



It's increasingly clear that the operation was a planned assassination, multiply violating elementary norms of international law. There appears to have been no attempt to apprehend the unarmed victim, as presumably could have been done by 80 commandos facing virtually no opposition—except, they claim, from his wife, who lunged towards them. In societies that profess some respect for law, suspects are apprehended and brought to fair trial. I stress “suspects.” In April 2002, the head of the FBI, Robert Mueller, informed the press that after the most intensive investigation in history, the FBI could say no more than that it “believed” that the plot was hatched in Afghanistan, though implemented in the UAE and Germany. What they only believed in April 2002, they obviously didn't know 8 months earlier, when Washington dismissed tentative offers by the Taliban (how serious, we do not know, because they were instantly dismissed) to extradite bin Laden if they were presented with evidence—which, as we soon learned, Washington didn't have. Thus **Obama was simply lying when he said, in his White House statement, that “we quickly learned that the 9/11 attacks were carried out by al Qaeda**

Nothing serious has been provided since. There is much talk of bin Laden's “confession,” but that is rather like my confession that I won the Boston Marathon. He boasted of what he regarded as a great achievement.

We might ask ourselves how we would be reacting if Iraqi commandos landed at George W. Bush's compound, assassinated him, and dumped his body in the Atlantic. Uncontroversially, his crimes vastly exceed bin Laden's, and he is not a “suspect” but uncontroversially the “decider” who gave the orders to commit the “supreme international crime differing only from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole” (quoting the Nuremberg Tribunal) for which Nazi criminals were hanged: the hundreds of thousands of deaths, millions of refugees, destruction of much of the country, the bitter sectarian conflict that has now spread to the rest of the region.

Noam Chomsky: My Reaction to Osama bin Laden's Death

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