

The military Joint Staff's Director of Operations also mentioned a strategic plan developed by the Joint Staff in late 2000 for dealing with the Taliban regime. The U.S. military was coming to the same conclusion as the Intelligence Community: getting Bin Ladin meant dealing with the Taliban regime first and shutting down the sanctuary in Afghanistan.

The Joint Inquiry also asked General Shelton whether the military and CIA ever pooled assets or developed plans to conduct a joint operation against Bin Ladin. The former Chairman said that no plans existed, and that, as a general principle, he was opposed to joint CIA-military [page 323] operations. He explained that he did not want U.S. military units to be dependent on the actions of CIA paramilitary units outside the military chain of command. He noted an instance in which CIA and the U.S. military conducted a coordinated operation [_____]. In that case, a "firewall" between CIA and military units allowed the military to proceed even if CIA units did not accomplish their mission. General Shelton said that he would have insisted on similar arrangements for joint operations in Afghanistan against Bin Ladin. In contrast, a former CTC Chief said about joint operations involving CIA and military units:

I think it is an absolutely great [idea]. This is something we have been advocating for a long time. If you want to go to war, you take the CIA, its clandestinity, its authorities, and you match it up with special operations forces of the U.S. military, you can really – you can really do some damage... This is something that we have tried to advocate at the working level, and we haven't made much progress. But, if this is something that you [the Congress] would like to look into, it would be great for the United States.

Similarly, a former Chief of CTC's Bin Ladin unit commented:

As someone who [_____] worked with special forces, they want to work with us and we want to work with them. History was made between the CIA and special forces. We need to do that.