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OPINION

Yes, the Saudi government helped the 9/11 terrorists

By Paul Sperry

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Photo: Getty Images

Now we know why the missing 28 pages on 9/11 were kept under lock and key for 15 years: They show the hijackers got help across America from Saudi diplomats and spies in the run-up to the attacks. Because of the coverup, a Saudi terror support network may still be in place inside the United States.

A CIA memorandum dated July 2, 2002, stated unequivocally that the connections found between the hijackers, the Saudi embassy in Washington and Saudi consulate in Los Angeles are “incontrovertible evidence that there is support for these terrorists within the Saudi government.”

“Numerous” FBI files also fingered two Saudi government employees who assisted the 9/11 hijackers as “Saudi intelligence officers,” the newly declassified documents reveal.

Though much is still redacted, they also show the Saudi government’s ties to the hijackers and other al Qaeda suspects were so extensive that the FBI’s Washington field office created a special squad to investigate the Saudi angle.

But this special focus on Saudi Arabia occurred belatedly, only after the 9/11 attacks, “due to Saudi Arabia’s status as an American ‘ally.’ ” Astoundingly, investigative resources were not dedicated to Saudi involvement in financing and supporting terrorism prior to 9/11.

The explosive information was locked up in a top-secret, highly secured room in the basement of the US Capitol for the past 15 years, ostensibly to protect the Kingdom from embarrassment. (The Post helped get the declassification ball rolling with the December 2013 piece, “Inside the Saudi 9/11 coverup.”)

That means for 15 years, 9/11 victims and their families have been denied by their own government critical evidence they’ve sought to sue the Saudi government for responsibility in the death of their loved ones.

It also means Washington has misled the American people about foreign sponsorship of 9/11. For 15 years, we’ve been told that al Qaeda acted alone, with no state sponsors. We were led to believe that 15 Saudi nationals who barely spoke English received no help while in America; that they operated in isolation, like visitors from outer space.

It was all a monstrous lie.

FBI files show Saudi agent Omar al-Bayoumi provided “substantial assistance” to Saudi hijackers Khalid al-Mihdhar and Nawaf al-Hazmi after they arrived in San Diego in February 2000. Hazmi was the leader of the cell that attacked the Pentagon, while Mihdhar was one of that cell’s muscle hijackers. The two even stayed at Bayoumi’s apartment, working out in his gym.

At the same time he was aiding the hijackers, Bayoumi was getting large salary increases from a Saudi defense front company tied to Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda, where he worked as a ghost employee. Another alleged Saudi intelligence officer who handled the hijackers, Osama Bassnan, worked closely with Bayoumi.

According to a CIA memo, cited by the now-uncensored 28-page section of the 9/11 report, “Bassnan reportedly received funding and possibly a fake passport from Saudi government officials.”

More alarming, “he and his wife have received financial support from the Saudi ambassador to the United States and his wife.” That would be Prince Bandar, who was promoted to Saudi intelligence minister after 9/11.

The same report says Bassnan, described as a “supporter of Osama bin Laden,” also got “a significant amount of cash” from another “member of the Saudi Royal Family.”

FBI documents and a CIA memo further indicate that the hijackers had contact with Shayk Fahad al-Thumairy, then a Saudi consular official in Los Angeles. Records show the accredited Saudi diplomat had dozens of phone conversations and at least one meeting with Bayoumi in advance of the hijackers’ arrival.

But wait, the Saudi-9/11 conspiracy gets even worse.

A Saudi interior ministry official stayed at the same hotel in Herndon, Va., with Hazmi and other Pentagon cell hijackers on the night before they hijacked the plane that departed that fateful Sept. 11, 2001, morning from nearby Dulles airport. FBI agents felt Saleh al-Hussayen lied about not meeting with or even knowing the hijackers, but when they tried to re-interview him, it was too late — he had been spirited out of the country along with dozens of other Saudi VIP suspects at Bandar’s request, and with the White House’s permission.

Speaking of Bandar, it turns out that an unlisted phone number connected to the good prince’s Aspen chalet was found in the phone book of senior al Qaeda operative Abu Zubaida when he was captured in Pakistan in 2002. Zubaida also just happened to have a contact number for Bandar’s bodyguard at the Saudi Embassy.

Mind you, these stomach-turning revelations are gleaned from merely summaries of FBI case files and CIA memos. There is much rawer intel that remains classified about the Saudi government’s role in 9/11.

The treachery may still be worse than we know. And it may be ongoing. As the 28 pages warn: “Saudi government officials in the United States may have other ties to al Qaeda and other terrorist groups.”

Sperry is author of “[INFILTRATION: How Muslim Spies and Subversives Have Penetrated Washington](#),” which exposes the Saudi terror support network in America.

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