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Osama bin Laden’s “Business” in Sudan

ANN M. LESCH

During a newspaper interview a few months ago, Hasan al-Turabi—the former éminence grise behind Sudan’s Islamist regime—shook his head, seemingly bewildered at the claim that he worked closely with Osama bin Laden during the Saudi militant’s four and a half years in Khartoum: “I knew bin Laden in Sudan briefly, through his work in roads and agriculture. . . . I met him once. . . .”¹ Those few words conveniently rewrote the story—a rewriting that was essential for Turabi in the wake of September 11. The actual history of their relationship was quite different.

TURABI’S PAN-ISLAMIST ZEAL . . .

Well before bin Laden arrived in Khartoum in December 1991, Turabi eagerly spread his version of Islamic politics throughout the Middle East, North Africa, and East Africa. Bringing his National Islamic Front to power through a military coup in June 1989, he took advantage of the Persian Gulf crisis in 1990–1991 to launch a pan-Islamic, anti-imperialist front to resist America’s “recolonization of the Islamic world.” Turabi’s Popular Arab Islamic Conference (PAIC) brought together leaders of militant Islamist groups, inaugurated by conferences in Khartoum in April and August 1991.

Sudan provided a sanctuary for many of these militants. Battle-hardened by their jihad (holy struggle) against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan (a struggle that ended in February 1989) and disil-

lusioned by the subsequent warlordism in Afghanistan, many Arab mujahideen (holy warriors) were perceived as threats to security in their own countries and therefore could not return home without risking arrest. In 1990 Sudan dropped its visa requirement for Arabs and opened its doors to them. (It even began to grant Arabs immediate permanent residency and passports in 1993.) Turabi disbursed Sudanese diplomatic passports to favored Islamist politicians, such as leaders of the Nahda (Islamic Revival) Party in Tunisia and the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in Algeria. His movement also funneled money to the FIS during the 1991 parliamentary election campaign. (The final stage of these elections was canceled when the government feared the FIS might win.) And in November 1991, the first armed operation against the Algerian government—in what has become a bloody 11 years of war—occurred when a group of Algerian veterans of the Afghan war, who had trained in Sudan, attacked a police post on the Algerian-Tunisian border.

Turabi also welcomed Egyptian militants, arguing that the Egyptian government was hostile to Islam and that Sudan must support that government’s enemies until it was overthrown. Egypt’s Islamic Jihad leader, Sheikh Umar Abd al-Rahman, on trial in absentia for political incitement, lived in a government villa in Khartoum in April 1990 and again in July of that year before he flew to the United States. (Abd al-Rahman obtained a “green card” but was jailed for complicity in attempts to bomb buildings and tunnels in New York City in 1993.) By the end of 1991, Sudan hosted about a thousand Egyptians, who were affiliated with both Islamic Jihad and Ayman al-Zawahiri’s wing of the Islamic Group. These comprised nearly half the

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¹*Al-Sharq al-Awsat* (London), January 23, 2002.

Egyptian fighters who had remained in Pakistan after the Afghan war ended.

Sudan set up training camps for African militants on the Ethiopian border and helped overthrow the Marxist regime in Addis Ababa in May 1991. Camps to train Arabs were located outside Port Sudan and Khartoum. As early as May 1990, some 60 Arabs from North Africa, France, and Belgium began to train in the Shambat district of Khartoum for sabotage operations in Europe. And in December 1991 the first 19 fighters from Kashmir completed a six-month training program; Turabi joined government officials to address their graduation ceremony.

These actions angered Arab and African rulers well before bin Laden arrived in Khartoum. In October 1990 the Egyptian government closed its airspace to flights from Sudan, seized nearly 200 machine guns that had been smuggled across the desert into upper Egypt, and asserted that the men who had killed the speaker of parliament in September had trained in Sudan. Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi complained that Turabi sent saboteurs trained in Sudan to destabilize Libya and abruptly raised the price of oil deliveries to pressure Khartoum. Tunisia recalled its ambassador in the fall of 1991 after receiving credible reports that Turabi and Sudanese government officials had plotted with Nahda leaders during the August PAIC meeting to assassinate the Tunisian president and to smuggle weapons into the country. (The head of Nahda then relinquished his Sudanese diplomatic passport and left Khartoum for Europe.) The Algerian military government, which seized power in January 1992, cold-shouldered Khartoum because of its support for Algerian Islamic groups. Governments in East Africa also protested Sudan's support for violent underground opposition movements.

... AND BIN LADEN'S MUTUAL INTEREST

A strong coincidence of interest united Turabi, the senior Islamist political operative, and bin Laden, the wealthy young Saudi businessman. Bin Laden had fought in Afghanistan alongside Arab mujahideen he had recruited and funded. He had gloried in the victory against Soviet troops, but had returned to Jeddah discouraged by the postwar Afghan infighting. When Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, bin Laden offered to mobilize 10,000 mujahideen to defend the kingdom. He was shocked when the rulers instead brought in thousands of American soldiers.

Although placed under severe restrictions by the Saudi regime, bin Laden managed to leave for Pak-

istan in April 1991 on the pretext of a business trip. But the political situation was too unstable for him to remain there. He was already in contact with Sudanese Islamists and had visited the country in October 1990. Therefore, he eagerly accepted Turabi's invitation to relocate to Khartoum.

It is not clear what their exact relationship was at that time. One report claims that Turabi appealed to bin Laden to use his contacts in the Persian Gulf to set up an international banking network to launder and transfer money to support PAIC and the armed movements. Bin Laden himself said that he had been considering investing in Sudan since 1990 and that, while dining with Turabi soon after his arrival, Turabi promised to give him all the help he needed. In any event, Turabi quickly provided him with an office and security guards and arranged to exempt his newly established construction company from customs duties on the import of trucks and tractors. Bin Laden moved into a villa in the upscale Riyadh district in Khartoum, next door to Turabi's spacious home.

Bin Laden launched a wide variety of businesses, starting with a construction company that built a new highway from Khartoum to Port Sudan, constructed a new airport outside Port Sudan, repaved the 500-kilometer road from Khartoum north to Shendi and Atbara, and raised the height of the Rusayris hydroelectric dam. He said that when he contributed a million dollars toward the capitalization of the new Shamali Bank, he was awarded a million acres in western Sudan for agriculture and cattle raising. Bin Laden also claimed that, when the government was desperately short of wheat in 1993, he underwrote an \$8-million loan with lenient terms to finance the necessary imports. Then, when the government failed in 1994 to pay him for his multimillion-dollar construction projects, it handed over ownership of its money-losing tannery and reportedly even awarded him a 10-year monopoly on the export of gum arabic, maize, sunflowers, and sesame.

Bin Laden provided substantial sums to help Turabi realize his pan-Islamic ambitions. By bin Laden's own account, he paid \$5,000 on arrival to become a member of Turabi's National Islamic Front, contributed \$1 million to support PAIC, and spent \$2 million to fly Arab mujahideen to Sudan from Pakistan when Iran reneged on paying that sum. He also affirmed that he built and equipped 23 training camps for mujahideen at his own expense. By the summer of 1994 at least 5,000 mujahideen trained in Sudan, often while working on bin Laden's agricultural and construction projects. The largest camp

was said to be based on a 5,000-acre farm in the mountains near Shendi, north of Khartoum.

Bin Laden's Egyptian partner, Ayman al-Zawahiri, apparently managed the international financial networks for bin Laden and Turabi, using Islamic banks, couriers, and charities to accumulate and move funds from Zawahiri's safe haven in Geneva. Bin Laden also spent three months in London in 1994 setting up the Advice and Reform Committee, which complemented Zawahiri's efforts by fund raising, propagandizing against the Saudi regime, and supporting cells in Europe and the United States. Bin Laden is said to have left Jeddah with a million dollars in cash. However, although he accessed additional funds before the Saudi government blocked his bank accounts, he was not the multimillionaire that is often alleged. His business ventures in the Sudan and the global fund-raising network were essential for the support of military and political operations.

Bin Laden's deeply felt beliefs crystallized during his stay in Sudan. From his viewpoint, he had fought a legitimate defensive jihad against the foreign presence in Afghanistan and had helped build an international movement of mujahideen, ready to fight against the infidels wherever they attacked. Jihad became the "acme of religion"—a drastic shift in the way Islamic principles are prioritized. He shared the foot soldiers' postwar disillusionment and sympathized with their eagerness to confront their own authoritarian, seemingly antireligious governments. And he was dismayed when United States troops defiled Saudi Arabia's holy soil. He accused the royal family of lying when they promised that those troops would leave as soon as they liberated Kuwait. Instead, the United States armed forces established permanent bases to enforce the crippling sanctions against Iraq that were imposed during the Persian Gulf conflict.

Bin Laden's interests therefore overlapped with Turabi's ambitions and with the goals of exiled Egyptian Islamists such as Zawahiri, with whom he had worked closely in Afghanistan. The camps that bin Laden set up expanded the training of militants to include attacks on neighboring countries. Libyans who had trained in Sudan attempted to assassinate Qaddafi in 1993, launched attacks inside Libya in 1995, and killed several Libyan security officers in 1996. Some of the Palestinian Hamas operatives who had trained in Sudan organized suicide bombings on Israeli civilian buses after they returned to

Gaza in 1995. Bin Laden and Turabi worked closely with the radical wing of Yemen's Islah (Reform) Party to achieve an Islamic military government similar to that in Sudan. The Sudanese government accelerated its training of Eritrean Jihad and Oromo fighters, and Egyptian Islamists continued to cross the border to attack targets in upper Egypt. The movement's reach extended to Lebanon: assassins of a prominent Lebanese politician escaped to Khartoum in November 1995, and two Sudanese arrested in January 1996 for casing the Egyptian embassy and other targets admitted to receiving funds from the Sudanese consul in Beirut.

Bin Laden shared the Sudanese government's concern about the situation in Somalia, which descended into chaos after the overthrow of United States ally General Siad Barre in January 1991. When the United Nations sent in peacekeepers in December 1992, Khartoum feared that this would establish a bridgehead for the United States (which spearheaded the peacekeeping force) to invade southern Sudan. Soon after, bin Laden's allies in Yemen tried to kill

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United States soldiers stationed in the city of Aden. Following a coordinating meeting in Khartoum in February 1993, the Sudanese government began to send arms to General Muhammad Aidid, a Somali warlord opposed to the UN–United States presence. The arms were shipped overland through Oromo-controlled areas of Ethiopia or by bin Laden's ships, which sailed from Port Sudan to offload along the Somali coast. Bin Laden flew at least 3,000 Arab fighters from Yemen to support Aidid's militia (at the cost of \$3 million) and bought land for training camps inside Somalia. Zawahiri helped raise funds and coordinate these efforts from his base in Europe. Aidid's confrontation with the United States forces culminated in the latter's disastrous attack on his headquarters in September 1993. Bin Laden celebrated the United States withdrawal in March 1994 as a victory for the expanding Islamist movement.

The bin Laden network also assisted the beleaguered government in Bosnia, under attack by Serbia and Croatia after it declared independence in 1991 but faced with an arms embargo from the West. Islamists argued that the Christian West refused to aid the Bosnian Muslims against the Christian Serbs and Croats. The mufti of Bosnia appealed for support at a PAIC conference in December 1993, and Islamists responded by sending funds, arms, and some 5,000 fighters to defend the

only Muslim political entity in Europe. They denounced the United States–brokered Dayton accords of November 1995 that ended fighting in Bosnia, saying that Dayton ratified territorial gains made by Serbs and Croats at the expense of Muslims. Although Zawahiri hastened to Bosnia, threatening to attack the UN peacekeepers that had been deployed there, most of the fighters were deported to their home countries before and after the accords were implemented.

Further afield, militants apparently linked to Sheikh Abd al-Rahman attacked the World Trade Center in February 1993 and plotted to blow up the UN headquarters, the Holland Tunnel, and other important structures in New York City. The Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA) conspired to crash an Air France airliner into the Eiffel Tower on Christmas Day in 1994, the same year that a plot was discovered to fly a plane into the CIA's headquarters near Washington, D.C.

And bin Laden visited Manila in 1993, seemingly to lay the groundwork to support the Abu Sayyaf rebel group, assassinate foreign leaders, and blow up United States airliners over the Pacific Ocean. (The Manila plots were discovered accidentally in early 1995.)

Bin Laden was personally preoccupied with the need to expel United States forces from the sacred soil of Arabia. He sought to expose the royal family as liars and hypocrites who would be punished on the day of judgment. They responded by stripping him of his citizenship in April 1994 and freezing his assets. In April 1995 a leaflet appeared that threatened strikes on United States and British troops and on the Saudi government if the “crusader” foreign forces did not evacuate Saudi Arabia by June 28, 1995. This threat was followed by attacks on the Saudi national guard headquarters in Riyadh in

²Allegedly targets began to be cased in 1993 and the Riyadh attack was planned in 1995 at meetings in Turabi's office in Khartoum and in Mecca during the pilgrimage. The 27-year-old Saudi executed as the leader of the cell had fought in Afghanistan and lived in Peshawar in one of bin Laden's hostels for Arab fighters. The bombers also demanded the release of Abd al-Rahman and others jailed in the United States for the 1993 New York terrorist plots. See Mary Anne Weaver, *A Portrait of Egypt* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000), pp. 188–189; Yossef Bodansky, *Bin Laden* (Roseville, Calif.: Prima Publishing, 2001), p. 104.

³The *salafi* approach is based on the return to what are viewed as the principles followed by the pious ancestors in Mecca at the time of the prophet and the first four caliphs.

November 1995, which killed 5 American soldiers, and on the United States military barracks in Khobar in June 1996, which killed 19 American soldiers.² Bin Laden praised the bombings for targeting United States troops while sparing Saudi citizens. He probably viewed the attacks as a success when the United States reacted by recalling many dependents and moving its bases to isolated locations in the desert.

CLASH OF IDEOLOGIES

Although Turabi and bin Laden had common interests in opposing United States domination and undermining regional governments, ideological differences began to mar their relationship. The mercurial Turabi espoused a modernist Islamism that (among other things) sought to reconcile the various currents of Islam, promote women's participation in public life, and avoid violence against civilians. In contrast, bin Laden and many of the

Arab militants who settled in Sudan adopted the *salafi* approach preached by Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia.³ These militants denounced all other Islamic cur-

rents as apostate, restricted the activities of women, and endorsed attacks on civilians as well as security forces to overthrow un-Islamic regimes.

By 1995 Turabi openly criticized the Algerian GIA and Zawahiri's Egyptian Islamic Group for killing civilians and foreign tourists. He also criticized the militants for repressing women and denounced Iran's clerical rule. Similarly, President Omar al-Bashir argued that the Sudan upheld the “return to our roots [and to] the principles of justice . . . under the aegis of a modern state. . . . We are against extremism and against bigotry.”

The militants responded in kind. At the PAIC conference in April 1995, a Lebanese Hezbollah leader accused Turabi of delusions of grandeur and pointedly asserted that he lacked the charisma and stature of the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Later, Egyptian operative Mustafa Hamza accused the Sudanese government of distorting Islam by deviating from the precepts and practices of the early Muslim forefathers.

By mid-1995 Turabi and the government had banned Arab militants from preaching in mosques after the five daily prayers. They had preached and circulated leaflets and cassettes that accused Turabi of blasphemy and atheism. Members of the militant Takfir wal-Hijra even killed 28 worshippers in the

In the wake of bin Laden's expulsion, Sudanese government officials vigorously denied responsibility for his actions.

conservative and nonviolent Ansar al-Sunna al-Muhammadiya mosque in February 1994. The Libyan-born leader of the cell declared that all contemporary Muslim societies were infidel and must be fought; bin Laden and Turabi were both on his hit list. Banned from the mosques, the young militants then preached on street corners against corruption, blasphemy, and the evils of modern society. In December 1995 police killed eight Takfir zealots who tried to force residents of a shantytown near Wad Medani to convert to their creed of Islam.

These ideological differences alone would not have caused the government to expel bin Laden and the Arab militants. The security forces could contain their excesses, and most of them could be kept isolated from the Sudanese public in bin Laden's training camps. Some could also be sent to fight in the jihad in southern Sudan, a move that bin Laden strongly opposed. (The civil war in Sudan, renewed in 1983, pitted the Arab-Islamic northern government against the African, non-Muslim peoples in the south.) So long as they served Turabi and the regime's regional political goals, they would be allowed to reside and train in Sudan.

THE TURNING POINT

On June 26, 1995, several Egyptians tried to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak

shortly after his convoy left the Addis Ababa airport en route for the Ethiopian capital itself. Cells coordinated by Zawahiri, Mustafa Hamza, and others had tried to kill Mubarak many times, first in Cairo and later in New York, Sarajevo, Rome, and Manila. This plan was allegedly initiated at the PAIC meeting in Khartoum in March 1995, where Turabi met with Zawahiri (based in Geneva), Rifat Ahmad Taha (a terrorist trainer based in Peshawar, Pakistan), and Hamza (who was based in Sudan). Turabi tasked Hamza with preparing the plan; Zawahiri would put the final touches on it. Hamza rented a villa in Addis Ababa, flying in operatives and weapons from Sudan in May on Sudanair as well as on bin Laden's private plane. Turabi met with Zawahiri in Geneva, followed by meetings between Hamza and the senior European commander to finalize the plans.

Zawahiri made an inspection trip to Sudan and Ethiopia in mid-June, culminating in a final meeting in Geneva on June 23 to coordinate three separate teams. One entered Ethiopia from Sudan, a second flew in from Pakistan (transiting at the Khartoum airport), and the third infiltrated Egypt to launch simultaneous attacks there. Hamza had trained the first and third teams separately on a farm north of Khartoum. When the attack failed, Ethiopian and Egyptian security arrested most of the participants, but three escaped to Sudan.

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Turabi and his agents in the security forces seem to have been fully involved in the plot. Those agents included the head of security, Nafi Ali Nafi, and Brigadier General al-Fatih Urwah, who headed training camps in eastern Sudan and now serves as the Sudanese ambassador to the United Nations. Indeed, Nafi was in Addis Ababa on the day of the attack. While denying prior knowledge, Turabi quickly hailed the “mujahideen who pursued the pharaoh of Egypt.”

President Bashir apparently had no prior knowledge of the plot. He immediately fired Nafi and began to overhaul the security services to reduce Turabi's control. The government reimposed entry visas for Arabs in September. When Egypt and Ethiopia formally accused the government of organizing the attack, Sudanese diplomats scrambled to deflect the accusation and repeatedly denied that they were hiding the three Egyptians. They were already concerned about ongoing censure from Libya and other North African regimes for hosting Arab militants; they also feared that the November bombing in Riyadh would be blamed on Khartoum. Although relations had been cold since Sudan had embraced Iraq during the Gulf War, Khartoum could ill afford complete isolation from Riyadh.

On January 31, 1996, the UN Security Council unanimously accused the Sudanese government of supporting terror, imposed limited sanctions, and demanded that the government extradite the three wanted Egyptians to Ethiopia. The United States simultaneously closed its embassy in Khartoum, on the grounds that the Sudanese government could not guarantee the diplomats' security so long as extremist groups operated freely in the capital city. The United States antiterrorism act of April 1996, which blocked the assets of terrorist organizations, was swiftly invoked against bin Laden's organization.

THE EXPULSION

Bin Laden was already anxious about his status when he flew to London in December 1995 (and soon after traveled to Mogadishu). He tried to obtain a visa to the United States and gain political asylum in England; instead, the British issued an

exclusion order. He also prepared to send some of his followers from Sudan to Somalia.

The ever-pragmatic Turabi realized that, to save the Khartoum regime, bin Laden had to leave. In January 1996 he contacted mujahideen leaders in Afghanistan to see if they would host their former ally. Turabi may have wanted to protect bin Laden from the outcome that Bashir was considering: turning bin Laden over to the United States or Saudi government.

Turabi later noted that, when no other country would accept bin Laden, “we worked out a plan under which the government apologetically permitted bin Laden to leave and proceed to Afghanistan.” Turabi reportedly went to bin Laden's office in March to tell him this, expressing his hope that bin Laden would retain his business interests in the country. But Turabi said bin Laden “left Sudan angry at being banished to Afghanistan.”

In February 1996 the Sudanese interior ministry required all Egyptians to register with the police. During April the government ordered the nearly 200 Egyptian militants in the country to leave within three weeks or face the threat of extradition to Egypt. Mustafa Hamza appears to have been one of those who abruptly left for Afghanistan that month.⁴ In fact, the Egyptian government gave Khartoum a detailed list of wanted persons, of whom 64 were detained in May. The government closed the Hamas office and expelled several Palestinians; militants from North Africa also quickly departed.

When Bashir performed the pilgrimage in early May, he piously told King Fahd that bin Laden entered Sudan as a businessman: “When the Saudis complained . . . we stopped him from performing these hostile activities.” Bin Laden departed that same month, flying into Jalalabad on May 10 to be welcomed by his former Afghan mujahideen ally, Gulhuddin Hekmetyar. Over the next few weeks, he was joined by his family, the families of Zawahiri and other key colleagues, and hundreds of fighters.

THE RETURN TO AFGHANISTAN

The globalization of the Islamist network peaked after bin Laden returned to Afghanistan. He quickly switched allegiance from Hekmetyar to the Pakistani-supported Taliban, which he later called the only pure “Muslim state that enforces God's laws, that destroys falsehoods, and that does not succumb to the American infidels.” Afghanistan also provided an ideal sanctuary for training new militants from the Middle East, Asia, and Europe. Indeed, the old training camps in Afghanistan had

⁴Interviewed by *al-Hayat* (London), April 22, 1996, he claimed that the last time that he had been to Sudan was in 1994, a year before the attempt to kill Mubarak, and that his Egyptian Islamic Group undertook the operation alone, without Sudanese assistance. Two persons, he claimed, merely passed through Khartoum on the way from Pakistan to Ethiopia, and others went from Pakistan across Sudanese territory to infiltrate into Egypt. These statements must have been part of a deal to let him leave if he would distance himself from the regime.

never entirely closed; in the early 1990s they were used to train Chechen and Central Asian militants.

In February 1998 bin Laden and Zawahiri formalized their long-standing ties by announcing the World Front for Jihad Against Jews and Crusaders, which endorsed attacks against American civilians and military personnel for occupying and, in bin Laden's words, "desecrating my land and holy shrines, and plundering the Muslims' oil." That August its operatives bombed the United States embassies in Kenya and Tanzania; the "sleeper" cells that carried out the attacks had been planted in East Africa in 1994 while bin Laden was still *persona grata* in Khartoum. The September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the symbols and center of American military and financial power were the logical outcome of the front's ideology. Zawahiri boasted afterward that, for the first time, Americans felt danger coming directly at them.

SUDAN'S DENIALS

In the wake of bin Laden's expulsion, Sudanese government officials vigorously denied responsibility for his actions. They argued that they expelled any Arab residents who were wanted in their own country or who undertook illegal actions. Bin Laden may have retained some of his businesses, however, and may have revisited Sudan at least once, in part because the government still owed him substantial amounts for his construction projects. Moreover, Qaddafi was compelled to issue an ultimatum to President Bashir in January 1997 to force Sudan to hand over two dozen Libyans, some of whom he accused of killing Libyan security officers. And not until the summer of 2001 did the Sudanese government deport the Egyptian Rifat Ahmad Taha, who had been sentenced to death in absentia for his role

in the bloody attack on Luxor in November 1997.⁵ By then Bashir had sidelined and arrested Turabi, closed the PAIC, reestablished cooperative relations with Egypt and Ethiopia, and held lengthy security talks with the CIA in an effort to prove that the country no longer hosted wanted terrorists.

This clean-up effort became frantic after September 11 as the government sought to ensure that it would not be a target of a United States military attack that would be presumably much more severe than the cruise missile strike the United States carried out in August 1998 in retaliation for the attacks on the United States embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. The government gave United States security agents access to hundreds of files on Islamists who had lived in Sudan. It was rewarded when the UN lifted the five-and-a-half-year-old sanctions and the United States made its first serious effort to resolve the nearly 20-year-old war in the south.

What was the importance of the Sudanese sojourn for Osama bin Laden? One can argue that, without the sanctuary in Sudan, the Arabs who had fought in Afghanistan would have dispersed. Some would have gone home; others would have scattered in exile. Over time, their strength would have waned and they would have had difficulty communicating and coordinating their efforts.

Sudan provided a welcoming environment. The government worked closely with bin Laden and the Egyptian Islamists to reinvigorate the transnational mujahideen movement and to train a new generation of militants. The Islamists could undertake weapons training and travel freely in and out of the country. While Turabi initiated this support before bin Laden's arrival and provided cover through PAIC for the leaders to plan terrorist attacks, bin Laden's presence expanded the range of activities. His and Zawahiri's organizations opened up new arenas for operations in East Africa, the Balkans, and Central Asia. Without Sudan, bin Laden could not have incubated the networks that have caused such devastation in subsequent years. ■

⁵Taha was put on a plane to Syria. The Syrian government realized that he was a political hot potato and deported him to Egypt in November 2001, where he was immediately jailed.