

- On August 22, 1998, in a radio address to the nation, President Clinton declared:
“Our efforts against terrorism cannot and will not end with this strike. We should have realistic expectations about what a single action can achieve, and we must be prepared for a long battle.”

In December 1998, Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet elaborated on the President’s statements in a memorandum to senior CIA managers, the Deputy DCI for Community Management, and the Assistant DCI for Military Support, declaring war on Bin Ladin: [page 242]

We must now enter a new phase in our effort against Bin Ladin. . . . We are at war. . . . I want no resources or people spared in this effort, either inside [the] CIA or the Community.

L. The Intelligence Community’s Response

The DCI stated to the Joint Inquiry that in early 1999, following his declaration, he ordered a baseline review of CIA’s operational strategy against Bin Ladin. According to the DCI’s testimony before the Joint Inquiry, the CIA “produced a new comprehensive operational plan of attack against the Bin Ladin/al-Qa’ida target inside and outside Afghanistan,” a plan of attack that in subsequent testimony the DCI simply called “The Plan”:

The Plan included a strong and focused intelligence collection program to track – and then act against – Bin Ladin and his associates in terrorist sanctuaries. It was a blend of aggressive human source collection – both unilateral and with foreign partners – and enhanced technical collection. . . .To execute the Plan, CTC developed a program to select and train the right officers and put them in the right places. We moved talented and experienced operations officers into the [CTC]. We also initiated a nation-wide program to identify, vet and hire qualified personnel for counterterrorist assignments in hostile environments. We sought native fluency in the languages of the Middle East and South Asia, combined with policy, military, business, technical, or academic experience. In addition, we established an eight-week Counterterrorist Operations Course to share the tradecraft we had developed and refined over the years.

[According to documents reviewed by the Joint Inquiry, “The Plan” included covert action and technical collection aimed at capturing Bin Ladin and his principal lieutenants. CIA activities within The Plan included working with [_____]
