

- imposing tighter controls on student visas;⁹³
- taking legal action to prevent terrorists from coming into the United States and to remove those already here, detaining them while awaiting removal proceedings;⁹⁴
- further increasing the number of immigration agents to FBI Joint Terrorism Task Forces to help investigate immigration charges against individuals suspected of terrorism;⁹⁵
- activating a special court to enable the use of classified evidence in immigration-related national security cases;⁹⁶ and
- both implementing new security measures for U.S. passports and working with the United Nations and foreign governments to raise global security standards for travel documents.⁹⁷

Clarke's working group compiled new proposals as well, such as

- undertaking a Joint Perimeter Defense program with Canada to establish cooperative intelligence and law enforcement programs, leading to joint operations based on shared visa and immigration data and joint border patrols;
- staffing land border crossings 24/7 and equipping them with video cameras, physical barriers, and means to detect weapons of mass destruction (WMD); and
- addressing the problem of migrants—possibly including terrorists—who destroy their travel documents so they cannot be returned to their countries of origin.⁹⁸

These proposals were praiseworthy in principle. In practice, however, they required action by weak, chronically underfunded executive agencies and powerful congressional committees, which were more responsive to well-organized interest groups than to executive branch interagency committees. The changes sought by the principals in March 2000 were only beginning to occur before 9/11.

“Afghan Eyes”

In early March 2000, when President Clinton received an update on U.S. covert action efforts against Bin Ladin, he wrote in the memo's margin that the United States could surely do better. Military officers in the Joint Staff told us that they shared this sense of frustration. Clarke used the President's comment to push the CSG to brainstorm new ideas, including aid to the Northern Alliance.⁹⁹

Back in December 1999, Northern Alliance leader Ahmed Shah Massoud had offered to stage a rocket attack against Bin Ladin's Derunta training complex. Officers at the CIA had worried that giving him a green light might cross the line into violation of the assassination ban. Hence, Massoud was told not