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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Event: Ambassador Tim Carney  
Type of Event: Interview  
Date: December 4, 2003  
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Prepared by: Niki Grandrimo  
Reviewed by: Scott Allan  
Team Number: Three (Counterterrorism Policy)  
Location: 2100 K St. Conference Room  
Participants: Niki Grandrimo, Scott Allan, & Doug MacEachin

**Interviewee Background**

As a career Foreign Service Officer, Ambassador Carney served at various State Department ("State") posts including: Special Political Advisor for East Asian and Pacific Affairs on the Cambodian Peace Process, 1990; Director for Southeast Asia and the Pacific at the National Security Council, 1991-1992; Director for the Department of Information and Education for the United Nations Mission in Cambodia, 1993-1994; Special Political Advisor to the Secretary General's Special Representative to Somalia, February 1994; Special Political Advisor to the Secretary General's Special Representative to South Africa, March 1994; Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs, August 1994-June 1995; US Ambassador to Sudan, August 1995-November 1997; and US Ambassador to Haiti, 1998-1999. Ambassador Carney retired from the Foreign Service in December 1999 and now works as a Consultant. Recently, he was a member of the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance in Iraq. [U]

**US Government ("USG") Priorities in Sudan**

In the summer of 1995, when Ambassador Carney arrived in Sudan, terrorism was the USG's top priority in Sudan. Sudan had been placed on the State Department's list of State Sponsors of terrorism in 1993<sup>1</sup> and terrorists operating from Sudan had just made an attempt to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The USG's other priorities in Sudan were ending the civil war and improving human rights. Ambassador Carney noted that evangelical Christian interest groups and certain Congressman were vocal in pressuring the USG on Sudan's human rights abuses. [U]

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<sup>1</sup> The law establishing the "State Sponsors" list states that, "The US may not provide assistance to any country that the Secretary of State determines that the government of that country has repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism (22 USC 2371). [U]"

## USG Policy Towards Sudan

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to.” Ambassador Carney stated that the fact that the Clinton Administration eventually accepted the GOS’s offer in May 2000 to send counterterrorism teams to Sudan is indicative that the hardline policy failed. [U]

### Terrorist Presence in Sudan

Ambassador Carney stated that he has no doubt that a significant number of terrorists and terrorist groups were operating in Sudan during his tenure as Ambassador. He noted that the GOS had formally abolished its visa requirement for Arabs and/or Muslims<sup>2</sup> so Sudan was considered a welcoming environment, especially for Arabs who had fought in Afghanistan. Ambassador Carney said that it was clear that the GOS had relationships with the terrorist groups operating in Sudan; the GOS provided the groups with Sudanese passports containing false personal information and facilitated their travel. He believed that the GOS welcomed Usama bin Laden (“UBL”), who moved to Sudan from Saudi Arabia in 1991, with a number of Afghan Arabs; the USG claimed approximately 200 Arabs accompanied him while the GOS claimed there were approximately 15. [U]

### UBL’s Arrival in Sudan

Ambassador Carney did not know the history of UBL’s move to Sudan however, in every meeting that he had with the GOS through 1996, the GOS described UBL as a “foreign investor.” UBL had at least four businesses in Sudan including: Wadi Alageeg Construction (roads); Tabba, general trading company; el-Thimer al Mobark Agricultural Company; and Khartoum Tannery. Ambassador Carney said that he had first heard of UBL in 1995 when he was the Deputy Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs. He had not heard the name “al Qaida” until 1997 after the staff of Embassy Khartoum was relocated to Embassy Nairobi.

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<sup>2</sup> Ambassador Carney’s memory was unclear as to the exact policy. [U]

### Decision to Close Embassy Khartoum

Ambassador Carney stated that the decision to close Embassy Khartoum was based on false information. He said that in February 1995, his predecessor, Ambassador Donald Petterson, sent a cable to Washington saying that the Embassy "was not doing any good" and Washington should consider closing it. However, the decision was not made to close the Embassy. Ambassador Carney arrived in August 1995. In October, he was called away from post, but upon his return, he discovered that a threat from the Sudanese prompted the Embassy staff to convene an Emergency Action Committee ("EAC") meeting, which recommended that the Embassy be closed. Ambassador Carney commented that he thought the threat and response from the EAC was greatly overdrawn nevertheless, he cabled the recommendation to Washington. [U]

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decided to implement the same plan that was used after the US Embassy was bombed in Beirut: the staff of Embassy Khartoum would be relocated to Embassy Nairobi and commute to Sudan when necessary. [S]

Prior to informing the GOS of the change in Embassy status, [redacted]

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However, they did not discuss follow-on actions to Ambassador Carney's suggestion.

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On January 31, 1996, 11 days after the meeting at Taha's house, Ambassador Carney informed the GOS that the USG was closing its Embassy in Khartoum and the Embassy staff would be moving to Embassy Nairobi. [REDACTED]

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**USG Policy Towards Sudan: February – July 1996**

On February 6, 1996, David Shinn, State's Director for the Office of East Africa, went to Khartoum and met with Foreign Minister Taha. The two discussed terrorism including UBL, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad ("EIJ"), and Egyptian Gama'a al-Islamiyya ("IG"). Taha asked Shinn for solid evidence that UBL was a terrorist. [REDACTED]

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From March 22-30, 1996, as part of Ambassador Carney's first visit to Khartoum after being moved to Nairobi, he met with Taha who again sought specifics on UBL. Ambassador Carney told Taha that terrorism was the USG's most "urgent" agenda item and provided the GOS with a non-paper that discussed terrorism.<sup>4</sup> [U]

On April 6, 1996, the United Nations Security Council debated whether to impose sanctions on Sudan for refusing to render the suspects in the Mubarak assassination attempt. The USG paper to the Security Council said that UBL "directs, funds and [provides] other logistic support to a number of terrorist organizations around the world" and noted that as many as 200 of UBL's followers transit his Sudanese facilities "presumably to receive terrorist training." On April 26, 1996, United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1054 imposing sanctions on Sudan for non-compliance with Resolution 1044, which required Sudan to extradite the Mubarak assassination suspects. [U]

<sup>3</sup> The PAIC's brought to Khartoum reputable Islamic scholars as well as supporters of terrorism to discuss Islamic ideology. [U]

<sup>4</sup> Ambassador Carney said that a non-paper is a paper that is absent of source and classification information. Ambassador Carney could not remember the detail of the non-paper but other sources indicate that the paper demanded that the GOS take action against terrorists operating in Sudan and detailed the actions that the USG would take if Americans were harmed. [U]

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On June 24, 1996, Ibrahim met with State's Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Philip Wilcox, and invited US officials to visit training camps in the Sudan. In late July [redacted] [redacted] accompanied Ambassador Carney on his monthly visit to Sudan in order to view [redacted] the training camps. He said that those being trained in the camps were the "militia of believers" closely associated with [redacted] [redacted], and were training to fight a jihad against the rebels in the South. However, Ambassador Carney acknowledged that those camps could be used to train terrorists by intermingling the terrorists with the militia or replacing the militia. Also in July, Sudan's President, Omar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir, sent President Clinton a letter promising protection in Khartoum for USG officials. [U]

When asked why the USG did not require that the GOS render UBL to the US, Ambassador Carney said that the USG could not take custody of UBL because it did not have an indictment against him at the time. He noted, however, that he never discussed rendering UBL to the US with the GOS; he only discussed it with Susan Rice, Director for African Affairs at the NSC. [U]

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[redacted] Ambassador Carney commented that the USG just wanted UBL out of Sudan and his role as Ambassador was to push the GOS to do it. When asked whether the GOS discussed rendering UBL to Saudi Arabia with the Saudi's, Ambassador Carney said that he thinks the Saudi's told the GOS that they did not want UBL. [S]

#### **Debate on USG Policy Towards Sudan**

Ambassador Carney stated that by late July 1996, the GOS had responded to most of the USG's concerns by: expelling UBL; providing access to training camps of interest to the

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USG; terminating the PAIC's; and informing the USG that the GOS would ensure the protection of US interests in Sudan. Ambassador Carney viewed these actions as the GOS making strides towards the USG and believed that the USG should have reengaged the GOS to test its sincerity.

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#### **Debate to Re-Open Embassy Khartoum**

Ambassador Carney said that most people in the USG realized that the security concerns in Sudan were false.

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In October 1997, State announced the return of Embassy staff to Khartoum however, State was forced to retract the announcement by the NSC. Ambassador Carney believes that the NSC's Dick Clarke and Susan Rice convinced the National Security Advisor, Sandy Berger, that the USG should not reopen the Embassy. Mr. Berger then convinced the Secretary of State, Madeline Albright, to keep the Embassy closed. [U]

#### **Recent Publications**

When asked his opinion about the Richard Miniter book, *Losing Bin Laden*, and David Rose's article, "The Osama Files," in *Vanity Fair*, Ambassador Carney said that "they provide a good picture of what did and did not occur in Sudan." He believes that they accurately raise the question as to why the USG did not engage the GOS, at least just to test its sincerity. [U]