Central Intelligence Agency ~~TOP SECRET~~ [redacted]

PDB Memorandum

25 May 1999

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SUBJECT: New Information on Bin Ladin's Unconventional Weapons Capability

1. [redacted] Usama Bin Ladin is pursuing a variety of options for developing chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear capabilities. The information on chemical and biological agents, [redacted]

2. [redacted] rough diagrams [redacted] of potential chemical weapons such as mortar or artillery rounds ranging from a simple WWI design to a crude binary weapon, [redacted] The organization could manufacture and use the simplest weapon design with a reasonable chance of success. [redacted] the students experimented with explosive dispersion of chemical agents.

— [redacted] claimed to have manufactured and tested sarin and had small stocks of it and VX.

— These nerve agents were not used during the training, which focused on poisons, biological toxins, and first-generation CW agents such as phosgene, chlorine, and hydrogen cyanide, [redacted]

3. [redacted] scientists are developing a "nuclear weapon" at a facility in Heart, and Bin Ladin believes it could be ready in one to two months. [redacted] Bin Ladin has acquired plutonium or uranium, [redacted] He has fallen victim to nuclear scams in the past.

— His network may have some radioactive material that could be used in a radiological dispersal device or "dirty" bomb that could cause contamination. [redacted]

4. [redacted] work is under way in Afghanistan to enhance the explosive power of conventional weapons. [redacted] scientists are working at a new facility in [redacted] to enhance explosives [redacted]

— The addition of uranium or a radioactive material would contaminate an area, but would not increase the power of an explosive.

— Bin Ladin's network might be trying to build or use thermobaric munitions, which combine a propellant and metal particles to produce blast waves several times stronger than ones produced by conventional bombs of a similar size. The Soviets used thermobaric munitions in rocket-propelled grenade launchers during the war in Afghanistan and left some there. [redacted]