

## **JTF-GTMO Information on Detainees**

### **INFORMATION FROM GUANTANAMO DETAINEES**

The US Government currently maintains custody of approximately 550 enemy combatants in the Global War on Terrorism at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Many of these enemy combatants are highly trained, dangerous members of al-Qaida, its related terrorist networks, and the former Taliban regime. More than 4,000 reports capture information provided by these detainees, much of it corroborated by other intelligence reporting. This unprecedented body of information has expanded our understanding of al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations and continues to prove valuable. Our intelligence and law enforcement communities develop leads, comprehensive assessments, and intelligence products based on information detainees provide. The information includes their leadership structures, recruiting practices, funding mechanisms, relationships, and the cooperation between terrorist groups, as well as training programs, and plans for attacking the United States and other countries.

The Joint Task Force, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (JTF-GTMO) remains the single best repository of al-Qaida information in the Department of Defense. Many detainees have admitted close relationships or other access to senior al-Qaida leadership. They provide valuable insights into the structure of that organization and associated terrorist groups. They have identified additional al-Qaida operatives and supporters, and have expanded our understanding of the extent of their presence in Europe, the United States, and throughout the CENTCOM area of operations. Detainees have also provided information on individuals connected to al-Qaida's pursuit of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. Exchanges with European allies have supported investigations of Islamic extremists in several European countries.

### **INFORMATION PROVIDED BY DETAINEES**

#### **Support to combat operations in Afghanistan**

Coalition forces in Afghanistan continue to capture al-Qaida, Taliban, and anti-coalition militia fighters. Guantanamo detainees remain a valuable resource to identify these recently captured fighters. Detainees also still provide useful information on locations of training compounds and safe houses, terrain features, travel patterns and routes used for smuggling people and equipment, as well as for identifying potential supporters and opponents.

#### **Terrorist Trainers and Bomb Makers**

Some detainees served as trainers in al-Qaida training camps; significant among these are the detainees that served as explosives trainers. Information given includes technical training provided by al-Qaida on building improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and the use of poisons. They have also explained the details of training courses and the process used to identify more talented recruits for further training and future operational activities.

Many detainees have been implicated in using, constructing, or being trained to construct IEDs. Some are low-level jihadists with just enough training to construct grenades from soda cans. Others are highly skilled engineers with the ability to design and build sophisticated, remotely triggered bombs made with explosives manufactured from household items. Additionally, detainees have been identified as explosives trainers who passed their techniques on to others through structured courses. The courses ranged from a few days (for basic bomb making) up to several weeks on subjects like electronic circuitry. The detainees have also provided the names of at least seven other explosives trainers still at large. At least one detainee holds a degree in Electrical Engineering. Another detainee has been cooperative enough to draw schematic diagrams of the bombs he designed and built, in addition, he has provided his critiques of the design of IEDs being constructed by terrorists in Iraq. He has also identified a complex detonation system – a dual tone multi-frequency (DTMF) encode/decode system – that had been used in the Chechen conflict, and is now being used on IEDs in Iraq, helping U.S. forces to combat this lethal weapon.

Detainees were frequently captured with a type of watch that has been linked to al-Qaida and radical Islamic terrorist IEDs. This particular model of watch is favored by al-Qaida bomb-builders because it allows alarm settings (and, therefore, detonations) more than 24-hours in advance. One detainee also detailed how pagers and cellular telephones are used to initiate detonations.

### **Terrorist Operatives**

Detainees were either actively involved in operational planning for terrorist attacks or had already participated in attacks in Europe, the United States, and/or central Asia at the time of detention. One detainee attempted to enter the United States in the summer of 2001, and a substantial volume of information suggests that he may have intended to participate in the September 11 attacks. Detainees have also provided information about al-Qaida operatives who remain at large as well as numerous al-Qaida, Taliban, and anti-coalition militia members who remain active in Central Asia, Europe, and the United States. Law enforcement entities in Europe and the United States continue to pursue leads provided by Guantanamo detainees.

One detainee identified 11 fellow GTMO detainees as Usama bin Ladin (UBL) bodyguards who all received terrorist training at al Farouq, a known terrorist training camp. This detainee also identified another detainee as UBL's "spiritual advisor," a significant role within al-Qaida.

Another detainee, the probable 20<sup>th</sup> 9/11 hijacker, confirmed more than 20 detainees as UBL bodyguards who received terrorist training at al Farouq and were active fighters against the northern alliance. This detainee admits attending terrorist training at al Farouq with many of these detainees.

### **Financial Issues**

Detainees provide information that helps sort out legitimate financial activity from illegitimate terrorist financing operations, as Islamic extremists exploit existing banking

systems to take advantage of widespread informal financial networks. These networks include the hawala system, front companies, and the use of charitable organizations to hide financial transactions.

One detainee was a senior member of one such illegitimate international humanitarian aid organization that provided significant and prolonged aid and support to both the Taliban and al Qaida in Afghanistan. He was given a letter by UBL providing assistance in the establishment of three new offices in Afghanistan and at least one office in Pakistan for this organization. The detainee had complete authority over the organization and has stated; "nothing happened in this organization without my knowledge."

This same detainee related that this organization spent \$1 million US dollars in Afghanistan between November 2000 - November 2001. During this time, he admittedly purchased \$5,000 US dollars worth of weapons utilizing the organization's funds, stating they were for NGO personnel protection against the Northern Alliance during the onset of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Another detainee claims to have traveled to Cambodia to assist with relief efforts at an unidentified orphanage on the behalf of an Islamic organization. By his own admission, this detainee met UBL as many as four times during July 2001 and is believed to have substantial ties to al-Qaida. He was approached by an al-Qaida leader to straighten out logistics and supply problems that al-Qaida was experiencing in the Tora Bora region of Afghanistan.

More than a dozen detainees had the cash equivalent of US\$1,000-10,000 in their pockets when apprehended; four detainees had US\$10,000-25,000; two detainees had the cash equivalent of more than US\$40,000 each when captured.

#### Terrorist Facilitators

Detainees have described their experiences with al Qaida recruiters and facilitators, the encouragement they received to participate in jihad, and how their travel was facilitated. Detainees who were actual facilitators have detailed their efforts to send interested young men to training camps in Afghanistan, and for some eventually to meetings with the highest circles of al Qaida leadership.

Over 25 GTMO detainees have been identified by other detainees as being facilitators who provided money, documentation, travel, or safe houses.

#### **Detainee Skill Sets**

More than 10 percent of the detainees possess college degrees or obtained other higher education, often at western colleges, many in the United States. Among these educated detainees are medical doctors, airplane pilots, aviation specialists, engineers, divers, translators, and lawyers.

A detainee, who produced al Qaida videos, was hired by a Taliban leader to provide computer services to include installing hardware and software.

Another detainee, who has threatened guards and admits enjoying terrorizing Americans, studied at Texas A&M for 18 months and has acquaintances in the U.S. He also studied English at the University of Texas in Austin.

Another detainee, who has been identified as an al Qaida weapons supplier, studied at Embry Riddle Aviation School in Arizona, obtaining a graduate degree in avionics management.

One detainee has a Masters degree in Aviation Management. Another detainee has a Masters degree in Petroleum Engineering.

### **Insight into Future Leaders and Centers of Activity**

Guantanamo detainees provide a unique insight into the type of individuals likely to become participants, recruiters, and leaders for the Islamic extremist movements. Detainees possess an astonishing variety of skills, educational levels, levels of motivation and experience. It is likely that many Guantanamo detainees would have risen to positions of prominence in the leadership ranks of al Qaida and its associated groups.

Since the elimination of Afghanistan as a sanctuary for al Qaida, the organization has endured a transitional period and become a looser network of extremists. In many cases, it has had to rely upon regional or local extremist networks to carry out its missions. A detainee does not have to be a member of al Qaida to provide valuable intelligence. The information provided by detained members of lesser-known extremist groups will prove to be valuable in the future as we continue to work to prevent the resurgence of groups like al Qaida and its supporters.

### **GTMO as a Strategic Interrogation Center**

GTMO is currently the only DoD strategic interrogation center and will remain useful as long as the war on terrorism is underway and new enemy combatants are captured and sent there. The lessons learned at GTMO have advanced both the operational art of intelligence, and the development of strategic interrogations doctrine.

### **Detainees Returning to the Fight**

We know of several former detainees from JTF-GTMO that have rejoined the fight against coalition forces. We have been able to identify at least ten by name. Press reporting indicates al Qaida-linked militants recently kidnapped two Chinese engineers and that former detainee Abdullah Mahsud, their reputed leader, ordered the kidnapping. (Fox News report October 12, 2004, Islamabad the News October 20, 2004, Washington Post October 13, 2004). Mahsud, now reputed to be a militant leader, claimed to be an office clerk and driver for the Taliban from 1996 to 1998 or 1999. He consistently denied having any affiliation with al Qaida. He also claimed to have received no weapons or military training due to his handicap (an amputation resulting from when he stepped on a land mine 10 years ago). He claimed that after September 11, 2001 he was forcibly conscripted by the Taliban military.

Another released detainee assassinated an Afghan judge. Several former GTMO detainees have been killed in combat with U.S. soldiers and Coalition forces.

### **SELECTED STATEMENTS FROM DETAINEES**

Statements made by detainees provide valuable insights into the mindset of these terrorists and the continuing threat they pose to the United States and the rest of the world.

A detainee who has assaulted GTMO guards on numerous occasions and crafted a weapon in his cell, stated that he can either go back home and kill as many Americans as he possibly can, or he can leave here in a box; either way it's the same to him.

A detainee with ties to UBL, the Taliban, and Chechen mujahideen leadership figures told another detainee, "Their day is coming. One day I will enjoy sucking their blood, although their blood is bitter, undrinkable..."

During an interview with U.S. military interrogators this same detainee then stated that he would lead his tribe in exacting revenge against the Saudi Arabian and U.S. governments. "I will arrange for the kidnapping and execution of US citizens living in Saudi Arabia. Small groups of four or five U.S. citizens will be kidnapped, held, and executed. They will have their heads cut off."

After being informed of the Tribunal process, the detainee replied, "Not only am I thinking about threatening the American public, but the whole world."

A detainee who has been identified as a UBL bodyguard, stated, "It would be okay for UBL to kill Jewish persons. There is no need to ask for forgiveness for killing a Jew. The Jewish people kill Muslims in Palestine so it's okay to kill Jews. Israel should not exist and be removed from Palestine."

A detainee who has been identified as UBL's "spiritual advisor" and a relative of a fighter who attacked U.S. Marines on Failaka Island, Kuwait on October 8, 2002, stated, "I pray everyday against the United States." This detainee repeatedly stated, "The United States government is criminals."

A detainee and self-confessed al Qaida member who produced an al Qaida recruitment video stated, "...the people who died on 9/11/2001 were not innocent because they paid taxes and participated in the government that fosters repression of Palestinians." He also stated, "...his group will shake up the U.S. and countries who follow the U.S." and that, "it is not the quantity of power, but the quality of power, that will win in the end."

A detainee who has assaulted GTMO guards on over 30 occasions, has made gestures of killing a guard and threatened to break a guard's arm.

A detainee, captured by Pakistani authorities and who, while being transported, was involved in a riot during which several Pakistani guards were killed, stated that acts of

terrorism are a legitimate way for a Muslim to wage jihad against the United States, even if innocent women and children are killed. He also said that he believes that Muslim jihadists will wipe out the government of the United States within the next 20 years. A detainee described how he was sought to assist an extremist in the purchasing of possible biological weapons-related medical equipment through humanitarian organizational channels. The detainee has also assaulted GTMO guards on various occasions and incited riots in the holding areas.

A detainee who admits to being one of UBL's primary drivers and bodyguards had in his possession surface to air missiles when captured. This detainee identified eight bodyguards currently held at GTMO.

A detainee, who fought as a Taliban soldier at Konduz, stated to the MPs that all Americans should die because these are the rules of Allah. The detainee also told the MPs that he would come to their homes and cut their throats like sheep. The detainee went on to say that upon his release from GTMO, he would use the Internet to search for the names and faces of MPs so that he could kill them.

#### **Contrasting DETAINEE COMMENTS**

**The following comments from current and past detainees are in contrast to other detainee comments concerning treatment at GTMO.**

"Americans are very kind people...If people say that there is mistreatment in Cuba with the detainees, those type speaking are wrong, they treat us like a Muslim not a detainee."

"...the devil Saddam and his party have fallen down. How people go to Najaf and Karbala walking and nobody prohibits them? This was grace of God and the USA to Iraqi people."

"I'm in good health and have good facilities of eating, drinking, living, and playing."

"These people take good care of me...The guards and everybody else is fine. We are allowed to talk to our friends."

"The food is good, the bedrooms are clean and the health care is very good. There is a library full of Islamic books, science books, and literature...Sport, reading, and praying, all of these options are not mandatory for everyone, it is up to the person."