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# CIA grills Aussie traitor aboard ship

By IAN McPHERDAN  
and MARK DUNN

AUSTRALIAN al-Qaeda fighter David Hicks has been flown to a United States warship for interrogation by the CIA.

The 26-year-old was handed to US troops by Northern Alliance forces yesterday and was immediately transferred by US Navy helicopter to the giant amphibious assault ship USS *Peleliu* in the Arabian Sea.

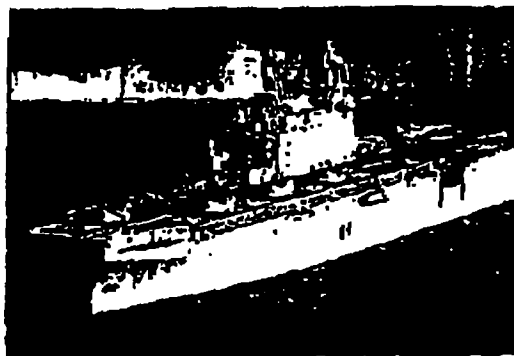
American Taliban fighter John Walker, who was captured close to Hicks in the Kunduz region, is also imprisoned on the ship.

The Australian government is seeking access to Hicks for Federal Police and ASIO investigators.

Attorney-General Daryl Williams and Defence Minister Robert Hill said if Mr Hicks committed a crime against Australian law the government would do "whatever is necessary" to bring him to justice.

Hicks was captured more than a week ago.

In his first interview from the war zone, Australian contingent commander Brigadier Ken Gillespie told the *Herald Sun* yesterday that, unlike Walker, who was with the Taliban, Hicks fought directly with Osama bin Laden's terrorist network.



Questions: David Hicks is on the USS *Peleliu*.

"My understanding is that Hicks was working with the al-Qaeda network," Brigadier Gillespie said.

Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer's office was also trying to confirm reports an Australian man had been abandoned in a Kandahar hospital.

US broadcaster National Public Radio quoted a Kandahar doctor saying the Australian had been left behind with other wounded after the Taliban stronghold fell on December 7.

A spokeswoman for Mr Downer said the Department of Foreign Affairs had been contacted by the family of a 25-year-old man believed to be travel-

ling in Afghanistan, worried that he had not been in touch.

"He advised his family upon leaving Australia in August that he intended to travel to Afghanistan," she said. "But we don't know if that is the man mentioned in the media reports."

It also emerged yesterday that a confessed al-Qaeda terrorist who learned to fly planes in Melbourne has been linked to last week's killing spree in the Indian Parliament and a 1999 airline hijacking. Mohammad Aroze, who claimed knowledge of a plot to crash a plane into the Rialto Towers, met Muslim extremists Shahid Akhtar and Zahoor

Ahmed Mistry at a mosque in Melbourne's west a number of times, according to Indian police reports.

Akhtar and Mistry were later named as hijackers of Indian Airlines flight IC-814 which was forced to fly to Afghanistan in 1999. The Taliban then helped negotiate the release of Islamic prisoners in return for the passengers, one of whom was stabbed to death.

ASIO agents in Mumbai are waiting to interview Mohammad Aroze Abdul Razak over claims he confessed to being an al-Qaeda operative and was a member of suicide teams planning to crash planes into the Indian and British parliaments and Melbourne's Rialto.

Aroze's connection to terrorists involved in last week's raid and the 1999 hijacking arose after the arrest of Mohammad Afzal, an alleged leader behind the attempt to blow up the parliament.

A police report leaked to Indian media claims to contain confessions from Aroze that he met fellow-hijackers Akhtar and Mistry a number of times in Melbourne in 1997 and took flying lessons with them in Texas before flight IC-814 was hijacked.

BIN Laden vanishes,  
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