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Why Saudi Ties to 9/11 Mean U.S. Ties to 9/11

By Kevin Ryan

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Media interest in Saudi Arabian connections to the crimes of 9/11 has centered on calls for the release of the 28 missing pages from the Joint Congressional Inquiry's report.

However, those calls focus on the question of hijacker financing and omit the most interesting links between the 9/11 attacks and Saudi Arabia—links that implicate powerful people in the United States. Here are twenty examples.

1. When two of the alleged 9/11 hijackers, Khalid Al-Mihdhar and Nawaf Al-Hazmi, came to the U.S. in January 2000, they immediately met with Omar Al-Bayoumi, a suspected Saudi spy and an employee of a Saudi aviation company. Al-Bayoumi, who was the target of FBI investigations in the two years before 9/11, became a good friend to the two 9/11 suspects, setting them up in an apartment and paying their rent.
2. Al-Mihdhar and Al-Hazmi then moved in with a long-time FBI asset, Abdussattar Shaikh, who was said to be a teacher of the Saudi language. Shaikh allowed them to live in his home for at least seven months, later saying that he thought they were only Saudi students. In an unlikely coincidence, both Al-Bayoumi and Shaikh also knew Hani Hanjour, the alleged pilot of Flight 77. Although Shaikh was reported to be a retired professor at San Diego State University, the university had no records of him. He was then said to be a professor at American Commonwealth University but that turned out to be a phony institution. During the 9/11 investigations, the FBI refused to allow Shaikh to be interviewed or deposed. The FBI also tried to prevent the testimony of Shaikh's FBI handler, which occurred only secretly at a later date. Despite having a very suspicious background, the FBI gave Shaikh \$100,000 and closed his contract.
3. Journalist Joseph Trento claimed that an unnamed former CIA officer, who worked in Saudi Arabia, told him that Alhazmi and Almihdhar were Saudi spies protected by U.S. authorities.
4. After being appointed CIA Director in 1997, George Tenet began to cultivate close personal relationships with officials in Saudi Arabia. Tenet grew especially close to Prince Bandar, the Saudi ambassador to the United States. Bandar and Tenet often met at Bandar's home near Washington. Tenet did not share information from those meetings with his own CIA officers who were handling Saudi issues at the agency. These facts are among the reasons to suspect that Tenet facilitated the crimes of 9/11.
5. Bernard Kerik, the New York City police commissioner at the time of 9/11, spent three years working in Saudi Arabia in the 1970s. He then spent another three years in Saudi Arabia in the 1980s as the "chief investigator for the royal family." It was Kerik who first told the public that explosives were not used at the World Trade Center (WTC) in a news conference. It was also his police department that was said to have discovered a passport that fell from one of the burning towers, providing dubious evidence identifying one of the alleged hijackers.
6. After 9/11, former FBI director Louis Freeh, whose agency failed to stop Al Qaeda-attributed terrorism from 1993 to 2001, became the personal attorney for Tenet's dubious cohort, Prince Bandar. Sometimes called "Bandar Bush" for his close relationship to the Bush family, Bandar was the Saudi intelligence director from 2005 to 2015.

7. The company that designed the security system for the WTC complex, Kroll Associates, had strong connections to Saudi Arabia. For example, Kroll board member Raymond Mabus, now Secretary of the Navy, was the U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia in the 1990s. Control of WTC security speaks to the question of how explosives could have been placed in the three tall buildings that were demolished on 9/11.
8. All four of the contractors that were involved in implementing Kroll's security design for the WTC had done significant business in the Saudi kingdom. Stratesec, the company that installed the overall electronic security system at the WTC complex, had also managed security for Dulles airport, where Flight 77 took off, and for United Airlines, which owned two of the three other planes. For many reasons, the company's managers should be primary suspects in the crimes of 9/11. Stratesec was in partnership with a large Saudi engineering and construction company to develop and conduct business in Saudi Arabia.
9. Another interesting connection between Stratesec and Saudi Arabia was that, in the years leading up to 9/11, Stratesec held its annual shareholders' meetings in an office that was leased by Saudi Arabia. This was an office in the Watergate Hotel occupied by the Saudi Embassy (run by Prince Bandar).
10. The Bush and Bin Laden-financed Carlyle Group owned, through BDM International, the Vinnell Corporation, a mercenary operation that had extensive contracts and trained the Saudi Arabian National Guard. Several of Stratesec's key employees, including its operating manager Barry McDaniel, came from BDM. In 1995, BDM's Vinnell was one of the first targets of Al Qaeda, in Saudi Arabia.
11. One of the two major contractors hired to manage the cleanup of debris at Ground Zero—Bovis Lend Lease—had previously built the Riyadh Olympic stadium in Saudi Arabia.
12. The other primary cleanup company at Ground Zero—AMEC Construction—had just completed a \$258 million refurbishment of Wedge 1 of the Pentagon, which is exactly where Flight 77 was said to impact that building. AMEC had a significant presence in Saudi Arabia for decades, working for the national oil company, Saudi Aramco.
13. In the 1990s, Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), run by Dick Cheney's protégé Duane Andrews, trained the Saudi Navy and instructed Saudi military personnel at its company headquarters in San Diego. SAIC had a greater impact on counterterrorism programs in the United States than any other non-government entity and it profited greatly from 9/11.
14. While SAIC was training the Saudi Navy, the Carlyle/BDM subsidiary Vinnell Corporation was training the Saudi Arabian National Guard. Simultaneously, Booz Allen Hamilton was managing the Saudi Marine Corps and running the Saudi Armed Forces Staff College.
15. Salomon Smith Barney (SSB), the company that occupied all but ten floors of WTC building 7, was taken over by Citigroup in 1998 after Citigroup was taken over by Saudi Prince Alwaleed, in a deal brokered by The Carlyle Group. Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney joined the advisory board for SSB just after Citigroup's takeover and they only resigned in January 2001 to join the Bush Administration.
16. The Saudi government was sued by thousands of 9/11 victim's family members due to the suspicion that Saudi Arabia helped to finance Al Qaeda. The Saudis hired the law firm of Bush Administration insider James Baker to defend them in that lawsuit.

17. The 9/11 families' lawsuit against Saudi royals was thrown out on a technicality related to the ability to sue a foreign government and, later, the Obama Administration backed the Saudis during the appeal.
18. The world's leading insurance provider, Lloyd's of London, filed a lawsuit alleging Saudi involvement in the 9/11 attacks. Lloyd's dropped the lawsuit just days later without explanation.
19. After 9/11, it became clear that Saudi officials were supporting terrorism. For example, in the case of a would-be "underwear bomber," it was revealed that the suspect was working for the CIA and Saudi intelligence.
20. Saudi Prince Bandar has been accused of coordinating an international ring of terrorism in his role as Saudi intelligence chief. From Egypt to Libya, and now in Syria, evidence suggests that Bandar Bush has led a network of terrorists around the globe, with U.S. support.



Therefore it is not surprising that people who hear claims of Saudi involvement in 9/11 wonder why the discussion remains so limited and always avoids the glaring implications those claims should entail.

Now that the U.S. and Saudi Arabia have "reset" their rocky relationship, calls by U.S. leaders to release the "28 pages" may very well die down. Since the new Saudi King came to the U.S. a few weeks ago, the two governments have rediscovered that they are "close allies" and many new deals are in the works. It remains to be seen what cards U.S. and Saudi leaders will play in the ongoing game of terror and deception but discussions of hijacker financing will probably be left behind.