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http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_911_timeline&projects_and_programs=vulgarBetrayal

Complete 911 Timeline

Robert Wright and Operation Vulgar Betrayal

Project: Complete 911 Timeline

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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 Yousuf 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

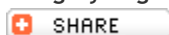
alleged associations. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 9/15/2003]

■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

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing, Bin Laden Family, BMI and Ptech



1989: Holy Land Foundation Formed in US



Holy Land Foundation logo. [Source: Holy Land Foundation]

The Holy Land Foundation charity is established in the US, two years after Hamas was founded in the Middle East. From the very beginning, there are signs that Holy Land supports illegal violent acts committed by Hamas. For instance, In 1990, Haitham Maghawri will apply for asylum in the US. He will tell the INS that he had been arrested several times in Lebanon, once for placing a car bomb. He will be denied asylum, but will gain permanent residence by marrying a US citizen. He then will become executive director of Holy Land. Additionally, government documents, corporate records, and Arabic-language articles show clear connections between Hamas, Holy Land, and a closely related group, the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP). For instance, in

the late 1980s, Mousa Abu Marzouk, a known political leader of Hamas living in the US, is the chairman of IAP's advisory committee and donates hundreds of thousands of dollars to the IAP. The IAP publicly recommends Muslims should donate money to Holy Land to support Hamas in the Palestinian *intifada* (uprising) against Israel. According to international law, violent acts against Israeli military targets are not illegal, but such acts against civilian targets are, and Hamas freely acknowledges that it does both. As a result, financial support in the US for Hamas is controversial and often done in secret. Hamas will not be officially declared a terrorist group until 1995, and after this all US financing support for Hamas will be done in secret (see January 1995). [DALLAS MORNING NEWS, 4/8/1996; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 12/12/2001; CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 12/16/2001; DALLAS MORNING NEWS, 12/20/2002]

Entity Tags: Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, Islamic Association for Palestine, Haitham Maghawri

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



1989-January 1993: Hamas Trains and Fundraises in US



Hamas logo. [Source: Hamas] Hamas is a Palestinian group known both for charitable works benefiting the Palestinian population and suicide attacks against Israeli targets. Hamas was formed in 1987, after a Palestinian uprising began the year before. Some claim that Israel indirectly supported and perhaps even directly funded Hamas in its early years in order to divide the Palestinians politically. For instance, a former senior CIA official will later claim that Israel's support for Hamas "was a direct attempt to divide and dilute support for a strong, secular PLO [Palestinian Liberation Organization] by using a competing religious alternative." Hamas begins attacks on Israeli military and civilian targets in 1989 and will begin suicide attacks on these targets in April 1994. The US will not officially declare Hamas a terrorist organization until 1995 (see January 1995). This means that funding Hamas is not a crime in the US before that year, but knowingly participating in or supporting a violent act overseas outside of the rules of war such as a suicide bombing could still potentially result in criminal charges in the US. [UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL, 6/18/2002; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 3/22/2004] Mohammad Salah, a Palestinian-American living in Chicago as a used car salesman, was reputedly trained by Hamas in terrorist techniques, including the use of chemical weapons and poisons, in the late 1980s. Working on the orders of high-level Hamas leader Mousa Abu Marzouk, Salah leads a four day Hamas training camp in the Chicago area in June 1990. According to one trainee, the approximately twenty-five trainees study Hamas philosophy, receive weapons training, and learn how to plant a car bomb. Two of the trainees are ultimately selected to fly to Syria, where they undergo more advanced training in making car bombs and throwing grenades. Ultimately, they are sent into Israel to launch attacks. Similar training camps take place in Kansas City and Wisconsin from 1989 through early 1991. Then, Salah is told by Marzouk to change his focus from training to fundraising. In early 1992, Salah receives about \$800,000 from Saudi multimillionaire Yassin al-Qadi, and he temporarily invests it in a BMI real estate scheme (see 1991). Between June 1991 and December 1992, Salah repeatedly travels to the Middle East and spends more than \$100,000 in direct support

of Hamas military activities. He attempts to spend the \$800,000 that is still invested in BMI, but BMI is unable to quickly liquidate the investment. Marzouk sends Salah almost \$1 million to spend. Salah goes to the West Bank in January 1993 and begins dispersing that money, but he is arrested before the end of the month. With Salah arrested, Hamas needs a new point man to collect and transfer new money raised in the US. Jamil Sarsour, a grocery store owner in Milwaukee, is chosen. It will be reported in 2003 that Sarsour is still living openly in Milwaukee (see June 2-5, 2003) [CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 10/29/2001; LA WEEKLY, 8/2/2002; FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 6/2/2003]

Entity Tags: Mousa Abu Marzouk, Central Intelligence Agency, Jamil Sarsour, Yassin al-Qadi, Mohammad Salah, Hamas, BMI Inc.

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



1991: Portion of Saudi Multimillionaire's BMI Investment Pays for Hamas Attacks



In 1991, Saudi multimillionaire Yassin al-Qadi transfers \$820,000 from a Swiss bank account to the Quranic Literacy Institute, a Muslim charity based in Chicago. The charity uses the money to purchase land in Woodridge, a quiet town on the outskirts of Chicago. Al-Qadi claims the money is an interest-free loan for charitable purposes, but in a June 1998 affidavit, FBI agent Robert Wright will claim the investment is designed to produce money for Middle East terrorism. According to the affidavit, most of about \$110,000 in income generated from the Woodridge property goes to Mohammad Salah, an admitted operative of Hamas. Salah is said to give \$96,000 of this money to another Hamas operative to buy automatic rifles, pistols, and ammunition. In March 1992, al-Qadi will send an additional \$27,000 directly to Salah. The institute will sell the Woodridge property for more than they had paid for it, but they will never repay al-Qadi's \$820,000. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 11/26/2002] In June 1998, the US will seize the Quranic Literacy Institute's assets (see June 9, 1998). In 2004, a US court will rule that the money from al-Qadi's original investment was used to fund a Hamas attack in 1996 that killed a US citizen (see May 12, 2000-December 9, 2004). [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 11/26/2002]

Entity Tags: Robert Wright, Hamas, Mohammad Salah, Yassin al-Qadi, Quranic Literacy Institute

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



1992: Militant Financial Front Said to Fund Terrorism Through Real Estate Investments in US



The Barnaby Knolls housing development, another Washington, DC, suburb funded by BMI Inc. [Source: Susan Biddle/ Washington Post] BMI Inc., is a New Jersey-based Muslim investment firm. Some of the lead investors have been suspected of supporting terrorism and other types of violence in the Middle East (see 1986-October 1999). In 1992, a branch of the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), a Saudi charity gives \$2.1 million to BMI to invest in real estate. The money disappears from BMI's books. By 1996, the CIA will secretly report that the IIRO supports terrorism financing in many locations around the world (see January 1996). In October 1999, BMI will go defunct after it is unable to repay this money to the IIRO branch. Additionally, the IIRO branch will give BMI over a million dollars between 1992 and 1998. BMI uses some money from the IIRO and other investors to build houses in

Oxon Hill, a Washington, D.C., suburb. Many well to do Muslims invest in the housing development because BMI advertises itself as investing according to Islamic principles. Most of the small investors as well as the middle class Americans who buy the Oxon Hill houses do not realize that the profits from the property sales go to Mousa Abu Marzouk, a known leader of Hamas. Marzouk is said to make \$250,000 in profits from BMI real estate deals in the early 1990s. In 2004, an Immigration and Customs Enforcement court declaration will assert that significant amounts of cash obtained from BMI by Marzouk is eventually used “in furtherance of Hamas terrorist operations.” [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 11/26/2002; WASHINGTON POST, 8/20/2003; WASHINGTON TIMES, 3/26/2004; WASHINGTON POST, 4/19/2004] By the end of 1992, BMI will have projected revenues in excess of \$25 million based largely on their real estate investments in the US. [US CONGRESS, 10/22/2003]

Entity Tags: Mousa Abu Marzouk, International Islamic Relief Organization, BMI Inc., Hamas

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing, BMI and Ptech

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January 1993: Confession Exposes Hamas Fundraising in US



Mohammad Salah. [Source: WGN-TV] In January 1993, Mohammad Salah, a Hamas operative living in the US (see 1989-January 1993), is arrested in the West Bank by the Israeli government on suspicion of transferring money to Hamas for guns and ammunition. News reports in February indicate that he is from Chicago and “had been found with more than \$100,000 and plans from Hamas leaders in the United States.” Apparently, this causes Chicago FBI agent Robert Wright to begin investigating his fundraising activities (see After January 1993). Salah reportedly quickly confesses to directing certain Hamas military operations, organizing military cells, and to handling more than \$1 million to purchase weapons. He names 23 organizations in the US that he says are helping to fund Hamas. He later will claim he was tortured into confessing. One of Salah’s associates is also arrested and reveals the existence of Hamas training camps in the US. Salah secretly will be tried by the Israeli government in 1994 and will plead guilty of the charges in 1995. He will be sentenced to five years in prison and released in 1997. [NEW YORK TIMES, 2/17/1993; EMERSON, 2002, PP. 82-83; FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 6/2/2003]

Entity Tags: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Israel, Robert Wright, Mohammad Salah, Hamas

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing

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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

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



October 1993: FBI Records Hamas Leaders Plotting in US but Take No Action



Sheikh Muhammad Al-Hanooti. [Source: Muslim World League Canada]

The FBI secretly records top Hamas leaders meeting in a Philadelphia hotel. Five Hamas leaders meet with three leaders of the Texas-based Holy Land Foundation charity (see 1989), including CEO Shukri Abu Baker and chairman Ghassan Elashi. A peace accord between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) had just been made, and this group meets to decide how to best oppose that. It is decided that “most or almost all of the funds collected [by Holy Land] in the future should be directed to enhance [Hamas] and to weaken the self-rule government” of Palestinian and PLO leader Yasser Arafat. According to an FBI memo released in late 2001 that summarizes the surveillance, “In the United States, they could raise funds, propagate their political goals, affect public opinion and influence decision-making of the US government.” The FBI also learns from the meeting that Hamas leader Mousa Abu Marzouk gave Holy Land large sums of cash to get the charity started. Holy Land will eventually grow to become the largest Muslim charity in the US. In a January 1995 public conference also monitored by the FBI, Holy Land CEO Abu Baker will be introduced to the audience as a Hamas senior vice president. One Hamas military leader there will tell the crowd, “I’m going to speak the truth to you. It’s simple. Finish off the Israelis! Kill them all! Exterminate them! No peace ever!” [NEW YORK TIMES, 12/6/2001; EMERSON, 2002, PP. 89-90; CBS NEWS, 12/18/2002]

Investigators conclude at the time that some of Holy Land’s “key decision makers [are] Hamas members, the foundation [is] the primary US fundraising organ for Hamas, and most of its expenditures [go] to build support for Hamas and its goal of destroying Israel.” [DALLAS MORNING NEWS, 12/5/2001] Sheikh Muhammad Al-Hanooti is one of the attendees for Hamas. In 1995, he

will be listed as an unindicted coconspirator in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing (see February 26, 1993). In the early 1990s, he is the imam at a Jersey City, New Jersey, mosque where at least one of the WTC bombers regularly prays and where al-Qaeda leader Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman often delivers incendiary speeches. An FBI report claims Al-Hanooti raised more than \$6 million for Hamas in 1993 alone, funneling much of it through the Holy Land Foundation. As of the end of 2005, Al-Hanooti will still be an imam in the US and will continue to deny all charges against him. [ALBANY TIMES-UNION, 6/30/2002] Chicago FBI agents Robert Wright and John Vincent try and fail to get a criminal prosecution against the attendees of this meeting. Instead, the attendees will not be charged with criminal activity connected to this meeting until 2002 and 2004 (see December 18, 2002-April 2005). Vincent will comment in 2002 that the arrests made that year could have been made in 1993 instead. One of the Hamas attendees of the meeting, Abdelhaleem Ashqar, will be not arrested until 2004 (see August 20, 2004), and other attendees like Ismail Selim Elbarasse have never been arrested. Elbarasse, a college roommate of Hamas leader Mousa Abu Marzouk, will be detained in 2004 on the accusation of working with Marzouk to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for Hamas, but not charged. [FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 6/2/2003; BALTIMORE SUN, 8/26/2004] Oliver “Buck” Revell, head of the Dallas FBI office at the time, will say after 9/11 that the US government should have shut down Holy Land as soon as it determined it was sending money to Hamas (even though raising money for Hamas is not a criminal act in the US until 1995 (see January 1995)). [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 12/12/2001]

Entity Tags: Shukri Abu Baker, Ghassan Elashi, Mousa Abu Marzouk, Palestinian Liberation Organization, Hamas, Sheikh Muhammad Al-Hanooti, Yasser Arafat, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Robert Wright, Oliver Revell, Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, Abdelhaleem Ashqar, John Vincent, Ismail Selim Elbarasse

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing


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1994-1995: Wright Allegedly Thwarted by FBI Intelligence

FBI agent Robert Wright had begun to investigate terrorism financing in 1993, and apparently quickly discovered many leads (see After January 1993). However, he will later claim that by 1994, he encounters resistance to his investigations from the FBI’s International Terrorism Unit. Wright will claim, “[T]here existed a concerted effort on the part of agents conducting counterterrorism intelligence investigations to insulate the subjects of their investigations from criminal investigation and prosecution.” In 2002, Wright will claim that the agents were doing this because they were lazy, and he will sue these unnamed agents. [UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL, 5/30/2002] But in 2003, he will suggest that in addition to such incompetence, his investigations into Hamas operatives living in the US were deliberately blocked so Hamas would be able to foment enough violence in Israel to derail the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. He will allege that some people in the FBI had a political agenda regarding Israel contrary to President Clinton’s (see June 2, 2003). [FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 6/2/2003]

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

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing

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

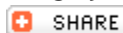


Steve McGonigle. [Source: University of Texas at Austin]

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

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



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

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing

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1995-1998: Alleged Ties Between Al-Qadi Charity and Terrorist Groups Are Uncovered; No Action Taken



Beginning in 1995, evidence begins to appear in the media suggesting that a Saudi charity named the Muwafaq Foundation has ties to radical militants. The foundation is run by a Saudi multimillionaire named Yassin al-Qadi.

- In 1995, media reports claim that Muwafaq is being used to fund mujaheddin fighters in Bosnia (see 1991-1995).
- Also in 1995, Pakistani police raid the foundation’s Pakistan branch in the wake of the arrest of WTC bomber Ramzi Yousef (see February 7, 1995). The head of the branch is held for several months, and then the branch is closed down. [CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 10/29/2001]
- A secret CIA report in January 1996 says that Muwafaq is has ties to the Al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya militant group and helps fund mujaheddin fighting in Bosnia and at least one training camp in Afghanistan (see January 1996).
- In February 1996, bin Laden says in an interview that he supports the Muwafaq branch in Zagreb, Croatia (which is close to the fighting in neighboring Bosnia). [GUARDIAN, 10/16/2001]
- A senior US official will later claim that in 1998, the National Commercial Bank, one of the largest banks in Saudi Arabia, ran an audit and determined that the Muwafaq Foundation gave \$3 million to al-Qaeda. Both al-Qadi and the bank later claim that the audit never existed. Al-Qadi asserts he has no ties to any terrorist group. [CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 10/29/2001] In 2003, former

counterterrorism “tsar” Richard Clarke will elaborate on this allegation, saying to a Senate committee, “Al-Qadi was the head of Muwafaq, a Saudi ‘relief organization’ that reportedly transferred at least \$3 million, on behalf of Khalid bin Mahfouz, to Osama bin Laden and assisted al-Qaeda fighters in Bosnia.” [US CONGRESS, 10/22/2003] (Note that bin Mahfouz, a Saudi billionaire, denies that he ever had any sort of tie to bin Laden or al-Qaeda and has not been officially charged of such ties anywhere.) [BIN MAHFOUZ INFO, 11/22/2005]

■ Al-Qadi will claim that he shut down Muwafaq in 1996, but it is referred to in UN and German charity documents as doing work in Sudan and Bosnia through 1998. [GUARDIAN, 10/16/2001; BBC, 10/20/2001]

■ Shortly after 9/11, the US Treasury Department will claim that Muwafaq funded Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK)/Al-Kifah (the predecessor of al-Qaeda), al-Qaeda, Hamas, and Abu Sayyaf (a Philippines militant group with ties to al-Qaeda), and other militant Islamic groups. [FRONTPAGE MAGAZINE, 6/17/2005]

However, despite all of these alleged connections, and the fact that the US will officially label al-Qadi a terrorism financier shortly after 9/11 (see October 12, 2001), the Muwafaq Foundation has never been officially declared a terrorist supporting entity. An October 2001 New York Times article will say that the reason, “administration officials said, was the inability of United States officials to locate the charity or determine whether it is still in operation.” But the same article will also quote a news editor, who calls Muwafaq’s board of directors “the creme de la creme of Saudi society.” [NEW YORK TIMES, 10/13/2001]

Entity Tags: Yassin al-Qadi, United Nations, US Department of the Treasury, Osama bin Laden, Hamas, Muwafaq Foundation, National Commercial Bank, Abu Sayyaf, Khalid bin Mahfouz, Switzerland, Al-Qaeda

Category Tags: Al-Qaeda in Balkans, Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing, BMI and Ptech

 SHARE

January 1995: US Officially Declares Hamas a Terrorist Organization

President Clinton issues an executive order making it a felony to raise or transfer funds to designated terrorist groups or their front organizations (see January 24, 1995). He additionally officially declares Hamas to be a terrorist organization and orders a freeze on all Hamas banking assets. It now becomes illegal in the US to donate money to Hamas or its related charities. [NEW YORK TIMES, 1/26/1995; NEW YORK TIMES, 8/16/1995] Surprisingly, the US will not declare al-Qaeda a terrorist organization until October 1999 (see October 8, 1999).

Entity Tags: Al-Qaeda, Hamas, William Jefferson (“Bill”) Clinton

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing

 SHARE

January 1995-April 1996: FBI and Treasury Cancel Raid on Suspected Charity

As President Clinton issues an executive order making it a felony to raise or transfer funds to designated terrorist groups or their front organizations (see January 1995), counterterrorism “tsar” Richard Clarke and Treasury official Richard Newcomb look for opportunities to use the new power. They review files to see if there are any clear cut cases to use it on. They decide that the Holy Land Foundation is in violation of the new order. Customs officials prepare to raid Holy Land’s headquarters in Arlington, Texas, and seize all their assets. However, FBI Director Louis Freeh and Treasury Secretary Bob Rubin object. Both claim the executive order might not hold up to legal challenges. Freeh additionally says he is concerned with alienating Arabs in the US, and Rubin is afraid the raid might discourage investment in the US. The raid is cancelled. [NEW YORK TIMES, 1/26/1995; CLARKE, 2004, PP. 98] The FBI is also aware of a public event held in January where the leader of Hamas’ political wing is the keynote speaker. He

urges the crowd, “I am going to speak the truth to you. It’s simple. Finish off the Israelis. Kill them all! Exterminate them! No peace ever!” Holy Land raises over \$200,000 for Hamas from the event. The same speaker helps Holy Land raise money with many other events in the US. [LOS ANGELES TIMES, 12/6/2001; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 3/15/2002] After Hamas leader Mousa Abu Marzouk is arrested trying to enter the US in July 1995 (see July 5, 1995-May 1997), agents who search his belongings find financial records showing that he invested \$250,000 in Holy Land in 1992. Holy Land continues to pay him monthly profits on his investment even after Hamas was declared a terrorist organization and news of his arrest made the front pages of US newspapers (in fact, Holy Land will continue to pay him through 2001). Although Holy Land is in clear violation of the law, the raid still does not occur. [DALLAS MORNING NEWS, 12/19/2002] In 1996, Congress will pass a law that confirms it is illegal to financially support officially designated terrorism groups such as Hamas. (see April 25, 1996). Clarke has never explained why Holy Land is not raided after the passage of this law, or in subsequent years when yet more evidence of terrorist ties are uncovered (see 1997; September 16, 1998-September 5, 2001). Holy Land will finally be raided after 9/11 (see December 4, 2001), largely on the basis of evidence collected in 1993 (see October 1993). In 2004, the US government will claim that Holy Land raised over \$12 million for Hamas between January 1995, when funding Hamas became illegal in the US, and December 2001, when Holy Land was shut down. [IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT, 7/27/2004]

Entity Tags: Richard A. Clarke, William Jefferson (“Bill”) Clinton, Richard Newcomb, US Department of the Treasury, Louis J. Freeh, Mousa Abu Marzouk, Hamas, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Bob Rubin, Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development

Category Tags: Counterterrorism Action Before 9/11, Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



February 1995: Hamas Operative Given Terrorist Status



The US officially designates Hamas operative Mohammad Salah a “Specially Designated Terrorist.” Wright had begun investigating Salah in early 1993 based on Salah’s widely publicized confession (see January 1993). Wright will later claim that he was ready to begin a criminal investigation in 1995, but he was not allowed to do so. Salah, who is serving a five year prison sentence in Israel at this time, will return to Chicago in November 1997 and live openly in the US despite his terrorist designation. Salah will not be charged for the crimes he allegedly committed in the early 1990s (see 1989-January 1993) until 2004 (see August 20, 2004). [FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 5/30/2002; FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 6/2/2003]

Entity Tags: Robert Wright, United States

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



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

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



1996: Vulgar Betrayal Investigation Launched



Vulgar Betrayal, the most significant US government investigation into terrorist financing before 9/11, is launched. This investigation grows out of investigations Chicago FBI agent Robert Wright had begun in 1993 (see After January 1993), and Wright appears to be the driving force behind Vulgar Betrayal. He later will say, "I named the case Vulgar Betrayal because of the many gross betrayals many Arab terrorists and their supporters" committed against the US, but the name will later prove to be bitterly ironic for him. Over a dozen FBI

agents are assigned it and a grand jury is empanelled to hear evidence. Wright will be removed from the investigation in late 1999 (see August 3, 1999), and it will be completely shut down in early 2000 (see August 2000). [FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 6/2/2003; CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 8/22/2004; LA WEEKLY, 8/25/2004; JUDICIAL WATCH, 12/15/2004] The investigation will first identify suspected terrorism financier Yassin al-Qadi as a target in 1997, but it will run into many obstacles in investigating him and others. Assistant US attorney Mark Flessner, the lead prosecutor for Vulgar Betrayal, will later claim that supervisors at the Justice Department's headquarters obstructed the investigation because it appeared to trace terrorism financing to important figures in Saudi Arabia, a key US ally. Wright will later state that had the leads into al-Qadi and others been fully investigated, "I believe the FBI could have identified other significant links to Osama bin Laden, links which may have been addressed to prevent future attacks against the United States by bin Laden and his terrorist trainees." [FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 6/2/2003; CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 8/22/2004]

Entity Tags: Mark Flessner, Robert Wright, Federal Bureau of Investigation, US Department of Justice, Vulgar Betrayal

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing, Counterterrorism Action Before 9/11



January 1996: CIA Report Exposes Militant Charity Fronts in Bosnia; Ties to Saudi Arabia and Other Governments Discovered



International Islamic Relief Organization logo. [Source: *International Islamic Relief Organization*] The CIA creates a report for the State Department detailing support for terrorism from prominent Islamic charities. The report, completed just as the Bosnian war is winding down, focuses on charity fronts that have helped the mujaheddin in Bosnia. It concludes that of more than 50 Islamic nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in existence, "available information indicates that approximately one-third... support terrorist groups or employ individuals who are suspected of having terrorist connections." The report notes that most of the offices of NGOs active in Bosnia are located in Zagreb, Sarajevo, Zenica, and Tuzla. There are coordination councils there organizing the work of the charity fronts. The report notes that some charities may be "backed by powerful interest groups," including governments. "We continue to have evidence that even high ranking members of the collecting or monitoring agencies in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Pakistan - such as the Saudi High Commission - are involved in illicit activities, including support for terrorists." The Wall Street Journal will later comment, "Disclosure of the report may raise new questions about whether enough was done to cut off support for terrorism before the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001... and about possible involvement in terrorism by Saudi Arabian officials." [CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 1/1996; WALL STREET JOURNAL, 5/9/2003] The below list of organizations paraphrases or quotes the report, except for informational asides in parentheses.

- The International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO). "The IIRO is affiliated with the Muslim World League, a major international organization largely financed by the government of Saudi Arabia." The IIRO has funded Hamas, Algerian radicals, Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (a.k.a. the

Islamic Group, an Egyptian radical militant group led by Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman), Ramzi Yousef, and six militant training camps in Afghanistan. “The former head of the IIRO office in the Philippines, Mohammad Jamal Khalifa, has been linked to Manila-based plots to target the Pope and US airlines; his brother-in-law is Osama bin Laden.”

- Al Haramain Islamic Foundation. It has connections to Al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya and helps support the mujaheddin battalion in Zenica. Their offices have been connected to smuggling, drug running, and prostitution.

- Human Concern International, headquartered in Canada. Its Swedish branch is said to be smuggling weapons to Bosnia. It is claimed “the entire Peshawar office is made up of [Al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya] members.” The head of its Pakistan office (Ahmed Said Khadr) was arrested recently for a role in the bombing of the Egyptian embassy in Pakistan (see November 19, 1995). (It will later be discovered that Khadr is a founder and major leader of al-Qaeda (see Summer 2001 and January 1996-September 10, 2001).)

- Third World Relief Agency (TWRA). Headquartered in Sudan, it has ties to Al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya. “The regional director of the organization, Elfatih Hassanein, is the most influential [charity] official in Bosnia. He is a major arms supplier to the government, according to clandestine and press reporting, and was forced to relocate his office from Zagreb in 1994 after his weapons smuggling operations were exposed. According to a foreign government service, Hassanein supports US Muslim extremists in Bosnia.” One TWRA employee alleged to also be a member of Al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya carried out a suicide car bombing in Rijeka, Croatia (see October 20, 1995).

- The Islamic African Relief Agency (IARA). Based in Sudan, it has offices in 30 countries. It is said to be controlled by Sudan’s ruling party and gives weapons to the Bosnian military in concert with the TWRA. (The US government will give the IARA \$4 million in aid in 1998 (see February 19, 2000).)

- Benevolence International Foundation (BIF) (the report refers to it by an alternate name, Lajnat al-Birr al-Islamiyya (LBI)). It supports mujaheddin in Bosnia. It mentions “one Zagreb employee, identified as Syrian-born US citizen Abu Mahmud,” as involved in a kidnapping in Pakistan (see July 4, 1995). [CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 1/1996] (This is a known alias (Abu Mahmoud al Suri) for Enaam Arnaout, the head of BIF’s US office.) [USA V. ENAAM M. ARNAOUT, 10/6/2003, PP. 37] This person “matches the description... of a man who was allegedly involved in the kidnapping of six Westerners in Kashmir in July 1995, and who left Pakistan in early October for Bosnia via the United States.”

- Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK), a.k.a. Al-Kifah. This group has ties to Ramzi Yousef, Osama bin Laden, Al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya, and possibly Hezbollah. Both the former director of its Zagreb office [Kamer Eddine Kherbane] and his deputy [Hassan Hakim] were senior members of Algerian extremist groups. Its main office in Peshawar, Pakistan, funds at least nine training camps in Afghanistan. “The press has reported that some employees of MAK’s New York branch were involved in the World Trade Center bombing [in 1993].” (Indeed, the New York branch, known as the Al-Kifah Refugee Center, is closely linked to the WTC bombing and the CIA used it as a conduit to send money to Afghanistan (see January 24, 1994).

- Muwafaq Foundation. Registered in Britain but based in Sudan, it has many offices in Bosnia. It has ties to Al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya and “helps fund the Egyptian Mujahedin Battalion in Bosnia” and “at least one training camp in Afghanistan” (see 1991-1995).

- Qatar Charitable Society, based in Qatar. It has possible ties to Hamas and Algerian militants. A staff member in Qatar is known to be a Hamas operative who has been monitored discussing militant operations. (An al-Qaeda defector will later reveal that in 1993 he was told this was one of al-Qaeda’s three most important charity fronts (see 1993)).

- Red Crescent (Iran branch). Linked to the Iranian government, it is “Often used by the Iranian [intelligence agency] as cover for intelligence officers, agents, and arms shipments.”

■Saudi High Commission. “The official Saudi government organization for collecting and disbursing humanitarian aid.” Some members possibly have ties to Hamas and Algerian militants (see 1996 and After).

■Other organizations mentioned are the Foundation for Human Rights, Liberties, and Humanitarian Relief (IHH) (a.k.a. the International Humanitarian Relief Organization), Kuwait Joint Relief Committee (KJRC), the Islamic World Committee, and Human Appeal International. [CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 1/1996]

After 9/11, former National Security Council official Daniel Benjamin will say that the NSC repeatedly questioned the CIA with inquiries about charity fronts. “We knew there was a big problem between [charities] and militants. The CIA report “suggests they were on the job, and, frankly, they were on the job.” [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 5/9/2003] However, very little action is taken on the information before 9/11. None of the groups mentioned will be shut down or have their assets seized.

Entity Tags: Muwafaq Foundation, Muslim World League, National Security Council, Saudi High Commission, Red Crescent (Iran branch), Qatar Charitable Society, US Department of State, Third World Relief Agency, Mohammed Jamal Khalifa, Islamic World Committee, Islamic African Relief Agency, Al-Gama’*a* al-Islamiyya, Al Haramain Islamic Foundation, Ahmed Said Khadr, Benevolence International Foundation, Central Intelligence Agency, Daniel Benjamin, Elfatih Hassanein, International Islamic Relief Organization, Kuwait Joint Relief Committee, Human Appeal International, Foundation for Human Rights, Hamas, Saudi Arabia

Category Tags: Al-Qaeda in Balkans, Counterterrorism Action Before 9/11, Mohammed Jamal Khalifa, Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Saudi Arabia, Terrorism Financing, Al-Kifah/MAK, BIF

 SHARE

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
Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



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 Marzook. [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

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



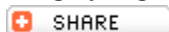
1997: US Action Against Holy Land Foundation Blocked Again



The US government once again considers going after the Holy Land Foundation for its ties to Hamas. Israel freezes the foundation’s assets this year, and the Treasury Department proposes making a similar asset freeze in the US as well. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 2/27/2002] In 2000, the New York Times will report, “Some government officials recommended that the group be prosecuted in 1997 for supporting Hamas, the militant Islamic group. But others opposed the effort, fearing that it would expose intelligence sources and spur public criticism of the administration as anti-Muslim.” [NEW YORK TIMES, 2/19/2000] Those pushing to prosecute the group would certainly include Vulgar Betrayal investigation FBI agents like Robert Wright. Wright had been aware of Holy Land’s ties to Hamas since 1993 (see After January 1993 and October 1993). However, Attorney General Janet Reno blocks the proposal and no action is taken. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 2/27/2002] Counterterrorism “tsar” Richard Clarke claims that in 1995 he pushed for something to be done to Holy Land, but higher-ups overruled him (see January 1995-April 1996).

Entity Tags: Janet Reno, Hamas, Vulgar Betrayal, US Department of the Treasury, Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, Robert Wright

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



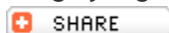
1997: FBI Supervisor Said to Hide Information about Hamas Operatives from Other FBI Agents



FBI agent Robert Wright begins investigating two known Hamas suspects believed to be residing in the Chicago area. He asks a relief supervisor whether he has any information about these suspects. The relief supervisor says he does not. Wright spends several weeks investigating the location of these two terrorist suspects, only to later learn the relief supervisor not only knew one of the suspects had been arrested overseas in 1995 as a result of terrorist activities, but that he had placed a copy of a statement provided by the arrested terrorist to overseas authorities in an obscure location where no one would find it. Wright will make this claim in a 1995 court case. He will allege this is just one instance of FBI superiors withholding information from his Vulgar Betrayal investigation. [ROBERT G. WRIGHT, JR., V. FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, 5/16/2005] One suspect who seems to fit the description of one of the two suspects is Chicago resident Mohammed Joma Hilmi Jarad. He was arrested in Israel in 1995, confessed to being a Hamas operative, then was released and returned to live in Chicago. [NEW YORK TIMES, 8/16/1995]

Entity Tags: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Hamas, Mohammed Joma Hilmi Jarad, Robert Wright, Vulgar Betrayal

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



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

Category Tags: Warning Signs, Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing, Alleged Al-Qaeda Linked Attacks, Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman



April 1998: FBI Agent Stifles Investigation into Ptech Figures





John Vincent. [Source: Patriot TV] FBI agent Robert Wright will later recall that at

this time, he is pleasantly surprised when FBI management provides his Vulgar Betrayal investigation with a 10 year veteran agent to assist with his efforts. According to Wright, the unnamed agent is assigned to “investigate a company and its 20-plus subsidiaries which were linked to a major financier of international terrorism.” However, Wright and fellow agent John Vincent will soon become dismayed when they realize the agent is not actually doing any work. He merely shuffles papers to look busy when people walk by. He will continue to do no work on this important assignment until the Vulgar Betrayal investigation is effectively shut down one year later (see August 3, 1999). Wright will claim in 2003, “The important assignment he was given involved both the founder and the financier of Ptech.” Presumably these could be references to Oussama Ziade, the president and chief founder of Ptech, and Yassin al-Qadi, apparently Ptech’s largest investor. [FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 6/2/2003]

Entity Tags: Oussama Ziade, Yassin al-Qadi, Robert Wright, Vulgar Betrayal, Ptech Inc., Federal Bureau of Investigation, John Vincent

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing, BMI and Ptech



June 9, 1998: US Seizes Funds Connected to Hamas Operative and Al-Qadi



FBI agent Robert Wright, apparently frustrated that his Vulgar Betrayal investigation is not allowed to criminally charge Hamas operative Mohammad Salah and Saudi multimillionaire Yassin al-Qadi, gets a court order to seize \$1.4 million in bank accounts and the Chicago house Salah owns. Wright says in the suit that the money is linked directly to al-Qadi and would be destined for terrorist activities. Wright uses a civil forfeiture law that had been frequently used to seize properties and funds of drug dealers or gangsters, but had never been used for accused terrorists. Salah had living in Chicago since his release from an Israeli prison in November 1997. A highly detailed affidavit tracks wire transfers from the US and Switzerland to specific Hamas attacks in Israel. Al-Qadi’s money was deposited in bank accounts controlled by Salah, who is called an important courier and financial agent for Hamas. Then Salah invested the money in BMI Inc., a real estate investment firm with ties to many suspected terrorism financiers (see 1986-October 1999). Some of the money is eventually withdrawn by Salah, brought to the West Bank, and given to Hamas operatives there (see 1989-January 1993). Salah denies the charges and says all the transfers were for charitable causes. Al-Qadi also claims innocence. [NEW YORK TIMES, 6/14/1998; UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL, 5/30/2002; WALL STREET JOURNAL, 12/6/2002] However, a federal judge agrees to the defendants’ request for a stay order, and the suit is said to “languish” in a Chicago federal court. The funds remain frozen and Salah continues to live in his house. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 9/25/2001] During the summer of 2001, the government will negotiate with Salah to settle the civil case, according to court records. [CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 8/22/2004] The Justice Department will even move ahead with plans to return \$1.4 million that Wright had seized from al-Qadi. But the transfer will be set for October 2001, “and the 9/11 attacks came first, prompting wiser minds at Justice to quash the move.” [NEW YORK POST, 7/14/2004] But also, in 2000, the parents

of a US teenager said to have been killed by a Hamas attack in Israel will sue Salah and others for damages based on this investigation, and they will win the suit in 2004 (see May 12, 2000-December 9, 2004). The US government will finally arrest Salah in 2004, and will charge him for many of the same offenses described in this 1998 case (see August 20, 2004). As of the end of 2005, al-Qadi has not been charged of any crime.

Entity Tags: BMI Inc., Vulgar Betrayal, US Department of Justice, Al-Qaeda, Mohammad Salah, Hamas, Robert Wright

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



September 16, 1998-September 5, 2001: Link with Bin Laden's Secretary Leads to Muslim Charities in Texas



On September 15, 1998, bin Laden's former personal secretary Wadih El-Hage is arrested in the US (see September 15, 1998). His address book had been discovered in 1997 (see Shortly After August 21, 1997), but apparently after his arrest investigators pursue new leads from it. One name in the book is Ghassan Dahduli. Both El-Hage and Dahduli lived in Tucson, Arizona in the late 1980s. Dahduli ran an Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP) office from the same Tucson mosque that El-Hage attended. Dahduli moved to Richardson, Texas, with the IAP office in 1990, around the time El-Hage moved to Arlington, Texas. Both towns are in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. El-Hage lived in Africa for much of the 1990s, but by 1998 he was back in Texas and he was seen in a Texas restaurant with Dahduli. The IAP, InfoCom, and Holy Land Foundation all have offices next to each other, and all have been accused of being fronts for Hamas. Dahduli worked at both the IAP and InfoCom. [DALLAS MORNING NEWS, 9/23/2001; NATION, 12/24/2001] Based on the connection between Dahduli and El-Hage and other information, the FBI opens up a criminal investigation into all three organizations in 1999. They determine that Hamas leader Mousa Abu Marzouk invested \$150,000 in InfoCom in 1992, and his wife Nadia Marzouk invested \$250,000 in 1993. On September 25, 2000, federal agents confront Dahduli in a shopping center parking lot and threaten to deport him, but offer to not do so if he agrees to become an informant on these organizations. Dahduli refuses and publicizes the offer to turn informant, even putting information about it on the Internet. He applies for political asylum in the US. [NATION, 12/24/2001; DALLAS MORNING NEWS, 12/20/2002] In early 2001, the Dallas Morning News begins publishing stories about InfoCom and its suspected ties to Hamas. Apparently, some combination of the Dahduli-El-Hage link, media pressure, and the investments of Marzouk and his wife prompts the FBI to raid InfoCom on September 5, 2001, one week before 9/11 (see September 5-8, 2001). It will be the only significant action the US government takes against a Muslim charity in the US before 9/11. [COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW, 1/2002] Shortly after 9/11, Dahduli will be arrested and questioned. He will be deported to Jordan in December 2001. [NATION, 12/24/2001]

Entity Tags: Wadih El-Hage, Mousa Abu Marzouk, Nadia Marzouk, Islamic Association for Palestine, InfoCom Corporation

Category Tags: 1998 US Embassy Bombings, Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Wadih El-Hage, Terrorism Financing



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

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing, BMI and Ptech, Counterterrorism Action Before 9/11, 1998 US Embassy Bombings



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

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, BMI and Ptech, Terrorism Financing, 1998 US Embassy Bombings



Early 1999-March 21, 2000: Muslim FBI Agent Refuses to Wear Wire in Meeting with BMI Head; FBI Infighting Follows



Gamal Abdel-Hafiz. [Source: Charles Ommanney]

Gamal Abdel-Hafiz, the only Muslim FBI agent in the years just prior to 9/11, becomes involved in FBI agent Robert Wright’s Vulgar Betrayal investigation in early 1999. An accountant working for BMI Inc., an investment firm with connections to many suspected terrorism financiers (see 1986-October 1999), tells Abdel-Hafiz that he is worried that BMI funds had helped fund the 1998 US embassy bombings in Africa (see 10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998). BMI president Soliman Biheiri hears that Abdel-Hafiz had been told about this, and wants to meet with him to discuss it (apparently without realizing that Abdel-Hafiz is an undercover FBI agent). Wright asks Abdel-Hafiz to wear a wire to the meeting, but Abdel-Hafiz refuses to do so. This leads to infighting within the FBI. On July 6, 1999, Abdel-Hafiz files a religious discrimination complaint, accusing Wright of making derogatory comments to fellow agents. [FRONTLINE, 10/16/2003] On March 21, 2000, Wright makes a formal internal complaint about Abdel-Hafiz. FBI agent Barry Carmody seconds Wright’s complaint. Wright and Carmody accuse Abdel-Hafiz of hindering investigations by openly refusing to record other Muslims. In an affidavit, Wright claims that Abdel-Hafiz refused to wear the wire “based on religious reasons saying, ‘A Muslim doesn’t

record another Muslim.”” Abdel-Hafiz does not deny the quote, but claims it was taken out of context. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 11/26/2002; ABC NEWS, 12/19/2002; FRONTLINE, 10/16/2003] Federal prosecutor Mark Flessner and other FBI agents back up the allegations against Abdel-Hafiz. [ABC NEWS, 12/19/2002] Carmody will also claim that, in a different investigation, Abdel-Hafiz hindered an inquiry into the possible ties to Islamic militants of fired University of South Florida Professor Sami al-Arian by refusing to record a conversation with the professor in 1998. [TAMPA TRIBUNE, 3/4/2003] Complaints to superiors and headquarters about Abdel-Hafiz never get a response. [FOX NEWS, 3/6/2003] “Far from being reprimanded, in February 2001 Abdel-Hafiz [is] promoted to one of the FBI’s most important anti-terrorism posts, the American Embassy in Saudi Arabia, to handle investigations for the FBI in that Muslim country.” [ABC NEWS, 12/19/2002; FRONTLINE, 10/16/2003] In 2003, FBI agent John Vincent will complain, “Five different FBI field divisions complained of this agent’s activities, and the FBI headquarters response was to promote him to a sensitive position in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.” [FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 6/2/2003] Abdel-Hafiz will be suspended in February 2003 over charges that he faked a break-in of his own house in order to collect \$25,000 in insurance benefits and then failed an FBI polygraph test when asked about it. In January 2004, the FBI’s Disciplinary Review Board will reinstate him after deciding there was insufficient evidence in the case. [TAMPA TRIBUNE, 3/4/2003; FRONTLINE, 10/16/2003]

Entity Tags: Sami Al-Arian, Vulgar Betrayal, Mark Flessner, Barry Carmody, Robert Wright, Federal Bureau of Investigation, John Vincent, Gamal Abdel-Hafiz

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing, BMI and Ptech



August 3, 1999: Wright Removed from Vulgar Betrayal Investigation



Chicago FBI agent Robert Wright is abruptly removed from the Vulgar Betrayal investigation into terrorism financing (see 1996). The entire investigation apparently winds down without his involvement, and will shut down altogether in 2000 (see August 2000). A New York Post article will state, “[T]he official reason was a fear that Wright’s work would disrupt FBI intelligence-gathering. My sources find this dubious: After years of monitoring these individuals, the bureau had likely learned all it could.... [But] conversations with FBI personnel indicate that he was told informally that his work was too embarrassing to the Saudis. In support of this is the fact that Wright was shut down as he seemed to be closing in on Yassin al-Qadi.” [WASHINGTON POST, 5/11/2002; NEW YORK POST, 7/14/2004] Wright later will claim that a reason he is given for being taken off the investigation is a recent dispute he is having with a Muslim FBI agent who refuses to wear a wire (see Early 1999-March 21, 2000). [FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 6/2/2003] He is also accused of sexually harassing a female FBI agent. This charge is investigated and later dropped. [CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 8/22/2004] Wright is removed from counterterrorism work altogether and remains that way at least through early 2002.

[ASSOCIATED PRESS, 3/15/2002] In September 1999, he will hire Chicago lawyer David Schippers, famed as House investigative counsel in the Clinton impeachment, to help fight the closure of the investigation. Although Schippers is known as an enemy of President Clinton, Wright will say, “I’m confident President Clinton had absolutely nothing to do with the lack of support and eventual closure of the Vulgar Betrayal investigation.” [FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 6/2/2003; CNN, 6/19/2003]

Entity Tags: International Terrorism Unit, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Vulgar Betrayal, Robert Wright, David Schippers, Yassin al-Qadi

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing, Counterterrorism Policy/Politics



February 19, 2000: US Said to Be Investigating 30 Charities for Supporting Terrorism, But No Action Until After 9/11



The New York Times reports that “In recent months, American officials have circulated within the government a list of more than 30 groups that they are examining for links to terrorism, at least two of which are based in the United States.” The only groups specifically mentioned as being on the list are: [NEW YORK TIMES, 2/19/2000]

- The Islamic African Relief Agency (IARA), a charity said to be tied to the government of Sudan, which the US officially lists as a terrorism sponsor. The State Department’s USAID program gave the IARA two grants in 1998 worth \$4.2 million for work in Mali, then later cancelled the grants (see November 1996-Late December 1999).

- The Holy Land Foundation, based in Richardson, Texas.

- The Global Relief Foundation, also based in Richardson, Texas.

- Human Concern International, a Canadian-based group shut down by Canada in 1997.

The US government is said to be stepping up investigations into such charities, and talking to countries in the Persian Gulf about their support of specific charities. “But officials said Washington had been reluctant to interfere in a domain safeguarded by constitutional guarantees of free association and separation of church and state. In addition, officials said, they lacked evidence that could be used in public court proceedings.” [NEW YORK TIMES, 2/19/2000]

Later in 2000, the State Department will ask its USAID program not to give aid to Holy Land any more. It will cite the payments the charity gives to the families of suicide bombers. [NEW YORK TIMES, 8/25/2000]

But aside from this one minor step, the US will take no actions against any of the four named charities until after 9/11. Three of the charities will be shut down shortly after 9/11 (see December 4, 2001; October 12, 2001), while in 2004 the IARA will be shut down for providing “direct financial support” to al-Qaeda. [NEW YORK TIMES, 8/25/2000]

Entity Tags: Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, Human Concern International, Global Relief Foundation, US Department of Justice, Islamic African Relief Agency

Category Tags: Counterterrorism Action Before 9/11, Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



May 12, 2000-December 9, 2004: Parents of Slain Teenager Successfully Sue Hamas Entities



David Boim. [Source: Public domain]

The parents of a US teenager killed in a West Bank attack sue Mohammad Salah, Mousa Abu Marzouk, the Holy Land Foundation, Quranic Literacy Institute, and Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP) for \$600 million. Stanley and Joyce Boim claim these people and entities were a “a network of front organizations” in the US that funded the attack that killed their 17-year-old David Boim. Their son was gunned down in 1996 while waiting at a bus stop; the attack was blamed on Hamas. Suing suspected terrorists for damages is allowed under a 1992 law, but it had never been done before. The suit claims that the Hamas finance network paid for the vehicle, machine guns, and ammunition used to kill Boim. The case is based on the investigative work of FBI agent Robert Wright and his Vulgar Betrayal investigation. Salah’s house and bank accounts were seized as

part of the investigation. [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 5/14/2000; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 6/6/2002] The Holy Land Foundation is defended in the suit by Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, a Washington law firm said to have influence with the Bush family. For instance, one firm partner is James Langdon, one of the future President Bush's close Texas friends. [BOSTON HERALD, 12/11/2001] On December 9, 2004, it will be announced that the elder Boims have won the suit. All of the above-mentioned people and entities will be found guilty and ordered to pay the Boims a total of \$156 million. There is little chance the Boims will ever see all of that large sum, especially since the organizations will be shut down and have their assets frozen in the years since the suit began. Joyce Boim will say, "I finally have justice for David. He's up there, smiling down." [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 12/9/2004]

Entity Tags: Vulgar Betrayal, Hamas, Mousa Abu Marzouk, Islamic Association for Palestine, Robert Wright, Mohammad Salah, Quranic Literacy Institute, Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, David Boim, Joyce Boim, Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, Stanley Boim

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



Summer 2000-September 11, 2001: Illegal FBI Activity Leads to Suspension of Surveillance of Al-Qaeda Suspects in US



FISA court judge Royce Lamberth was angry with the FBI over misleading statements made in FISA wiretap applications. [Source: *Public domain*] While monitoring foreign terrorists in the US, the FBI listens to calls made by suspects as a part of an operation called Catcher's Mitt, which is curtailed at this time due to misleading statements by FBI agents. It is never revealed who the targets of the FBI's surveillance are under this operation, but below are some of the terrorism suspects under investigation in the US at the time:

- Imran Mandhai, Shuyeb Mossa Jokhan and Adnan El Shukrijumah in Florida. They are plotting a series of attacks there, but Mandhai and Jokhan are brought in for questioning by the FBI and surveillance of them stops in late spring (see November 2000-Spring 2002 and May 2, 2001);
- Another Florida cell connected to Blind Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman. The FBI has been investigating it since 1993 (see (October 1993-November 2001));
- Al-Qaeda operatives in Denver (see March 2000);
- A Boston-based al-Qaeda cell involving Nabil al-Marabh and Raed Hijazi. Cell members provide funding to terrorists, fight abroad, and are involved in document forging (see January 2001, Spring 2001, and Early September 2001);
- Fourteen of the hijackers' associates the FBI investigates before 9/11. The FBI is still investigating four of these people while the hijackers associate with them; [US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003, PP. 169 
- Hamas operatives such as Mohammed Salah in Chicago. Salah invests money in the US and sends it to the occupied territories to fund attacks (see June 9, 1998).

When problems are found with the applications for the wiretap warrants, an investigation is

launched (see Summer-October 2000), and new requirements for warrant applications are put in place (see October 2000). From this time well into 2001, the FBI is forced to shut down wiretaps of al-Qaeda-related suspects connected to the 1998 US embassy bombings and Hamas (see March 2001 and April 2001). One source familiar with the case says that about 10 to 20 al-Qaeda related wiretaps have to be shut down and it becomes more difficult to get permission for new FISA wiretaps. Newsweek notes, “The effect [is] to stymie terror surveillance at exactly the moment it was needed most: requests from both Phoenix [with the Ken Williams memo (see July 10, 2001)] and Minneapolis [with Zacarias Moussaoui’s arrest] for wiretaps [will be] turned down [by FBI superiors],” (see August 21, 2001 and August 28, 2001). [NEWSWEEK, 5/27/2002] Robert Wright is an FBI agent who led the Vulgar Betrayal investigation looking into allegations that Saudi businessman Yassin al-Qadi helped finance the embassy bombings, and other matters. In late 2002, he will claim to discover evidence that some of the FBI intelligence agents who stalled and obstructed his investigation were the same FBI agents who misrepresented the FISA petitions. [JUDICIAL WATCH, 9/11/2002]

Entity Tags: Robert Wright, Shuyeb Mossa Jokhan, Raed Hijazi, Royce Lamberth, Al-Qaeda, Zacarias Moussaoui, Ken Williams, Mohammad Salah, Adnan Shukrijumah, Central Intelligence Agency, Nabil al-Marabh, Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, Imran Mandhai, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Timeline Tags: 9/11 Timeline

Category Tags: Counterterrorism Action Before 9/11, 1998 US Embassy Bombings, Phoenix Memo, Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Alhazmi and Almihdhar, Nabil Al-Marabh, Zacarias Moussaoui



August 2000: Vulgar Betrayal Investigation Shut Down



Frances Townsend. [Source: White House] Vulgar Betrayal, the most significant US government investigation into terrorist financing before 9/11, shuts down. FBI agent Robert Wright launched the investigation in 1996 (see 1996) and was removed from the investigation in late 1999 (see August 3, 1999). Apparently the investigation accomplished little after Wright’s departure. [LA WEEKLY, 8/25/2004; JUDICIAL WATCH, 12/15/2004; ROBERT G. WRIGHT, JR., V. FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, 5/16/2005] A March 2000 affidavit named Yassin al-Qadi as a source of terrorist funds in Chicago, but no charges are brought against him. [ABC NEWS, 12/19/2002] Mark Flessner, an assistant US attorney assigned to Vulgar Betrayal in 1996, later will recall, “Vulgar Betrayal was a case where the FBI’s intelligence agents would not cooperate with the criminal agents trying to put these guys in jail. They refused to let us arrest them. They only wanted to watch them conduct their business.” He will also claim that Frances Townsend, a Justice Department official working a variety of posts, helps close down the investigation. He will say Townsend did not share information but “deliberately obstructed it. And I found that very disconcerting.” He will claim that she completely supports FBI intelligence agents and refuses to share their information with the Vulgar Betrayal investigation. A federal grand jury was impaneled in 1996 to support Vulgar Betrayal, but without the information from FBI intelligence, Flessner did not have enough evidence to return indictments. “I couldn’t even get permission to do the basic things you do, such as

collecting phone numbers from their targets' incoming and outgoing calls, and addresses from their mail." With the shut down of the investigation in 2000, Flessner will resign from the Justice Department in frustration. After 9/11, Townsend will be appointed President Bush's Homeland Security Adviser and counterterrorism director for the National Security Council. [LA WEEKLY, 8/25/2004]

Entity Tags: Mark Flessner, Frances Townsend, Vulgar Betrayal, Federal Bureau of Investigation, International Terrorism Unit, US Department of Justice

Category Tags: Counterterrorism Action Before 9/11, Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



January-March 2001: Wright Told to 'Let Sleeping Dogs Lie'



Kathleen McChesney. [Source: FBI] FBI agent Robert Wright is continuing to protest and fight the cancellation of the Vulgar Betrayal investigation (see August 2000). In January 2001, he claims that his supervisor tells him, "I think it's just better to let sleeping dogs lie." FBI agent John Vincent backs up the allegation. [ABC NEWS, 12/19/2002] In March 2001, Wright meets with the Chicago special agent-in-charge, who appears to be Kathleen McChesney, given that Wright calls this person "she" and McChesney held that position since January 1999. [FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, 12/2001; FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 6/2/2003] He tells her that "the international terrorism unit of the FBI is a complete joke." Within three weeks, the FBI opens another disciplinary investigation on Wright, charging that he had supplied classified information to an assistant US attorney. Wright is later cleared of the charges. In 2002, Wright will claim, "This was a pathetic attempt... before the Sept. 11th attacks, to further silence me from going public about the FBI's negligence and incompetence." [CNN, 6/19/2003; NEW YORK POST, 7/14/2004] A lawyer speaking for Wright after 9/11 will blame Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division Michael Chertoff for refusing to take Wright's concerns seriously before 9/11. Chertoff will later be promoted to head the Department of Homeland Security. [FOX NEWS, 5/30/2002]

Entity Tags: Vulgar Betrayal, Federal Bureau of Investigation, John Vincent, Kathleen McChesney, Michael Chertoff, Robert Wright, International Terrorism Unit

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing, Counterterrorism Policy/Politics



Late January 2001: US Intelligence Told to Back Off from Bin Laden and Saudis





A. Q. Khan receiving a medal. [Source: Associated Press] The BBC later reports, “After the elections, [US intelligence] agencies [are] told to ‘back off’ investigating the bin Ladens and Saudi royals, and that anger[s] agents.” This follows previous orders to abandon an investigation of bin Laden relatives in 1996 (see February-September 11, 1996), and difficulties in investigating Saudi royalty. [BBC, 11/6/2001] An unnamed “top-level CIA operative” says there is a “major policy shift” at the National Security Agency at this time. Bin Laden could still be investigated, but agents could not look too closely at how he got his money. One specific CIA investigation hampered by this new policy is an investigation in Pakistani nuclear scientist A. Q. Khan and his Khan Laboratories. Khan is considered the “father” of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons capability. But since the funding for this nuclear program gets traced back to Saudi Arabia, restrictions are placed on the inquiry. [PALAST, 2002, PP. 99-100] Also in early 2001, FBI agent Robert Wright, attempting to pursue an investigation into Saudi multimillionaire Yassin al-Qadi, is told by FBI superiors, “it’s just better to let sleeping dogs lie”(see January-March 2001). Reporter Greg Palast notes that President Clinton was already hindering investigations by protecting Saudi interests. However, as he puts it, “Where Clinton said, ‘Go slow,’ Bush policymakers said, ‘No go.’ The difference is between closing one eye and closing them both.” [PALAST, 2002, PP. 102]

Entity Tags: Abdul Qadeer Khan, National Security Agency, Bin Laden Family, Yassin al-Qadi, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Central Intelligence Agency, William Jefferson (“Bill”) Clinton, Osama bin Laden

Timeline Tags: A. Q. Khan’s Nuclear Network

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Saudi Arabia, Terrorism Financing, Bin Laden Family, Pakistani Nukes & Islamic Militancy, Counterterrorism Policy/Politics



February-March 2001: Politicians Warned about Terrorism Funding in US



In September 1999, FBI agent Robert Wright hired David Schippers as his lawyer to represent him in his troubles with the FBI (see August 3, 1999). Schippers was the House Judiciary Committee’s chief investigator in the Clinton impeachment trial. Schippers later will claim that at this time he begins contacting congresspeople that he knows from the impeachment trial with concerns about terrorism. He later recalls, “I was talking primarily about the infiltration of Hamas [inside the US]—how they’re moving the money. I have evidence on that. I have all kinds of material.” In an obvious reference to the Vulgar Betrayal investigation, he also will assert that he knew US intelligence had “established the sources of the money flow of bin Laden” as early as 1996, but by 1999 had faced high-level obstructions into investigating these matters. But he will claim, “I couldn’t get anybody to talk to me.”

[WORLDNETDAILY, 10/21/2001; AHMED, 2004, PP. 258-260] Schippers later claims he will continue to warn politicians about terrorism funding in the US, while also warning them about a potential

al-Qaeda attack on lower Manhattan based on information he will receive in May 2001 (see May 2001; July-Late August 2001).

Entity Tags: US Congress, Hamas, Federal Bureau of Investigation, David Schippers

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



April 2001: Surveillance of Al-Qaeda and Hamas in US Curtailed



A surveillance program known as Catcher's Mitt is curtailed, and ten to twenty al-Qaeda wiretaps, as well as some Hamas wiretaps, are not renewed. This follows the discovery of errors in applications for warrants under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) related to both al-Qaeda and Hamas and the introduction of new procedures (see Summer 2000-September 11, 2001, Summer-October 2000, October 2000, and March 2001). [NEW YORK TIMES, 9/19/2001; NEWSWEEK, 5/27/2002; NEWSWEEK, 3/29/2004] In addition, other similar programs such as Able Danger and Monarch Passage are shut down at the same time (see (February-March 2001) and January-March 2001).

Entity Tags: Al-Qaeda, Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, Catcher's Mitt, Hamas

Timeline Tags: 9/11 Timeline

Category Tags: Counterterrorism Action Before 9/11, Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Remote Surveillance



May 2001: Clinton Impeachment Lawyer Learns About Al-Qaeda Manhattan Attack Warning



David Schippers, the House Judiciary Committee's chief investigator in the Clinton impeachment trial, was hired to represent FBI agent Robert Wright in September 1999 (see August 3, 1999). After 9/11, Schippers will claim that he began privately informing congresspeople about Wright's investigation into terrorism financing in the US in early 2001, but found little interest (see February-March 2001). Schippers appears to have had different sources than Wright who began telling him about attack warnings. Supposedly, the first warning was based on a secret February 1995 report which stated that bin Laden was planning three attacks on the US: the bombing of a federal building in the heartland of the US, shooting down or blowing up an airplane, and a massive attack in lower Manhattan. Schippers believes the first warning was a prediction of the April 1995 Oklahoma City bombing (see April 19, 1995) and the second was a prediction of the 1996 explosion of TWA Flight 800 (see July 17, 1996-September 1996). In some versions of this warning, the Manhattan attack was meant to be caused by a "dirty bomb" - explosives mixed with radioactive materials - but other accounts described the use of planes as weapons instead. He says one of his sources for this early warning was Yossef Bodansky, director of the Congressional Task Force on Terrorism and Unconventional Warfare. Schippers will claim that his sources continued to uncover further information. The Manhattan warning "had started out just a general threat, but they narrowed it and narrowed it, more and more with time," until the "same people who came out with the first warning" tell him in May 2001 that "an attack on lower Manhattan is imminent." Schippers speaks to several FBI agents directly, and hears that "there are [other agents] all over the country who are frustrated and just waiting to come out." They are frustrated by "a bureaucratic elite in Washington short-stopping information," which gives "terrorism a free reign in the United States." Schippers later claims that some FBI agents later told him that before 9/11, "they had [Mohamed] Atta in their sights." They also had attempted to "check out" the names and activities of "very strange characters training at flight schools." He will claim that "FBI agents in Chicago and Minnesota" tell him "there [is] going to be an attack on lower Manhattan." Schippers will later claim that he will attempt to

contact Attorney General John Ashcroft and other politicians about this warning in coming months, but that they will show little interest (see July-Late August 2001). [WORLDNETDAILY, 10/21/2001; INDIANAPOLIS STAR, 5/18/2002; AHMED, 2004, PP. 258-260]

Entity Tags: Osama bin Laden, Yossef Bodansky, Al-Qaeda, David Schippers, William Jefferson (“Bill”) Clinton, John Ashcroft, Robert Wright, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Category Tags: Warning Signs, Terrorism Financing, Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal



June 9, 2001-July 10, 2001: Wright Says FBI Unit Is Making ‘Virtually No Effort’ to Neutralize Known Terrorists Inside the US



FBI agent Robert Wright gives the FBI a mission statement he wrote that outlines his complaints against his agency. It reads, in part, “Knowing what I know, I can confidently say that until the investigative responsibilities for terrorism are removed from the FBI, I will not feel safe. The FBI has proven for the past decade it cannot identify and prevent acts of terrorism against the United States and its citizens at home and abroad. Even worse, there is virtually no effort on the part of the FBI’s International Terrorism Unit to neutralize known and suspected terrorists residing within the United States. Unfortunately, more terrorist attacks against American interests, coupled with the loss of American lives, will have to occur before those in power give this matter the urgent attention it deserves.” Wright asks the FBI for permission to make his complaints public. Larry Klayman, chairman of the public-interest group Judicial Watch, claims that regulations require the FBI to give or deny clearance within 30 days, which would have made FBI failures an issue before 9/11. But the FBI delays making a decision and will only allow Wright to publicly reveal his mission statement in May 2002.

[CYBERCAST NEWS SERVICE, 5/30/2002; FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 5/30/2002] One month later, Wright and his lawyer David Schippers have a meeting with a reporter from the CBS news program 60 Minutes to express the concerns in his statement. He claims that he says it is only a matter of time before there will be an attack on US soil. However, he is prohibited by his superior from speaking to 60 Minutes or any other media outlet. [FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 6/2/2003] Schippers will later claim that this month he also attempts to contact a number of important politicians with his concerns based on information from Wright and other FBI agents that he knows, but he was rebuffed (see July-Late August 2001).

Entity Tags: Federal Bureau of Investigation, David Schippers, Larry Klayman, Robert Wright, International Terrorism Unit

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing, Warning Signs, Counterterrorism Policy/Politics



July-Late August 2001: Clinton Impeachment Lawyer Tries to Warn about Al-Qaeda Attack on Lower Manhattan

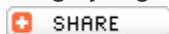




David Schippers. [Source: Publicity photo]

David Schippers, the House Judiciary Committee's chief investigator in the Clinton impeachment trial and the lawyer for FBI agent Robert Wright since September 1999, will later claim that he was warned about an upcoming al-Qaeda attack on lower Manhattan in May 2001 (see May 2001). After May, Schippers continues to get increasingly precise information about this attack from FBI agents in Chicago and Minnesota, and around July he renews efforts to pass the warning to politicians. He will claim, "I tried to see if I could get a Congressman to go to bat for me and at least bring these people [to Washington] and listen to them. I sent them information and nobody cared. It was always, 'We'll get back to you,' 'We'll get back to you,' 'We'll get back to you.'" At the same time he is attempting to pass on this warning, he will claim he is also attempting to pass on the work of reporter Jayna Davis and her theory that Middle Easterners were involved in the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing (see April 19, 1995), and also Wright's claim that Hamas operatives were operating freely inside the US (see February-March 2001). The three claims put together seem to lead to a bad response; Schippers later comments, "People thought I was crazy." Around July 15, he attempts to contact Attorney General John Ashcroft. Conservative activist "Phyllis Schlafly finally apparently made some calls. She called me one day and said, 'I've talked to John Ashcroft, and he'll call you tomorrow.'" The next day, one of Ashcroft's underlings in the Justice Department calls him back and says, "We don't start our investigations with the Attorney General. Let me look into this, and I'll have somebody get back to you right away." Schippers will say he never did hear back from anyone in the Justice Department. Perhaps coincidentally, on July 26 it will be reported that Ashcroft has stopped flying commercial aircraft due to an unnamed threat (see July 26, 2001). In late August, his FBI agent sources again confirm that an al-Qaeda attack on lower Manhattan is imminent. [WORLDNETDAILY, 10/21/2001; INDIANAPOLIS STAR, 5/18/2002; AHMED, 2004, PP. 258-260] In 2003, Wright will say, "In 2000 and in 2001, [Schippers] contacted several US congressmen well before the September 11th attacks. Unfortunately, these congressmen failed to follow through with Mr. Schippers' request that they investigate my concerns." It is not clear if Wright was one of the Chicago FBI agents that Schippers claims gave warnings about a Manhattan attack, or if Wright is only referring to Wright's investigation into funding for Hamas and other groups that Schippers was also warning politicians about (see February-March 2001). [FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 6/2/2003]

Entity Tags: William Jefferson ("Bill") Clinton, US Department of Justice, Al-Qaeda, Robert Wright, Phyllis Schlafly, John Ashcroft, Hamas, Federal Bureau of Investigation, David Schippers, Jayna Davis
Category Tags: Warning Signs, Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



September 5-8, 2001: Raid on Arab Web Hosting Company Precedes 9/11 Attacks





Infocom logo. [Source: Infocom]

The US Joint Terrorism Task Force conducts a three-day raid of the offices of InfoCom Corporation, a Texas-based company that hosts about 500 mostly Arab websites, including Al Jazeera, the Arab world's most popular news channel. [GUARDIAN, 9/10/2001; WEB HOST INDUSTRY REVIEW, 9/10/2001] Three days after the initial raid, the task force is "still busy inside the building, reportedly copying every hard disc they could find. It is not clear how long these websites remain shut down."

[GUARDIAN, 9/10/2001] InfoCom began to be seriously investigated by the FBI in late 1998 when the name of an employee was discovered in the address book of bin Laden's former personal secretary. There also was evidence of a financial link between InfoCom and a top Hamas leader (see October 1994-2001). InfoCom is closely connected to the Holy Land Foundation. Not only are the two organizations across the road from each other in Richardson, Texas, a number of employees work at both organizations. For instance, Ghassan Elashi is both the vice president of InfoCom and chairman of Holy Land. [GUARDIAN, 9/10/2001; NEW YORK TIMES, 12/20/2002]

A local bank closes Holy Land's checking accounts totaling about \$13 million around the same time as the raid on InfoCom, but Holy Land's assets are not officially frozen by the government. [DALLAS BUSINESS JOURNAL, 9/7/2001] The US will shut down Holy Land and freeze their assets two months later (see December 4, 2001) for suspected ties to Hamas. Holy Land is represented by Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, a Washington, D.C., law firm with unusually close ties to the Bush White House. [WASHINGTON POST, 12/17/2001]

In 2002, the five brothers running InfoCom will be charged of selling computer equipment overseas in violation of anti-terrorism laws and of supporting Hamas by giving money to Hamas leader Mousa Abu Marzouk through 2001. In 2004, the five brothers will be convicted of the first charge, and in 2005, three brothers will be convicted of the second charge. (see December 18, 2002-April 2005). On a possibly connected note, in the Garland suburb adjoining Richardson, a fifth-grade boy apparently has foreknowledge of 9/11 (see September 10, 2001). [HOUSTON CHRONICLE, 9/19/2001]

Entity Tags: Federal Bureau of Investigation, InfoCom Corporation, Secret Service, Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, Osama bin Laden, Ghassan Elashi, Joint Terrorism Task Force, Al Jazeera, Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, Hamas, Mousa Abu Marzouk

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



September 11, 2001: The 9/11 Attack: 3,000 Die in New York City and Washington, D.C.



The September 11, 2001 attacks. From left to right: The World Trade Center, Pentagon, and Flight 93 crash. [Source: unknown] (click image to enlarge)

The 9/11 attack: Four planes are hijacked, two crash into the WTC, one into the Pentagon, and one crashes into the Pennsylvania countryside. Nearly 3,000 people are killed.

Entity Tags: World Trade Center, Pentagon, Al-Qaeda, United Airlines, American Airlines

Timeline Tags: 9/11 Timeline

Category Tags: Warning Signs, Pipeline Politics, Al-Qaeda in Germany, Alhazmi and Almihdhar, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, Israel, Alleged Iraq-Al-Qaeda Links, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the ISI, US Dominance, Zacarias Moussaoui, Nabil Al-Marabh, Counterterrorism Action Before 9/11, Ali Mohamed, Able Danger, Mohamed Atta, Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Military Exercises, Mamoun Darkazanli,

BMI and Ptech, Osama Bin Laden, Phoenix Memo, Remote Surveillance, Al Taqwa Bank, Terrorism Financing, Al-Qaeda Malaysia Summit, Yemen Hub, Alleged Al-Qaeda Linked Attacks, Counterterrorism Policy/Politics, Training Exercises



September 11, 2001-Autum 2002: FBI's Saudi Office Fails to Follow Up Thousands of 9/11 Leads; Unprocessed Documents Are Destroyed

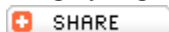


At the time of 9/11, the FBI's Saudi Arabia office was comprised of only legal attache Wilfred Rattigan and his assistant Gamal Abdel-Hafiz. Abdel-Hafiz, the FBI's only Muslim agent at the time, had been appointed to the position in February 2001 despite a controversy with his FBI work back in the US (see Early 1999-March 21, 2000). Some fellow FBI agents accused him of refusing to secretly record conversations with Muslim suspects. Time will report, "The FBI sent reinforcements [to the Saudi Arabian office] within two weeks of 9/11, but it appears that the bureau's team never got on top of the thousands of leads flowing in from the US and Saudi governments.... According to several former employees of the US embassy in Riyadh, the FBI legal attache's office housed within the embassy was often in disarray during the months that followed 9/11. When an FBI supervisor arrived [nearly a year after 9/11] to clean up the mess, she found a mountain of paper and, for security reasons, ordered wholesale shredding that resulted in the destruction of unprocessed documents relating to the 9/11 investigations." In June 2005, the Senate Judiciary Committee will begin investigating allegations that the FBI's Saudi office was "delinquent in pursuing thousands of leads" related to 9/11. Piles of time-sensitive leads still had not been followed up when the supervisor arrives. The FBI will claim that the thousands of shredded documents were duplicated elsewhere. But the Judiciary Committee will assert some material is lost. One employee will claim that some of the lost information "was leads, suspicious-activity material, information on airline pilots." Rattigan, who has converted to Islam, later will sue the FBI for discrimination and will claim that the FBI refused to provide him with adequate resources to cope with the workload after 9/11. [FRONTLINE, 10/16/2003; TIME, 6/27/2005]

Entity Tags: Gamal Abdel-Hafiz, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Wilfred Rattigan

Timeline Tags: 9/11 Timeline

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing, FBI 9/11 Investigation



September 11, 2001-October 2001: FBI Agent Wright Gagged by FBI in Wake of 9/11



FBI agent Robert Wright will later claim that the FBI takes extraordinary efforts to gag him in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. According to Wright, "On September the 11th, as I watched the World Trade Center towers burn, I did not initially share the same feelings of surprise and shock and dismay most Americans felt. I just thought to myself, 'It has begun.'" On the afternoon of 9/11, he claims that he is called by reporters from the New York Times and 60 Minutes who already are aware of his issues with FBI management (see June 9, 2001-July 10, 2001). They ask if he would be willing to go public with his story. He declines. "I'm confident if I had gone public at that time I would have been fired. I realized my termination would only aid the FBI by allowing management to claim I was simply a former employee who was disgruntled over his termination." Over the next few days, his former supervisor prohibits him from working with the 9/11 investigation. He is not allowed to answer any incoming telephone calls from the general public. The FBI prohibits him from publishing his recently completed book on FBI failures (see May 11, 2002). His lawyers contact a congressman who invites him to come to Washington and present his information to Congress. Wright is immediately prohibited from traveling outside of Chicago without FBI approval. Larry

Klayman, one of two lawyers now representing Wright, later says he calls the Justice Department a few days after 9/11 and asks that Wright be allowed to present his issues to Attorney General John Ashcroft. Klayman claims he receives a reply from Michael Chertoff, then head of the Criminal division, who refuses to meet with Wright and says, “We are tired of conspiracy theories.” [FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 5/30/2002; FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 6/2/2003] On September 20, Wright’s legal representatives publish a list of 20 entities described as “Tax Exempt and Other Entities to Investigate Immediately.” The US will later shut down many of these entities. [JUDICIAL WATCH, 9/20/2001] The restrictions placed on Wright will largely continue to hold in the years afterwards. For instance, as of the end of 2005, his book still has not been approved for publication (see May 11, 2002).

Entity Tags: US Department of Justice, John Ashcroft, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Larry Klayman, Robert Wright, Michael Chertoff

Timeline Tags: 9/11 Timeline

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing, Other 9/11 Investigations

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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

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Saudi Arabia, BMI and Ptech, Terrorism Financing

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December 3-14, 2001: Bush Administration Officials Tip Off Reporters About Raids on Suspect Charities



On December 3, 2001, New York Times reporter Judith Miller telephones officials with the Holy Land Foundation charity in Texas and asks them to comment about what she says is a government raid on the charity planned for the next day. Then in a December 4, 2001, New

York Times article, Miller writes that President Bush is about to announce that the US is freezing the assets of Holy Land and two other financial groups, all for supporting Hamas. US officials will later argue that Miller's phone call and article "increased the likelihood that the foundation destroyed or hid records before a hastily organized raid by agents that day." Later in the month, a similar incident occurs. On December 13, New York Times reporter Philip Shenon telephones officials at the Global Relief Foundation in Illinois and asks them to comment about an imminent government crackdown on that charity. The FBI learns that some Global Relief employees may be destroying documents. US attorney Patrick Fitzgerald had been investigating the charities. He had been wiretapping Global Relief and another charity in hopes of learning evidence of criminal activity, but after the leak he changes plans and carries out a hastily arranged raid on the charity the next day (see December 14, 2001). Fitzgerald later seeks records from the New York Times to find out who in the Bush administration leaked information about the upcoming raids to Miller and Shenon. However, in 2005 Fitzgerald will lose the case. It is still not known who leaked the information to the New York Times nor what their motives were. Ironically, Fitzgerald will succeed in forcing Miller to reveal information about her sources in another extremely similar legal case in 2005 involving the leaking of the name of CIA agent Valerie Plame. [NEW YORK TIMES, 12/4/2001; NEW YORK TIMES, 12/15/2001; WASHINGTON POST, 9/10/2004; WASHINGTON POST, 2/25/2005] **The 9/11 Commission** will later conclude that in addition to the above cases, "press leaks plagued almost every [raid on Muslim charities] that took place in the United States" after 9/11. [WASHINGTON POST, 9/10/2004]

Entity Tags: Philip Shenon, Patrick Fitzgerald, Judith Miller, Hamas, Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, Federal Bureau of Investigation, George W. Bush, Global Relief Foundation, Bush administration

Timeline Tags: 9/11 Timeline

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing, Counterterrorism Action After 9/11



December 4, 2001: Holy Land Foundation Shut Down



The Holy Land Foundation is shut down and its assets are seized. Holy Land claimed to be the largest Muslim charity in the US. It claimed to raise millions for Palestinian refugees and denied any support for terrorism. In justifying the move, the US government presents evidence of ties between the Holy Land and Hamas. Much of this evidence dates back to 1993; the Associated Press titles a story on the closure, "Money Freeze A Long Time Coming."

[ASSOCIATED PRESS, 12/5/2001] Holy Land offices in San Diego, California; Paterson, New Jersey; and Bridgeview, Illinois, are also raided. [CNN, 12/4/2001] The indictment says Holy Land has been "deeply involved with a network of Muslim Brotherhood organizations dedicated to furthering the Islamic fundamentalist agenda espoused by Hamas." [WASHINGTON POST, 9/11/2004] Holy Land is represented by the powerful law firm of Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld. Three partners at Akin, Gump are very close to President Bush: George Salem chaired Bush's 2000 campaign outreach to Arab-Americans; Barnett "Sandy" Kress was appointed by Bush as an "unpaid consultant" on education reform and has an office in the White House; and James Langdon is one of Bush's closest Texas friends. [BOSTON HERALD, 12/11/2001; WASHINGTON POST, 12/17/2001] The leaders of Holy Land will be charged with a variety of crimes in 2002 and 2004 (see December 18, 2002-April 2005).

Entity Tags: Hamas, Muslim Brotherhood, Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, US Department of the Treasury, Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing, Counterterrorism Action After 9/11



December 17-18, 2001: Hamas Threatens to Attack US



On December 17, 2001, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad release a joint manifesto declaring, “Americans are the enemies of the Palestinian people [and] a target for future attacks.” The next day, Hamas leaders issues a statement declaring that “Americans [are] now considered legitimate targets as well as Israelis.” So far, Hamas has not followed through with this threat. However, in February 2003, top Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin will called on Muslims to “threaten Western interests and strike them everywhere” in the event of a war in Iraq, which will begin one month later. [NATIONAL POST, 10/18/2003] Despite these threats, known Hamas operatives will continue to live openly in the US. For instance, the US officially declared Mohammad Salah a terrorist in 1995 (see June 2-5, 2003), the FBI knew he was living openly in Chicago since late 1997, and yet he will not be indicted for crimes committed in the early 1990s until 2004 (see August 20, 2004).

Entity Tags: Palestinian Islamic Jihad, United States, Hamas

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



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

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



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

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing, Counterterrorism Action After 9/11



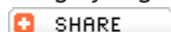
May 5, 2002-July 22, 2004: US Government Fails to Investigate FBI Agent Wright's Complaints

FBI agent Robert Wright, feeling that he had been gagged by FBI superiors (see September 11, 2001-October 2001), files a formal complaint in early 2002 with the Inspector General's Office (IGO) of the Justice Department. The IGO probes agency wrongdoing and mistakes. However, the IGO turns him away. On May 5, 2002, the IGO writes that "Mr. Wright raises serious charges concerning the FBI's handling of a criminal matter relating to suspected terrorists," but the IGO does "not have the resources to conduct an investigation of [the] anticipated size and scope." Instead, the IGO recommends Wright to refer his complaints to Congress. The IGO had previously conducted large-scale investigations, for instance looking into the FBI's alleged mishandling of evidence in the trial of convicted Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh. David Schippers, one of Wright's lawyers, scoffs at the IGO's explanation: "The truth is, they don't want to investigate FBI dereliction of duty." The 9/11 Congressional Inquiry will interview Wright in late 2002. [LA WEEKLY, 8/9/2002] However, neither his name, nor Yassin al-Qadi's name, nor any details about the Vulgar Betrayal investigation will appear in the Inquiry's heavily censored 2003 final report. He will not be interviewed by the 9/11 Commission, and neither his name, nor Yassin al-Qadi's name, nor any details about the Vulgar Betrayal investigation will appear in the 9/11 Commission Final Report in 2004. Supposedly, the FBI "stalled Wright's appearance before the 9/11 Commission until it was too late for him to appear before its public hearings." [US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003 ; US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003; DEBBIESCHLUSSEL (.COM), 7/14/2004; 9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004]

Entity Tags: US Congress, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Office of the Inspector General (DOJ), David Schippers, Robert Wright

Timeline Tags: 9/11 Timeline

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



May 11, 2002: FBI Agent Wright Sues FBI for Blocking Book Criticizing FBI Failures

FBI agent Robert Wright claims he began writing a book in August 1999, immediately after being removed from the Vulgar Betrayal investigation. “It was single spaced, 500 pages, and it was titled ‘Fatal Betrayals of the Intelligence Mission.’ The manuscript outlines the FBI’s intentional, at times, failure, to pursue the terrorists and thereby prevent terrorist attacks. Ironically, I completed the text of the manuscript two days after the September 11th attack. On September 10th, I had all but the last three pages completed.” He submitted the book for FBI approval on October 3, 2001, and the FBI is required to apply any censorship and approve publication within 3 days. By May 2002, he feels the FBI is stalling and he sues the FBI to force them to release the book. At one point, the FBI will approve 96 percent of the text and 94 percent of another document he wrote shortly after 9/11, but later the FBI will revoke this decision and prohibit the release of any portion of the book at all. Wright will claim that he based the book entirely on open source materials (with affidavits and other court documents from his investigations apparently making up much of the content). But as of the end of 2005, the book still has not be cleared for publication. Wright’s lawsuit is still ongoing. [NEW YORK TIMES, 5/12/2002; FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 5/30/2002; ROBERT G. WRIGHT, JR., V. FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, 5/16/2005]

Entity Tags: Robert Wright, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Timeline Tags: 9/11 Timeline

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



May 30, 2002: Wright Claims FBI Obstructed Efforts to Stop Terrorist Money Flows




Robert Wright tears up as he apologizes to 9/11 victims’ relatives in his 2002 press conference. [Source: Getty Images] FBI agent Robert Wright holds a press conference. He makes a statement that has been preapproved by the FBI. As one account puts it, “Robert Wright’s story is difficult to piece together because he is on government orders to remain silent.... [T]his is in distinct contrast to the free speech and whistle-blower protections offered to Colleen Rowley, general counsel in the FBI Minneapolis office, who got her story out before the agency could silence her. Wright, a 12-year bureau veteran, has followed proper channels” but has been frustrated by limitations on what he is allowed to say (see September 11, 2001-October 2001). “The best he could do [is a] press conference in Washington, D.C., where he [tells] curious reporters that he [has] a whopper of a tale to tell, if only he could.” Wright says that FBI bureaucrats “intentionally and repeatedly thwarted [his] attempts to launch a more comprehensive investigation to identify and neutralize terrorists.” He also claims, “FBI management failed to take seriously the threat of terrorism in the US.” [FOX NEWS, 5/30/2002; FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 5/30/2002; LA WEEKLY, 8/2/2002] Larry Klayman, a lawyer

representing Wright, says at the conference that he believes one reason Wright's investigations were blocked "is because these monies were going through some very powerful US banks with some very powerful interests in the United States. These banks knew or had reason to know that these monies were laundered by terrorists. And there are very significant potential conflicts of interests in both the Clinton and Bush Administrations—with the country primarily responsible for funding these charities, mainly Saudi Arabia. We have both Clinton and Bush, and in particular this Bush Administration, who is as tight with Saudi Arabia as you can get." He also says, "Corruption is knowing when something is not being done, knowing when the American people are being left unprotected and when you make a decision not to do something to protect the American people... And you effectively allow 9/11 to occur. That is the ultimate form of government corruption—dereliction of duty. That's subject in the military to prosecution, to court martial.... Frankly, if not treason." [FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 5/30/2002]

Entity Tags: William Jefferson ("Bill") Clinton, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Robert Wright, Clinton administration, Bush administration, Larry Klayman, Coleen Rowley

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing

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August 25, 2002: CIA Collects No Intelligence About Saudi Arabia



Appearing on NBC's Dateline, former CIA agent Robert Baer says the US collects virtually no intelligence about Saudi Arabia nor are they given any intelligence collected by the Saudis. He says this is because there are implicit orders from the White House that say: "Do not collect information on Saudi Arabia because we're going to risk annoying the royal family." On the same television program, despite being on a US list of suspected terrorist financiers since October 2001, Saudi millionaire Yassin al-Qadi says, "I'm living my life here in Saudi Arabia without any problem" because he is being protected by the Saudi government. Al-Qadi admits to giving bin Laden money for his "humanitarian" work, but says this is different from bin Laden's militant activities. Presented with this information, the US Treasury Department only says that the US "is pleased with and appreciates the actions taken by the Saudis" in the war on terror. The Saudi government still has not given US intelligence permission to talk to any family members of the hijackers, even though some US journalists have had limited contact with a few. [MSNBC, 8/25/2002]

Entity Tags: Osama bin Laden, United States, Saudi Arabia, Robert Baer, Yassin al-Qadi, US Department of the Treasury


Category Tags: Saudi Arabia, Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal

 SHARE

November 26, 2002: Secret List of Saudi Terror Financiers Is Revealed



In the wake of news that two Saudis living in San Diego, California, may have helped two of the 9/11 hijackers, reports surface that the US has a secret, short list of wealthy individuals who are the alleged key financiers of al-Qaeda and other Islamic militant groups. The Washington Post claims there are nine names on the list: seven Saudis, plus one Egyptian, and one Pakistani. [WASHINGTON POST, 11/26/2002] ABC News claims the list consists of 12 names, all Saudis, and says they were financing al-Qaeda through accounts in Cyprus, Switzerland, and Malaysia, among other countries. [ABC NEWS, 11/25/2002] They also claim the Saudi government has a copy of the list. US officials privately say all the people listed have close personal and business ties with the Saudi royal family. [ABC NEWS, 11/26/2002] A secret report by French investigator Jean-Charles Brisard names seven prominent Saudi financiers of terror; the number matches the seven Saudis mentioned in the Washington Post article, though it's not

known if all the names are the same. The Saudis mentioned by Brisard include Yassin al-Qadi, Adel Batterjee, and Wael Hamza Julaidan (who has had his assets frozen by the US.) [US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 9/6/2002] Brisard says al-Qaeda has received between \$300 million and \$500 million over the last ten years from wealthy businessmen and bankers. He claims that the combined fortunes of these men equal about 20 percent of Saudi Arabia's GDP (gross domestic product). [BRISARD, 12/19/2002 ; LOS ANGELES TIMES, 12/24/2002] However, Brisard's study has been mistakenly described as a United Nations report. While he submitted the study to the UN, the UN didn't request it. [MONEY LAUNDERING ALERT, 10/2003] It is also reported that a National Security Council task force recommends that the US demand that Saudi Arabia crack down on al-Qaeda's financiers within 90 days of receiving evidence of misdeeds and if they do not, the US should take unilateral action to bring the suspects to justice. However, the US government denies this report and calls Saudi Arabia a "good partner in the war on terrorism." [WASHINGTON POST, 11/26/2002] Press Secretary Ari Fleischer says: "I think the fact that many of the hijackers came from that nation [Saudi Arabia] cannot and should not be read as an indictment of the country." [RADIO FREE EUROPE, 11/27/2002]

Entity Tags: United States, Yassin al-Qadi, Saudi Arabia, National Security Council, Adel Abdul Jalil Batterjee, Ari Fleischer, Jean-Charles Brisard, Wael Hamza Julaidan, Al-Qaeda

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Saudi Arabia, Terrorism Financing, BIF



December 18, 2002-April 2005: Marzouk, InfoCom, and Holy Land Foundation Leaders Are Charged and Convicted



Ghassan Elashi holds a press conference and denies any connection to terrorist funding. [Source: Associated Press] Mousa Abu Marzouk, his wife, and five brothers (Ghassan Elashi, Bayan Elashi, Hazim Elashi, Basman Elashi, and Ihsan Elashi) are charged with conspiracy, money laundering, dealing in the property of a designated terrorist, illegal export, and making false statements. The brothers are arrested in Texas, but Marzouk and his wife are living in Syria and remain free. Marzouk is considered a top leader of Hamas. FBI agent Robert Wright had been investigating Marzouk and the brothers since the late 1990s. Wright is set to appear on ABC News on December 19, 2002, to complain that the FBI had failed to prosecute Marzouk for years. As the New York Post notes, "That got results: A day before the show aired, Attorney General Ashcroft announced he would indict Marzouk." [BBC, 12/18/2002; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 12/18/2002; WASHINGTON POST, 12/19/2002; NEW YORK POST, 7/14/2004] FBI agent John Vincent, who worked closely with Wright, comments, "From within the FBI, [Wright] and I tried to get the FBI to use existing criminal laws to attack the infrastructure of terrorist organizations within the United States, but to no avail. It took an appearance [on television] by [Wright]

and I to propel them into making arrests that they could have made as early as 1993.” [FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 6/2/2003] ABC News similarly notes, “Marzouk was in US custody in 1997 and under criminal investigation then for much the same crimes cited today.” [ABC NEWS, 12/18/2002] Ghassan Elashi was the vice president of InfoCom Corporation, which was raided on September 5, 2001 (see September 5-8, 2001). He was also chairman of Holy Land Foundation, which was shut down in December 2001. InfoCom and Holy Land were based in the same Texas office park and shared many of the same employees. [GUARDIAN, 9/10/2001; CBS NEWS, 12/18/2002; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 12/23/2002] Holy Land raised \$13 million in 2000 and claimed to be the largest Muslim charity in the US. The government charges that Hamas members met with Ghassan Elashi and other Holy Land officials in 1993 to discuss raising money for the families of suicide bombers (see October 1993). Wright had begun an investigation into Holy Land that same year, but he faced obstacles from higher-ups and eventually his investigation was shut down. [CBS NEWS, 12/18/2002; NEW YORK TIMES, 7/28/2004] In 2004, the five Elashi brothers will be convicted of selling computer equipment overseas in violation of anti-terrorism laws. In 2005, three of the brothers, Ghassan, Basman, and Bayan Elashi, will be found guilty of supporting Hamas by giving money to Marzouk through 2001. [BBC, 7/8/2004; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 4/13/2005] In July 2004, Ghassan Elashi will be charged again, along with four other former Holy Land officials. Two other Holy Land officials will also be charged but not arrested, since they had recently left the country. Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY) will state: “I wonder why this prosecution has taken so long. I think until recently we have not put the resources needed into tracking groups that finance terrorism, and the fact that they didn’t get 24-hour surveillance on these two who escaped is galling and perplexing.” [NEW YORK TIMES, 7/28/2004] In 2007, this court case will result in a mistrial, and be cast as a major setback for the Justice Department (see October 19, 2007).

Entity Tags: Charles Schumer, Bayan Elashi, Basman Elashi, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Ihsan Elashi, Mousa Abu Marzouk, John Ashcroft, Hazim Elashi, Ghassan Elashi, Nadia Elashi
Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Saudi Arabia


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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
Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing

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June 2-5, 2003: Suspected Hamas Operatives Living Openly in US



Abdelhaleem Ashqar. [Source: Paul J. Richards / Agence France-Presse / Getty Images]NBS

News and ABC News report that Mohammad Salah is living openly in Chicago. The US government had declared Salah a “designated global terrorist,” in 1995 and his name has remained on the list ever since (see February 1995). Salah was convicted in Israel for being a member of Hamas and served five years in prison. Suspected Hamas fundraiser Jamil Sarsour is running a grocery store in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. US officials say Sarsour helped finance a string of suicide bus bombings in Israel, including one that killed two Americans. He also spent several years in an Israeli prison in the 1990s. Furthermore, suspected Hamas fundraiser Abdelhaleem Ashqar is working as a professor at Howard University in Washington. NBC additionally reports there are “about two dozen [other] alleged Hamas operatives in the United States now under investigation by the FBI.” FBI agent Robert Wright began investigating these men and others in the early 1990s. For instance, Ashqar organized a secret Hamas fundraising meeting in Philadelphia in the early 1990s that was wiretapped by the FBI (see October 1993). Wright believes Sarsour has been a pivotal figure in sending funds from the US to Hamas overseas since the early 1990s (see 1989-January 1993). Wright claims that the FBI could have moved against Hamas in the US years before 9/11. He says, “The Hamas criminal enterprise has been flourishing since then. These guys are still operating strong today because we’re doing absolutely nothing about it. The FBI has turned a blind eye to what they are doing.” Salah, who had been employed as a college professor in Chicago since February 2002, is fired from his job as a result of these stories. [MSNBC, 6/2/2003; ABC NEWS, 6/5/2003; ABC NEWS, 6/12/2003] But the men are not arrested in the wake of the media reports. Salah and Ashqar will finally be indicted in August 2004 (see August 20, 2004).

Entity Tags: Mohammad Salah, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Abdelhaleem Ashqar, Jamil Sarsour
 Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



After June 2, 2003-December 2003: FBI Superiors Vow to Fire Wright



Robert Jordan. [Source: KGW]Beginning in 1999, the FBI had conducted five disciplinary investigations of FBI agent Robert Wright and failed to find any wrongdoing. But within days of Wright’s second press conference (see June 2, 2003), they launch yet another

investigation about him, claiming his media appearances show he was insubordinate. [CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 4/22/2005] Senators Charles Grassley (R-IA) and Patrick Leahy (D-VT) quickly hear of this new investigation and co-author a letter to FBI Director Robert Mueller on July 12. The letter states, “We are troubled by the FBI’s apparent haste to launch [a disciplinary] investigation every time an agent speaks publicly about problems within the FBI... The FBI should worry more about catching terrorists than gagging its own agents.” The senators demand a briefing on what is happening. [CNN, 6/19/2003; CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 7/13/2004] In July 2003, FBI agent Royden Rice speaks to a reporter from the LA Weekly. Wright will later sue the FBI, alleging that Rice disclosed classified information to the reporter in an attempt to smear him. Rice denies the charges and the case is still pending. [LA WEEKLY, 7/22/2005] In December 2003, John Roberts, the third highest ranking official in the FBI’s disciplinary office, writes a memo about FBI Assistant Director Robert Jordan and Deputy Assistant Director Jody Weis. The memo claims that Jordan and Weis were overheard saying that Wright’s second press conference (see June 2, 2003) would give them an opportunity to “take him out.” Roberts also refers to an e-mail from a higher up in the Chicago FBI office asking for permission to do a media smear job on Wright (it is not known if this agent is Rice or someone else). Roberts claims that Jordan and Weis are misusing the FBI’s disciplinary process to silence and punish whistleblowers like Wright. He also claims that the allegations against Wright were not serious enough for a disciplinary investigation and at most Wright should have faced a written reprimand, since no classified information was disclosed. Roberts says, “I was left with the clear understanding that I was to... deceive, misrepresent, and hide... the facts of this matter.” [CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 7/13/2004; NEW YORK POST, 7/14/2004] Even though details of Roberts’ memo will be revealed to the press in 2004, the investigation into Wright will continue and result in him being fired in 2005. Senators Grassley and Leahy will write at least three more letters to Mueller demanding explanations, but still will receive no answer. Later in 2005, Wright’s dismissal will be overruled by the Justice Department and he will be reinstated (see April 30, 2005-October 19, 2005). There appears to have been no investigation into the behavior of Jordan and Weis. [LA WEEKLY, 7/22/2005]

Entity Tags: Robert S. Mueller III, Robert Wright, Robert Jordan, Patrick J. Leahy, Jody Weis, Royden Rice, John E. Roberts, Charles Grassley, Federal Bureau of Investigation, US Department of Justice
Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



June 15, 2003: BMI Leader Arrested and Imprisoned



Yaqub Mirza. [Source: Publicity photo, via Byrd Business Review]Soliman Biheiri, the former head of BMI Inc., a New Jersey-based investment firm with ties to many suspected terrorism financiers (see 1986-October 1999), had left the US immediately after a raid of the SAAR network in March 2002 (see March 20, 2002). On this day, he returns to the US and is immediately arrested and interviewed by Customs agent David Kane. Biheiri tells Kane that he has longstanding ties to leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood, a radical Muslim group banned in

Egypt. Agents are able to search his laptop computer, and discover ties with Hamas leader Mousa Abu Marzouk. He is also connected to two principals of the banned Al Taqwa Bank (see November 7, 2001), Youssef Nada and Ghaleb Himmat, when their addresses are discovered on his computer as well. Agents say there are “other indications” of connections between Al Taqwa and Biheiri’s company BMI, including financial transactions. [FORWARD, 10/17/2003; WALL STREET JOURNAL, 6/21/2004; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 10/12/2004] An e-mail is also discovered showing Biheiri was involved in Saudi multimillionaire Yassin al-Qadi’s financial dealings with Yaqub Mirza, the director of the raided SAAR network. The US froze al-Qadi’s assets in late 2001 (see October 12, 2001). [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 9/15/2003] Biheiri will be convicted of immigration fraud in October 2003. He will be convicted again in 2004 for lying to Kane about his ties to Marzouk during his interview. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 6/21/2004; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 10/12/2004]

Entity Tags: Soliman Biheiri, Muslim Brotherhood, Yassin al-Qadi, David Kane, Youssef Nada, Ghaleb Himmat, Al Taqwa Bank, BMI Inc., Mousa Abu Marzouk

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing, BMI and Ptech, Counterterrorism Action After 9/11



August 20, 2004: Salah Finally Arrested



Mohammad Salah, Mousa Abu Marzouk, and Abdelhaleem Ashqar are indicted on racketeering conspiracy charges. Salah and Ashqar are arrested. Marzouk, considered a high-ranking Hamas leader, is out of reach in Syria. Marzouk had been charged in 2002 on related matters (see December 18, 2002-April 2005). Ashqar was already under house arrest on related charges of contempt and obstruction of justice. The three are accused of using US bank accounts to launder millions of dollars to support Hamas. The indictment alleges the laundered money was used to pay for murders, kidnappings, assaults, and passport fraud. Many of the charges date to the early 1990s (see 1989-January 1993) and had been the subject of legal cases in 1998 and 2000 (see June 9, 1998; May 12, 2000-December 9, 2004). [NEW YORK TIMES, 8/21/2004; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 8/24/2004] Salah and Ashqar had been living openly in the US for several years. The US had declared Salah a “designated global terrorist” in 1995 and he returned to Chicago in 1997 (see February 1995). The media reported on this in 2003 but they still were not arrested (see June 2-5, 2003). In 1993, Ashqar took part in a secret Hamas meeting in Philadelphia that was wiretapped by the FBI (see October 1993). [ABC NEWS, 6/12/2003; NEW YORK TIMES, 8/21/2004]

Entity Tags: Mohammad Salah, Abdelhaleem Ashqar, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Hamas, Mousa Abu Marzouk

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing





August 21, 2004: 9/11 Commission’s Terrorist Financing Conclusions at Odds with Media Accounts





The 9/11 Commission releases a report on terrorism financing. Its conclusions generally stand in complete contrast to a great body of material reported by the mainstream media, before and after this report. For instance, while the report does mention some terrorism-supporting organizations in great detail, such as the Global Relief Foundation or Al Barakaat, many seemingly important organizations are not mentioned a single time in either this report or the 9/11 Commission Final Report. The Commission fails to ever mention: BMI, Inc., Ptech, Al Taqwa Bank, Holy Land Foundation, InfoCom, International Islamic Relief Organization, Muslim World League, Muwafaq (Blessed Relief) Foundation, Quranic Literacy Institute, and the SAAR network or any entity within it. Additionally, important efforts to track terrorist financing such as Vulgar Betrayal and Operation Greenquest are not mentioned a single time.


[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 61; 9/11 COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP. 134-5 ] Some select quotes from the report:

■“While the drug trade was an important source of income for the Taliban before 9/11, it did not serve the same purpose for al-Qaeda. Although there is some fragmentary reporting alleging that bin Laden may have been an investor, or even had an operational role, in drug trafficking before 9/11, this intelligence cannot be substantiated and the sourcing is probably suspect.” Additionally, there is “no evidence of [al-Qaeda] drug funding after 9/11.” [9/11 COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP. 22-23 

■“[C]ontrary to some public reports, we have not seen substantial evidence that al-Qaeda shares a fund-raising infrastructure in the United States with Hamas, Hezbollah, or Palestinian Islamic Jihad.” [9/11 COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP. 24 

■“The United States is not, and has not been, a substantial source of al-Qaeda funding, but some funds raised in the United States may have made their way to al-Qaeda and its affiliated groups. A murky US network of jihadist (holy war) supporters has plainly provided funds to foreign mujaheddin with al-Qaeda links. Still, there is little hard evidence of substantial funds from the United States actually going to al-Qaeda. A CIA expert on al-Qaeda financing believes that any money coming out of the United States for al-Qaeda is ‘minuscule.’” [9/11 COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP. 24 

■The notion “that bin Laden was a financier with a fortune of several hundred million dollars” is an “urban legend.” “[S]ome within the government continued to cite the \$300 million figure well after 9/11, and the general public still [incorrectly] gives credence to the notion of a ‘multimillionaire bin Laden.’” [9/11 COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP. 20, 34 ] (A few months after this report, it will be reported that in 2000 over \$250 million passed through a bank account jointly controlled by bin Laden and another man (see 2000).)

■“To date, the US government has not been able to determine the origin of the money used for the 9/11 attacks... Ultimately the question of the origin of the funds is of little practical significance.” [9/11 COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP. 144 

■“The US intelligence community has attacked the problem [of terrorist funding] with imagination and vigor” since 9/11. [NEW YORK TIMES, 8/22/2004]

■According to the New York Times, the report “largely exonerate[s] the Saudi government and its senior officials of long-standing accusations that they were involved in financing al-Qaeda terrorists.” [NEW YORK TIMES, 8/22/2004] Author Douglas Farah comments on the Commission’s report, “The biggest hole is the complete lack of attention to the role the Muslim Brotherhood has played in the financing of al-Qaeda and other radical Islamist groups. While the ties are extensive on a personal level, they also pervade the financial structure of al-Qaeda.... According to sources who provided classified briefing to the Commission staff, most of the information that was provided was ignored.... [T]he Commission staff simply did not include any information that was at odds with the official line of different agencies.”

[FARAH, 8/27/2004]

Entity Tags: Muwafaq Foundation, Vulgar Betrayal, Operation Greenquest, Osama bin Laden, Saudi Arabia, Quranic Literacy Institute, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Muslim World League, SAAR Foundation, Muslim Brotherhood, Ptech Inc., InfoCom Corporation, Al-Qaeda, Al Taqwa Bank, 9/11 Commission, BMI Inc., Al Barakaat, Central Intelligence Agency, Douglas Farah, Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, International Islamic Relief Organization, Global Relief Foundation, Hamas

Timeline Tags: 9/11 Timeline

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing, Al Taqwa Bank, BMI and Ptech, 9/11 Commission



April 30, 2005-October 19, 2005: FBI Agent Wright Is Fired by FBI, Then Reinstated



On April 30, 2005, FBI agent Robert Wright is notified that the FBI plans to fire him within 30 days. He is immediately ordered to cease work. [CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 4/22/2005] However, on October 19, 2005, it is announced that the Justice Department overruled the FBI and orders Wright reinstated as an FBI agent. However, he is placed on probation for one year and downgraded in pay. The Chicago Tribune comments, “Wright has been the subject of at least six disciplinary investigations in his career. His supporters have long suspected that the FBI retaliated against him for his public criticism of the bureau and its ability to safeguard the nation from future terrorist attacks.” [CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 10/19/2005] He has two lawsuits still pending against the FBI. One alleges that the FBI improperly released confidential information from his personnel file (see After June 2, 2003-December 2003), and the other accuses the FBI of violating his rights of free expression by blocking the publication of a book he wrote before 9/11. [WASHINGTON POST, 4/23/2005]

Entity Tags: Robert Wright, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Office of the Inspector General (DOJ)

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



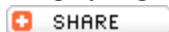
June 22, 2005-December 2005: Swiss Open and Close Investigation on Financier Al-Qadi



In the years since the US declared Saudi multimillionaire Yassin al-Qadi a terrorism financier (see October 12, 2001), no criminal charges have been brought against him anywhere in the world. But on June 22, 2005, it is announced that Swiss prosecutors are pursuing a formal criminal case against him. The case focuses on a series of transactions made between February and August 1998 that were sent from one of al-Qadi’s companies to a firm owned by Saudi businessman Wael Hamza Julaidan. Julaidan reputedly associated with bin Laden in the 1980s. He was placed on US and UN terrorism financier lists in 2002. Over \$1 million of the money in these transactions was sent to a Yemeni charity, but allegedly wound up funding al-Qaeda instead. Al-Qadi denies knowing that the money would go to al-Qaeda. [NEWSWEEK, 6/22/2005] It is claimed that some of this money goes to support the 9/11 attacks. However, in December 2005, the Swiss apparently close the case. The Swiss court issues a statement, “Nothing in the file allows one to conclude with sufficient likelihood that Yassin al-Qadi knew or was able to know that the payments he made and for which he is implicated in the Swiss proceedings, could serve to specifically finance the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.” [ARAB NEWS, 12/25/2005]

Entity Tags: Switzerland, Al-Qaeda, Wael Hamza Julaidan, Yassin al-Qadi

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



September 19, 2005: US Freezes Assets of Al-Qadi Associate



The US freezes the assets of Abdul Latif Saleh, who is a citizen of both Jordan and Albania. Bin Laden allegedly gave Saleh \$600,000 to create “extremist groups” in Albania, and Saleh is also said to be tied to the Islamic Jihad (which merged into al-Qaeda before 9/11). Saleh is also said to be associated with Saudi multimillionaire Yassin al-Qadi (see October 12, 2001). The Treasury Department claims, “Saleh and Qadi had entered into several business partnerships with one another, including a sugar importing business, a medical enterprise and a construction business. Saleh served as the general manager of all of Qadi’s businesses in Albania and reportedly holds 10 percent of the Qadi Group’s investments in Albania.”

[ASSOCIATED PRESS, 9/19/2005; US DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY, 9/19/2005] In the middle of 2004, the Swiss government also froze bank accounts worth \$20 million of an unnamed Saudi businessman who is the former president of the Muwafaq Foundation over alleged al-Qaeda

ties (see June 25, 2004). Al-Qadi was the founder and main investor of Muwafaq (see 1995-1998). [NEW YORK TIMES, 6/25/2004]

Entity Tags: Osama bin Laden, Abdul Latif Saleh, US Department of the Treasury, Yassin al-Qadi

Category Tags: Robert Wright and Vulgar Betrayal, Terrorism Financing



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