Situation Report

12 September 2001, 0400 EDT

Bin Ladin's Tracks

Mounting evidence indicates Sunni extremists in Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf recently were aware Usama Bin Ladin-directed attacks were imminent. A *mujahidin* facilitator in Afghanistan on Sunday claimed Bin Ladin had left Kandahar for Kabul in anticipation of a probable operation, [redacted] An individual [redacted] to a colleague in Afghanistan—before the US attacks—knowledge of something about to happen, [redacted].

— [redacted] the existence of a probable operation was widely known among extremists in Afghanistan and speculated Bin Ladin may have relocated to Kabul to avoid conflict over his activities with the Taliban leadership in Kandahar.

— [redacted] Bin Ladin and Taliban leader Mullah Omar late last month clashed over Bin Ladin's determination to mount terrorist attacks. Bin Ladin told Mullah Omar he had operations in progress that would cause great damage to the US.

A Kandahar-based Arab yesterday said the attacks were the result of two years' planning and were "the beginning of the wrath," [redacted] suggest the Capitol and the White House also may have been targets of the operations.

— [redacted] to an individual in Kuwait gave thanks for "the explosion in the Congress building." [redacted] in mid-June was one of three recipients of a possible go-ahead message for terrorist attacks.

— A member of a nongovernmental organization sympathetic to Bin Ladin initially claimed the White House had been destroyed before later correcting himself.

[redacted] indicates a possible terrorist operative—named al-Ghamdi—may have boarded United Airlines flight 175, one of the aircraft that struck the World Trade Center. [redacted] an individual with a similar name would enter the US via Canada to carry out a terrorist attack in New York.

Taliban Under Pressure

Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar was on the move shortly after the attacks on the US, [redacted] Omar sought the assistance of Afghan Corps Commander Osmani in evacuating him and his family from their residence in Kandahar.

The overnight attacks on Kabul were conducted by Northern Alliance (NA) [redacted]. The NA appears eager to prove the 9 September assassination of NA leader Ahamd Shah Masood did not disrupt its military abilities.

— Several UN agencies and nongovernmental organizations are considering evacuating personnel from Afghanistan as early as today in anticipation of US retaliation, [redacted]. Evacuees most likely will travel by car, unsure whether the Taliban would let flights leave Afghanistan.

Allied Support

NATO's North Atlantic Council (NAC) convened last night to demonstrate solidarity with the US. [redacted] The NAC will meet again this morning to consider the crisis and security implications for NATO.

— [redacted]

— [redacted]

— [redacted]

Defenses Up

Many countries are taking military precautions against terrorism directed at them or at US facilities. **Russian** air defense, naval, space, and internal security forces have been ordered to a heightened state of vigilance to guard against terrorist attacks, according to [redacted] press reports.

— [redacted]

— **Malaysian** officials this morning evacuated the Petronas Twin Towers—the world's tallest building—after receiving a phoned bomb threat, according to press reports.

— [redacted]

[redacted]

Civil Air Travel

Closure of US and Canadian airports has affected world air travel and commerce, with cancellations mounting in Europe and Asia, according to press reports. Some carriers have suspended flights to the Middle East.

— The **UK** and **Belgium have** banned commercial flights over central London and Brussels, respectively, and [redacted] **Australia's** Qantas Airlines is diverting flights around Afghanistan, [redacted]

Financial Markets

US bond futures posted gains in overnight trading, helping the dollar stabilize against major currencies and recover most of its losses from early yesterday. Stock prices in major Asian markets were down sharply as of mid-afternoon Wednesday, however, with the South Korean and Hong Kong blue chip indices both down roughly 10 percent and averages declining by 5 percent or more in Japan, Australia, Singapore, and China.

— The Nikkei slid nearly 700 points, to 9,610—its first closing below 10,000 since 1984—and is now 75 percent below its 1989 peak.

Shares in the European aviation sector slumped yesterday, with Lufthansa and British Airways down 15 and 21 percent, respectively. The European Aeronautic Space and Defense Company (EADS)—parent company of Airbus—fell to a record low.

In **oil markets**, the European benchmark Brent crude closed at $29.06 per barrel yesterday, up $1.61 from Monday but down slightly after reaching more than $31 per barrel during the day. Oil exports from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Kuwait were flowing normally today, according to industry reports.

Also In the Middle East

Intifadah-related violence continues at high levels. The terrorism in the US did not appear to influence that situation, although some Palestinians publicly celebrated the blow against the US.

[redacted]

- — Six other Palestinians were reported killed overnight in clashes throughout the West Bank, according to a press report.

- — In the Gaza Strip, Palestinians fired mortar rounds and rocket-propelled grenades at Israeli targets, and Israel responded with gun and tank fire towards a nearby Palestinian security facility, [redacted]