

More Explosive Evidence of Saudi Support for 9/11 Hijackers

by Edward Spannaus and Jeffrey Steinberg

Sept. 19—Calling it “the most important thing about 9/11 to surface in the last seven or eight years,” former Sen. Bob Graham of Florida, who chaired the Congressional Joint Inquiry into the 9/11 terrorist attacks, is calling on President Obama to investigate new disclosures linking Saudi nationals living in Sarasota, Fla., to the 9/11 hijackers.

“It’s very important for the White House to take control of this situation,” Graham told the *St. Petersburg Times* on Sept. 10. “The key umbrella question is: What was the full extent of Saudi involvement prior to 9/11 and why did the U.S. administration cover this up?”

While the Sarasota story may not be *the* most important element of 9/11 to surface in recent years—that honor must go to the exposure of the British-BAE-Saudi slush fund for financing terrorism known as “Al-Yamamah” (see “9/11 Secrets Partially Revealed,” *EIR*, Sept. 16, 2011 and references therein)—it nonetheless ranks very high on the list.

Sarasota House Linked to Hijackers

The disclosures to which Graham is referring, were published in the *Miami Herald* on Sept. 7, revealing that two weeks before the 9/11 hijackings, a wealthy Saudi family which had been in contact with 9/11 hijackers Mohamed Atta and others, abruptly fled from their luxury home near Sarasota.

The house was owned by Saudi financier Esam Ghazzawi, and occupied by his daughter Anoud, her husband Abdulazzi al-Hijjii, and their young children. According to the story written by author Anthony Summers and local reporter Dan Christensen, law enforcement agents found records of telephone calls with a number of the hijackers, including Atta; security re-

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying a news article from the Miami Herald. The page header includes the newspaper's name, date (Tuesday, 09.20.11), and navigation links. The article title is "Link to 9/11 hijackers found in Sarasota" with a sub-headline "FBI found ties between hijackers and Saudis in Sarasota but never revealed the findings". The byline reads "BY ANTHONY SUMMERS AND DAN CHRISTENSEN SPECIAL TO THE MIAMI HERALD". The main text begins with "Just two weeks before the 9/11 hijackers slammed into the Pentagon and World Trade Center, members of a Saudi family abruptly vacated their luxury home near Sarasota, leaving a brand new car in the driveway, a refrigerator full of food, fruit on the counter — and an open safe in a master bedroom." Below the text is a photograph of Mohamed Atta, with a caption: "Mohamed Atta is shown in an undated State of Florida Division of Motor Vehicles photograph. AP". A second paragraph starts with "In the weeks to follow, law enforcement agents not only discovered the home was visited by vehicles used by the hijackers, but phone calls were linked between the home and those who carried out the death flights — including leader Mohamed Atta — in discoveries never before revealed to the public." At the bottom of the article, a line of text states: "Ten years after the deadliest attack of terrorism on U.S. soil, new information has emerged that shows the FBI found troubling ties between the hijackers and residents in the upscale community in southwest".

Recent revelations in the *Miami Herald* linking a wealthy Saudi family with the 9/11 hijackers were characterized by former Sen. Bob Graham as “the most important thing about 9/11 to surface in the last seven or eight years.” Here is the paper’s online edition, showing 9/11 terrorist leader Mohamed Atta.

ords of the gated community also showed visits by vehicles owned by Atta and by another hijacker, Zaid Jarrah.

Atta, Jarrah, and Marwan al-Shehhi were all living within 10 miles of Ghazzawi’s house, and were taking flying lessons in nearby Venice. Analysis of phone records from Ghazzawi’s house showed contact with 11 other terrorism suspects, including Walid al-Shehhi, who was with Atta on the first plane to hit the World Trade Center on Sept. 11.

Neighbors said that Ghazzawi’s family bragged of his ties to the Saudi royal family. This appears to be no

idle boast: During the 1990s, British court documents pertaining to the investigations of BCCI (Bank of Credit and Commerce International) revealed that Ghazzawi held funds for Saudi Prince Fahd bin Salman, a nephew of the late King Fahd. Fahd's father, Prince Salman bin Abdel Azziz, governor of Riyadh Province, was also the co-director of the Saudi intelligence service, along with Prince Turki bin Faisal. Turki abruptly resigned (or was sacked) 10 days before the 9/11 attacks—around the same time that the Ghazzawi family abruptly fled Florida—and Turki left Washington on Sept. 4, 2001.

Saudi Support Network

In a Sept. 15 interview on “Democracy Now,” Graham described the Saudi “support network” for the 9/11 terrorists that the Congressional Inquiry uncovered in San Diego, Calif., adding that, “We’ve just learned about another pod of this network in Sarasota.”

“What we know to date is that there was a wealthy Saudi family living in a gated community near Sarasota, which had numerous contacts with Atta, the leader of the hijackers, and two others who were doing their pilot training near Sarasota. We also know that this family left the United States under what appear to be very urgent circumstances on Aug. 30, 2001, just before 9/11.”

Graham stressed that the FBI did not tell the Congressional Inquiry about the Saudi contacts in either San Diego or Sarasota. Graham also cited the suppression of the final 28-page section of the Joint Inquiry’s report, which was entirely blanked out and kept secret from the public, on the orders of former President George W. Bush, and which is still being withheld by the Obama Administration.

The Sarasota revelations parallel earlier information about a Saudi government employee who had lived in California for years, Graham said. As *EIR* has reported since 2007, that man, Omar al-Bayoumi, had paid for a San Diego apartment for two of the hijackers, funneled money to them, and then left the United States in July 2011. Graham thinks Bayoumi and the Sarasota husband and wife, as well as her wealthy father, could have helped form a shadow support system for the hijackers.

“These 19 people did not play out this plot as lone wolves,” Graham said. “The chances that 19 people, most of whom had never been in the U.S., who did not speak English, and most of whom did not know each

other, could have completed training, practiced and executed such a complicated plot, defies common sense.

“My assumption had been that they had some support system that was already in place in the United States, which facilitated their activities. We learned a lot about such a facilitation in San Diego. Now we’re beginning to learn about Sarasota. The question in my mind is, what happened in places like Arlington, Va.; Paterson, N.J.; Phoenix, Ariz.; Delray Beach, Fla., where we know hijackers lived for a considerable period of time? Were there similar facilitators in those communities?”

Graham believes that the intelligence networks that were used to support the 9/11 hijackers, were created by the Saudis after the first Gulf War, to monitor the activities of Saudi students who were studying in the U.S., to ensure that Saudi leaders did not suffer the same fate as the Shah of Iran. This is consistent with what *EIR* reported as far back as 2007: that Bayoumi was suspected by the Arab community in San Diego of being an agent for Saudi intelligence, who was keeping tabs on Saudis in the area, especially Saudi students attending college in southern California.

More Calls for Investigation

The *Miami Herald*, which first published the Sarasota revelations along with the *Broward Bulldog*, has also called for a full investigation, saying in a Sept. 15 editorial, “There are simply too many unanswered questions . . . to sweep this matter under the rug.” The *Herald* notes that the FBI has issued a statement saying that it had followed up the information and found “no connection” to the 9/11 plot. “That should not be the end of it,” says the *Herald*, insisting that the public deserves answers to questions about the connections between the hijackers and the Saudis who lived in the Sarasota house, including an explanation for the many phone calls and visits. The *Herald* reports that, in addition to Graham’s calls for the White House to investigate, Rep. Kathy Castor (D-Fla.), has called on the House Intelligence Committee to investigate.

Lloyds Sues Saudis for 9/11

In a further, ironic development which may shed additional light on the 9/11 events, Lloyds Syndicate 3500, a Lloyds of London insurance portfolio, filed suit in the Federal District Court for Western Pennsylvania in Johnstown on Sept. 8, against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, three Saudi government-run charities, two

major Saudi banks, and three individuals. One of the individual defendants is Prince Salman bin Abdul Azziz, mentioned above as the father of the Prince Fahd bin Salman, for whom Ghazzawi was holding funds in a BCCI account. Salman is cited in the lawsuit as having headed the Saudi High Commission for Relief of Bosnia and Herzegovina, accused of providing funding and logistical support for al-Qaeda. He is also shown to have given large personal donations to “charities” and other organizations supporting al-Qaeda.

One of the banks named as a defendant is the Saudi-based National Commercial Bank, whose close relationship with BCCI is well documented. In a 1992 U.S. Senate report, BCCI was cited for its financing and support of terrorism, and for its funding of the Afghan War against the Soviet Union.

Lloyds is demanding at least \$215 million in compensation for insurance payments that the syndicate made to victims of the 9/11 attacks on behalf of airlines and others. The 150-page suit charges and documents that, without the financial and logistical support of the Saudi government and government-controlled charities, the 9/11 attacks could not have occurred.

The suit is premised on the argument that, while the costs of the 9/11 attacks *per se* were limited, al-Qaeda had a \$35 million-a-year budget that was largely covered by payments from the Saudi royal family and allied circles. The suit provides very detailed allegations about the role of the Saudi regime in sponsoring, financing, and supporting al-Qaeda over the 13-year period from 1988 through the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. The evidence compiled for the lawsuit was based almost exclusively on U.S. and Saudi government documents, including publicly available evidence provided by scores of Guantanamo Bay detainees, who were picked up as “enemy combatants,” and who were affiliated with either al-Qaeda or the Saudi charities named in the suit.

Among the nominally private charities named in the suit were: the World Muslim League, the Saudi Red Crescent, and a variety of Saudi charities, such as the Al-Harmain Foundation, that funded the wars in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Chechnya. All of these organizations were controlled by the Saudi Ministry of Religious Affairs and by Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef, who is now second in line to become King, and who chaired the government committee overseeing all of the named charities.

Although the funding channels which are docu-

mented in the lawsuit no doubt closely overlap those used by the Al-Yamamah slush funds (estimated at \$80-100 billion) used for financing the Afghan mujahideen and what later emerged as al-Qaeda, the suit makes no mention of the British hand in Saudi-sponsored terrorism. Despite that shortcoming, the suit presents a damning case against the Saudi royal family and some of the most prominent Saudi bankers and businessmen, all of whom were part of the “Golden Chain,” a group of wealthy Saudi princes and millionaires whose names appeared on a document, captured in Bosnia, detailing the financing of the worldwide jihadi movements.

The Western District of Pennsylvania, where the suit was filed, is near the site where one of the four 9/11 hijacked commercial airliners crashed. Days after the suit was filed, Vice President Joe Biden and former President Bill Clinton presided over the 9/11 commemoration just miles from Johnstown.

Along with the fight to declassify the suppressed 28 pages from the Congressional Joint Inquiry, the Lloyds suit potentially provides another fruitful avenue for uncovering the truth about 9/11.

10 Years Later

An LPAC-TV Feature Film

Eight months before the September 11, 2001 attacks, Lyndon LaRouche forecast that the United States was at high risk for a Reichstag Fire event, an event that would allow those in power to manage, through dictatorial means, an economic and social crisis that they were otherwise incompetent to handle. We are presently living in the wake of that history.

<http://larouchepac.com/10yearslater>

