

9/11 ANALYSIS: 9/11 and America's Secret Terror Campaign

The Imperial Anatomy of Al-Qaeda, Part III

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Global Research, September 10, 2010

10 September 2010

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Terrorism](#)

This is Part III of the three-part series, "The Imperial Anatomy of Al-Qaeda"

[*Part 1: The Imperial Anatomy of Al-Qaeda. The CIA's Drug-Running Terrorists and the "Arc of Crisis"*](#)

[*Part 2: Empire, Energy and Al-Qaeda: The Anglo-American Terror Network*](#)

Anticipating An Attack

For several years prior to the events of 9/11, top American strategists had been acknowledging the necessity of what they oft-termed a "new Pearl Harbor", a momentous attack upon America itself, in order to mobilize the American populace for a new global war of domination.

As Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote in his 1997 book *The Grand Chessboard*, "America's primary interest is to help ensure that no single power comes to control this geopolitical space [of Central Asia] and that the global community has unhindered financial and economic access to it." [1] Brzezinski acknowledged in his book that, "the pursuit of power is not a goal that commands popular passion, except in conditions of a sudden threat or challenge to the public's sense of domestic well-being." [2] He also wrote that, "The public supported America's engagement in World War II largely because of the shock effect of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor." [3]

In 1999, Andrew Krepinevich, Executive Director of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments testified before the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities. He stated that the US faces an "unprecedented challenge":

[T]he need to transform our armed forces into a very different kind of military from that which exists today, while sustaining the military's ability to play a very active role in supporting U.S. near-term efforts to preserve global stability within a national security strategy of engagement and enlargement. [4]

After advocating a massive re-imagining of the role and nature of US military might, pushing the notion of a "revolution in military affairs" and an acceleration of imperial ambitions, he told the Senate Committee:

There appears to be general agreement concerning the need to transform the U.S. military into a significantly different kind of force from that which emerged victorious from the Cold

and Gulf Wars. Yet this verbal support has not been translated into a defense program supporting transformation. [. . .] While there is growing support in Congress for transformation, the “critical mass” [i.e., public support] needed to effect it has not yet been achieved. One may conclude that, in the absence of a strong external shock to the United States—a latter-day “Pearl Harbor” of sorts—surmounting the barriers to transformation will likely prove a long, arduous process.[5]

In 1999, Graham Fuller, former Deputy Director of the CIA’s National Council on Intelligence, advocated using Muslim forces to further US interests in Central Asia. He stated that, “The policy of guiding the evolution of Islam and of helping them against our adversaries worked marvelously well in Afghanistan against [the Russians]. The same doctrines can still be used to destabilize what remains of Russian power, and especially to counter the Chinese influence in Central Asia.”[6]

In June of 2000, the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Pentagon released Joint Vision 2020, outlining the American military strategy that the Department of Defense “will follow in the future.” The emphasis in the report was put on the notion of “Full Spectrum Dominance,” which means “the ability of U.S. forces, operating alone or with allies, to defeat any adversary and control any situation across the range of military operations”:

Joint Vision 2020 addresses full-spectrum dominance across the range of conflicts from nuclear war to major theater wars to smaller-scale contingencies. It also addresses amorphous situations like peacekeeping and noncombat humanitarian relief.[7]

The neoconservative think tank the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) released a report in September of 2000 called Rebuilding America’s Defenses in which they advocated for a massive expansion of America’s empire and “full spectrum dominance” as well as the necessity to undertake a “Revolution in military affairs,” and undertake multiple simultaneous wars in different regions of the world. Several members of the think tank and authors of the report would go on to enter key policy positions within the Bush administration several months later (including, but not limited to Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, and Zalmay Khalilzad). While acknowledging the massive undertaking this “project” would be, the report stated:

Further, the process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event – like a new Pearl Harbor.”[8]

In January of 2001, the Rumsfeld Commission, which was set up to analyze the US National Security Space Management and Organization, chaired by incoming US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld (who had also been a signatory to and member of the Project for the New American Century at the same time). It advocated an expansion of military capabilities in Space and a total reorganization of the armed forces and intelligence agencies of the United States. The report stated that:

History is replete with instances in which warning signs were ignored and change resisted until an external, “improbable” event forced resistant bureaucracies to take action. The question is whether the US will be wise enough to act responsibly and soon enough to reduce US space vulnerability. Or whether, as in the past, a disabling attack against the country and its people – a “Space Pearl Harbor” – will be the only event able to galvanize the nation and cause the US Government to act.[9]

As early as 1998, the President was warned in his CIA daily briefing that, “bin Laden and his allies are preparing for an attack in the US, including an aircraft hijacking.” NORAD, the “North American Aerospace Defense command also conducted an exercise to counter a terrorist attack involving smashing an airplane into a building.” In August 1999, “the Federal Aviation Administration’s intelligence branch warned of a possible “suicide hijacking operation” by Osama Bin Laden.”[10]

In October of 2000, the Pentagon undertook an emergency response exercise in which “there was a mock terrorist incident at the Pentagon Metro stop and a construction accident,” and it further envisioned a “downed passenger aircraft” in the Pentagon courtyard.[11]

For years, NORAD had been conducting military exercises and drills in which it envisioned planes being hijacked and flown into buildings in the United States.[12] One of the intended targets in the NORAD drills was the World Trade Center:

In another exercise, jets performed a mock shutdown over the Atlantic Ocean of a jet supposedly laden with chemical poisons headed toward a target in the United States. In a third scenario, the target was the Pentagon — but that drill was not run after Defense officials said it was unrealistic.[13]

As the Guardian revealed in April of 2004:

Five months before the September 11 attacks, US military planners suggested a war game to practise a response to a terrorist attack using a commercial airliner flown into the Pentagon, but senior officers rejected the scenario as “too unrealistic”. [14]

In May of 2001, an exercise involving U.S. Central Command, U.S. Special Operations Command and U.S. Joint Forces Command took place in which the military establishment “forecasted” the first war of the 21st century so closely that, “Nostradamus couldn’t have nailed the first battle of the next war any closer than we did,” as articulated by a former top official with the exercise, Dave Ozolek. The exercise, Unified Vision 2001:

[G]rew out of the realization that the threat was changing. Ozolek said the scenario was a major regional threat emanating from the Middle East. The scenario called for global deployment into a landlocked country with hostile terrain and a lack of basing and agreements with neighboring countries for U.S. access.

[. . .] The threat we portrayed was an unstable and hostile state, but the primary enemy was not the state itself but a transnational actor based out of that area, globally connected, capable and willing to conduct terrorist attacks in the U.S. as part of that campaign.

[. . .] “Many of the participants in Unified Vision, 100 days later, were war planners,” Ozolek said. They took their experiences in Unified Vision back to their commands and put them to use as the commands created plans for operations Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle, he said. They had an idea of the tactics, techniques and procedures needed to operate against such an enemy, he noted.

Ozolek said Unified Vision refutes the pundits who make a living out of critiquing the Department of Defense. “The first thing they like to talk about is that we always dwell on the last battle of the last war,” he said. “What we’re showing them is that this time we got it right: We really were looking at the first battle of the next war, and we nailed it pretty

darned close.”[15]

After 9/11, in May of 2002, Condoleezza Rice stated that, “I don’t think anybody could have predicted that ... they would try to use an airplane as a missile, a hijacked airplane as a missile.”[16] So Condi is a fool or a liar, because that statement is nothing if not entirely and utterly false. The national security apparatus had fully anticipated, and even war gamed and drilled this very scenario. It was expected, planned for, and no less with war plans waiting in the wings.

The 9/11 Commission

Of critical importance in understanding the events of 9/11 is taking note of the funding for the operation. The 9/11 Commission itself stated:

To date the U.S. government has not been able to determine the origin of the money used for the 9/11 attacks. Ultimately the question is of little practical significance.[17]

However, one should take issue with this claim. The fact is that any comprehensive investigation, criminal or otherwise, should pay special attention to the role of financing; follow the money. This is not the only failure of the 9/11 Commission, as has been amply documented.

From its inception, the 9/11 Commission was plagued with problems. The Bush administration had resisted attempts to form a commission to investigate the attacks of 9/11 for over a year, even pressuring Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle not to launch an inquiry.[18] In May of 2002, President Bush voiced his opposition to the formation of a 9/11 commission.[19]

In September of 2002, Bush reversed his previous decision and backed the proposal to form an “independent” commission to investigate the attacks.[20] Within a month of this statement, the White House began undermining the process, as “an almost completed Congressional deal was suddenly undone in October after a Republican lawmaker involved in the final negotiations received a call from Vice President Dick Cheney,” which led to a stalling of the process.[21]

In mid-November, Congress approved the creation of a bi-partisan 9/11 Commission to investigate the attacks, with 10 Congressmen, 5 Democrats and 5 Republicans, with the Chairman appointed by the Bush administration and the Vice Chair appointed by the Democrats.[22]

The Bush administration chose as the Chairman none other than Henry Kissinger, former National Security Adviser and Secretary of State for Nixon and Ford, “a consummate Washington insider,” not to mention war criminal. Even the New York Times had to admit:

Unfortunately, his affinity for power and the commercial interests he has cultivated since leaving government may make him less than the staunchly independent figure that is needed for this critical post. Indeed, it is tempting to wonder if the choice of Mr. Kissinger is not a clever maneuver by the White House to contain an investigation it long opposed.[23]

Two week later, “Facing questions about potential conflicts of interest, Henry Kissinger resigned” as Chairman of the 9/11 Commission.[24] He was replaced with former New Jersey Governor Thomas Kean. As of November 2003, one Commissioner, Max Cleland, claimed

that the “investigation is now compromised” by the White House.[25]

Shortly after the release of the final 9/11 Commission Report in 2004, Harper’s Magazine called it “a cheat and a fraud,” declaring the report a “whitewash.”[26]

In 2006, the two co-Chairs of the Commission published a book in which they claimed that the Commission was lied to by both the FAA and the Department of Defense, specifically NORAD.[27] Several commissioners are on the record as saying they felt that the Pentagon purposely lied to them in order to mislead them.[28] Further, much of the information the commission received and used in its report “was the product of harsh interrogations of al-Qaida operatives – interrogations that many critics have labeled torture.”[29]

As it turned out, the Executive Director of the 9/11 Commission, Philip Zelikow, was a man of dubious priorities and connections. He was the ultimate author of the final report and controlled the research staff of the commission. Zelikow, “a former colleague of then-National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, was appointed executive director of the 9/11 Commission despite his close ties to the Bush White House, and he remained in regular contact with [Karl] Rove while overseeing the commission.” Zelikow “secretly spoke with President Bush’s close adviser Karl Rove and others within the White House while the ostensibly autonomous commission was completing its report.” Zelikow had even previously co-authored a book with Condoleezza Rice. Following the publication of the report, Zelikow then went to work as an adviser to Condoleezza Rice in the White House.[30]

The Bin Ladens

There are many fascinating and important revelations regarding the intricate relationship between the CIA, the ISI, and al-Qaeda in the lead-up to the events of 9/11 that deserve to be subjected to more scrutiny.

First, let’s take a look at Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden, whose relationship with the CIA in the past had been well documented, reportedly acted as a rogue following the 1991 US Gulf War against Iraq and American stationing of troops and military bases in Saudi Arabia. However, there are reports that would indicate that the relationship between bin Laden and the US intelligence apparatus remained, at least to some degree, for many years.

We must remember the nature of al-Qaeda, as an organization, or network, of intelligence assets funded, armed, trained and dispersed around the world by a complex network of intelligence agencies from the United States, France, Great Britain, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan.

A French court undertook a probe into the financial network of Osama bin Laden, who was widely assumed to simply be independently wealthy, and financed al-Qaeda operations through his own funds. However, it was revealed that Osama maintained a joint bank account with his half-brother Yeslam bin Laden in Switzerland between 1990 and 1997. Of particular interest to investigators was “a 241 million euro transfer made to Pakistan in 2000 from an account belonging to a company called Cambridge, a SBG [Saudi Bin Laden Group] subsidiary, that was opened at Deutsche Bank in Geneva,” with the funds “transferred into an account belonging jointly to Osama bin Laden and someone of Pakistani nationality.”[31]

Der Spiegel, a major German newspaper, was granted access to thousands of pages of intelligence documents relating to bin Laden and al-Qaeda. In the report on the documents,

the authors revealed that when bin Laden needed financing, “The Saudi elite — and his own family — came to his assistance.” The list of financiers:

is a veritable who’s who of the Middle Eastern monarchy, including the signatures of two former cabinet ministers, six bankers and twelve prominent businessmen. The list also mentions “the bin Laden brothers.” ... Did “the bin Laden brothers,” who first pledged money to Al-Qaida and then, in 1994, issued a joint press statement declaring that they were ejecting Osama from the family as a “black sheep,” truly break ties with their blood relatives — or were they simply pulling the wool over the eyes of the world?[32]

Osama bin Laden’s sister-in-law even stated:

I absolutely do not believe that the bin Ladens disowned Osama. In this family, a brother is always a brother, no matter what he has done. I am convinced that the complex and tightly woven network between the bin Laden clan and the Saudi royal family is still in operation.[33]

Following the death of Osama’s father, Salem bin Laden, Osama’s brother, became head of the company, Saudi Binladen Group (SBG). As Der Spiegel reported:

Salem bin Laden established the company’s ties to the American political elite when, according to French intelligence sources, he helped the Reagan administration circumvent the US Senate and funnel \$34 million to the right-wing Contra rebels operating in Nicaragua. He also developed close ties with the Bush family in Texas.[34]

While Osama was fighting in Afghanistan against the Soviets, he would often be personally visited by Saudi Prince Turki, the head of Saudi intelligence, and was funded by both the Saudi Binladen Group (SBG) and the Saudi royal family. In 1990, when King Fahd of Saudi Arabia allowed the Americans to establish military bases in Saudi Arabia, the SBG got the contract to build the bases.[35]

Though the Bin Laden family claimed Osama was a “black sheep” and that they cut off ties with him in the early 1990s, the evidence remains strong that not only did Osama maintain ties with his family, but he maintained his ties with Saudi intelligence. While Osama was in Sudan in the early 1990s, Saudi intelligence would so frequently send his family over to meet with him, and kept in such close contact with him, that the Israeli intelligence agency, Mossad, believed Osama was a Saudi spy. In 1994, under intense public pressure, both Saudi Arabia and the bin Laden family publicly revoked their ties with Osama.[36]

Yet, even after this, when Osama returned to Afghanistan in the mid-1990s to work with the Taliban, Prince Turki of Saudi intelligence would still maintain contact and even visit Osama, even bringing “gifts” such as dozens of trucks:

According to a former member of the Taliban intelligence service, Prince Turki and OBL [Osama bin Laden] made a deal: The Saudis would support al-Qaida financially, but only under the condition that there would be no attacks on Saudi soil.[37]

On January 9, 2001, Osama attended his sons wedding in Afghanistan, accompanied by his mother and two brothers, hardly the actions of a “black sheep”. Further, two of Osama’s sisters traveled to Abu Dhabi in February of 2001 to “deliver large sums of cash” to an al-Qaeda agent. In the United States, the Bin Laden family had diplomatic passports, so following the 9/11 attacks, they could not be questioned, but instead were flown out of the

country. The Bin Ladens were also in business with the Bush family through the investment company, the Carlyle Group.[38] No one ever seemed to question why the bin Laden family had diplomatic passports, a strange occurrence, it would seem, for a Saudi 'business' family who weren't engaged in any official or formal 'diplomacy'.

In March of 2000, it was reported that Osama bin Laden was sick and suffering from kidney and liver disease.[39] A western intelligence source told the Hong-Kong based magazine, Asiaweek, that bin Laden was dying of kidney failure.[40]

In July of 2001, Osama bin Laden spent 10 days at the American hospital in Dubai for treatment. He traveled from Pakistan to Dubai on July 4, 2001, to be treated in the urology department. While he was in the hospital, Osama was visited by several members of his family, Saudi officials, and the CIA. One visitor was Saudi Prince Turki al Faisal, the head of Saudi intelligence, and the CIA station chief in Dubai, who was soon after recalled back to Washington.[41]

On September 10, 2001, the night before the attacks of 9/11, Osama bin Laden was in Pakistan "getting medical treatment with the support of the very military that days later pledged its backing for the U.S. war on terror in Afghanistan." Pakistani intelligence reported that bin Laden was quickly taken to a military hospital in Rawalpindi for kidney dialysis treatment. As one medical worker said, "they moved out all the regular staff in the urology department and sent in a secret team to replace them." Pakistani President Musharraf openly stated in public that Osama suffers from kidney disease and is near death.[42]

The Pakistani ISI and 9/11

Throughout the entire time of overt and covert assistance by Pakistan's ISI to both the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, the CIA had maintained its close ties with the ISI that they had developed during the Soviet-Afghan war in the 1980s, in which they used the ISI as a conduit; as was set up through the Safari Club in the 1970s, which was the organization of western intelligence agencies which used Middle Eastern and Asian intelligence agencies as conduits for their covert activities. Thus, the CIA maintained its extensive contact with the ISI, and so would be well aware of its activities.[43]

A top Indian intelligence official even stated that, "America's Defence Intelligence Agency was aware that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) was sponsoring the Taliban and Al Qaeda, but the Bush Administration chose to ignore its findings." [44] Is it inconceivable that since the CIA maintained its extensive contacts with the ISI, and the ISI maintained and expanded its contacts with the Taliban and al-Qaeda, that the CIA was not in fact sponsoring both the Taliban and Al-Qaeda through the ISI as well? We know that the CIA was supporting the Taliban through the same network of the ISI that was supporting al-Qaeda operatives,[45] thus it would take a stretch of the imagination to think that the CIA would be unaware of its subsequent support for al-Qaeda. Whether direct or indirect, the CIA was supporting al-Qaeda.

Shortly after 9/11, Indian intelligence became aware of the fact that General Mahmoud Ahmad, head of Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) had wired \$100,000 from Saeed Sheikh, a convicted terrorist who had associations with the ISI, to Mohamed Atta, the purported ringleader and one of the 9/11 hijackers. Thus, the ISI in effect, financed the 9/11 attacks. However, there are several more ambiguous facets to this story. It just so happens that General Mahmoud Ahmad went to Washington, D.C. on September 4th, 2001 for a

weeklong visit. On September 10, the day before 9/11, a Pakistani newspaper ran a story on Ahmad's visit:

ISI Chief Lt-Gen Mahmood's week-long presence in Washington has triggered speculation about the agenda of his mysterious meetings at the Pentagon and National Security Council. Officially, State Department sources say he is on a routine visit in return to CIA Director George Tenet's earlier visit to Islamabad. Official sources confirm that he met Tenet this week. He also held long parleys with unspecified officials at the White House and the Pentagon. But the most important meeting was with Mark Grossman, US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs.

... What added interest to his visit is the history of such visits. Last time Ziauddin Butt, Mahmood's predecessor, was here during Nawaz Sharif's government the domestic politics turned topsy-turvy within days. That this is not the first visit by Mahmood in the last three months shows the urgency of the ongoing parleys.[46]

General Ahmad, while in Washington, met with CIA Director George Tenet and Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage. On the morning of 9/11, General Ahmad was in a meeting with the Chairmen of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees, Senator Bob Graham and Representative Porter Goss, a former 10-year veteran of CIA clandestine operations. Porter Goss was later put in charge of a joint House-Senate investigation into the Sept. 11 attacks, and later became the CIA director.[47]

General Mahmood, having wired \$100,000 to Mohamad Atta, the purported lead 9/11 hijacker, implicates the ISI in the attacks of 9/11, at least from a financial standing. The FBI even confirmed the transaction took place.[48] The ISI's extensive ties to American intelligence and the fact that Ahmad was in D.C. talking to high level legislators, State Department, Pentagon and intelligence officials begs the question of what the precise nature of these secret meetings were.

Michael Meacher, a former British MP and member of Tony Blair's cabinet, wrote in the Guardian that:

Ahmed, the paymaster for the hijackers, was actually in Washington on 9/11, and had a series of pre-9/11 top-level meetings in the White House, the Pentagon, the national security council, and with George Tenet, then head of the CIA, and Marc Grossman, the under-secretary of state for political affairs. When Ahmed was exposed by the Wall Street Journal as having sent the money to the hijackers, he was forced to "retire" by President Pervez Musharraf.[49]

Meacher further discussed the case of Sibel Edmonds, a former FBI translator-turned-whistleblower who tried to expose evidence of what she saw as collusion between intelligence agencies and the terrorists behind 9/11. She was subsequently gagged by the U.S. Department of Justice:

She is a 33-year-old Turkish-American former FBI translator of intelligence, fluent in Farsi, the language spoken mainly in Iran and Afghanistan, who had top-secret security clearance. She tried to blow the whistle on the cover-up of intelligence that names some of the culprits who orchestrated the 9/11 attacks, but is now under two gagging orders that forbid her from testifying in court or mentioning the names of the people or the countries involved. She has been quoted as saying: "My translations of the 9/11 intercepts included [terrorist] money

laundering, detailed and date-specific information ... if they were to do real investigations, we would see several significant high-level criminal prosecutions in this country [the US] ... and believe me, they will do everything to cover this up".[50]

In August of 2009, Sibel Edmonds revealed that, "the US was on 'intimate' terms with the Taliban and al-Qaeda using the militants to further certain goals in central Asia," and stated, "With those groups, we had operations in Central Asia." She explained that Washington used those groups "as we did during the Afghan and Soviet conflict." [51] In other words, the US was arming, funding and using al-Qaeda for its own objectives, just as it always had.

On September 11, 2009, 8 years to the day of the events of 9/11, a major British newspaper, the Daily Mail, ran a story critical of the official story regarding Osama bin Laden. In it, the author posed the question:

What if he has been dead for years, and the British and U.S. intelligence services are actually playing a game of double bluff? What if everything we have seen or heard of him on video and audio tapes since the early days after 9/11 is a fake – and that he is being kept 'alive' by the Western allies to stir up support for the war on terror?[52]

The article quoted former U.S. foreign intelligence officer and senior editor Angelo M. Codevilla, a professor of international relations at Boston University as saying, "All the evidence suggests Elvis Presley is more alive today than Osama Bin Laden":

Prof Codevilla asserted: 'The video and audio tapes alleged to be Osama's never convince the impartial observer,' he asserted. 'The guy just does not look like Osama. Some videos show him with a Semitic, aquiline nose, while others show him with a shorter, broader one. Next to that, differences between the colours and styles of his beard are small stuff.' [53]

Interesting to note is that following the 9/11 attacks, Osama bin Laden, in at least four separate statements to Middle Eastern press and media, stated that he did not take part in the 9/11 attacks, while the video in which he supposedly claimed responsibility for the attacks has him wearing gold rings, which is forbidden by his Wahhabist religion, as well as writing with his right hand, whereas the FBI website says that he is left handed, and his face is blurred and difficult to make out. On September 28, 2001, Osama bin Laden said, "I have already said I am not involved. As a Muslim, I try my best to avoid telling a lie. I had no knowledge... nor do I consider the killing of innocent women, children and other humans as an appreciable act." [54]

Osama bin Laden was even reported to have died of kidney failure on December 13, 2001, in the mountains of Tora Bora on the Afghan-Pakistan border. On that same day, the U.S. government released the fateful videotape in which Osama claimed responsibility for the attacks. However, the bin Laden in the video was very different from the known images of the real bin Laden, and even had a different shaped nose, his beard was darker, his skin paler, and his fingers were no longer long and thin, as well as the fact that he looked to be in good health. [55]

As the Los Angeles Times reported in November of 2009, the extensive and close relationship between the CIA and the ISI has not diminished since 9/11, but had in fact, accelerated: "the CIA has funneled hundreds of millions of dollars to Pakistan's intelligence service since the Sept. 11 attacks, accounting for as much as one-third of the foreign spy agency's annual budget." Further, "the payments to Pakistan are authorized under a covert

program initially approved by then-President Bush and continued under President Obama.” Further, “the CIA has routinely brought ISI operatives to a secret training facility in North Carolina,” and as the article pointed out, “the CIA also directs millions of dollars to other foreign spy services. But the magnitude of the payments to the ISI reflect Pakistan’s central role.” As the report in the Los Angeles Times explained, the CIA financial support to the ISI began during the Afghan-Soviet conflict, and has not stopped since then, and since 9/11, it has actually accelerated.[56]

The Nexus Personified: The Case of Ali Mohamed

Perhaps the perfect example of the complex relationship and nexus between intelligence agencies and al-Qaeda is the case of a man named Ali Mohamed. As the San Francisco Chronicle reported in 2001, “A former U.S. Army sergeant who trained Osama bin Laden’s bodyguards and helped plan the 1998 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Kenya was a U.S. government informant during much of his terrorist career.” Ali Mohamed, an Egyptian-born US citizen had approached the CIA in the mid-1980s to inform for them. He also spent years as an FBI informant, all the while being a top-level al-Qaeda operative, even training Osama bin Laden’s bodyguards, as well as training terrorists in camps in Afghanistan and Sudan, and planned the 1998 US Embassy bombing in Kenya.[57]

State Department officials proclaimed this was merely a sign of the problems associated with recruiting informants, that Mohamed was a double agent working for al-Qaeda, and they should have “known better.” However, the ignorance plea can only go so far, and considering Mohamed’s extensive ties to not one, but several US agencies, there is no doubt he was a double agent, but perhaps it is more likely he was working as an al-Qaeda operative for the US government. After all, it is one thing to say the Ali Mohamed was lucky in his evading being caught, but he was continuously lucky, over and over again. One wonders when ‘luck’ is organized.

In 1971, Ali Mohamed joined the Egyptian Army, rising to the rank of major. Well educated in Egypt, he was fluent in English. In 1981, he joined the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, “a group of radical Muslim fundamentalists opposed to the Egyptian government’s ties to the United States and Israel that included members of the Egyptian military.” The very same year, in 1981, Mohamed traveled to the United States for the first time, “graduating from a special program for foreign officers at the U.S. Army Special Forces school at Fort Bragg, N.C.” In 1984, Mohamed left the Egyptian military.[58]

In 1984, Ali Mohamed approached the CIA office in Egypt offering to be a spy. Officially, the CIA then cut off contact with him shortly thereafter, as he made contact with terrorist organizations and informed them he was working with the CIA, supposedly proposing to spy on US intelligence agencies. So the CIA had the State Department add him to a “watch list” so that he could not enter the United States. However, the next year, Ali Mohamed obtained a visa from the American Embassy and went to the United States. He then joined the American Army and “served with one of its most elite units.”[59]

From 1986 until 1989, Ali Mohamed served at the Army’s Special Forces base in Fort Bragg, N.C., until he was honourably discharged in 1989. While on active duty, he went to New York where he trained local Muslims in military tactics to go fight in the Afghan-Soviet war. One of his students was “El Sayyid A. Nosair, the Egyptian immigrant convicted of killing Rabbi Meir Kahane, the founder of the Jewish Defense League, in 1990,” which was the first recorded al-Qaeda operation on U.S. soil.[60]

In the early 1990s, Ali Mohamed began working for the FBI. Mohamed then forged ties with Osama bin Laden as early as 1991, and assisted in a variety of ways, such as helping bin Laden and 'al-Qaeda' obtain fake documents, assisted with logistical tasks, and even helped Osama relocate from Afghanistan to the Sudan in 1991. Many terrorists that Mohamed trained were subsequently involved in the 1993 plot to blow up the World Trade Center. In 1992, Mohamed returned to Afghanistan to continue training militants. That same year, he was detained by officials in Rome, yet was released shortly thereafter.[61]

In 1992, Ali Mohamed created an al-Qaeda terrorist cell in Kenya, and in 1993, bin Laden asked Mohamed to scout for potential terrorist targets in Nairobi, Kenya. He took photos of and scouted the French Embassy, the US AID office and the American Embassy. Bin Laden subsequently chose the American Embassy as the target.[62]

In 1993, he was detained by the RCMP in Vancouver, Canada, "while traveling in the company of a suspected associate of Mr. bin Laden's who was trying to enter the United States using false documents." [63] However, after the RCMP were told to contact his FBI handlers, Mohamed was released.[64] He subsequently masterminded the American Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998.[65]

However, there are implications that may suggest that Ali Mohamed's ties to the CIA did not end or evaporate in the 1980s. Following 9/11, several revelations were reported in the media about a covert program of allowing high-level terrorists to enter the United States under a secret CIA program which had the State Department issue visas to terrorists in order to enter the United States.

The CIA Brings Terrorists to America

Michael Springman, former State Department official and head of the US Visa Bureau in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, from 1987 to 1989, went public with his experiences. He stated that, "In Saudi Arabia I was repeatedly ordered by high level State Dept officials to issue visas to unqualified applicants," and that he would complain to an assortment of different departments and agencies, however, his complaints were met with silence. He elaborated, "What I was protesting was, in reality, an effort to bring recruits, rounded up by Osama Bin Laden, to the US for terrorist training by the CIA. They would then be returned to Afghanistan to fight against the then-Soviets." Further:

The attack on the World Trade Center in 1993 did not shake the State Department's faith in the Saudis, nor did the attack on American barracks at Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia three years later, in which 19 Americans died. FBI agents began to feel their investigation was being obstructed. Would you be surprised to find out that FBI agents are a bit frustrated that they can't be looking into some Saudi connections?[66]

As Springman further revealed in an interview with the CBC, Sheikh Abdel Rahman, the terrorist widely considered to have played a key role in the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993, was issued a visa from a CIA case officer in Sudan, "And that 15 or so of the people who came from Saudi Arabia to participate in the attacks on the WTC and the Pentagon [on 9/11] had gotten their visas through the American consular general at Jeddah." The interviewer asked if this suggests that this "pipeline" of visa applications issued by the CIA to terrorists was never wrapped up, and Springman replied:

Exactly. I had thought it had been, because I had raised sufficient hell that I thought they

had done it. I had complained to the embassy in Riyadh, I had complained to the diplomatic security in Washington, I had complained to the General Accounting Office, I had complained to the State Department Inspector General's office, and I had complained to the Bureau of Consular Affairs at the State Department. Apparently the reverberations from this were heard all over the State Department.[67]

Eventually, the State Department fired Springman without a sufficient reason. As he explained, the same program in which he was ordered to allow terrorists to enter the United States in the late 1980s had continued and 15 of the 19 suspected 9/11 hijackers were issued visas through this network. It further turned out that Ali Mohamed was "admitted to the United States under a special visa program controlled by the C.I.A.'s clandestine service," and he had claimed to be working for the CIA.[68]

In the mid-1990s, Ali Mohamed helped al-Qaeda's current number two, presumably after Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, to come to California and raise money for al-Qaeda operations. In 2000, Ali Mohamed was called in for questioning and was subsequently arrested in relation to involvement with the 1998 embassy bombings and is being kept in an undisclosed location.[69]

Thus, we have a perfect example of the "terror nexus" in Ali Mohamed: simultaneously having connections with the CIA, the FBI, the Army, and al-Qaeda. His high-level status within al-Qaeda could not have taken place without the knowledge and support of his handlers. Mohamed was a double agent, that much is for sure, but for whom was he really working? Considering he has disappeared into the abyss of "National Security", the answers might never be fully known. However, this does provide more evidence as to the covert relationship that the United States maintained with al-Qaeda.

Able Danger: Tracking the 9/11 Terrorists

Lt. Col. Anthony Shaffer, a military intelligence officer, revealed his in-depth knowledge of having worked with the Pentagon's ultra-secret "Able Danger" program. Able Danger "was begun in 1999 at the request of General Hugh Shelton, then the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff and under the direct supervision of General Pete Schoomaker, then the commander of the Special Operations Command (SOCOM)." The CIA, however, had refused to cooperate with the Able Danger program, which was designed to track down terrorists, and developed a specific focus on al-Qaeda. Raytheon, a private military contracting corporation, was involved in this data-mining military intelligence program. Once Schaffer went public with information about the program, the "then deputy director of operations at the Defense Intelligence Agency essentially pulled the plug on his involvement with Able Danger." [70]

In September of 2000, more than a year before 9/11, Able Danger, "a small, highly classified military intelligence unit identified Mohammed Atta and three other future hijackers as likely members of a cell of Al Qaeda operating in the United States," and in the summer of 2000, Able Danger recommended that the information be shared with the FBI to go in and remove the terrorist cell. However, the information was not shared and the recommendation was rejected, apparently because "Mr. Atta, and the others were in the United States on valid entry visas." Further:

A former spokesman for the Sept. 11 commission, Al Felzenberg, confirmed that members of its staff, including Philip Zelikow [a friend of Condi Rice who later joined the Bush administration], the executive director, were told about the program on an overseas trip in

October 2003 that included stops in Afghanistan and Pakistan.[71]

A Pentagon spokesman said that the 9/11 Commission looked into the issue during the Commission hearings; however, they “chose not to include it in the final report.”[72] Other intelligence officers and sources came forward to reveal and validate the claims made about “Able Danger,” including J.D. Smith, a defense contractor who confirmed that Able Danger had identified Atta. Further, Navy Captain Scott Philpott has also gone on record along with Schaffer, claiming that they were “discouraged from looking further into Atta” and their attempts to share information with the FBI were thwarted.[73] Congress then began an investigation into the “Able Danger” program. According to Congressional testimony:

Pentagon lawyers during the Clinton administration ordered the destruction of intelligence reports that identified September 11 leader Mohamed Atta months before the attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center.[74]

Further, in 2004, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), “destroyed files on the Army’s computer data-mining program known as Able Danger to avoid disclosing the information”:

Retired Army Maj. Erik Kleinsmith, former director of the Army Land Information Warfare Center, told the panel he was directed by Pentagon lawyers to delete 2 terabytes of computer data — the equivalent of one-quarter of the information in the Library of Congress — on Able Danger in May or June 2000 because of legal concerns about information on U.S. citizens.[75]

In September of 2005, as the Senate investigation into Able Danger was underway, several Senators from both parties accused the Defense Department “of obstructing an investigation into whether a highly classified intelligence program known as Able Danger did indeed identify Mohamed Atta and other future hijackers as potential threats well before the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.” This occurred after the Pentagon “blocked several witnesses from testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee at a public hearing.”[76]

The Pentagon even acknowledged that, “it had blocked several military officers and intelligence analysts from testifying at an open Congressional hearing about a highly classified intelligence program.” A Pentagon spokesman said open testimony “would not be appropriate.”[77]

The 9/11 Commission, despite testimony from Col. Schaffer and other individuals about the Able Danger program, had dismissed Able Danger as “not historically significant,” and justified leaving it out of the final report, which stated that, “American intelligence agencies were unaware of Mr. Atta until the day of the attacks.” Louis Freeh, a former FBI Director, wrote in an article in the Wall Street Journal, that this assertion by the 9/11 Commission is “embarrassingly wrong,” especially since Commission members had acknowledged in 2005 (a year after the release of the 9/11 Commission Report), that they had met with Able Danger officials who did mention they were tracking Atta prior to 9/11.[78]

Further, more information was revealed regarding the relationship many supposed hijackers had with the US intelligence community, as it was revealed by Newsweek in 2002 that two hijackers were identified by the CIA in January of 2000 when they attended an al-Qaeda meeting in Malaysia. However, the two men then went to San Diego where they attended flight school, where they “moved into the home of a Muslim man who had befriended them at the local Islamic Center. The landlord regularly prayed with them and even helped one

open a bank account.” However, their landlord also happened to be an “undercover asset” for the FBI, yet nothing was done.[79]

Immediately following the 9/11 attacks, it was reported by Newsweek that the military gave information to the FBI which alleged that 5 of the 9/11 hijackers had “received training at secure U.S. military installations in the 1990s.” Further, “three of the alleged hijackers listed their address on drivers licenses and car registrations as the Naval Air Station in Pensacola.” Newsweek continued:

But there are slight discrepancies between the military training records and the official FBI list of suspected hijackers-either in the spellings of their names or with their birthdates. One military source said it is possible that the hijackers may have stolen the identities of the foreign nationals who studied at the U.S. installations.[80]

Could the use of false identities or dual identities be the reason why, in late September of 2001, it was reported that four of the alleged 9/11 hijackers had turned out to be alive and well, and living in the Middle East? The FBI released the list of the 19 purported 9/11 hijackers, and some of the names and photographs on the list show people who were still alive, a remarkable feat for someone accused of crashing a plane in a suicide mission. Even the FBI director in late September of 2001 agreed that the identity of many of the hijackers was still in doubt.[81] Yet, these were not questions addressed by the 9/11 Commission.

It must be looked at and addressed much more closely and critically; the role between the U.S. and other Western intelligence agencies to what is known as “al-Qaeda.” Given our historical understanding of al-Qaeda as a “database” of intelligence assets, which were recruited to fight the Afghan-Soviet war, and our more recent understanding of the relationships between various intelligence agencies historically and presently to these groups and individuals, does it not seem plausible that the operation of al-Qaeda as a covert branch of U.S. policy has continued? Certainly, more research needs to be undertaken, but what is clear is that any and all official investigations thus far have been nothing but concocted lies: that is, willful and intended deception, designed to hide the truth, not reveal it.

It is also within this context, of understanding the deep nexus of intelligence and terrorism in international relations and imperial stratagems (that is, strategic deception), that we must view the rise, role, evolution and purpose of the “Global War on Terror,” now in its 9th year, spending trillions to send poor Americans to kill poor Muslims in nations across the Middle East, Africa, and Central and South Asia.

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