the U.S. economy. New York, which KSM considered the economic capital of the United States, therefore became the primary target."⁷¹

Following the 9/11 attacks, Bin Laden remarked that the hijackers had "struck...the U.S. economy in the heart" and "inflicted...more than a trillion dollars in losses" on U.S. markets. In the same speech, he added, "If their economy is destroyed, they will be busy with their own affairs rather than enslaving the weak peoples. It is very important to concentrate on hitting the U.S. economy through all possible means."⁷²

⁶⁹ Transcript of Usama Bin Laden Tape, November 2, 2004.

⁷⁰ Akhu Man Ta`a Allah, "What Else is There to Say About September 11," *Sawt al-Jihad*, Volume 26.

⁷¹ [The 9/11 Commission Report](#), p. 153.

⁷² "'Full Text' of Usama bin Ladin Recorded Statement Aired by Al-Jazirah TV 27 Dec," FBIS, Document ID: GMP20011227000257.