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Office of the Attorney General
Washington, D. C. 20530

September 24, 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL UNITED STATES ATTORNEYS

FROM: THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Ashcroft", is written over the word "GENERAL" in the "FROM:" line.

SUBJECT: Responsibilities of Anti-Terrorism Advisory Councils (ATACs)

On September 17, 2001, I issued an anti-terrorism directive which established Anti-Terrorism Task Forces (ATTFs) in each of the Districts in order to facilitate the Department's number one priority: the protection of America against the threat of terrorism. Since that time, the U.S. Attorneys have constituted and led the ATTFs as a complement to the operational counterterrorism efforts of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs).

As the chief federal law enforcement officials in your respective Districts, each U.S. Attorney has brought inherent leadership and experience to ensure effective implementation of the President's war on terrorism. I appreciate the many successful projects that you have initiated, including large-scale projects such as the Interview Project and the Airport Security Reviews, countless training programs and forums, and the facilitation of a new era of information sharing. You have made great strides in reaching out to state and local law enforcement, forging unprecedented levels of outreach and cooperation, as well as coordinating with the new Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Maintaining this leadership within each District is critical to the President's mission to prevent future terrorist attacks and the Department's objective to work as a seamless organization in our war against terrorism. We have now reached the two-year mark since the establishment of the ATTFs, and this memorandum is intended to provide further clarity as to your respective roles as leaders of these entities and to ensure that your activities are fully integrated with the operations of the JTTFs.

Each existing ATTF will reconstitute its current membership intact as an Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council (ATAC), which shall be chaired by the U.S. Attorney in each District. As detailed below, the ATACs will continue their core functions: (1) coordinating specific anti-terrorism initiatives; (2) initiating training programs; and (3) facilitating information sharing. Regarding the core operational aspects of terrorism investigations, the ATACs will work in

partnership with the JTTFs, who will retain primary responsibility for terrorism investigations, continuing to coordinate among FBI field offices and their respective counterparts in federal, state, and local law enforcement and intelligence agencies in conducting international and domestic investigations. As described more fully below, ATACs will continue to coordinate operational and investigative work in certain investigations. I also ask that you once again reach out to all law enforcement entities that have heretofore not participated in the ATTFs and invite them to join the newly constituted ATACs.

ATAC Responsibilities

1. **Coordinate Anti-Terrorism Initiatives:**
 - a. Ensure that federal, state, and local enforcement efforts are focused and coordinated as they pursue targets who may be connected to terrorism.
 - b. Mobilize and coordinate federal, state, and local officials for national prevention-based initiatives that involve significant prospects of imminent prosecution, such as Airport Security Reviews, Nuclear Power Plant Security Reviews, and Interview Projects.
 - c. Provide a central forum for agencies to congregate and identify potential terrorism links among their investigations. As the entities that work regularly with all enforcement agencies, you are positioned to bring agencies together which would not otherwise know that their respective investigations are linked. These forums are especially useful where there is either no JTTF headquartered in a particular district or where the suspected activities do not warrant investigation by the JTTFs. Where such forums focus on homeland security initiatives, it is anticipated that the ATACs will coordinate and work with the DHS.

2. **Initiate Training Programs.**
 - a. Provide federal, state, and local law enforcement officials with legal training on federal criminal procedure, the United States Code, the USA PATRIOT Act and investigative techniques available post-PATRIOT Act, other new federal initiatives, and the array of federal charges that can be used to neutralize suspected terrorists and terrorist supporters.
 - b. Sponsor and coordinate hands-on training programs concerning recent cases that may have relevance to your districts, including, for example, credit card fraud,

- c. Social Security fraud, immigration fraud, asylum fraud, alien smuggling, bankruptcy fraud, cyber-crimes, and money laundering.
- d. Continue to provide in the short term – and invite DHS to assist in coordinating – training programs in areas such as HAZMAT recognition and protecting issues including chemical, biological, and nuclear agents; threat recognition; using incident command systems; and public health issues.

3. **Information Sharing:**

- a. Foster regular meetings where agencies that do not ordinarily come in contact with each other can learn about the capabilities and assets of other agencies.
- b. Continue to employ Intelligence Research Specialists in each district who coordinate with intelligence specialists in other agencies and review incoming intelligence. These specialists will be members of the ATACs and JTTFs and will help further ensure that there is no duplication of efforts. They will also continue to provide JTTFs with intelligence information generated by ATAC members who are not JTTF members, as well as intelligence obtained by U.S. Attorneys' Offices from non-terrorism prosecutions and investigations.
- c. Disseminate terrorism-related information to ATAC member agencies by utilizing Chief Information Officers, Law Enforcement Coordinators, and the Regional Information Sharing Network (RISS). While you do not have primary responsibility for disseminating FBI materials, when requested, the ATACs will continue to serve as a supporting role to JTTFs/FBI to ensure that all ATAC members receive timely information.

4. **Operational Aspects of Terrorism Investigations:** The JTTFs will retain primary operational responsibility for terrorism investigations. At the same time, ATACs will continue to take the lead where they are better equipped to manage particular projects either because of other pressing JTTF priorities or limited JTTF resources. In addition, in districts where JTTFs are not headquartered, the ATACs shall continue to coordinate operational and investigative work in certain investigations.

Thank you for the continued leadership that you have displayed as the chief law enforcement officials in your respective districts. I trust that this memorandum provides further clarity to this effort. I recognize also that each District is different and that you must tailor these responsibilities in a manner that fits your local needs. Your continued dedication is critical to effective implementation of the Department's number one priority: the war on terrorism.