Summary of the High Value Terrorist Detainee Program

Since 9/11, we have been engaged in a struggle against an elusive enemy; terrorists work in the shadows, relying on secrecy and the element of surprise to maximize the impact of their attacks. Timely and accurate intelligence is crucial to success in the War on Terrorism. One of the key tools in this war has been the information we have gleaned from the terrorists themselves. Detainees who have been in the inner circle of al-Qa'ida, occupying some of the most important positions in that organization, hold information that simply cannot be obtained from any other source.

- *In the last five years, reporting from terrorist detainees has become a crucial pillar of US counterterrorism efforts, representing the single largest source of insight into al-Qa'ida for the US and its CT partners.*

- *Detainees have confirmed that al-Qa'ida continues to work on operations against the US and its CT allies; a fact underscored by the recent foiled plot in the United Kingdom. Detainee reporting will remain a critical tool if we and our allies are to continue to protect ourselves against these terrorists.*

A Program with Safeguards and Oversight

In March 2002, the CIA and our Coalition partners captured Abu Zubaydah—a terrorist leader and trainer and a key associate of Usama Bin Ladin. A dedicated terrorist, Abu Zubaydah was wounded in the capture operation and likely would have died had it not been for the medical attention arranged by the CIA. During initial interrogation, Abu Zubaydah gave some information that he probably viewed as nominal. Some was important, however, including that Khalid Shaykh Mohammad (KSM) was the 9/11 mastermind and used the moniker "Mukhtar." This identification allowed us to comb previously collected intelligence for both names, opening up new leads to this terrorist plotter—leads that eventually resulted in his capture. **It was clear to his interrogators that Abu Zubaydah possessed a great deal of information about al-Qa'ida; however, he soon stopped all cooperation. Over the ensuing months, the CIA designed a new interrogation program that would be safe, effective, and legal.**

- The CIA sought and obtained legal guidance from the Department of Justice that none of the new procedures violated the US statutes prohibiting torture. Policymakers were also briefed and approved the use of the procedures.

- The procedures proved highly effective. Abu Zubaydah soon began providing accurate and timely actionable intelligence, including information that led to the capture of 9/11 plotter Ramzi bin al-Shibh.

CIA's interrogation program is designed to ensure that intelligence is collected in a manner that does not violate the US Constitution, any US statute, or US treaty obligations.

- **Shortly after 11 September 2001, the majority and minority leaders of the Senate, the Speaker and the minority leader of the House, and the chairs and ranking members of the intelligence committees were briefed on the authorities for CIA's detention and interrogation program, in accordance with established procedures for sensitive intelligence programs. Within weeks of that time, the authorities were also briefed to the full intelligence committee.**

- **As CIA's efforts to implement these authorities got underway in 2002, the chairs, ranking members, and majority and minority staff directors of the intelligence committees were fully briefed on the interrogation procedures. Briefings to the chairs, ranking members, and majority an minority staff directors have been given on multiple occasions since that time, and in the fall of 2005, in connection with discussion on the Detainee Treatment Act, several other Members were briefed on the program, including the interrogation procedures.**

- **The Department of Justice has reviewed procedures proposed by the CIA on more than one occasion and determined them to be lawful.**

- **The program has been investigated and audited by the CIA's Office of the Inspector General (OIG), which was given full and complete access to all aspects of the program.**

Multiple safeguards have been built into the program to assure its professionalism. All those involved in the questioning of detainees are carefully chosen and screened for demonstrated professional judgment and maturity; the average age of officers interrogating detainees is 43. Once selected, they must complete more than 250 hours of specialized training before they are allowed to come face-to-face with a terrorist. Additional fieldwork under the direct supervision of an experienced officer is required before they can direct an interrogation.

- Specific senior CIA officers, and currently only the Director of the CIA, must approve—prior to use—each and every one of the lawful interrogation procedures to be used. No deviation from the approved procedures and methods is permitted.

- All interrogation sessions in which one of these lawful procedures is authorized for use must be observed by non-participants to ensure the procedures are applied appropriately and safely. These observers are authorized to terminate an interrogation immediately should they believe anything unauthorized is occurring.

- Any deviations from approved program procedures and practices are to be immediately reported and immediate corrective action taken, including referral to CIA's Office of the Inspector General and the Department of Justice, as appropriate.

Another key to the success of CIA's program is the involvement of CIA's substantive terrorism experts, who work together with the full spectrum of CIA's operations officers. In addition to interrogators, detainees are questioned by subject matter experts with years of experience studying and tracking al-Qa'ida members and plots whose expertise contributed to the capture of the detainees. These debriefers are also carefully selected and trained before being permitted to come face-to-face with a detainee. Their expertise helps to maintain a fast pace of questions and answers: they know the detainee's history and what information he should know; they can direct the questions to obtain the most critical information a detainee possesses; and they can quickly verify the truthfulness of a response.

- Debriefers with in-depth knowledge of al-Qa'ida are able to confront the terrorists with multiple sources of information about their activities, including reporting from other detainees. Debriefers use all source information not only to develop questions for detainees but to corroborate the information the detainees supply.

Proven Effectiveness

Captured al-Qa'ida training manuals indicate that al-Qa'ida operatives receive counter-interrogation training; detainees in CIA's program have provided valuable information despite their efforts to apply this training. **Detainees have provided lead information that has aided the US and its allies in capturing al-Qa'ida operatives who pose a serious threat.**

- **Unraveling the network of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) leader and al-Qa'ida's South Asia representative Hambali and foiling future US operations.** This network's unraveling is an example of how detainees all held by CIA can be more effectively debriefed than if they were held by a variety of different governments. Quickly using information from one detainee in the questioning of another would be practically impossible if the detainees were in the custody of multiple foreign states. In March 2003, al-Qa'ida operations chief KSM provided the first information on his use of the Hambali network for Western operations, setting off a chain of detentions and reporting that ultimately led to the capture not only of Hambali, but of his brother and a cell of JI operatives. **Hambali admitted that the cell was intended for KSM's future US operations.**

Terrorists taken off the street with the help of detainee reporting include some who were involved in casing targets in the US:

1. **US Government and Tourist Sites:** In 2003 and 2004, an individual was tasked by al-Qa'ida to case important US Government and tourist targets within the United States. He is in the custody of a foreign state.

2. **Iyman Faris and the Brooklyn Bridge:** In 2003, a senior al-Qa'ida plotter described an Ohio based truck driver who had taken operational tasking from al-

Qa'ida and who the FBI identified as Iyman Faris. Faris was located and acknowledged discussing the destruction of the Brooklyn Bridge in New York. Faris ultimately pled guilty to providing material support to al-Qa'ida and is now in a federal corrections facility.

3. **Financial Institutions:** KSM and other detainees provided key leads to an elusive operative who had been tasked prior to 9/11 to case financial buildings in major cities along the East Coast. He is in the custody of a foreign state.

Other Operatives for Attacks Against the US and Its Allies. Detainees have provided names approximately 86 individuals—many of whom we had never heard of before—that al-Qa'ida has deemed suitable for Western operations. We have shared these names broadly within the US intelligence and law enforcement communities and with key partners overseas. Nearly half these individuals have been removed from the battlefield by the US and its allies.

- Jafar al-Tayyar was described by Abu Zubaydah who named him as one of the most likely individuals to be used by al-Qa'ida for operations in the United States or Europe. Other detainees added more details, helping us confirm that he is an al-Qa'ida operative and uncover his true name. As a result, a $5 million reward has been posted for information leading to the capture of Adnan El Shukrijumah, who remains at large.

The detention of terrorists disrupts—at least temporarily—the plots they were involved in, saving the lives not only of Americans but also of countless of men, women, and children around the globe:

1. **The West Coast Airliner Plot:** In mid-2002, thanks to leads from a variety of detainees, the US disrupted a plot by 9/11 mastermind KSM to attack targets on the West Coast of the United States using hijacked airplanes.

2. **The 2004 UK Urban Targets Plot:** In mid-2004, the US and its counterterrorism partners disrupted a plot that involved attacking urban targets in the United Kingdom with explosive devices. Some of the key leads to these plotters came from detainees.

3. **The 2003 Karachi Plot:** In the spring of 2003, the US and a partner detained key al-Qa'ida operatives who were in the advanced stages of plotting an attack against several targets in Karachi, Pakistan that would have killed hundreds of innocent men, women, and children.

4. **The Heathrow Airport Plot:** In 2003, the US and several partners—acting on information from several detainees—disrupted a plot to attack Heathrow Airport using hijacked commercial airliners. KSM and his network were behind the planning for this attack.

5. **The 2002 Arabian Gulf Shipping Plot:** In late 2002 and early 2003, the work of the US and partner nations to detain two senior al-Qa'ida operatives thwarted these operatives' plot to attack ships in the Arabian Gulf.

6. **The Straits of Hormuz Plot:** One of the Arabian Gulf shipping plotters was also working on a plot to attack ships transiting the Straits of Hormuz. His detention disrupted this plot.

7. **The Tall Buildings Plot.** Working with information from detainees, the US disrupted a plot to blow up tall buildings in the United States. KSM later described how he had directed operatives to ensure the buildings were high enough to prevent the people trapped above from escaping out of the windows, thus ensuring their deaths from smoke inhalation.

8. **Camp Lemonier Plot:** In early 2004, shortly after his capture, al-Qa'ida facilitator Gouled Hassan Dourad revealed that in mid-2003 al-Qa'ida East Africa cell leader Abu Talha al-Sudani sent him from Mogadishu to Djibouti to case the US Marine base at Camp Lemonier, as part of a plot to send suicide bombers with a truck bomb into the base. His information—including identifying operatives associated with the plot—helped us to enhance the security at the camp.

In the years since 9/11, successive detainees have helped us and our allies gauge our progress in the fight against al-Qa'ida by providing updated information on the changing structure and health of the organization. They also have given the US and its CT partners context to understand new threat information as it becomes available—insights that illuminate activity we and our allies see in reporting on current threats and plotting. In addition, detainees have provided us locational information on al-Qa'ida managers and operatives.

- **As a result, we have been able to provide leads to our CT partners around the world that have helped them root out al-Qa'ida safehavens. Subsequent detainees have reported that attempts to mount additional attacks in the US Homeland have been set back by these counterterrorism operations.**