



Office of the Attorney General
Washington, D. C. 20530

September 17, 2001

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL UNITED STATES ATTORNEYS

FROM: *John Ashcroft*
THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

SUBJECT: ANTI-TERRORISM PLAN

Last Tuesday marked a turning point in this country's fight against terrorism. That morning, the forces of terrorism attacked the citizens of our country with a ferocity that was nothing short of a declaration of war against the American people. The President of the United States has announced that we will meet that declaration with a full commitment of resources and with a firm resolve to rid the world of terrorism. The fight against terrorism must be our first and overriding priority.

As the 1995 bombing in Oklahoma City and the events of last week clearly demonstrated, much of the terrorism directed at American citizens is orchestrated and carried out by persons residing in our country -- people who enjoy the blessings of our free society yet commit themselves to its destruction. We in law enforcement must do everything within our power to apprehend those persons and to eradicate the forces of terrorism in our country. The memory of those who fell last week and our sworn duty to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic" demand that we dedicate ourselves to this mission.

Accordingly, I hereby direct every United States Attorney to commit all available resources and manpower to our national mission against terrorism, and I instruct each United States Attorney's Office to implement the following measures to enhance our capacity to combat terrorism:

- (1) *Implement the Department's Anti-Terrorism Plan.* The guiding principle of this enforcement plan is the prevention of future terrorism through the dismantling of terrorist organizations operating within the United States. This plan focuses on preventing terrorism by arresting and detaining violators who have been identified as persons who participate in, or lend support to, terrorist activities. Federal law enforcement agencies and the United States Attorneys' Offices will use every available law enforcement tool to incapacitate these individuals and their organizations.
- (2) *Establish an Anti-Terrorism Task Force within each district.* At my direction, each United States Attorney's Office last week identified one experienced prosecutor who will serve as the Anti-Terrorism Coordinator for that district. That Coordinator is to convene a meeting of representatives from the federal law enforcement agencies -- including the FBI, INS, DEA, Customs Service, Marshals Service, Secret Service

and ATF -- and the primary state and local police forces in that district.¹ That group will constitute the Anti-Terrorism Task Force in each district.

These task forces will be part of a national network that will coordinate the dissemination of information and the development of investigative and prosecutive strategy throughout the country. The efforts of each task force will be coordinated by the Anti-Terrorism Coordinator in that district. Each Anti-Terrorism Coordinator will, in turn, coordinate with a National Anti-Terrorism Coordinator in the Terrorism & Violent Crime Section of the Criminal Division. The National Anti-Terrorism Coordinators will be assigned by region of the country, and they will have primary responsibility for coordinating activities within their assigned region and integrating those activities into the Department's national anti-terrorism strategy.

The creation of these Anti-Terrorism Task Forces and their coordination on a national level will serve several purposes. First, these task forces will be a conduit of information about suspected terrorists between the federal and local agencies. Intelligence about terrorist networks obtained by federal agencies will be disseminated through these task forces to the local police officials who can help monitor those networks in their localities. Also, intelligence developed by local police will be conveyed through this collaboration to the federal agencies.

Second, the Anti-Terrorism Task Force in each district will serve as a coordinating body for implementing the operational plan for the prevention of terrorism. Once information is received indicating that individuals or groups of individuals in a particular district are terrorists or supporters of terrorism, the members of the Anti-Terrorism Task Force, in conjunction with their National Anti-Terrorism Coordinator, will determine and implement the most effective strategy for incapacitating them.

Third, the Anti-Terrorism Task Force in each district will serve as a standing organizational structure for a coordinated response to a terrorist incident in that district.

In sum, the implementation of task forces coordinated by the United States Attorney in each district will provide the operational foundation for a concerted national assault against terrorism. With the Criminal Division providing centralized strategic guidance and the task forces tailoring the strategy to the circumstances of each district, this system will provide law enforcement with a comprehensive and

¹In those districts which fall within the jurisdiction of one of the Joint Terrorism Task Forces, representatives of those task forces should participate as members of the Anti-Terrorism Task Force in each district.

seamless approach to attack terrorism within our borders.

The task forces will be receiving clear guidance from the Department on an ongoing basis. The Deputy Attorney General and the Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division held a teleconference today with all United States Attorneys and Anti-Terrorism Coordinators in which they discussed the Department's immediate anti-terrorism strategy and provided guidance for establishing the task forces in each district. The Department will be distributing materials about the mission and methods of the task forces. Also, a national conference of the Coordinators will be held at the National Advocacy Center, at which representatives of the Attorney General and the FBI Director will detail the operational plan for terrorism prevention and provide briefings about the terrorist activities in each region of the country.

- (3) *Provide regular reports on anti-terrorism activities.* Each district is to report regularly on the activities of its Anti-Terrorism Task Force. EOUSA will develop and distribute a template for that report, and the reports will be compiled for review by the Deputy Attorney General, the Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division and myself. These reports will be closely reviewed to ensure that the Anti-Terrorism Task Forces around the country are properly structured and staffed, and that they maintain their focus and effectiveness over time.
- (4) *Appoint an immigration coordinator.* Each district is to appoint an Assistant United States Attorney to act as the district's liaison with the Immigration and Naturalization Service and to oversee the handling of all immigration cases brought as a result of this anti-terrorism plan.
- (5) *Implement the Anti-Terrorism Plan by the following deadlines:*
 - a. Each district was to appoint an Anti-Terrorism Coordinator by September 13, 2001.
 - b. Each district is to designate an immigration coordinator by close of business September 17, 2001.
 - c. The Anti-Terrorism Coordinator in each district is to convene a meeting of the Anti-Terrorism Task Force by close of business September 18, 2001.
 - d. The Anti-Terrorism Coordinator is to submit the first report on the activities of the task force by close of business September 24, 2001.

I understand that this is an aggressive and ambitious agenda, and that it represents a change in the manner of doing business in the United States Attorneys' Offices. We must all recognize, however, that our mission has changed with the events of last week. The threat that seemed fairly

remote to most Americans six days ago is now felt in every heart and in every home in the United States. If we hope to dispel this threat, we must meet it with ingenuity and determination. I call upon each of you to commit yourselves and your offices to this mission. The security of the nation demands such a commitment.