

# Saudi Arabia, 9/11 and the “war on terror”

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More than 13 years after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, evidence in a federal lawsuit brought by relatives of the victims is a devastating exposure of events and relations long covered up and obscured by the media and political establishment: that Al Qaeda and the 9/11 hijackers were financed by the Saudi monarchy, a top US ally with extensive ties to US intelligence agencies.

Affidavits filed with Federal District Judge George P. Daniels substantiate claims that leading figures in the Saudi monarchy, including its longtime ambassador to Washington, Prince Bandar bin Sultan, a nephew of the current Saudi monarch, King Salman, financially supported Al Qaeda.

The documents include a deposition from Zacarias Moussaoui, the only individual convicted of direct participation in the plot to hijack airplanes and fly them into the World Trade Center and other US targets on September 11, 2001.

Moussaoui testified that while working for Al Qaeda in Afghanistan in the 1990s he prepared a digital database of the group’s financial backers that included Prince Bandar and two other high-ranking Saudi princes: Prince Turki al-Faisal, the longtime head of Saudi intelligence, and Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, chairman of the Kingdom Holding Company and the wealthiest member of the royal family.

He also described working as a courier for bin Laden, bringing messages to members of the Saudi royal family, including Prince Salman, then the governor of Riyadh, who today is King Salman after succeeding to the throne last month.

The *New York Times* published lead articles Wednesday and Thursday highlighting the new allegations of Saudi backing for the 9/11 attacks. These had less the character of an exposé, however, than of a semi-official attempt to contain the impact of the material being released as a consequence of the 9/11 families’ lawsuit.

This is the apparent reason for the articles’ near-exclusive focus on Moussaoui, a witness whose testimony can be more easily dismissed by the political establishment. The legal papers filed with the federal

district court included Moussaoui’s deposition, but much more, including allegations of Saudi complicity in 9/11 from such pillars of the Washington establishment as former senator Robert Graham of Florida. He wrote, “I am convinced that there was a direct line between at least some of the terrorists who carried out the Sept. 11 attacks and the government of Saudi Arabia.”

Graham is in a position to know. He chaired the Senate Intelligence Committee in 2002 when it produced a lengthy report on the 9/11 attacks. This included a 28-page section on Saudi support to the 9/11 hijackers that was classified and suppressed by the Bush administration, an act of censorship that was endorsed and continued by the Obama administration. Senator Graham, who favors the release of this material, wrote, “The 28 pages primarily relate to who financed 9/11, and they point a very strong finger at Saudi Arabia as being the principal financier.”

The evidence of Saudi complicity in the 9/11 attacks is a devastating exposure of the fraudulent nature of the “war on terror,” the axis of US national security policy for more than 13 years.

The Bush administration used the 9/11 attacks as the pretext for wars against Afghanistan, whose government had provided shelter to Osama bin Laden, but had no involvement in 9/11, and against Iraq, which had no connection to either 9/11 or Al Qaeda. Meanwhile Saudi Arabia, the country that supplied Al Qaeda’s funds, its principal leader, and 15 of the 19 hijackers, was deemed a key US ally.

Every official investigation into the 9/11 attacks had to whitewash the Saudi connection—or be censored, like the Senate Intelligence Committee report. The issue was not just the reactionary role of the Saudi monarchy in financing and supporting Al Qaeda, but the close ties between US intelligence agencies and the supposedly anti-American terrorist group—connections on which the latest *Times* articles are completely silent.

There is every reason to believe that nearly 3,000 Americans were murdered on September 11, 2001 with

the tacit or active complicity of sections of the US military-intelligence apparatus. The CIA, FBI and other agencies took no action to disrupt the operations of the terrorists, even though many of the individuals involved were known to US security agencies and several were under active surveillance as they planned and executed the simultaneous hijacking of four US jetliners.

Many questions about the complicity of US agencies with the 9/11 attacks were raised within weeks of the destruction of the World Trade Center. Some were detailed in a series of articles on the *World Socialist Web Site* just over 13 years ago: see “Was the US government alerted to September 11 attack?”

Thirteen years later, these questions are still unanswered:

- \* Why were the 9/11 hijackers allowed to travel in and out of the United States freely, even those like Mohammed Atta, who were under surveillance for Al Qaeda connections?

- \* Why did the CIA fail to inform the FBI of the entry of two Al Qaeda associates into the United States in early 2001? These two lived in San Diego at the home of an FBI informant, sought pilot training, and received funds from Saudi sponsors in Washington. One was listed in the phone book. On September 11, 2001, they were 2 of the 19 hijackers.

- \* Why were the future hijackers allowed to take flight training, including Moussaoui, who asked to learn how to steer a jumbo jet but not how to take off and land? When Minnesota FBI agents sought to probe Moussaoui’s actions and motives, a month before the 9/11 attacks, FBI headquarters denied requests to search his computer.

- \* Why was no effort made to respond to repeated warnings from foreign intelligence services, including Russia, Israel, and Germany, about terrorist plans to hijack US airliners and fly them into buildings?

The crimes committed on 9/11 took nearly 3,000 lives. The crimes committed using 9/11 as a justification have taken hundreds of thousands if not millions of lives, in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Libya and a dozen other countries. And 9/11 has served as the all-purpose justification for the wholesale destruction of democratic rights in the United States and other imperialist countries, which have created the framework for police states in the name of preventing “another 9/11.”

Covering up the Saudi connection is critical not only in concealing the role of US intelligence agencies in the events of September 11, 2001, but also to ongoing operations of US imperialism throughout the Middle East,

where Washington relies on the reactionary Saudi monarchy as one of its main agencies. This was signaled last month in Obama’s trip to Riyadh to pay homage to the new king, Salman—one of those named as a financial supporter of Osama bin Laden.

The Saudi connection has been critical to the continuing relations of American imperialism with Al Qaeda and other Islamic fundamentalist groups. These forces were first mobilized in the 1980s as part of the campaign by the Carter and Reagan administrations to subvert the Soviet-backed regime in Afghanistan and foster the disintegration of the USSR. The *mujaheddin*—including Osama bin Laden—were armed and trained by the CIA and financed by Saudi Arabia. They have more recently been used to overthrow the Libyan regime of Muammar Gaddafi and to undermine the Syrian government of President Bashar al-Assad.

ISIS itself is a product of this insidious relationship. It originates in the Sunni fundamentalist backlash to the US invasion of Iraq in 2003—prior to the US invasion, there was no Al Qaeda presence in Iraq. Al Qaeda in Iraq reemerged as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, one of the strongest Islamist groups fighting against the Assad government in Syria, with the aid and training of the US, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. It was only when ISIS fighters crossed back over into Iraq and began attacking the US-backed puppet regime in Baghdad that the group became the target of US bombs and propaganda.

Yet at the center of the entire “war on terror” is a monumental and brazen lie, the claim that 19 hijackers plotted and carried out a major attack on New York City and Washington, D.C., without anyone in the vast US military-intelligence apparatus being aware of what they were preparing. The latest revelations about the Saudi role in 9/11 are another blow against this web of fabrication and cover-up.



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