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PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

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Fact Sheet

The August 6, 2001 PDB

The August 6, 2001 Pdb Item Entitled "bin Ladin Determined to Strike in US" was prepared in response to questions asked by the President about the possibility of attacks by al-Qaida inside the United States. The PDB article did not warn of the 9-11 attacks. Although the PDB referred to the possibility of hijackings, it did not discuss the possible use of planes as weapons. The PDB was based largely on background information about past terrorist attacks conducted by al-Qaida and general threats from the late 1990s. The only recent information concerning possible current activities in the PDB related to two incidents. There is no information that either incident was related to the 9-11 attacks.

Q: Why was this PDB prepared?

DCI Tenet has already described the genesis of this PDB item in a letter to the 9-11 Commission dated March 26, 2004. This PDB item was prepared in response to questions President Bush asked his PDB briefer. The President had seen previous intelligence reports about possible al-Qa'ida threats to U.S. targets outside the United States. The President had asked whether any of the information pointed to a possible attack inside the United States. When this PDB item was presented to the President on August 6, 2001, his PDB briefer told him that it was prepared in response to the President's previous questions.

Q: What information does this PDB item contain?

The article advised the President of what was publicly well-known: that Bin Ladin had a desire to attack inside the United States. Bin Ladin had stated publicly in 1997 and 1998 that his followers would try to "bring the fighting to America." Most of the information in the article was an analysis of previous terrorist attacks by al-Qaida and a summary and discussion of general threat reporting from the late 1990s. The draft was prepared by CIA after consultation with an FBI analyst.

Q: Did the PDB item include any warning of the 9-11 attack?

No. The only recent information concerning possible current activities in the PDB related to two incidents. There is no information that either incident was related to the 9-11 attacks. The first incident involved suspected "recent surveillance of federal buildings in New York." This information was based on a report that two Yemeni men had been seen taking photographs of buildings at Federal Plaza in New York. The FBI later interviewed the men and determined that their conduct was consistent with tourist activity and the FBI's investigation identified no link to terrorism. The second incident involved a call made on May 15, 2001 by an unidentified individual to the U.S. Embassy in the UAE "saying that a group of Bin Ladin supporters was in the US planning attacks with explosives." The caller did not say where or when the attacks might occur. o On May 17, 2001, the NSC's counterterrorism staff convened the Counterterrorism Security Group, whose members include State, DoD, JCS, DoJ, FBI, and CIA, and reviewed the information provided by the caller. o The information was also shared with Customs, INS, and FAA. o The PDB article advised the President that CIA and FBI were investigating the information. o We had no information, either before or after 9/11, that connects the caller's information with the 9/11 attacks.

Q: The PDB item stated that "al-Qa'ida members have resided in or traveled to the US for years, and the group apparently maintains a support structure that could aid attacks." Was this new information and what

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was being done about it?

The presence of individuals associated or affiliated with al-Qaida in the United States was not new information. This information had been well-known to the intelligence and law enforcement communities for a number of years. The FBI was actively investigating individuals associated or affiliated with al-Qaida in the United States -- a fact noted in the PDB article. As also noted in the PDB article, the FBI was conducting approximately 70 full-field Bin-Laden-related investigations.

Q: Why is the term "patterns of suspicious activity" used in the PDB and what does it refer to?

The CIA author of the PDB item judged, after consulting an FBI colleague, that there were suspicious patterns of activity that were worrisome, even though nothing pointed to a specific operation in a specific location. o In that vein, the author was concerned that one of the East African bombing defendants had told FBI officers earlier in 2001 that Bin Laden would retaliate if the defendants in the trial were convicted -- four were convicted in New York on May 29 -- with a major attack, something the FBI interpreted to mean possibly in the United States. o In addition, the CIA author understood that there had been possible recent surveillance of federal buildings in New York. Except for the information relating to the possible surveillance of federal buildings in New York, which was later determined by the FBI to be consistent with tourist-related activity, the PDB item contained no information from FBI investigations that indicated activities related to the preparation or planning for hijackings or other attacks within the United States. None of the information relating to the "patterns of suspicious activity" was later deemed to be related to the 9-11 attacks. From June through September, the FAA and FBI issued a number of warnings about the possibility of terrorist attacks. FAA warnings included specific warnings about the possibility of a hijacking to free imprisoned al-Qaida members inside the United States and the possibility of attacks in response to law enforcement actions against al-Qaida members.

Q: Why has information been redacted from the PDB?

The copy of the PDB that has been released is a copy of the PDB prepared for the President, except that three redactions have been made to protect the names of foreign governments that provided information to CIA.

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