

113. On further information, see Intelligence report, possible arrest of persons involved in hijacking plan, Dec. 18, 1998; Intelligence report, timeframe for completion of hijacking operation, Dec. 24, 1998; Intelligence report, claim that Bin Ladin postponed hijacking, Jan. 8, 1999; CIA analytic report, "Reporting on Al-Qaida plans to Use Aircraft as Terrorist Weapons," Aug. 26, 2002. After 9/11, the U.S. government checked again with the foreign government to determine if there could be any connection between the attacks and these 1998–1999 reports. The foreign government had no intelligence of such links, but judged that the 1998 plan could have influenced planning for the 9/11 operation. *Ibid.*

On the FBI followup in 1998–1999, see FBI memo, Jack S. to FAA ACI, "FBI Investigative Efforts," Jan. 27, 1999; FAA records, information in FAA Intelligence Case File 98-0199B. A Saudi who had just completed pilot training, boarding a flight to return to Saudi Arabia, had been arrested at JFK Airport in late November 1998. He had been carrying an inert hand grenade, which was detected by a checkpoint screener. The terminal was evacuated, and police found miscellaneous gun parts, pistol ammunition, and military paraphernalia in the man's checked bags. FAA record, "Security Summary NY-99-007," undated. The man was released after a few days in jail and, assisted by the local Saudi consulate, had returned to Saudi Arabia. The new threat information caused the FBI and the CIA to look again at this case. FBI agents found that the man's statements about his flight training were true and that his firearms were legally registered. The Saudi investigators reported that the Saudi had enjoyed shooting at a gun club in Texas, where he had completed his flight training for a commercial pilot's license. The Saudis further indicated that the man had no apparent political motive, and the results of a security investigation in the Kingdom were negative. FAA memo, Matthew K. to Jack S. and Tom K., Saudi national, Jan. 17, 1999; FBI memo, Jack S. to FAA ACI, "FBI Investigative Efforts," Jan. 27, 1999; Intelligence report (to FAA), Saudi information, Apr. 13, 1999. For the expiration of the FAA security directive, see FAA security directive, SD 108-95; FAA record, "SD/EA Status: 108 Security Directives," May 20, 2002.

114. NSC notes, Clarke briefing notes for Berger for Small Group, Dec. 17, 1998; CIA memo, "Bin Ladin Ready to Attack," Dec. 18, 1998.

115. NSC notes, Clarke briefing notes for Berger for Small Group, Dec. 17, 1998; NSC memo, Benjamin to Berger, Dec. 18, 1998; DOD memo, "UBL Campaign: Talking Points for Qandahar Attack," Jan. 11, 1999; Hugh Shelton interview (Feb. 5, 2004).

116. NSC memo, Benjamin to Berger, Dec. 18, 1998; DOD order, Execute Order (EXORD), Dec. 18, 1998.

117. NSC memo, Benjamin to Berger, Dec. 18, 1998; Mike interview (Jan. 6, 2004); CIA emails, Mike to Schroen, "Urgent re UBL," and Schroen's response, Dec. 20, 1998.

118. John Maher III interview (Apr. 4, 2004). Maher said he found General Zinni's figures to be "shockingly high." On the principals' decision against recommending an attack, see NSC memo, Clarke to Berger, Jan. 12, 1999. See also George Tenet interview (Jan. 22, 2004); Mike interview (Feb. 6, 2004).

119. CIA email, Mike to Schroen, "Your Note," Dec. 21, 1998; CIA email, Schroen to Mike, "Re Urgent re UBL," Dec. 20, 1998.

120. John Maher III interview (Apr. 22, 2004).

121. CIA report, "Further Options Available Against UBL," Nov. 18, 1998; CIA talking points, "Options for Attacking the Usama Bin Ladin Problem," Nov. 24, 1998. On the MON, see Randy Moss interview (Feb. 6, 2004); James Baker interview (Feb. 4, 2004).

122. NSC note, Dec. 20, 1998. There is no indication as to who wrote this note or to whom it was directed. It was cleared with Berger, Reno, Assistant Attorney General Randy Moss, and CTC's "Jeff," and briefed in substance to Leon Fuerth, national security adviser to Vice President Gore, and to Deputy DCI Gordon. See also attached CIA memo, Gordon to Berger, Dec. 21, 1998; NSC memo, Berger to President Clinton, Dec. 24, 1998.

123. NSC memo, Berger to President Clinton, Dec. 24, 1998; Randy Moss interview (Feb. 6, 2004); James Baker interview (Feb. 4, 2004). Both Moss and Baker told us they concluded that killing Bin Ladin did not violate the assassination ban contained in Executive Order 12333.

124. NSC memo, Berger to President Clinton, Dec. 24, 1998; Janet Reno interview (Dec. 16, 2003). See also Randy Moss interview (Feb. 6, 2004). Tenet told us he does not recall this episode.

125. CIA cable, message from the DCI, Dec. 26, 1998.

126. CIA cable, instructions passed to tribals and response, Dec. 27, 1998.

127. CIA cable, comments on tribals' response, Dec. 27, 1998. "Mike" noted that the tribals' reaction had "attracted a good deal of attention" back at CIA headquarters. CIA cable, comments from Schroen, Dec. 28, 1998. Schroen commented that the tribals' response was an effort to appear statesmanlike and take the moral high ground.

128. See President Clinton meeting (Apr. 8, 2004); Samuel Berger interview (Jan. 1, 2004); Richard Clarke interview (Jan. 12, 2004). For a CIA senior intelligence manager, operator, and lawyer's view, see George Tenet interview (Jan. 22, 2004); Gary Schroen interview (Jan. 6, 2004); Doug B. interview (Nov. 17, 2003); Mike interview (Jan. 6, 2004).

129. James Baker interview (Feb. 4, 2004); President Clinton meeting (Apr. 8, 2004).

130. NSC memo, McCarthy to CIA, Dec. 1999.

131. NSC memo, Clarke to Berger, Jan. 12, 1999.