

President Clinton, in a February 2002 speech to the Long Island Association, said that the United States did not accept a Sudanese offer and take Bin Ladin because there was no indictment. President Clinton speech to the Long Island Association, Feb. 15, 2002 (videotape of speech). But the President told us that he had "misspoken" and was, wrongly, recounting a number of press stories he had read. After reviewing this matter in preparation for his Commission meeting, President Clinton told us that Sudan never offered to turn Bin Ladin over to the United States. President Clinton meeting (Apr. 8, 2004). Berger told us that he saw no chance that Sudan would have handed Bin Ladin over and also noted that in 1996, the U.S. government still did not know of any al Qaeda attacks on U.S. citizens. Samuel Berger interview (Jan. 14, 2004).

Alleged Sudanese offers to cooperate on counterterrorism have been the subject of much recent controversy. After repeatedly demanding that Sudan stop supporting terrorist groups, in 1993 the U.S. government designated the country a state sponsor of terrorism. Diplomatic discussions continued but had little impact on Sudanese support for terrorism or on other issues, such as human rights. In the fall of 1995, the United States conducted a Sudan policy review and, supported by a vocal segment of Congress, the White House sought to pressure and isolate the Sudanese. Susan Rice interview (Jan. 9, 2004).

After Bin Ladin left Sudan in May 1996, some State Department officials, including Ambassador Carney, criticized the NSC's hard-line policy, which he felt provided no "carrots" for Sudanese moderates to cooperate on counterterrorism. He also faulted the NSC for not reopening the U.S. embassy in Khartoum (closed in early 1996) when security concerns there were reevaluated. State's Sudan desk officer agreed, noting that the embassy was an excellent vehicle for gathering information on terrorists. According to one State official, NSC policymakers' views were too firmly set to engage and test the Sudanese on counterterrorism. Timothy Carney interview (Dec. 4, 2003); David Shinn interview (Aug. 29, 2003); Stephen Schwartz interview (Dec. 30, 2003).

But supporters of the tough line, such as the NSC's Susan Rice, argued that any conciliatory statements from Khartoum belied its unhelpful actions. For example, she noted, though Sudan did eventually expel Bin Ladin, his al Qaeda network retained a presence in the country. Susan Rice interview (Jan. 9, 2004). In addition, the CIA's Africa Division, whose operatives had engaged the Sudanese on counterterrorism in early 1996, would conclude that "there is no indication that Sudanese involvement with terrorism has decreased in the past year." They saw the Sudanese gestures toward cooperating as "tactical retreats" aimed at deceiving Washington in hopes of having sanctions removed. CIA memo, Walter to Acting DCI, "Africa Division's Recommendations Regarding Sudan," Dec. 17, 1996. The CIA official who ran the Sudanese portfolio and met with the Sudanese on numerous occasions told us the Sudanese were not going to deliver, and the perceived moderates "were just flat-out lying." Mark interview (May 12, 2004).

In February 1997, the Sudanese sent letters to President Clinton and Secretary of State Albright, extending an invitation for a U.S. counterterrorism inspection mission to visit Sudan. The Sudanese also used private U.S. citizens to pass along offers to cooperate. Mansoor Ijaz interview (May 7, 2004); Janet McElligot interview (Oct. 20, 2003). But these offers were dismissed because the NSC viewed Sudan as all talk and little action. U.S. officials also feared that the Sudanese would exploit any positive American responses, including trips to the region by U.S. officials, for their own political purposes. See Joint Inquiry interview of David Williams, June 26, 2002. Today, Sudan is still listed as a state sponsor of terrorism.

8. Mike interview (Dec. 11, 2003). On local contacts, see Gary Schroen interview (Mar. 3, 2004). On "Jeff's" views, see CIA memo, "DCI Talking Points Regarding Operations Against Usama Bin Ladin," Aug. 25, 1997.

9. See Joint Inquiry briefing by Mike, Sept. 12, 2002. For briefings to the NSC, see NSC email, Clarke to Berger, "Threat Warning: Usama bin Ladin," Mar. 7, 1998; Mary McCarthy interview (Dec. 8, 2003); CIA memos, summary of weekly Berger/Tenet meeting, May 1, 1998.

10. CIA memos, summary of weekly Berger/Tenet meeting, May 1, 1998.

11. Karl Inderfurth interview (Feb. 18, 2004).

12. Peter Tomsen interview (Oct. 8, 2003).

13. For State Department officials' views, see Strobe Talbott interview (Jan. 15, 2004); Karl Inderfurth interview (Feb. 18, 2004).

14. On the civil war and UNOCAL, see Karl Inderfurth interview (Feb. 18, 2004); Robin Raphel interview (Dec. 8, 2003). The former UNOCAL chief for the pipeline project, Marty Miller, denied working exclusively with the Taliban and told us that his company sought to work with all Afghan factions to bring about the necessary stability to proceed with the project. Marty Miller interview (Nov. 7, 2003). UNOCAL hired, among others, Robert Oakley, the former ambassador to Pakistan. Oakley told us that he counseled the company about the internal dynamics of Afghanistan and Pakistan but never lobbied the State Department on UNOCAL's behalf. Robert Oakley interview (Sept. 7, 2003); see also "Advisory Consulting Agreement" between UNOCAL and Oakley, Oct. 1996. On giving the Taliban a chance, see Marvin Weinbaum interview (Aug. 12, 2003).

15. See Madeleine Albright, speech at Nashir Bagh refugee camp in western Pakistan, Nov. 18, 1997. For a description of the Richardson mission, see Bill Richardson interview (Dec. 15, 2003); Karl Inderfurth interview (Feb. 18, 2004).

16. Marvin Weinbaum interview (Aug. 12, 2003). See also Strobe Talbott interview (Jan. 15, 2004). For Zinni's