

SAUDI INVOLVEMENT IN 9/11 – STILL A STATE SECRET

In the wake of the anniversary of 9/11, it was revealed that the Trump administration has taken extraordinary steps to continue the 18-year cover-up of Saudi government involvement in the September 11, 2001 terror attacks. It is significant, but not surprising, that the corporate media has given only the most perfunctory and muted coverage to the moves by the Trump administration to once again suppress the role of the Saudi regime in 9/11, and the Democrats have been completely silent.

Victims of the attacks and their families are pushing for access to a 2007 report as part of a lawsuit against the Saudi government launched in 2003 charging the despotic monarchy with coordinating the mass killings. A federal court filing on behalf of the victims and families revealed that Attorney General William Barr has asserted the **state secrets privilege** to block the release of an FBI report detailing extensive relations between some of the 19 hijackers and Saudi government officials. Barr declared there was a **“reasonable danger”** that releasing the report would **“risk significant harm to national security.”**

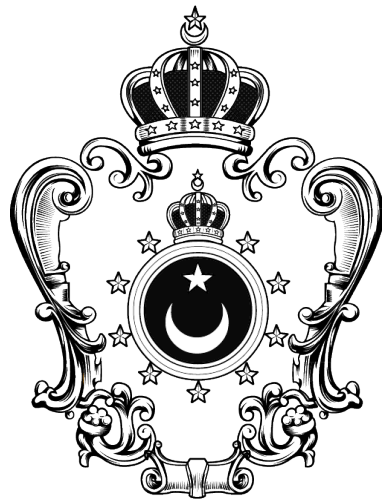
Government investigations have established that the two people who are named in the FBI summary, Fahad al-Thumairy, a **former Saudi consulate official**, and Omar al-Bayoumi, suspected by the FBI of being a Saudi **intelligence officer**, were working in coordination with the Saudi regime. The third person, whose name is redacted, is described in the FBI summary as having **assigned the other two** to assist the hijackers.

Lawyers for the families last year subpoenaed the FBI for an unredacted copy of the summary based on the contention that the third person was a senior Saudi official. But as part of the court filing, citing the **“exceptional nature of the case,”** the FBI issued a protective seal to prevent the name of the third Saudi from becoming public. The agency also refused to provide any of the other information requested by the families.

An FBI official said the agency was shielding the name to protect classified information related to “ongoing investigations” and to protect its “sources and methods.” In fact, the extraordinary measures taken to conceal the role of the Saudi regime in the 9/11 attacks are driven by the need to **protect the Saudi monarchy** which has been a key ally of the United States in the Middle East for 70 years, and since 9/11 it has become, alongside Israel, Washington’s most important partner in the region. It has played a central role in the bloody wars for regime change in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen, which have killed more than a million people and destroyed entire societies. It is also the world’s **biggest purchaser** of US arms.

Its intelligence agencies have long worked in the closest collaboration with the CIA and the FBI. Any exposure of Saudi complicity in 9/11 implicates sections of the US intelligence establishment in facilitating, it not actively aiding, the terror attacks, and sheds light on the multiple unanswered questions about how 19 men, **15 of whom** were Saudi nationals, could carry out such a complex operation.

The cover-up of Saudi involvement has been carried out over three administrations, Democratic and Republican alike. It began within hours of the attacks themselves. Eight days after the attacks, at least 13 relatives of Osama bin Laden, accompanied by bodyguards and associates, were allowed to **secretly leave** the US on a chartered flight. One of the



passengers, a nephew of the supposed number one on Washington’s “most wanted” list, had been linked by the FBI to a suspected terrorist organization.

The US association with bin Laden went back decades. Under the CIA’s Operation Cyclone, conducted between 1979 and 1989, the US and Saudi Arabia provided **\$40 billion** worth of financial aid and weapons to the mujahedeen “freedom fighters” waging war against Soviet forces in Afghanistan, an operation in which **then-US ally bin Laden** played a key role. The proxy war in Afghanistan was pivotal in the later creation of Al Qaeda.

In July of 2016, the US government released to the public a 28-page section, suppressed for 14 years, of a joint congressional inquiry into 9/11. The 28-page chapter dealt with the role of the Saudi government and contained abundant and damning evidence of **extensive Saudi support** for the 9/11 hijackers in the period leading up to the attacks. Among its revelations were:

- Two of the Saudi hijackers, Khalid al-Mihdhar and Nawaf al-Hazmi, lived for a time in Los Angeles and San Diego in 2000, where they obtained pilot training. They were given money and lodgings by Omar al-Bayoumi, who **worked closely with an emir** at the Saudi Defense Ministry. Both were under CIA surveillance while attending an Al Qaeda planning meeting in 2000 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and placed on a “watch list” for FBI monitoring if they came to the United States.

Nonetheless they were allowed to enter the US on January 15, 2000.

- Al-Bayoumi “received support from a Saudi company affiliated with the Saudi Ministry of Defense,” **drawing a paycheck** for a no-show job. The company also had ties to Osama bin Laden. His allowances jumped almost tenfold after the arrival of al-Hazmi and al-Mihdhar. Al-Bayoumi had found an apartment for the two, which they shared with an informant for the San Diego FBI, advancing them a deposit on the first month’s rent.

- Al-Bayoumi’s wife received a **\$1,200 a month stipend** from the wife of Prince Bandar, then the Saudi ambassador to the US and later head of Saudi intelligence. The wife of his associate, Osama Bassnan, identified by the FBI as a supporter of bin Laden, received \$2,000 a month from Bandar’s wife.

- Three of the hijackers stayed at the same Virginia hotel as Saleh al-Hussayen, a Saudi Interior Ministry official, **the night before** the attacks.

Despite such evidence, and much more, the bipartisan 9/11 Commission appointed by George W. Bush concluded that there was no conclusive evidence that “senior” Saudi officials played a role in the 9/11 attacks. When the 28-page section of the congressional report was released in 2016, Obama’s CIA director, John Brennan, denounced all suggestions of Saudi involvement as baseless. However, former Secretary of the Navy John Lehman, a member of the 9/11 Commission, said, *“There was an awful lot of participation by Saudi individuals in supporting the hijackers, and some of those people worked in the Saudi government.”*

Former Democratic Senator Robert Graham, **cochair** of the Joint Congressional Inquiry into the 9/11 attacks, said that there was *“a pervasive pattern of covering up the role of Saudi Arabia in 9/11 by all of the agencies of the federal government, which have access to information that might illuminate Saudi Arabia’s role in 9/11.”* In the lawsuit filed by the families of the victims, he filed an affidavit that stated, *“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.”*

Thanks to **Barry Grey**
A slightly longer version is found on **wsws.org**

What Is Happening to Assange

The publication of classified documents is not yet a crime in the United States. If Assange is extradited and convicted, it will become one. Assange is not an American citizen. WikiLeaks, which he founded, is not a U.S.-based publication. The extradition of Assange would mean the end of journalistic investigations into the inner workings of power. It would cement into place a terrifying global, corporate tyranny under which borders, nationality and law mean nothing. Once such a legal precedent is set, any publication that publishes classified material, from The New York Times to an alternative website, will be prosecuted and silenced.

The flagrant defiance of law and international protocols in the persecution of Assange is legion. In April 2019, Ecuadorian President Lenin Moreno capriciously terminated Assange’s right of asylum at the London embassy, where he spent seven years, despite Assange’s status as a political refugee. Moreno authorized British police to enter the embassy — diplomatically sanctioned sovereign territory — to arrest a naturalized citizen of Ecuador. (Assange retains his Australian citizenship.) The British police seized Assange, who has never committed a crime, and the British government keeps him imprisoned, ostensibly for a bail violation.

Assange is being held in the notorious high-security HM Prison Belmarsh. He has spent much of his time in isolation, is often heavily sedated and has been denied medical treatment for a variety of physical ailments. His lawyers say they are routinely denied access to their client. Nils Melzer, the United Nations’ special rapporteur on torture who examined Assange with two physicians, said Assange has undergone prolonged psychological torture. Melzer has criticized what he calls the “judicial persecution” of Assange by Britain, the United States, Ecuador and Sweden, which prolonged an investigation into a sexual assault case in an effort to extradite Assange to Sweden. Assange said the case was a pretext to extradite him to the United States. Once Assange was arrested by British police the sexual assault case was dropped.

Melzer says Assange would face a politicized show trial in the United States if he were extradited to face 17 charges under the Espionage Act for his role in publishing classified military and diplomatic cables, documents and videos that exposed U.S. war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan. Each of the counts carries a potential sentence of 10 years, and an additional charge that Assange conspired to hack into a government computer has a maximum sentence of five years. A hearing to determine whether he will be extradited to the United States starts Feb. 24 at London’s Woolwich Crown Court. It is scheduled to last about a week and then resume May 18.

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