

Context of 'March 15, 2002: FBI Claims Broad Investigation of Hamas Operatives in US'

This is a scalable context timeline. It contains events related to the event **March 15, 2002: FBI Claims Broad Investigation of Hamas Operatives in US**. You can narrow or broaden the context of this timeline by adjusting the zoom level. The lower the scale, the more relevant the items on average will be, while the higher the scale, the less relevant the items, on average, will be.

1986-October 1999: New Jersey Firm Investors List Is 'Who's Who of Designated Terrorists'



Soliman Biheiri. [Source: *US Immigrations and Customs*] BMI Inc., a real estate investment firm based in Secaucus, New Jersey, is formed in 1986. Former counterterrorism "tsar" Richard Clarke will state in 2003, "While BMI [has] held itself out publicly as a financial services provider for Muslims in the United States, its investor list suggests the possibility this facade was just a cover to conceal terrorist support. BMI's investor list reads like a who's who of designated terrorists and Islamic extremists." Investors in BMI include: [US CONGRESS, 10/22/2003]

■ Soliman Biheiri. He is the head of BMI for the duration of the company's existence. US prosecutors will later call him the US banker for the Muslim Brotherhood, a banned Egyptian militant group. Biheiri's computer will eventually be searched and found to have contact information for Ghaleb Himmatt and Youssef Nada, leaders of the Al Taqwa Bank, which is founded two years after BMI (see 1988). After 9/11, the US and UN will designate both Himmatt and Nada and the Al Taqwa Bank as terrorist financiers, and the bank will be shut down (see November 7, 2001). US prosecutors say there are other ties between BMI and Al Taqwa, including financial transactions. Biheiri also has close ties with Youssef Abdullah Al-Qaradawi. Qaradawi is said to be a high-ranking member of the Muslim Brotherhood, a shareholder in Al Taqwa, and has made statements supporting suicide bombings against Israel. In 2003, US investigators will accuse Biheiri of ties to terrorist financing. He will be convicted of immigration violations and lying to a federal agent (see June 15, 2003). [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 9/15/2003; FORWARD, 10/17/2003] Biheiri will be convicted of immigration fraud in 2003 and then convicted of lying to federal investigators in 2004 (see June 15, 2003).

■ Abdullah Awad bin Laden, a nephew of Osama bin Laden. He invests about a half-million dollars in BMI real estate ventures, earning a profit of \$70,000. For most of the 1990s he runs the US branch of a Saudi charity called World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY). He is

investigated by the FBI in 1996 (see February-September 11, 1996), and WAMY will be raided by US agents in 2004 (see June 1, 2004). The raid is apparently part of a larger investigation into terrorism financing. In 2001, at least two of the 9/11 hijackers will live three blocks away from the WAMY office (see March 2001 and After). [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 9/15/2003; WASHINGTON POST, 4/19/2004]

■ Nur and Iman bin Laden, two female relatives of Osama bin Laden. Abdullah Awad bin Laden will invest some of their money in a BMI real estate project. While their bin Laden family ties are intriguing, neither have been accused of any knowing connections to terrorist financing. [WASHINGTON POST, 4/19/2004]

■ Mousa Abu Marzouk. He has identified himself as a top leader of Hamas. The US declares him a terrorist in 1995 (see July 5, 1995-May 1997). BMI makes at least two transactions with Marzouk after he is declared a terrorist. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 9/15/2003]

■ Yassin al-Qadi, a Saudi multimillionaire. His lawyers will later claim he has no terrorism ties and had only a passing involvement with BMI and liquidated his investment in it in 1996. However, another company operating from the same office as BMI is called Kadi International Inc. and lists its president as al-Qadi. Al-Qadi is also a major investor in the suspect computer company Ptech (see 1994; 1999-After October 12, 2001). Al-Qadi and BMI head Biheiri have financial dealings with Yaqub Mirza, a Pakistani who manages a group of Islamic charities in Virginia known as the SAAR network (see July 29, 1983). These charities will be raided in March 2002 on suspicions of terrorism ties (see March 20, 2002). Shortly after 9/11, the US will officially declare al-Qadi a terrorist financier (see October 12, 2001). [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 9/15/2003]

■ Saleh Kamel. BMI allegedly receives a \$500,000 investment from the Dallah Al-Baraka banking conglomerate, which is headed by Kamel. For many years before 9/11, Omar al-Bayoumi, an associate of 9/11 hijackers Khalid Almihdhar and Nawaf Alhazmi, will receive a salary from Dallah, despite apparently doing no work. Some will accuse al-Bayoumi of involvement in funding the 9/11 plot, but that remains to be proven (see August 1994-July 2001). Kamel reportedly founded a Sudanese Islamic bank which housed accounts for senior al-Qaeda operatives. He is a multi-billionaire heavily involved in promoting Islam, and his name appears on the Golden Chain, a list of early al-Qaeda supporters (see 1988-1989). He denies supporting terrorism. [US CONGRESS, 10/22/2003; WALL STREET JOURNAL, 6/21/2004]

■ The Kuwait Finance House. According to Clarke, this organization is alleged to be a BMI investor and the “financial arm of the Muslim Brotherhood in Kuwait. Several al-Qaeda operatives have allegedly been associated with the Kuwaiti Muslim Brotherhood, including Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, Suliman abu Ghaith, Wadih El-Hage, and Ramzi Yousef.” In 2003, an apparent successor entity to the Kuwait Finance House will be designated as a terrorist entity by the US. A lawyer for the Kuwait Finance House will later say the bank has never let its accounts be used for terrorism. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 9/15/2003; US CONGRESS, 10/22/2003; WALL STREET JOURNAL, 4/20/2005]

■ Tarek Swaidan. He is a Kuwaiti, an associate of al-Qadi, and a leading member of the Kuwaiti branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. It is unknown if he has made any denials about his alleged associations. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 9/15/2003]

■ Abdurahman Alamoudi. For many years he runs the American Muslim Council, a lobby group founded by a top Muslim Brotherhood figure. US prosecutors say he also is in the Brotherhood, and has alleged ties to Hamas. In 2004, the US will sentence him to 23 years in prison for illegal dealings with Libya (see October 15, 2004). [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 6/21/2004; WASHINGTON POST, 10/16/2004]

■ The International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) and the Muslim World League, closely connected Saudi charities suspected of financing terrorism. They give BMI \$3.7 million out of a \$10 million endowment from unknown Saudi donors. The Financial Times will later note, “While it is not clear whether that money came from the Saudi government, [a 2003] affidavit quotes a CIA report that says the Muslim World League ‘is largely financed by the government

of Saudi Arabia.” Both organizations consistently deny any support of terrorism financing, but in early 2006 it will be reported that US officials continue to suspect them of such support (see January 15, 2006). [FINANCIAL TIMES, 8/21/2003] In 1992, a branch of the IIRO gives \$2.1 million to BMI Inc. to invest in real estate. The money disappears from BMI’s books. In October 1999, BMI goes defunct after it is unable to repay this money to the IIRO branch. The IIRO branch gives BMI the rest of the \$3.7 million between 1992 and 1998. BMI will use the money to buy real estate (see 1992). Eventually, some of this money will be given to Hamas operatives in the West Bank and spent on violent actions against Israel. This will eventually lead to legal action in the US and a seizure of some of the money. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 11/26/2002; WASHINGTON POST, 8/20/2003; WASHINGTON TIMES, 3/26/2004; WASHINGTON POST, 4/19/2004] By 1992, BMI has projected revenues in excess of \$25 million, based largely on their real estate investments in the US. [US CONGRESS, 10/22/2003] In early 1999, months before BMI goes defunct, the FBI hears evidence potentially tying BMI to the 1998 US embassy bombings (see 10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998), but an investigation into this will not be pursued (see Early 1999). It should be noted that BMI had many investors, and presumably most BMI investors would have had no suspicions that their money might be used to fund terrorism or other types of violence.

Entity Tags: Iman bin Laden, International Islamic Relief Organization, Muslim World League, Kuwait Finance House, Nur bin Laden, Mousa Abu Marzouk, Abdurahman Alamoudi, Richard A. Clarke, Soliman Biheiri, Abdullah Awad bin Laden, Yousuf Abdullah Al-Qaradawi, Tarek Swaidan, Yassin al-Qadi, Saleh Abdullah Kamel

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline



After January 1993: Wright Begins Investigating Terrorism Financing Inside US



FBI agent Robert Wright is assigned to the FBI’s counterterrorism task force in Chicago. He had joined the FBI three years earlier. [NEW YORK POST, 7/14/2004; WASHINGTON TIMES, 7/18/2004] He immediately begins to uncover a wide network of suspected Hamas and al-Qaeda financiers inside the US. Apparently, he gets a key head start from the confession of Mohammad Salah in Israel in early 1993 (see January 1993). Salah names 23 organizations in the US who he says are secretly funding Hamas, and Israel shares this information with US officials. Some of his confession, including the mention of the Holy Land Foundation as a key Hamas funder, is even publicly revealed in a February 1993 New York Times article. [NEW YORK TIMES, 2/17/1993; FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 6/2/2003] In the next few years, Wright will uncover evidence that leads him to suspect the following:

- Mousa Abu Marzouk, the political director of Hamas, has been laundering money and fundraising in the US for Hamas (see July 5, 1995-May 1997).
- The Holy Land Foundation charity is secretly financing Hamas suicide bombings (see October 1993; December 4, 2001).
- Saudi multimillionaire Yassin Al-Qadi is funding Hamas (see June 9, 1998).
- Al-Qadi is funding al-Qaeda attacks (see October 1998).
- Several other US residents and entities are also financing Hamas. In 1996, Wright’s investigations will turn into a larger investigation of terrorist financing, code named Vulgar Betrayal (see 1996). It will continue to discover more leads to connect not only to Hamas, but also to al-Qaeda. [NEW YORK POST, 7/14/2004]

Entity Tags: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Mohammad Salah, Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, Yassin al-Qadi, Vulgar Betrayal, Hamas, Mousa Abu Marzouk, Robert Wright, Al-Qaeda

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline



1994: Ptech Founded with Support from Suspected Terrorism Financiers



Oussama Ziade. [Source: Beta Consulting] Ptech is founded in 1994 by Oussama

Ziade, Hussein Ibrahim, and James Cerrato. Ziade came from Lebanon to study at Harvard University. As the Associated Press will describe it, Ptech's "idea was to help complicated organizations like the military and large companies create a picture of how their assets—people and technology—work together. Then the software could show how little changes, like combining two departments, might affect the whole." They raise \$20 million to start the company. A number of Ptech employees and investors will later be suspected of having ties to groups that have been designated by the US as terrorist organizations: [CNN, 12/6/2002; WALL STREET JOURNAL, 12/6/2002; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 1/3/2003]

- Yassin al-Qadi, a Saudi multimillionaire. He will invest \$5 million of Ptech's start-up money. The US will declare him an al-Qaeda financier shortly after 9/11 (see October 12, 2001). In 1998, al-Qadi will come under investigation by FBI agent Robert Wright (see October 1998) for potential ties to the 1998 US embassy bombings (see 10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998). Al-Qadi is also a major investor in BMI Inc., an investment firm with connections to a remarkable number of suspected terrorist financiers (see 1986-October 1999). Al-Qadi later will claim that he sold his investment in Ptech in 1999, but there will be evidence he may continue to hold a financial stake after that year, and even after the US will officially declare him a terrorism financier (see 1999-After October 12, 2001). [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 12/6/2002; WASHINGTON POST, 12/7/2002; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 1/3/2003]

- Gamel Ahmed, Ptech's comptroller in the mid-1990s. One al-Qadi loan Wright will investigate also involves Ahmed. [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 1/3/2003]

- Hussein Ibrahim, Ptech vice president and chief scientist. He also serves as vice president and then president of BMI from 1989 until 1995. He has no known direct terrorism finance connections, but it has been reported that al-Qadi brought Ibrahim into Ptech as his representative. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 12/6/2002; WBZ 4 (BOSTON), 12/9/2002; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 1/3/2003]

- Soliman Biheiri. He is the head of BMI and a member of Ptech's board. US prosecutors will later call him the US banker for the Muslim Brotherhood, a banned Egyptian militant group. He will later be convicted for lying and immigration fraud (see June 15, 2003). [FRONTPAGE MAGAZINE, 6/17/2005]

- Abdurahman Alamoudi. He is one of Ptech's founders, as well as an investor in BMI. In 2004, the US will sentence him to 23 years in prison for illegal dealings with Libya (see October 15, 2004). [WASHINGTON POST, 10/16/2004; FRONTPAGE MAGAZINE, 6/17/2005]

- Muhammed Mubayyid and Suheil Laheir. Neither have any known direct ties to terrorism financing. However, both are longtime Ptech employees whom formerly worked for Care International, a Boston-based suspect Islamic charity (not to be confused with a large international charity having the same name). [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 12/6/2002] In 2005, Mubayyid will be charged with conspiring to defraud the US and making false statements to the FBI. Care International had previously been the Boston branch of the Al-Kifah Refugee Center (see [a0493kifahboston]) and a recruitment office for Mektab al Khidmat (MAK), the precursor

organization to al-Qaeda (see 1985-1989). Laheir, Ptech's chief architect, wrote many articles in support of Islamic holy war. He frequently quoted Abdullah Azzam, bin Laden's mentor.

[ASSOCIATED PRESS, 5/13/2005; FRONTPAGE MAGAZINE, 6/17/2005]

■Yaqub Mirza. He is a Ptech investor and on a Ptech advisory board. He directs SAAR, a multi-million dollar network of companies and charities in Herndon, Virginia (see July 29, 1983). In March 2002, US investigators will raid the SAAR network for suspected terrorism ties (see March 20, 2002). In late 2002, the Wall Street Journal will report, "US officials privately say Mr. Mirza and his associates also have connections to al-Qaeda and to other entities officially listed by the US as sponsors of terrorism." [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 12/6/2002; WBZ 4 (BOSTON), 12/9/2002; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 1/3/2003]

■BMI itself directly invests in Ptech. It also gives Ptech a founding loan, and leases Ptech much of its office and computer equipment. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 12/6/2002; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 1/3/2003] Ptech president Ziade and other Ptech employees will claim that all of their ties to suspected terrorist financiers are coincidental. By 2002, Ptech will have annual revenues of up to \$10 million. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 12/6/2002] Ptech's potential ties to suspected terrorist financiers will be of particular concern because of its potential access to classified government information (see 1996-1997). [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 12/6/2002; BOSTON GLOBE, 12/7/2002] Joe Bergantino, a CBS journalist who will be the first to report on Ptech, will say of Ptech in 2002, "The worst-case scenario is that this is a situation where this was planned for a very long time to establish a company in this country and in the computer software business that would target federal agencies and gain access to key government data to essentially help terrorists launch another attack." [NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO, 12/8/2002]

Entity Tags: Oussama Ziade, Hussein Ibrahim, James Cerrato, Muhammed Mubayyid, Gamel Ahmed, Care International (Boston), Yassin al-Qadi, Al-Qaeda, Yacub Mirza, BMI Inc., Suheil Laheir, Abdurahman Alamoudi, Soliman Biheiri, Ptech Inc.

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline

 SHARE

October 1994-2001: Media Reports Point to Links Between Hamas and Texas Charities



Steve McGonigle. [Source: University of Texas at Austin] In October 1994, CBS News shows a documentary made by counterterrorism expert Steven Emerson called Jihad in America that alleges the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP) and Holy Land Foundation have given critical financial support to Hamas. The story is largely based on confessions that Hamas operative Mohammad Salah and another man gave to Israeli officials in 1993 (see January 1993). It claims that these two Texas-based organizations are sending more than a million dollars to Hamas, much of it to buy ammunition. The US officially declares Hamas a terrorist organization in 1995 (see January 1995), and a new law passed in 1996 confirms a 1995 executive order that giving any support to groups like Hamas a crime (see April 25, 1996). [DALLAS MORNING NEWS, 10/5/1994; DALLAS MORNING NEWS, 4/8/1996] In March 1996, the Israeli government closes the Jerusalem office of the Holy Land Foundation because of alleged ties to Hamas. This prompts Steve McGonigle, a reporter at the Dallas Morning News, to begin investigating Holy Land, since their headquarters are near Dallas. Beginning in April 1996,

McGonigle begins reporting on Holy Land and their ties to Hamas. He notices by looking at public records that Mousa Abu Marzouk, the political leader of Hamas being detained in New York (see July 5, 1995-May 1997), has provided hundreds of thousands of dollars in funding to Holy Land beginning in 1992, the same information that FBI agents like Robert Wright are already aware of. In 1997, the Associated Press will note that Marzouk gave Holy Land its single biggest contribution in the first five years of Holy Land's existence. Members of Congress such as US Representative Nita Lowey (D-NY) ask the IRS to revoke the Holy Land Foundation's tax-exempt status because of its support for a US-designated terrorist group. McGonigle also publishes that Marzouk's wife invested \$250,000 in 1993 in InfoCom, the computer company located next to Holy Land that will also be accused of Hamas ties (see September 16, 1998-September 5, 2001). McGonigle will continue to write more stories about Holy Land and Hamas, causing Holy Land to sue his newspaper for defamation in April 2000 (the suit will be dropped after 9/11). [DALLAS MORNING NEWS, 4/8/1996; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 5/26/1997; COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW, 1/2002] Yet despite all of this media coverage, InfoCom will not be raided until one week before 9/11 (see September 5-8, 2001), and the Holy Land Foundation will not be raided until after 9/11.

Entity Tags: Steve McGonigle, Mousa Abu Marzouk, Mohammad Salah, Steven Emerson, InfoCom Corp., Hamas, Islamic Association for Palestine, Nita Lowey, Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development
Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline



1995-1996: Reports: FBI Watches Hamas Supporters But Make No Arrests



In January 1995, the New York Times reports, "For more than a year the Federal Bureau of Investigation has closely monitored supporters of the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas in several cities, including Washington, Chicago, Los Angeles, Detroit, and Dallas." [NEW YORK TIMES, 1/26/1995] In August 1995, the Times reports, "For well over a year, the FBI has monitored Hamas supporters in several American cities." [NEW YORK TIMES, 8/16/1995] On March 12, 1996, FBI Director Louis Freeh says to Congress, "We have several instances where we have been able to show the transfer of substantial cash funds from the US to areas in the Mideast where we could show Hamas received, and even made expenditure of, those funds." He says some of the money raised is sent back from the Middle East to the US to support and expand phony front organizations for Hamas. The FBI, he adds, has a "very inadequate picture of what perhaps is much greater activity" in the US. He notes the difficulty of tracing "those funds to actual military or terrorist operations anywhere outside the US." Hamas leaders say any such money raised is used for charitable and humanitarian purposes. (Legally, after 1995 it became a crime in the US to fund Hamas, no matter how they spent their money (see January 1995)) In 1997, a Congressional analyst will say it is estimated Hamas receives from 30 percent to 80 percent of its budget from sources inside the US. [NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, 3/13/1996; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 5/26/1997] But in 2002, FBI agent Robert Wright will claim, "Against the wishes of some at the FBI in 1995, when I uncovered criminal violations in several of my cases, I promptly initiated active terrorism criminal investigations on these subjects. I developed probable cause to believe that some of these transfers or transmissions had been of money intended to be used in the support of domestic and international terrorism activities. The illegal transfers that supported specific terrorist activities involving extortion, kidnapping, and murder..." Much of Wright's evidence will focus on Hamas figures Mohammad Salah and Mousa Abu Marzouk. [FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 5/30/2002] FBI agent Joe Hummel will say in 1997 that he has evidence "millions of dollars" passed through the bank accounts of Marzouk. But even though Marzouk is in US custody, he will merely be deported later in 1997 (see July 5, 1995-May 1997). [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 5/26/1997] Federal prosecutor Mark Flessner will later claim that Wright and others in the Vulgar Betrayal investigation were building a strong

criminal case against some in this Hamas support network, but they were not allowed to charge anyone no matter how strong their evidence was (see October 1998). [FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 5/30/2002] In March 2002, the FBI will still publicly claim that it is watching an “elaborate network” of Hamas supporters in the US (see March 15, 2002).

Entity Tags: Mark Flessner, Robert Wright, Joe Hummel, Vulgar Betrayal, Louis J. Freeh, Mohammad Salah, Mousa Abu Marzouk, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Hamas

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline



July 5, 1995-May 1997: Hamas Leader Held in the US, Then Let Go



Mousa Abu Marzouk. [Source: US Department of Corrections] On July 5, 1995, high-

level Hamas leader Mousa Abu Marzouk is detained at a New York City airport as he tries to enter the US. An immigration agent checks Marzouk’s name against a watch list and finds a match. Marzouk’s name had apparently been added to the watch list in recent months, so he had not been stopped on previous trips. Although not a US citizen, he had been living in the US for 14 years. Israel considers him the head of Hamas’ political wing, and he is already under indictment in Israel for at least ten attacks that killed at least 47 people. In 1994 he appeared on Lebanese television to take credit for a Hamas suicide attack in Israel, saying, “Death is a goal to every Muslim.” When he is detained in New York, he is found with an address book that the FBI says contains the names, telephone numbers, and addresses of numerous “active and violent terrorists and terrorist organizations.” More than 20 percent of the addresses are in the US. He is also carrying paperwork connecting him to charities and companies worth more than \$10 million, which the FBI suspect are part of a Hamas money laundering operation in the US. On August 16, 1995, the US declares him a “Specially Designated Terrorist.” [NEW YORK TIMES, 7/28/1995; EMERSON, 2002, PP. 86-87; FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 6/2/2003; WALL STREET JOURNAL, 6/21/2004] In August 1995, the US announces it will extradite Marzouk to Israel rather than try him in the US. Extradition hearings proceed slowly until 1997, when Marzouk announces he will no longer fight being deported to Israel. Then Israel makes the surprise announcement that it is no longer seeking Marzouk’s extradition. They cite a fear of a highly publicized trial and the fear of retaliatory terrorist attacks. In May 1997, the US deports Marzouk to Jordan, “ending what had become an embarrassing case for both the United States and Israel.” Jordan in turn deports him to Syria, where he will live and continue to work as a top Hamas leader. At the time of his deportation, it is claimed that one reason Marzouk is being deported is because the evidence against him is weak. [NEW YORK TIMES, 4/4/1997; NEW YORK TIMES, 5/6/1997; EMERSON, 2002, PP. 87-89] However, FBI agent Robert Wright will later claim that he uncovered more than enough evidence to convict Marzouk, but that higher-ups in the FBI did not want to disrupt the Hamas support network in the US, apparently in hopes that Hamas would commit enough violent attacks to disrupt peace negotiations between Israel and more moderate Palestinians (see June 2, 2003).

Entity Tags: Hamas, Mousa Abu Marzouk, United States, Robert Wright

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline



1996-Early 1997: Probe of Suspicious Company with Saudi Ties Is Stalled



A 1996 CIA report shows that US intelligence believes that the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), a Saudi charity with strong ties to the Saudi government, is funding a variety of radical militant groups (see January 1996). However, no action is taken against it. Also in 1996, Valerie Donahue, a Chicago FBI agent who is presumably part of Robert Wright's Vulgar Betrayal investigation, begins looking into Global Chemical Corp., a chemical company that appears to be an investment fraud scheme. The company is jointly owned by the IIRO and Abrar Investments Inc. Suspected terrorism financier Yassin al-Qadi has investments in Abrar Investments and he is also director of its Malaysian corporate parent. Donahue finds that Abrar Investments gave Global Chemical more than half a million dollars, and the IIRO gave it over \$1 million. Further, the Saudi embassy has recently sent \$400,000 to the IIRO. The president of Global Chemical is Mohammed Mabrook, a Libyan immigrant and suspected Hamas operative. Mabrook had previously worked for a pro-Palestinian group led by Hamas leader Mousa Abu Marzouk. (Marzouk is in US detention from 1995 to May 1997, but he is apparently merely held for deportation and not questioned about matters like Global Chemical (see July 5, 1995-May 1997).) Donahue discovers that Global Chemical is keeping a warehouse full of highly toxic chemicals, but they do not seem to be selling them. In late 1996, a chemical weapons expert examines the chemicals and opines that they appear to be meant for a laboratory performing biochemistry or manufacturing explosives. While no direct evidence of bomb making is found, investigators know that a Hamas associate of Marzouk, Mohammad Salah, had previously trained US recruits to work with "basic chemical materials for the preparation of bombs and explosives." (see 1989-January 1993) In January 1997, the FBI raids Global Chemical and confiscates the chemicals stockpiled in the warehouse. Mabrook is questioned, then let go. He moves to Saudi Arabia. Abrar Investments vacate their offices and cease operations. In June 1999, Mabrook will return to the US and will be prosecuted. He will be tried on fraud charges for illegal dealings with the IIRO and given a four year sentence. Meanwhile, the IIRO ignores an FBI demand for accounting records to explain how it spent several million dollars that seem to have gone to the IIRO and disappeared. In January 1997, Donahue requests a search warrant to find and confiscate the records, saying that she suspect IIRO officials are engaged in "possible mail and wire fraud... and money laundering." Apparently, the probe stalls and the financial records are never maintained. Some investigators believe the probe is dropped for diplomatic reasons. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 11/26/2002; WALL STREET JOURNAL, 12/16/2002; CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION, 10/29/2003] Investigators will later be prohibited from investigating a possible link between al-Qadi and the 1998 US embassy bombings (see October 1998). After 9/11, the US will apparently have ample evidence to officially label the IIRO a funder of terrorism, but will refrain from doing so for fear of embarrassing the Saudi government (see October 12, 2001).

Entity Tags: Valerie Donahue, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Mohammed Mabrook, Global Chemical Corp., International Islamic Relief Organization, Yassin al-Qadi, Vulgar Betrayal, Abrar Investments

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline



March 13, 1996: Clinton Administration Criticized for Meetings with Radical Muslim Activist





President Clinton meeting with Abdulrahman

Alamoudi in the 1990s. [Source: PBS] (click image to enlarge) Counterterrorism expert Steven Emerson, head of the Investigative Project on Terrorism, criticizes the Clinton administration for its ties to Abdulrahman Alamoudi in a Wall Street Journal editorial. Alamoudi is a prominent Muslim activist and heads an organization called the American Muslim Council (AMC). Emerson notes that on November 9, 1995, President Clinton and Vice President Al Gore met with Alamoudi as part of a meeting with 23 Muslim and Arab leaders. And on December 8, 1995, National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, met with Alamoudi at the White House along with several other American Islamic leaders. Emerson notes that Alamoudi openly supports Hamas, even though the US government officially designated it a terrorist financier in early 1995 (see January 1995), and he has been the primary public defender of high ranking Hamas leader Mousa Abu Marzouk, who the US declared a terrorism financier and then imprisoned in 1995 (see July 5, 1995-May 1997). He notes that Alamoudi's AMC also has close ties to other Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, and in 1994 the AMC co-sponsored a trip to the US for Sudanese leader Hasan al-Turabi, a well-known radical militant who is hosting Osama bin Laden in Sudan at the time. Emerson concludes, "The president is right to invite Muslim groups to the White House. But by inviting the extremist element of the American Muslim community—represented by the AMC—the administration undercuts moderate Muslims and strengthens the groups committing terrorist attacks." [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 3/13/1996] It will later be reported that in 1994, US intelligence discovered that the AMC helped pass money from bin Laden to Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, but it is not known if Clinton was aware of this (see Shortly After March 1994). But Alamoudi's political influence in the US will not diminish and he will later be courted by future President Bush (see July 2000). He will eventually be sentenced to a long prison term for illegal dealings with Libya (see October 15, 2004).

Entity Tags: American Muslim Council, William Jefferson ("Bill") Clinton, Al Gore, Muslim Brotherhood, Steven Emerson, Abdurahman Alamoudi, Anthony Lake, Mousa Abu Marzouk, Hassan al-Turabi, Clinton administration, Hamas

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline



November 1996-Late December 1999: US Government Funding Charity Front It Knows Has Ties to Bin Laden and Hamas





IARA logo. [Source: IARA] In November 1996, the FBI monitors the

progress of bin Laden buying a new satellite phone and tracks the purchase to Ziyad Khaleel, a US citizen and radical militant living in Missouri (see November 1996-Late August 1998). Newsweek will later say that this puts the Sudan-based charity Islamic American Relief Agency (IARA) “on the FBI’s radar screen” because Khaleel is one of IARA’s eight regional US directors. [NEWSWEEK, 10/20/2004] Khaleel is monitored as he continues to buy new minutes and parts for bin Laden’s phone at least through 1998 (see July 29-August 7, 1998). He is also the webmaster of the official Hamas website. His name and a Detroit address where he lived both appear prominently in ledgers taken by US investigators from the Al-Kifah Refugee Center in 1994, a charity front with ties to both bin Laden and the CIA (see 1986-1993). That Detroit address is also tied to Ahmed Abu Marzouk, the nephew of Mousa Abu Marzouk, a high-ranking Hamas leader who is imprisoned in the US between 1995 and 1997 (see July 5, 1995-May 1997). Furthermore, Khaleel is working for the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP), a Hamas-linked organization cofounded by Mousa Abu Marzouk. [NATIONAL REVIEW, 10/2/2003] A secret CIA report in early 1996 concluded that the IARA was funding radical militants in Bosnia (see January 1996). US intelligence will later reveal that in the late 1990s, IARA is regularly funding al-Qaeda. For instance, it has evidence of IARA giving hundreds of thousands of dollars to bin Laden in 1999. But Newsweek will later note that “at the very moment that the [IARA] was allegedly heavily involved in funneling money to bin Laden, the US branch was receiving ample support from the US Treasury through contracts awarded by the State Department’s Agency for International Development (USAID).” Between 1997 and 1999, USAID gives over \$4 million to IARA, mostly meant for charity projects in Africa. Finally, at the end of December 1999, counterterrorism “tsar” Richard Clarke gets USAID to cut off all funding for IARA. But the charity is merely told in a letter that US government funding for it would not be “in the national interest of the United States” and it is allowed to continue operating. At the same time, US agents arrest Khaleel while he is traveling to Jordan (see December 29, 1999). The US government will wait until 2004 before shutting down IARA in the US and raiding the Missouri branch where Khaleel worked. Newsweek will later comment, “One question that is likely to arise [in the future] is why it took the US government so long to move more aggressively against the group.” [NEWSWEEK, 10/20/2004]

Entity Tags: USAID, Ziyad Khaleel, Islamic African Relief Agency, Osama bin Laden, Al-Kifah Refugee Center, Ahmed Abu Marzouk, Richard A. Clarke, Islamic Association for Palestine, Mousa Abu Marzouk, Hamas

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline



July 31, 1997: Islamic Extremist Suicide Attack in New York City Narrowly Averted






Gazi Ibrahim Abu Mezer. [Source: Associated Press]Gazi Ibrahim Abu Mezer, and Lafi

Khalil, two Palestinian men who had recently immigrated from the West Bank to the US, are arrested in New York City. They are found with a number of hand made bombs, and officials claim they were mere hours away from using them on a busy Atlantic Avenue subway station and on a commuter bus. Police were tipped off to them by a roommate. [NEW YORK TIMES, 8/1/1997; CNN, 8/2/1997] In the days immediately after the arrests, numerous media reports claim that the FBI has tied the two men to Hamas. For instance, the Associated Press reports, “The FBI has linked two suspects in a Brooklyn suicide-bombing plot to the militant Mideast group Hamas... One man was linked to Hamas by intelligence sources, the other through an immigration document he had filled out in which he said he had been accused in Israel of having been in a terrorist organization. The organization, the source said, was Hamas.” Reports say both suspects “are working for Mousa Abu Marzouk, the Hamas political leader who lived in Virginia for 15 years before being arrested in 1995, imprisoned as a terrorism suspect, and then deported earlier [in 1997].”(see July 5, 1995-May 1997) [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 8/1/1997; CNN, 8/2/1997] According to another account, “law enforcement authorities say these suspects made frequent phone calls from local neighborhood stores to various Hamas organization offices in the Middle East.” [PBS, 8/1/1997] Just days earlier, there had been a Hamas suicide bombing in Israel that killed fifteen people. Mezer or Khalil reportedly called the suicide bombers “heroes” and added, “We wish to join them.” [NEW YORK TIMES, 8/2/1997] A note is found in their apartment that threatens a series of attacks unless several jailed militants were released, including Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, Ramzi Yousef, and Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the top leader of Hamas. A copy of the letter was sent to the State Department two days before their arrest. A portrait of Abdul-Rahman is also found on the wall of their apartment. [CNN, 8/2/1997; NEW YORK TIMES, 8/6/1997] However, on August 4, US officials announce that the two had no ties to Hamas or any other organization. In his trial, Mezer will say he planned to use the bombs to kill as many Jews as possible, though not in a subway. He will describe himself as a supporter of Hamas but not a member. He will be convicted and sentenced to life in prison. Khalil will be acquitted of the terrorism charge, but convicted of having a fake immigration card. He will be sentenced to three years in prison and then ordered deported. [CNN, 8/4/1997; NEW YORK TIMES, 7/21/1998; NATIONAL JOURNAL, 9/19/2001]

Entity Tags: Ramzi Yousef, Lafi Khalil, Hamas, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Gazi Ibrahim Abu Mezer, US Department of State, Omar Abdul-Rahman, Mousa Abu Marzouk

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline

 SHARE

10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998: Al-Qaeda Bombs US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, Killing Over 200





Bombings of the Nairobi, Kenya, US embassy

(left), and the Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, US embassy (right). [Source: Associated Press] (click image to enlarge) Two US embassies in Africa are bombed within minutes of each other. At 10:35, local time, a suicide car bomb attack in Nairobi, Kenya, kills 213 people, including 12 US nationals, and injures more than 4,500. Mohamed al-Owhali and someone known only as Azzam are the suicide bombers, but al-Owhali runs away at the last minute and survives. Four minutes later, a suicide car bomb attack in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, kills 11 and injures 85. The attacks are blamed on al-Qaeda. Hamden Khalif Allah Awad is the suicide bomber there. [PBS FRONTLINE, 2001; UNITED STATES OF AMERICA V. USAMA BIN LADEN, ET AL., DAY 38, 5/2/2001] The Tanzania death toll is low because, remarkably, the attack takes place on a national holiday so the US embassy there is closed. [MILLER, STONE, AND MITCHELL, 2002, PP. 195] The attack shows al-Qaeda has a capability for simultaneous attacks. The Tanzania bombing appears to have been a late addition, as one of the arrested bombers allegedly told US agents that it was added to the plot only about 10 days in advance. [UNITED STATE OF AMERICA V. USAMA BIN LADEN, ET AL., DAY 14, 3/7/2001] A third attack against the US embassy in Uganda does not take place due to a last minute delay (see August 7, 1998). [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 9/25/1998] August 7, 1998, is the eighth anniversary of the arrival of US troops in Saudi Arabia, and some speculate that is the reason for the date of the bombings. [GUNARATNA, 2003, PP. 46] In the 2002 book *The Cell*, reporters John Miller, Michael Stone, and Chris Miller will write, “What has become clear with time is that facets of the East Africa plot had been known beforehand to the FBI, the CIA, the State Department, and to Israeli and Kenyan intelligence services.... [N]o one can seriously argue that the horrors of August 7, 1998, couldn’t have been prevented.” They will also comment, “Inexplicable as the intelligence failure was, more baffling still was that al-Qaeda correctly presumed that a major attack could be carried out by a cell that US agents had already uncovered.” [MILLER, STONE, AND MITCHELL, 2002, PP. 195, 206] After 9/11, it will come to light that three of the alleged hijackers, Khalid Almihdhar, Nawaf Alhazmi, and Salem Alhazmi, had some involvement in the bombings (see October 4, 2001, Late 1999, and 1993-1999) and that the US intelligence community was aware of this involvement by late 1999 (see December 15-31, 1999), if not before.

Entity Tags: Hamden Khalif Allah Awad, Mohamed al-Owhali, Salem Alhazmi, Khalid Almihdhar, Azzam, Al-Qaeda, Nawaf Alhazmi

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline

 SHARE

October 1998: Vulgar Betrayal Investigation Nearly Shut Down





Mark Flessner. Two months after the US embassy bombings in Africa (see

10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998), FBI agent Robert Wright and his Vulgar Betrayal investigation discover evidence they think ties Saudi multimillionaire Yassin al-Qadi to the bombings. Since 1997, Wright had been investigating a suspected terrorist cell in Chicago that was connected to fundraising for Hamas. They discovered what they considered to be clear proof that al-Qadi and other people they were already investigating had helped fund the embassy bombings. Wright asks FBI headquarters for permission to open an investigation into this money trail at this time, but the permission is not granted. Wright will later recall, “The supervisor who was there from headquarters was right straight across from me and started yelling at me: ‘You will not open criminal investigations. I forbid any of you. You will not open criminal investigations against any of these intelligence subjects.’” Instead, they are told to merely follow the suspects and file reports, but make no arrests. Federal prosecutor Mark Flessner, working with the Vulgar Betrayal investigation, later will claim that a strong criminal case was building against al-Qadi and his associates. “There were powers bigger than I was in the Justice Department and within the FBI that simply were not going to let [the building of a criminal case] happen. And it didn’t happen.... I think there were very serious mistakes made. And I think, it perhaps cost, it cost people their lives ultimately.” [ABC NEWS, 12/19/2002] Flessner later will speculate that Saudi influence may have played a role. ABC News will report in 2002, “According to US officials, al-Qadi [has] close personal and business connections with the Saudi royal family.” [ABC NEWS, 11/26/2002] Wright later will allege that FBI headquarters even attempted to shut down the Vulgar Betrayal investigation altogether at this time. He says, “They wanted to kill it.” [ABC NEWS, 12/19/2002] However, he will claim, “Fortunately an assistant special agent in Chicago interceded to prevent FBI headquarters from closing Operation Vulgar Betrayal.” [FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 6/2/2003] He claims that a new supervisor will write in late 1998, “Agent Wright has spearheaded this effort despite embarrassing lack of investigative resources available to the case, such as computers, financial analysis software, and a team of financial analysts. Although far from being concluded, the success of this investigation so far has been entirely due to the foresight and perseverance of Agent Wright.” [FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 5/30/2002] When the story of this interference in the alleged al-Qadi-embassy bombings connection will be reported in late 2002, Wright will conclude, “September the 11th is a direct result of the incompetence of the FBI’s International Terrorism Unit. No doubt about that. Absolutely no doubt about that. You can’t know the things I know and not go public.” He will remain prohibited from telling all he knows, merely hinting, “There’s so much more. God, there’s so much more. A lot more.” [ABC NEWS, 12/19/2002]

Entity Tags: Yassin al-Qadi, Hamas, US Department of Justice, International Terrorism Unit, Mark Flessner, Robert Wright, Al-Qaeda, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Vulgar Betrayal

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline



Early 1999: FBI Fails to Pursue Possible Connection Between BMI and Embassy Bombings



BMI Inc. is a New Jersey-based investment firm with connections to a remarkable number of suspected terrorist financiers (see 1986-October 1999). In 1999, a former BMI accountant contacts the FBI and says that he believes BMI is supporting terrorism. He claims that money he “was transferring overseas on behalf of the company may have been used to finance the embassy bombings in Africa.”(see 10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998) US investigators establish a financial link between BMI and an Islamic charity named Mercy International. A Nairobi, Kenya, branch of that charity helped support the embassy bombings. FBI agent Robert Wright’s Vulgar Betrayal investigation had recently discovered evidence suggesting a link between Saudi multimillionaire Yassin al-Qadi and the embassy bombings (see October 1998), and al-Qadi is a major investor of BMI. The Vulgar Betrayal investigation begins looking at this new possible link. BMI president Soliman Biheiri hears that FBI agent Gamal Abdel-Hafiz has been told about this, and he asks to meet with Abdel-Hafiz to explain. Apparently, he does not realize that Abdel-Hafiz is an undercover FBI agent. Wright asks Abdel-Hafiz to wear a wire to the meeting, and Abdel-Hafiz refuses to do so (see Early 1999-March 21, 2000). Apparently the meeting with Biheiri never takes place and the possible connections between BMI and the embassy bombings are not fully investigated before 9/11. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 11/26/2002; WASHINGTON POST, 8/20/2003; FRONTLINE, 10/16/2003]

Entity Tags: Gamal Abdel-Hafiz, Mercy International, Federal Bureau of Investigation, BMI Inc., Soliman Biheiri, Robert Wright, Vulgar Betrayal

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline



October 12, 2001: US Declares Al-Qadi Terrorist Financier



Yassin al-Qadi. [Source: Arab News] Yassin al-Qadi is included in a new US list

of 39 individuals and organizations designated by the US as connected to terrorism (see October 12, 2001). The US officially declares him a “Specially Designated Global Terrorist” and his US assets are frozen. [CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 10/14/2001; CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 10/29/2001] Al-Qadi says he is “horrified and shocked” by the allegations. [CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 10/16/2001] There have been several accusations that al-Qadi laundered money to fund Hamas and al-Qaeda. He headed the Muwafaq (Blessed Relief) Foundation, a Saudi-based charity. Treasury officials allege it has funneled millions of dollars to al-Qaeda (see 1995-1998). [CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 10/16/2001; CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 10/29/2001] An investigation into his al-Qaeda connections was canceled by higher-ups in the FBI in October 1998 (see October 1998). In late 2002, Saudi Arabia will freeze al-Qadi’s accounts, an action the Saudis have taken against only three people. However, he has yet to be charged or arrested by the Saudis or the US. [WASHINGTON POST, 12/7/2002]

Entity Tags: Yassin al-Qadi, United States, US Department of the Treasury

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline



Early March 2002: Two FBI Agents Prevented from Discussing Unclassified Information with Reporter



FBI agents John Vincent (left), and Robert Wright (right) appear on ABC News. [Source: ABC News] In early March 2002, New York Times reporter Judith Miller hears that FBI agent Robert Wright is complaining about the FBI's mishandling of the Vulgar Betrayal investigation. Miller submits a list of written questions to Wright about his allegations. She also submits a similar list to FBI agent John Vincent, who also worked on Vulgar Betrayal and shares many of Wright's views. Wright and Vincent quickly reply, but the FBI does not allow Miller to read their answers. Meanwhile, Miller contacts some other FBI officials to hear their side of the issue. She is allowed to speak to them. Because Miller is unable to hear from Wright or Vincent, she decides not to write the story. In December 2002, the Justice Department will hear an appeal from Wright and rule that no classified information was contained in the answers to Miller's questions. But as of the end of 2005, all of Wright and Vincent's answers still have not been released by the FBI. [ROBERT G. WRIGHT, JR., V. FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, 5/16/2005]

Entity Tags: John Vincent, Judith Miller, US Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Robert Wright

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline



March 15, 2002: FBI Claims Broad Investigation of Hamas Operatives in US



Days after FBI agent Robert Wright renewed efforts to make his disputes with the FBI public (see Early March 2002), the Associated Press releases a story that seems designed to counter Wright's upcoming claims that the FBI has let large numbers of Hamas operatives live and fundraise openly in the US. The article says the FBI is conducting a "broad financial assault" against an "elaborate network of businesses and charities supporting Hamas" in the US. Further, "FBI terrorist tracking units monitoring, intercepting, and disrupting financial transactions from US supporters to Hamas overseas are moving closer to building criminal cases against some of the players." The article notes that the FBI's current efforts are based on Wright's pre-9/11 work in Chicago. The article also says, "Information developed during and after [Wright's] Chicago case has resulted in the execution of several national security warrants permitting electronic intercepts of key suspects here and overseas... In several instances, the FBI and other US agencies have decided to forgo arrests or indictments and instead have secretly disrupted Hamas activities so that agents could continue to monitor suspects and the flow of their money, officials said." [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 3/15/2002] Presumably, if any of the Hamas operatives were not suspicious that they were under surveillance before reading this article, they would be after reading it.

Entity Tags: Hamas, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Robert Wright

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline

March 20, 2002: SAAR Network Is Raided



US Customs Agents carry out boxes of evidence from SAAR network businesses on March 20, 2002. [Source: Mike Theiler/ Getty Images] Scores of federal agents raid 14 entities in a cluster of more than 100 homes, charities, think tanks, and businesses in Herndon, Virginia, a town just outside of Washington with a large Muslim population. No arrests are made and no organizations are shut down, but over 500 boxes of files and computer files are confiscated, filling seven trucks. This group of interlocking entities is widely known as the SAAR network (it is also sometimes called the Safa Group). SAAR stands for Sulaiman Abdul Aziz al-Rajhi, a Saudi banker and billionaire who largely funded the group beginning in the early 1980s (see July 29, 1983). He is said to be close to the Saudi ruling family and is on the Golden Chain, a list of early al-Qaeda supporters (see 1988-1989). [NEW YORK TIMES, 3/21/2002; FARAH, 2004, PP. 152; WALL STREET JOURNAL, 6/21/2004] The name and address of Salah al-Rajhi, Suleiman's brother, was discovered in 1998 in the telephone book of Wadih El-Hage (see September 15, 1998). El-Hage was bin Laden's personal secretary and was convicted of a role in the 1998 US embassy bombings. [NEW YORK TIMES, 3/25/2002] The raids are said to be primarily led by David Kane, a Customs agent working with a Customs investigation started just after 9/11 code-named Operation Greenquest. Many of the organizations are located at an office building at 555 Grove Street in Herndon. Kane writes in an affidavit for the raid that many organizations based there are "paper organizations" which "dissolve and are replaced by other organizations under the control of the same group of individuals." [NEW YORK TIMES, 3/21/2002; WALL STREET JOURNAL, 6/21/2004] Investigators appear to be primarily interested in the connections between the SAAR network and the Al Taqwa Bank, a Swiss bank closed after 9/11 on suspicions of funding al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups (see November 7, 2001). They are also interested in connections between both SAAR and Al Taqwa and the Muslim Brotherhood (see December 1982). According to author Douglas Farah, "US officials [later say] they had tracked about \$20 million from [SAAR] entities flowing through Nada's Bank al Taqwa, but said the total could be much higher. The ties between Nada and [SAAR] leaders were many and long-standing, as were their ties to other [Muslim] Brotherhood leaders.... For a time, Suleiman Abdel Aziz al-Rajhi, the SAAR Foundation founder, worked for Nada" at Al Taqwa's Liechtenstein branch. [NEW YORK TIMES, 3/25/2002; FARAH, 2004, PP. 154-155] Organizations and individuals targeted by the raid include:

- Yaqub Mirza. He is the director of virtually all of the organizations targeted in the raid. The Wall Street Journal claims, "US officials privately say Mr. Mirza and his associates also have connections to al-Qaeda and to other entities officially listed by the US as sponsors of terrorism." [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 4/18/2002; WALL STREET JOURNAL, 12/6/2002]
- The SAAR Foundation or the Safa Trust, an umbrella group for the SAAR network. The SAAR Foundation had recently disbanded and reformed as the Safa Trust. [NEW YORK TIMES, 3/21/2002; WALL STREET JOURNAL, 3/22/2002; WASHINGTON POST, 10/7/2002]
- Hisham Al-Talib, who served as an officer of the SAAR Foundation and Safa Trust, had previously been an officer of firms run by Youssef Nada. Nada is one of the main owners of

the Al Taqwa Bank. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 3/22/2002]

■Mar-Jac Poultry Inc., an Islamic chicken processor with operations in rural Georgia. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 6/21/2004]

■Jamal Barzinji. An officer of Mar-Jac and other organizations targeted in the raid, he had previously been involved with Nada's companies. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 3/22/2002]

■The International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO). [NEW YORK TIMES, 3/21/2002]

■The Muslim World League. It is considered to be a parent organization for the IIRO. [NEW YORK TIMES, 3/21/2002]

■International Institute for Islamic Thought (IIRT). The IIRT had been under investigation since at least 1998. [NEW YORK TIMES, 3/21/2002]

■Tarik Hamdi, an employee at IIRT. His home is also raided. He carried a battery for a satellite phone to Afghanistan in early 1998, and the battery was used for Osama bin Laden's phone (see May 28, 1998). [NEW YORK TIMES, 3/21/2002]

■Abdurahman Alamoudi, a top Muslim lobbyist who formerly worked for one of the SAAR organizations. His nearby home is raided. The search yields a memo on large transactions involving Hamas, operations against the Israelis, and the notation "Met Mousa Abu Marzouk in Jordan." Marzouk is a Hamas leader believed to be involved in fundraising for Hamas in the US for many years (see July 5, 1995-May 1997). Alamoudi is alleged to be a leader of the Muslim Brotherhood. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 6/21/2004]

■Samir Salah, an Egyptian-born president of the Piedmont Trading Corporation, which is part of the SAAR network. He is also a former director and treasurer of the Al Taqwa Bank's important Bahamas branch. Additionally, he was a founder of a Bosnian charity reportedly connected to a plot to blow up the US embassy in Bosnia. [NEW YORK TIMES, 3/25/2002]

■Ibrahim Hassabella. He is a shareholder of the SAAR Foundation and also a former secretary of the Al Taqwa Bank. [NEW YORK TIMES, 3/25/2002] Investigators will later find that much of SAAR's money seemed to disappear into offshore bank accounts. For instance, in 1998, SAAR claimed to have moved \$9 million to a charity based in the tax haven of the Isle of Man, but investigators will find no evidence the charity existed. One US official involved in the probe will say of SAAR, "Looking at their finances is like looking into a black hole." [WASHINGTON POST, 10/7/2002] In 2003, it will be reported that US investigators are looking into reports that the director of the SAAR foundation for most of the 1990s stayed in the same hotel as three of the 9/11 hijackers the night before the 9/11 attacks (see September 10, 2001). Some US investigators had looked into the SAAR network in the mid-1990s, but the FBI blocked the investigation's progress (see 1995-1998).

Entity Tags: Operation Greenquest, Muslim World League, Muslim Brotherhood, SAAR Foundation, Samir Salah, Sulaiman Abdul Aziz al-Rajhi, Mousa Abu Marzouk, US Customs Service, Tarik Hamdi, Jamal Barzinji, International Institute for Islamic Thought, International Islamic Relief Organization, Abdurahman Alamoudi, Al Taqwa Bank, Mar-Jac Poultry Inc., David Kane, Hisham Al-Talib, Hamas, Yacub Mirza, Ibrahim Hassabella

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline



June 2, 2003: Wright Alleges FBI Let Hamas Operate Freely in US to Help Derail Israel Peace Accords



FBI agent Robert Wright holds a second press conference, accusing the FBI of obstructing the Vulgar Betrayal investigation before 9/11, and then engaging in a cover up after 9/11. He criticizes what he calls the FBI's "pathetic anti-terrorism efforts." He says, "the FBI does not want Congress and others to know how the FBI's international terrorism unit was instrumental in the collapse of the Middle East peace process. The documents detail how the FBI allowed known terrorists, their co-conspirators and financiers to operate and roam freely throughout the United States while simultaneously turning a blind eye to the criminal activities of

terrorists and obstructing those of us who are truly trying to identify them and neutralize them.” He also states, “I blame the FBI’s international terrorism unit for being instrumental in the collapse in the Middle East peace process in the 1990s.” [FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 6/2/2003; CNN, 6/19/2003] The FBI responds by launching a dubious disciplinary investigation into Wright (see After June 2, 2003-December 2003). The same day Wright makes these allegations, news reports will indicate suspected Hamas operatives are still living openly in the US (see June 2-5, 2003).

Entity Tags: Robert Wright, Vulgar Betrayal, US Congress, Hamas, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline