

George Tenet, the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), testified that “a common thread runs between the first attack on the World Trade Center in February 1993 and the 11 September attacks.” The thread is Khalid Shaykh Muhammad, also known as Mukhtar or “the Brain.” According to the DCI, Muhammad, “a high-ranking al-Qa’ida member,” was “the mastermind or one of the key planners of the 11 September operation.” The DCI noted that Mukhtar is Ramzi Yousef’s uncle, and, after the World Trade Center attack, Muhammad joined Yousef in the 1995 airplane plot, for which Muhammad has been indicted by a federal grand jury.

In August 1996, Bin Ladin issued the first *fatwa* declaring *jihad* against the United States. A second *fatwa* in February 1998 proclaimed: “to kill the Americans and their allies – civilian and military is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it.” Bin Ladin repeated these threats in a May 1998 press interview. The bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania followed in August.

In June 1998, the Department of Justice obtained a sealed indictment in the Southern District of New York against Bin Ladin as the sole named defendant in a “conspiracy to attack defense utilities of the United States.” Among other overt acts, the indictment charged that in October 1993 “members of al-Qa’ida participated with Somali tribesmen in an attack on United States military personnel serving in Somalia [which] killed a total of 18 United States soldiers and wounded 73 others.” The indictment was unsealed after the East African embassy bombings and was followed by a series of superseding indictments that charged Bin Ladin and others with a conspiracy to “murder United States nationals anywhere in the world, including in the United States.”

The U.S. Government produced proof in the embassy bombing trials of Bin Ladin’s direct connections to the attacks. Mohamed al-Owhali, who was to have been a suicide passenger in the Kenya bombing, ran from the bomb truck moments before it exploded. After his arrest in Kenya, al-Owhali confessed and admitted that he had been given a telephone number in Sana’a, Yemen, which he called before and after the bombing. Telephone records for calls to that number led to the bomb factory for the Nairobi attack in a house occupied by a ranking al-Qa’ida [page 136] member and training camp veteran. Calls from Bin Ladin’s satellite phone to the Yemen number were made the day of the attack and the day after when al-Owhali called that number for help. Al-Owhali also confessed that he had asked Bin Ladin for a