

Chicken-Hawks Rev Up Anti-Saudi Campaign

by Arthur Ticknor and Jeffrey Steinberg

Although President Bush hosted a White House celebration honoring the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, and issued a statement rejecting Christian Zionists Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson's latest blasphemous rantings against Islam, there are other ominous signs that the campaign by Vice President Dick Cheney and his Chicken-hawk faction, to destroy the 60-year Saudi-American partnership, is escalating once again. The Chicken-hawks—the Utopian faction predominantly composed of individuals who have never served in the military, and who are committed to a “Clash of Civilizations” against Islam—are furious that they did not get their pre-election Iraq war; that plan was jammed up by an intervention into the institution of the Presidency, where the indispensable factor was the leadership and movement of Lyndon LaRouche, the only qualified 2004 U.S. Presidential candidate.

Five recent developments, in particular, suggest that some heavy political firepower is being brought into the renewed drive to demonize the House of Saud and create a rupture in relations between Washington and Riyadh.

Over the Nov. 23-24 weekend, the Chicken-hawks' Saudi-bashing campaign got deeply personal, with allegations that Princess Haifa al-Faisal, the wife of Saudi Ambassador to Washington Prince Bandar bin Sultan, had written checks that wound up financing two of the accused 9/11 hijackers, when they first rented an apartment in San Diego. Both *Newsweek* and *Time* ran lengthy stories in the editions that hit the newsstands on Nov. 25, with *Newsweek* taking the accusatory tone, that the Saudi Embassy was funneling money to al-Qaeda terrorists, either out of naiveté, carelessness, or, intentionally. At the center of the allegations are two Saudi citizens who lived in the United States for a number of years: Omar al-Bayoumi and Osama Basnan. The Saudi Embassy confirmed on Nov. 25 that Princess Haifa had written checks, drawn on Riggs Bank accounts to Basnan's wife, to help her pay medical bills. Some were counter-signed over to al-Bayoumi's wife; it is alleged is that several thousand dollars went to help two hijackers, Nawaf Alhamzi and Khalid Almidhar, rent their San Diego apartment in January 2000.

A spokesman for the Saudi government, Adel al-Jubeir, appeared on television talk shows on Nov. 23-24, to denounce the allegations that the Ambassador's wife had willfully financed the hijackers. “To think that Princess Haifa, whose father [King Faisal] was murdered by a terrorist in 1975,



Saudi Ambassador Prince Bandar bin Sultan is investigating the charges against his Embassy, made in the U.S. media, for supporting terrorism: The charges, even as reported in the press, make circumstantial evidence look solid by comparison.

who's a mother, who's a grandmother, would write checks to people who give it to terrorists is crazy,” he told the ABC News “This Week” program on Nov. 24.

U.S. officials confirmed that the whole al-Bayoumi/Basnan affair was thoroughly investigated seven months ago, and both men were cleared of suspicion of terrorist ties and allowed to leave the country. *EIR* sources indicate that the entire affair was recently hoked up by the neo-conservative faction, including some people within the Congressional Research Service, to blow up the U.S.-Saudi relationship.

Senators Join the Fray

On Nov. 24, on cue, Sens. Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.), John McCain (R-Ariz.), and Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) appeared on the Sunday talking-heads shows, to rant against the Saudis and demand a probe of the royal family's possible connections to the 9/11 attack.

“The Saudis have been engaged in a Faustian bargain with the radical Islamic fundamentalists for many, many years,” spewed McCain on ABC's “This Week” show. “In order to stay on the throne . . . huge amounts of money have gone to these organizations.”

Moonie-owned Lieberman, bashing the White House for not being as aggressive as it should be about the Saudis, warned that the Washington-Riyadh relationship could be broken. “The FBI and maybe other parts of our government have seemed to want to almost defend the Saudis, or not be as aggressive as they should be about the Saudis,” he said on CBS's “Face the Nation.” “The President ought to be demanding a full public accounting from the FBI and the CIA about what they knew about Saudi involvement. Either [the Saudis] have to change, or the relationship we have with Saudi Arabia is going to change dramatically.”

“We should follow the money trail wherever it leads,”



Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) led the anti-Saudi attack on the Sunday talk shows on Nov. 24. "The royal family continue to support the terrorists," Shelby charged.

said Shelby on ABC's "Good Morning America" on Nov. 25, and "if it leads to the higher echelons of the royal family, so be it. . . . The Saudi princess, a lot of the hierarchy of the royal family continue, I believe, to support the terrorists through various organizations."

CFR Spearheads the Attack

The media assault on the Saudi royal family is part of a larger attack, which began with the release of a Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) study on "Terrorist Financing." The task force that prepared the study was chaired by Maurice Greenberg, the chairman of the giant insurance company, American International Group (AIG). Greenberg is not only an establishment fixture, having served as chairman of the New York Federal Reserve Board, and as a member of the "Pioneers," the group of George W. Bush financial backers who contributed and raised more than \$100,000 for Bush's 2000 electoral campaign. He also is a leading figure in the American Zionist community, having established the Maurice Greenberg Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Hartford in Connecticut.

Greenberg has been a leading behind-the-scenes figure in the United States intelligence community, who, at one point, was being mooted to be the Director of Central Intelligence. In 1986 Greenberg parlayed his close friendship with CIA Director William J. Casey, to get the Reagan Administration to carry out a coup d'état that removed Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos from power in 1985. The fact that a figure like Maurice Greenberg is now setting his sights against the House of Saud, is not to be taken lightly.

The CFR report contained a particularly venomous attack on the Saudis for failing to control the flow of charitable funds into terrorist groups. "For years, individuals and charities based in Saudi Arabia have been the most important source of funds for al-Qaeda," it stated. "And for years, Saudi offi-



Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) accused the FBI of protecting Saudi figures from investigation.

cials have turned a blind eye to this problem." The report totally ignored the underground illegal weapons and drug flows, which provide a far larger source of cash to the mujahideen terrorist apparatus. Needless to say, there was no mention of the fact, emphasized recently by Lyndon LaRouche, that Osama bin Laden began his career on the U.S. payroll, and that nobody has ever discovered the termination of that status.

Recommendations included blocking the U.S. assets of Saudi citizens, businesses, and financial institutions, by designating them as associated with terrorist organizations, under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act.

A National Security Council task force, according to the Nov. 26 *Washington Post*, is going to make a recommendation to President Bush that he give the Saudis a deadline to close in on terrorist financing operations, or face undefined penalties from the United States.

The Foundation for The Defense of Democracies

Another element was the emergence of a neo-con "Chicken-hawk" front group, which is playing a key role in the Saudi-bashing campaign. The Foundation for the Defense of Democracies was created in the immediate aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001, and its stated mission is "to conduct research and education on international terrorism." Most recently, the FDD has been running a joint project with a Northern Virginia-based one-man operation, called the Saudi Institute, of Ali al-Ahmed, to vilify Saudi Arabia in the U.S. media. The head of the FDD is Clifford May, who is currently the vice chairman of the Republican Jewish Coalition. The vice president of FDD is Nim Bombs, former Officer of Public and Academic Affairs at the Israeli Embassy in Washington. The FDD's advisory board is co-chaired by former CIA Director James Woolsey and former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.). The Board of Advisers includes: Richard Perle,



Hearings called by Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) on Nov. 20, featured decades-long Israeli Likud Party agents as "expert witnesses" on Saudi activities.

the head of the Defense Policy Board, which hosted the July 10, 2002 Pentagon conference in which speakers called for the U.S. military occupation of the Saudi oil fields; William Kristol, editor of the rabidly anti-Saudi and pro-Ariel Sharon *Weekly Standard* magazine; Frank Gaffney of the pro-Sharon Center for Security Policy; Gary Bauer, the Christian Zionist; and Donna Brazile, the former manager of Al Gore's Presidential campaign.

The alliance between FDD and the one-man Saudi Institute has been promoted by Fox News and Daniel Pipes. Pipes appeared on an Aug. 27, 2002 Fox TV interview along with al-Ahmed, to denounce President Bush for failing to publicly raise the issue of human rights in Saudi Arabia, when he met earlier that day with Saudi Ambassador Prince Bandar. Another senior adviser to the FDD, Stephen Schwartz, recently authored *The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Saud, From Tradition to Terror*, a book-length rant against the Saudi royal family. He represented the FDD at the June 2002 Capitol Hill forum, co-sponsored by the Hudson Institute and the Aspen Berlin Institute, where speakers called for the American military to take over the Saudi oil fields and overthrow the House of Saud.

Congressional Hearings

The U.S. Congress has also jumped into the Saudi-bashing act, holding several high-profile hearings on terrorist financing, which have also featured some of the most notoriously biased witnesses, making the most slanderous allegations against Saudi Arabia. On Nov. 20, Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) chaired hearings of the Senate Judiciary Committee on funding of international terrorism, with witnesses Nathan Lewin and Alan Gerson. Lewin has been one of the most important protectors of the Israeli espionage operations against the United States for decades. In 1978, he intervened to cover up the anti-Saudi espionage activities of Stephen Bryen, who was caught by eyewitnesses, passing classified

Pentagon documents to officials of the Israeli Defense Ministry at the Madison Hotel in Washington. Bryen went on to be a top official, under Richard Perle, in the Reagan-Bush Defense Department.

More recently, Lewin penned an article in *Sh'ma*, calling on Israel to assassinate the family members of suicide bombers, arguing that such action is justified under Jewish Talmudic law. "The nation whose civilians are killed or maimed should, by 'targetted assassinations' or other means," he wrote, "be free promptly to execute the immediate relatives of the suicide bombers." Such measures are justified, he argued, because the Torah commanded the "total eradication" of nations posing a threat to the survival of Israel.

In his Senate testimony, Lewin demanded that Federal prosecutors share their investigative files with private attorneys who are waging civil lawsuits against purported financiers of terrorism. Lewin is now in Federal court in Chicago, suing to seize all of the assets of the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development. "The law should authorize," he said, "the distribution and the availability of information that Federal prosecutors gain in their investigations, to the private attorneys general. . . . Grand jury and other investigative materials should be disclosed to private attorneys for their actions, under court order."

The co-panelist with Lewin at the Specter hearings was Alan Gerson, who is a lead attorney in a \$1 trillion lawsuit against the Saudi government and many prominent Saudi bankers and business leaders, accusing them of having been responsible for the Sept. 11 attacks. While the basis of the lawsuit is a tissue of lies, the intent of the attorneys and sponsors of the action is to drive an even deeper wedge between Saudi Arabia and the United States, by forcing Saudi investors to pull their funds out of America, for fear of having them frozen and outright seized in the bogus legal action.

Gerson maintained that the lawsuit is not "unwarranted interference in America's foreign policy," calling on Specter to defeat the "pernicious maneuverings" to stop the lawsuit. "We are intent," he said, on going after "Saudi interests," which total about \$860 billion in the United States.

Rep. Dan Burton (R-Ind.) delivered subpoenas to the Saudi Embassy the week of Nov. 18, demanding all of their financial records. While the records are protected by diplomatic immunity and treaties, the grandstanding by Burton was intended to cast the shadow of coverup on the Embassy.

There are clearly sane figures inside the Bush Administration, who are dead-set against any revival of vicious Saudi-bashing efforts. But the continuing presence of Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, Douglas Feith, Lewis Libby, and scores of lesser Sharon-backers inside the Bush national security team is a matter of ongoing concern. It is well known that if you repeat a lie often enough, people begin to believe that it has a kernel of truth. The architects of the "Get Saudi" drive are obviously banking on such logic.