

Pakistan were pressed to cut support for the Taliban and that covert and military measures were taken to disrupt al-Qa'ida activities in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, the [page 127] Joint Inquiry found that none of these actions were effective in hindering terrorist training or al-Qa'ida's ability to operate from Afghanistan.

[Despite the Intelligence Community's growing recognition that Afghanistan was churning out thousands of radicals, the U.S. government did not integrate all the instruments of national power and policy – diplomatic, intelligence, economic, and military – to address this problem. [_____

_____]. Prior to September 11, military force was used only in the August 20, 1998 cruise missile strikes on targets in Afghanistan and the Sudan. Former National Security Advisor Sandy Berger testified to the Joint Inquiry that massive military strikes on Afghanistan would have had little public or Congressional support before September 11, 2001. Moreover, as Mr. Berger noted to the Joint Inquiry, a lack of intelligence on which to base action hindered efforts to use military force in Afghanistan].

Permitting the sanctuary in Afghanistan to exist for as long as it did allowed Bin Ladin's key operatives to meet, plan operations, train recruits, identify particularly capable recruits or those with specialized skills, and ensure that al-Qa'ida's masterminds remained beyond the reach of international justice. In his testimony before the Joint Committee on October 17, 2002, the DCI responded to a question about what he would do differently prior to September 11, 2001, saying:

[H]indsight is perfect, we should have taken down that sanctuary a lot sooner. The circumstances at the time may have not warranted, the regional situation may have been different, and after [September] 11 all I can tell you is we let a sanctuary fester, we let him build capability. And there may have been lots of good reasons why in hindsight it couldn't have been done earlier or sooner. I am not challenging it, because hindsight is always perfect, but we let him operate with impunity for a long time without putting the full force and muscle of the United States against it.

As an adjunct to covert and military efforts to eliminate Bin Ladin's sanctuary in Afghanistan, the United States Government relied heavily on law enforcement to counter