

SOME PERSPECTIVE ON THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

December 2000: Richard Clarke develops policy paper entitled, "Strategy for Eliminating the Threat from the Jihadist Networks of al Qida: Status and Prospects." It calls for identifying and destroying known Al Qaeda camps and pressuring Pakistan to cooperate in the fight against Al Qaeda.

January 25, 2001: Clarke sends the "Strategy for Eliminating the Threat" document to Condi Rice, noting that "we urgently need ... a Principals level review" of the threat posed by Al Qaeda.

September 4, 2001: Condi holds first Principals Committee meeting dedicated to Al Qaeda.

February 14, 2003: The Bush Administration unveils the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, which includes the objective: "Eliminate terrorist sanctuaries and havens."

July 22, 2004: The 9/11 Commission releases its report. The **first** recommendation is:

The US government must identify and prioritize actual or potential terrorist sanctuaries. For each, it should have a realistic strategy to keep possible terrorists insecure and on the run, using all elements of national power. We should reach out, listen to, and work with other countries that can help.

June 23, 2006: The Bush Administration announces the indictment of the Liberty City Seven, an alleged terrorist cell the FBI admits is "more aspirational than operational."

August 3, 2007: The Implementing the 9/11 Commission Recommendations Act signed into law.

It requires:

(1) REQUIREMENT FOR REPORT ON STRATEGY.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report, in classified form if necessary, that describes the long-term strategy of the United States to engage with the Government of Pakistan to address the issues described in subparagraphs (A) through (F) of subsection (a)(2) and carry out the policies described in subsection (b) in order accomplish the goal of building a moderate, democratic Pakistan.

December 13, 2007: The first trial of the Liberty City Seven ends in a mistrial, with one defendant, Lyglenson Lemorin, acquitted of all charges.

April 16, 2008: The second trial of the Liberty City Seven ends in a mistrial.

April 17, 2008: 87 months after Richard Clarke first insisted that the Bush Administration develop a strategy to combat Al Qaeda, 62 months after the Bush Administration announced its intention to eliminate terrorist sanctuaries, 45 months after the 9/11 Commission called for the Administration to develop a strategy to eliminate terrorist sanctuaries, 258 days after Congress required the Administration to submit a strategy to combat terrorist safe havens in Pakistan within 90 days, and one day after the Bush Administration insisted it may try a group of aspirational terrorists a third time, GAO releases a report finding:

The United States Lacks Comprehensive Plan to Destroy the Terrorist Threat and Close the Safe Haven in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas

No comprehensive plan for meeting U.S. national security goals in the FATA has

been developed, as stipulated by the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (2003), called for by an independent commission (2004), and mandated by congressional legislation (2007).

The report also states:

al Qaeda is now using the Pakistani safe haven to put the last element necessary to launch another attack against America into place, including the identification, training, and positioning of Western operatives for an attack. It stated that al Qaeda is most likely using the FATA to plot terrorist attacks against political, economic, and infrastructure targets in America "designed to produce mass casualties, visually dramatic destruction, significant economic aftershocks, and/or fear among the population.

(h/t democracy arsenal on the GAO report)