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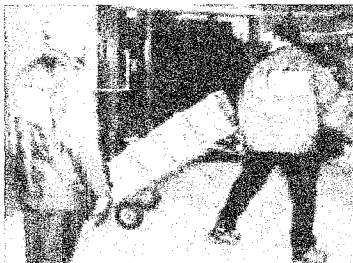
Shortly After October 12, 2001: Software Company Whistleblowers Ignored

Yassin al-Qadi, a Saudi multimillionaire businessman, was officially declared a terrorist financier in October 2001 (see October 12, 2001). [Arab News, 9/26/2002] That same month, a number of employees at Ptech, a Boston-based computer company that al-Qadi and other individuals suspected of financing officially designated terrorist groups invested in (see 1994), tell the Boston FBI about the connections between Ptech and al-Qadi. However, FBI agents do little more than take their statements. A high-level government source later will claim the FBI does not convey the Ptech-al-Qadi link to Operation Greenquest, a Customs Department investigation into al-Qadi and other suspected financiers, and none of the government agencies using Ptech software are warned about the possible security threat Ptech represents. [Boston Globe, 12/7/2002; WBZ 4 (Boston), 12/9/2002] According to a private terrorism expert involved in investigating Ptech at the time, "Frighteningly, when an employee told [Ptech president Oussama Ziade] he felt he had to contact the FBI regarding al-Qadi's involvement in the company, the president allegedly told him not to worry because Yaqub Mirza, who was on the board of directors of the company and was himself a target of a [Greenquest] terrorist financing raid in March 2002 (see March 20, 2002), had contacts high within the FBI." [National Review, 5/27/2003] A Ptech investigation will finally begin in 2002 after more whistleblowers come forward (see May-December 5, 2002).

Entity Tags: Yacub Mirza, Operation Greenquest, US Customs Service, Oussama Ziade, Ptech Inc., Yassin al-Qadi, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline

March 20, 2002: SAAR Network Is Raided



US Customs Agents carry out boxes of evidence from SAAR network businesses on March 20, 2002.
[Source: Mike Theiler/ Getty Images]

Scores of federal agents raid 14 entities in a cluster of more than 100 homes, charities, think tanks, and businesses in Herndon, Virginia, a town just outside of Washington with a large Muslim population. No arrests are made and no organizations are shut down, but over 500 boxes of files and computer files are confiscated, filling seven trucks. This group of interlocking entities is widely known as the SAAR network (it is also sometimes called the Safa Group). SAAR stands for Suleiman Abdel Aziz al-Rajhi, a Saudi banker and billionaire who largely funded the group beginning in the early 1980s (see July 29, 1983). He is said to be close to the Saudi ruling family and is on the Golden Chain, a list of early al-Qaeda supporters (see 1989). [New York Times, 3/21/2002; Farah, 2004, pp. 152; Wall Street Journal, 6/21/2004] The name and address of Salah Al-Rajhi, Suleiman's brother, was discovered in 1998 in the telephone book of Wadih El-Hage (see September 15, 1998). El-Hage was bin Laden's personal secretary and was convicted of a role in the 1998 US embassy bombings. [New York Times, 3/25/2002] The raids are said to be primarily led by David Kane, a Customs agent working with a Customs investigation started just after 9/11 code-named Operation Greenquest. Many of the organizations are located at an office building

at 555 Grove Street in Herndon. Kane writes in an affidavit for the raid that many organizations based there are "paper organizations" which "dissolve and are replaced by other organizations under the control of the same group of individuals." [New York Times, 3/21/2002; Wall Street Journal, 6/21/2004] Investigators appear to be primarily interested in the connections between the SAAR network and the Al Taqwa Bank, a Swiss bank closed after 9/11 on suspicions of funding al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups (see November 7, 2001). They are also interested in connections between both SAAR and Al Taqwa and the Muslim Brotherhood (see December 1982). According to author Douglas Farah, "US officials [later say] they had tracked about \$20 million from [SAAR] entities flowing through Nada's Bank al Taqwa, but said the total could be much higher. The ties between Nada and [SAAR] leaders were many and long-standing, as were their ties to other [Muslim] Brotherhood leaders. ... For a time, Suleiman Abdel Aziz al-Rajhi, the SAAR Foundation founder, worked for Nada" at Al Taqwa's Liechtenstein branch. [New York Times, 3/25/2002; Farah, 2004, pp. 154-155] Organizations and individuals targeted by the raid include:

- Yaqub Mirza. He is the director of virtually all of the organizations targeted in the raid. The Wall Street Journal claims, "US officials privately say Mr. Mirza and his associates also have connections to al-Qaeda and to other entities officially listed by the US as sponsors of terrorism." [Wall Street Journal, 4/18/2002; Wall Street Journal, 12/6/2002]
- The SAAR Foundation or the Safa Trust, an umbrella group for the SAAR network. The SAAR Foundation had recently disbanded and reformed as the Safa Trust. [New York Times, 3/21/2002; Wall Street Journal, 3/22/2002; Washington Post, 10/7/2002]
- Hisham Al-Talib, who served as an officer of the SAAR Foundation and Safa Trust, had previously been an officer of firms run by Youssef Nada. Nada is one of the main owners of the Al Taqwa Bank. [Wall Street Journal, 3/22/2002]
- Mar-Jac Poultry Inc., an Islamic chicken processor with operations in rural Georgia. [Wall Street Journal, 6/21/2004]
- Jamal Barzinji. An officer of Mar-Jac and other organizations targeted in the raid, he had previously been involved with Nada's companies. [Wall Street Journal, 3/22/2002]
- The International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO). [New York Times, 3/21/2002]
- The Muslim World League. It is considered to be a parent organization for the IIRO. [New York Times, 3/21/2002]
- International Institute for Islamic Thought (IIRT). The IIRT had been under investigation since at least 1998. [New York Times, 3/21/2002]
- Tarik Hamdi, an employee at IIRT. His home is also raided. He carried a battery for a satellite phone to Afghanistan in early 1998, and the battery was used for Osama bin Laden's phone (see May 28, 1998). [New York Times, 3/21/2002]
- Abdurahman Alamoudi, a top Muslim lobbyist who formerly worked for one of the SAAR organizations. His nearby home is raided. The search yields a memo on large transactions involving Hamas, operations against the Israelis, and the notation "Met Mousa Abu Marzouk in Jordan." Marzouk is a Hamas leader believed to be involved in fundraising for Hamas in the US for many years (see July 5, 1995-May 1997). Alamoudi is alleged to be a leader of the Muslim Brotherhood. [Wall Street Journal, 6/21/2004]
- Samir Salah, an Egyptian-born president of the Piedmont Trading Corporation, which is part of the SAAR network. He is also a former director and treasurer of the Al Taqwa Bank's important Bahamas branch. Additionally, he was a founder of a Bosnian charity reportedly connected to a plot to blow up the US embassy in Bosnia. [New York Times, 3/25/2002]
- Ibrahim Hassabella. He is a shareholder of the SAAR Foundation and also a former secretary of the Al Taqwa Bank. [New York Times, 3/25/2002] Investigators will later find that much of SAAR's money seemed to disappear into offshore bank accounts. For instance, in 1998, SAAR claimed to have moved \$9 million to a charity based in the tax haven of the Isle of Man, but investigators will find no evidence the charity existed. One US official involved in the probe will say of SAAR, "Looking at their finances is like looking into a black hole." [Washington Post, 10/7/2002] In 2003, it will be reported that US investigators are looking into reports that the director of the SAAR foundation for most of the 1990s stayed in the same hotel as three of the 9/11 hijackers the night before the 9/11 attacks (see September 10, 2001). Some US investigators had looked into the SAAR network in the mid-1990s, but the FBI blocked the investigation's progress (see 1995-1998).

Entity Tags: Abdel Aziz al-Rajhi, Mousa Abu Marzouk, Tarik Hamdi, Ibrahim Hassabella, Hamas, Al Taqwa Bank, Samir Salah, International Institute for Islamic Thought, Abdurahman Alamoudi, Muslim Brotherhood, International Islamic Relief Organization, Hisham Al-Talib, Jamal Barzinji, World Muslim League, David Kane, Yacub Mirza, SAAR Foundation, Operation Greenquest, Mar-Jac Poultry Inc., US Customs Service

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline

After March 20, 2002: CIA and FBI Said to Harass Greenquest Investigators

Terrorism expert Rita Katz is said to have given the Operation Greenquest investigators some of the information that led to the March 2002 SAAR network raid (see March 20, 2002). She will later write that in the months after that raid, "The CIA was investigating me and the SAAR investigators from Greenquest and Customs. The CIA and the FBI investigated everyone who had anything to do with the SAAR investigation. White vans and SUV's with dark windows appeared near all the homes of the SAAR investigators. All agents, some of whom were very experienced with surveillance, knew they were being followed. So was I. I felt that I was being followed everywhere and watched at home, in the supermarket, on the way to work ... and for what? ... The Customs agents were questioned. So were their supervisors. So was the US attorney on the SAAR case. ... Risking criticism for being unfoundedly paranoid, I must convey my theory about the investigation and CIA's involvement in it, I don't know for certain what's the deal with the CIA investigating the SAAR investigators, but it sure feels as if someone up in that agency doesn't like the idea that the Saudi Arabian boat is rocked. The [SAAR raid] had taken place already—the CIA couldn't change that—but investigating and giving the people behind the raids a hard time is a most efficient way of making sure the SAAR investigation stops there." [Katz] > Ritz. 2003. <Terrorist Hunter. New York, NY: Ecco.)" onmouseout="return-Id()" > Katz, 2003, pp. 42] The internal governmental battle against Greenquest will continue until Greenquest will be shut down in 2003 (see After March 20, 2002-Early 2003).

Entity Tags: Operation Greenquest, Rita Katz, Saudi Arabia, US Customs Service, Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, SAAR Foundation
Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline

After March 20, 2002-Early 2003: Customs and FBI Battle to Control Finance Investigations



Larry Thompson.
[Source: White House]

It appears that serious tensions develop between the FBI and Operation Greenquest investigators in the wake of the Greenquest raid on the SAAR network in March 2002 (see After March 20, 2002). The Customs Department launched Greenquest, an investigation into the financing of al-Qaeda and similar groups, weeks after 9/11. In June 2002, the Washington Post will headline an article, "Infighting Slows Hunt for Hidden Al Qaeda Assets." [Washington Post, 6/18/2002] With the creation of the new Department of Homeland Security in November 2002, the FBI and its parent agency the Justice Department are given a chance to gain total control over Operation Greenquest. Newsweek reports, "Internally, FBI officials have derided Greenquest agents as a bunch of 'cowboys' whose actions have undermined more important, long-range FBI investigations into terrorist financing." Meanwhile, "The FBI-Justice move, pushed by [Justice Department] Criminal Division chief Michael Chertoff and Deputy Attorney General Larry Thompson, has enraged Homeland

Security officials... They accuse the [FBI] of sabotaging Greenquest investigations—by failing to turn over critical information to their agents—and trying to obscure a decade-long record of lethargy in which FBI offices failed to aggressively pursue terror-finance cases. 'They [the FBI] won't share anything with us,' [says] a Homeland Security official. 'Then they go to the White House and they accuse us of not sharing. If they can't take it over, they want to kill it.'" This battle has a large effect on the investigation into Ptech, a Boston-based computer company with ties to suspected terrorist financiers. When Ptech whistleblowers [approach] the FBI, the FBI "apparently [do] little or nothing in response" (see Shortly After October 12, 2001; May-December 5, 2002). Then Greenquest launched an investigation in Ptech, which culminates in a raid on the Ptech offices in December 2002 (see December 5, 2002). "After getting wind of the Greenquest probe, the FBI stepped in and unsuccessfully tried to take control of the case. The result, sources say, has been something of a train wreck." [Newsweek, 4/9/2003] Greenquest appears to have been heavily based on the pre-9/11 investigations of FBI agent Robert Wright. The New York Post will report in 2004, "After 9/11, Wright's work was picked up by David Kane of the US Customs Service, who raided companies owned by [Yassin] al-Qadi, leading to al-Qadi's designation as a 'global terrorist' and to money-laundering indictments of companies in Northern Virginia linked to al-Qadi and Soliman Biheiri (another Wright investigatee). The [Greenquest] indictments rely heavily on Wright's work." [New York Post, 7/14/2004] The FBI will eventually win the battle with Homeland Security and Customs, and Greenquest will cease to exist at the end of June 2003 (see May 13-June 30, 2003).

[Newsweek, 4/9/2003]

Entity Tags: Operation Greenquest, Larry D. Thompson, Ptech Inc., Federal Bureau of Investigation, Michael Chertoff

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline

April 4, 2002: Treasury Secretary Meeting Raises Political Influence Questions



Talat Othman.
[Source: Hanania]

In the wake of the Operation Greenquest raid on the SAAR network (see March 20, 2002), disgruntled Muslim-American leaders meet with Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill to complain about the raid. At the time, the Treasury Department had control over the Customs Department, which ran Greenquest. The meeting is arranged by prominent Republican activist Grover Norquist. About a dozen leaders are asked to attend the meeting. O'Neill pledges to look into concerns the leaders have about the raid. [Wall Street Journal, 4/18/2002; Harper's, 3/2004] Those who meet with O'Neill include:

- Khaled Saffuri. He is head of the Islamic Institute, a group he co-founded with Norquist to organize conservative Muslims. The institute accepted \$20,000 in donations from the Safa Trust, which was targeted in the raid. The Safa Trust in turn has been funded by Youssef Nada, who had his assets frozen shortly after 9/11 on suspicion on funding al-Qaeda (see November 7, 2001). The institute also received donations from Abdurahman Alamoudi, another target of the raid (see October 15, 2004). [Wall Street Journal, 4/18/2002; Harper's, 3/2004]

- Talat Othman. The Wall Street Journal calls him "a longtime associate and supporter of President Bush's family who gave a benediction at the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia in August 2000." He serves on the board of Amana Mutual Funds Trust, an investment firm founded by Yaqub Mirza, the director of most of the organizations targeted in the raid. Amana was not a target of the raid, but two other organization that were raided held large blocks of shares in Amana's mutual funds. Othman claims to know Mirza only slightly. Othman is also on the board of Saffuri's Islamic Institute. Further, Othman served on the board of Harken Energy in the late 1980s and early 1990s, at the same time that President Bush did. At the time, Othman represented Saudi businessman Abdullah Bakhsh on Harken Energy's board, and the investments through Bakhsh were considered essential in saving Harken from bankruptcy. Bakhsh has indirect connections to the notorious criminal bank BCCI (see July 5, 1991), and in 1996 reputedly attended a secret meeting with al-Qaeda representatives, where the attendees agreed to pay al-Qaeda many millions of dollars of protection money (see May 1996). [Wall Street Journal, 12/6/1991; Wall Street Journal, 4/18/2002] Bakhsh will head a subsidiary of Halliburton, the oil services company formerly run by Vice President Cheney. Othman reportedly remains a friend of Bush. [Harper's, 3/2004] Harper's magazine will note that "large sums of money from the suspect groups have moved through Amana, [yet] Greenquest agents chose not to raid the firm," and will hint that political influence from Othman and others may have saved Amana from being raided. [Harper's, 3/2004]

Entity Tags: Talat Othman, Khaled Saffuri, SAAR Foundation, Operation Greenquest, Grover Norquist, Paul O'Neill
Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline

May-December 5, 2002: US Investigators Pressed to Look Into Ptech



Indira Singh. [Source: Michael Kane]

In October 2001, Ptech insiders attempted to warn the FBI that suspected terrorist financier Yassin al-Qadi had funded Ptech (see Shortly After October 12, 2001). Then Indira Singh, an employee at JP Morgan Chase bank, develops her own suspicions about Ptech after her bank assigned her to investigate Ptech for a potential business deal. In May 2002, she speaks with the FBI about her concerns. Weeks later, she learns the FBI still has not told any other government agencies about the potential Ptech security threat. She later will recall, "the language, the kind of language law enforcement, counterterrorism, and the FBI agents themselves were using basically indicated to me that absolutely no investigation was going on, that it was totally at a standstill, at which point my hair stood on end." She contacts a Boston CBS television station, WBZ-TV, and a reporter for the station named Joe Bergantino begins investigating Ptech. [Boston Globe, 12/7/2002; National Public Radio, 12/8/2002; WBZ 4 (Boston), 12/9/2002] Around

the same time, a former government official with contacts in the Bush administration tells officials at the National Security Council about the Ptech allegations. By late August, Operation Greenquest then opens its own Ptech investigation. The FBI then tries "to muscle its way back into the probe once it [becomes] clear that [Greenquest is] taking the case seriously." [Newsweek, 12/6/2002; WBZ 4 (Boston), 12/9/2002] Beginning in late November, US agents begin calling Ptech officials and asking them if they have ties to money laundering, thus tipping them off. Ptech will also be notified when a December raid will be occurring before it happens. [Associated Press, 1/3/2003] WBZ-TV prepared a story on Ptech, but withheld it from the public for more than three months after receiving "calls from federal law

enforcement agencies, some at the highest levels.” The station claims the government launched its Ptech probe in August 2002, after they “got wind of our investigation” and “asked us to hold the story so they could come out and do their raid and look like they’re ahead of the game.” [Boston Globe, 12/7/2002; WBZ 4 (Boston), 12/9/2002]

Entity Tags: Operation Greenquest, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Ptech Inc., National Security Council, Indira Singh

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline

December 5, 2002: Software Company with Access to Government Secrets Raided



FBI agents raid Ptech offices. [Source: ABC News]

Federal agents search the offices of Ptech, Inc., a Boston computer software company, looking for evidence of links to bin Laden. A senior Ptech official confirms that Yassin al-Qadi, one of 12 Saudi businessmen on a secret CIA list suspected of funneling millions of dollars to al-Qaeda, was an investor in the company, beginning in 1994. Ptech appears to have connections to other potential terrorist financiers (see 1994). In particular, there seem to be many ties between Ptech and BMI Inc., a New Jersey-based company whose list of investors has been called a “who’s who of designated terrorists and Islamic extremists.” (see 1986-October 1999) [Newsweek, 12/6/2002; WBZ 4 (Boston), 12/9/2002] A former FBI counterterrorism official states, “For someone like [al-Qadi] to be involved in a capacity, in an organization, a company that has access to classified information, that has access to government open or classified computer systems,

would be of grave concern.” [WBZ 4 (Boston), 12/9/2002] On the day after the raid, US authorities will claim that Ptech’s software has been scrutinized and poses no danger. But security expert John Pike comments, “When you look at all of the different military security agencies that they have as customers, it’s very difficult to imagine how they would not be encountering sensitive information, classified information.” [National Public Radio, 12/8/2002] The search into Ptech is part of Operation Greenquest, which has served 114 search warrants in the past 14 months involving suspected terrorist financing. Fifty arrests have been made and \$27.4 million seized. [Forbes, 12/6/2002] However, the raid appears to have been largely for show. Ptech was notified by US officials in November that they were being investigated, and they were told in advance exactly when the raid would take place. (see May-December 5, 2002). Top officials in the US government appear to have made up their minds before the results of the raid can even be examined. White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer comments on the Ptech raid only hours after it ended, “The one thing I can share with you is that the products that were supplied by this company to the government all fell in the nonclassified area. None of it involved any classified products used by the government. The material has been reviewed by the appropriate government agencies, and they have detected absolutely nothing in their reports to the White House that would lead to any concern about any of the products purchased from this company.” [White House, 12/6/2002] The fact that the raid took place at all appears to have to been due to the persistence of Operation Greenquest investigators, who are engaged at the time in a bureaucratic battle with other investigators over who will control US government investigations into terrorist financing (see After March 20, 2002-Early 2003). Greenquest will lose that battle early in 2003 and get shut down (see May 13-June 30, 2003). No charges will be brought against Ptech, and the company will continue fulfilling sensitive government contracts under a new name (see May 14, 2004).

Entity Tags: Central Intelligence Agency, Ari Fleischer, Ptech Inc., BMI Inc., Operation Greenquest, Yassin al-Qadi, BMI Inc., Federal Bureau of Investigation

Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline

May 13-June 30, 2003: FBI Wins Battle to Control Finance Investigations

The FBI and Customs Department had been waging a bureaucratic war over control of Operation Greenquest, a controversial but largely fruitful Customs terrorist finance investigation (see After March 20, 2002-Early 2003). On May 13, 2003, Attorney General John Ashcroft and Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge signed a memorandum of agreement giving the FBI near total control over all terrorist finance investigations. According to the memorandum, if the FBI feels the case is related to terrorist financing

and should belong to them, "the investigation and operation of the matter shall be led by the FBI." The agreement also effectively ends Greenquest. The memo states, "The Secretary [of Homeland Security] agrees that no later than June 30, 2003, Operation Greenquest will no longer exist as a program name." [National Review, 5/27/2003]

Entity Tags: US Customs Service, Operation Greenquest, John Ashcroft, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Tom Ridge
Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline

August 21, 2004: 9/11 Commission's Terrorist Financing Conclusions at Odds with Media Accounts

The 9/11 Commission releases a report on terrorism financing. Its conclusions generally stand in complete contrast to a great body of material reported by the mainstream media, before and after this report. For instance, while the report does mention some terrorism-supporting organizations in great detail, such as the Global Relief Foundation or Al Barakaat, many seemingly important organizations are not mentioned a single time in either this report or the 9/11 Commission Final Report. The Commission fails to ever mention: BMI, Inc., Ptech, Al Taqwa Bank, Holy Land Foundation, InfoCom, International Islamic Relief Organization, Muslim World League, Muwafaq (Blessed Relief) Foundation, Quranic Literacy Institute, and the SAAR network or any entity within it. Additionally, important efforts to track terrorist financing such as Vulgar Betrayal and Operation Greenquest are not mentioned a single time. [9/11 Commission, 7/24/2004; 9/11 Commission, 8/21/2004] Some select quotes from the report:

- "While the drug trade was an important source of income for the Taliban before 9/11, it did not serve the same purpose for al-Qaeda. Although there is some fragmentary reporting alleging that bin Laden may have been an investor, or even had an operational role, in drug trafficking before 9/11, this intelligence cannot be substantiated and the sourcing is probably suspect." Additionally, there is "no evidence of [al-Qaeda] drug funding after 9/11." [9/11 Commission, 8/21/2004, pp. 22-23]
- "[C]ontrary to some public reports, we have not seen substantial evidence that al-Qaeda shares a fund-raising infrastructure in the United States with Hamas, Hezbollah, or Palestinian Islamic Jihad." [9/11 Commission, 8/21/2004, pp. 24]
- "The United States is not, and has not been, a substantial source of al-Qaeda funding, but some funds raised in the United States may have made their way to al-Qaeda and its affiliated groups. A murky US network of jihadist (holy war) supporters has plainly provided funds to foreign mujahedeen with al-Qaeda links. Still, there is little hard evidence of substantial funds from the United States actually going to al-Qaeda. A CIA expert on al-Qaeda financing believes that any money coming out of the United States for al-Qaeda is 'minuscule.'" [9/11 Commission, 8/21/2004, pp. 24]
- The notion "that bin Laden was a financier with a fortune of several hundred million dollars" is an "urban legend." "[S]ome within the government continued to cite the \$300 million figure well after 9/11, and the general public still [incorrectly] gives credence to the notion of a 'multimillionaire bin Laden.'" [9/11 Commission, 8/21/2004, pp. 20, 34] (A few months after this report, it will be reported that in 2000 over \$250 million passed through a bank account jointly controlled by bin Laden and another man (see 2000).)
- "To date, the US government has not been able to determine the origin of the money used for the 9/11 attacks. ... Ultimately the question of the origin of the funds is of little practical significance." [9/11 Commission, 8/21/2004, pp. 144]
- "The US intelligence community has attacked the problem [of terrorist funding] with imagination and vigor" since 9/11. [New York Times, 8/22/2004]
- According to the New York Times, the report "largely exonerate[s] the Saudi government and its senior officials of long-standing accusations that they were involved in financing al-Qaeda terrorists." [New York Times, 8/22/2004] Author Douglas Farah comments on the Commission's report, "The biggest hole is the complete lack of attention to the role the Muslim Brotherhood has played in the financing of al-Qaeda and other radical Islamist groups. While the ties are extensive on a personal level, they also pervade the financial structure of al-Qaeda. ... According to sources who provided classified briefing to the Commission staff, most of the information that was provided was ignored. ... [T]he Commission staff simply did not include any information that was at odds with the official line of different agencies." [Farah, 8/27/2004]

Entity Tags: Operation Greenquest, SAAR Foundation, InfoCom Corporation, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, 9/11 Commission, International Islamic Relief Organization, Muwafaq Foundation, Saudi Arabia, Osama bin Laden, Global Relief Foundation, Quranic Literacy Institute, Al Taqwa Bank, Muslim Brotherhood, Al Barakaat, BMI Inc., Hamas, al-Qaeda, Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, Ptech Inc., Central Intelligence Agency, Muslim World League, Douglas Farah, Vulgar Betrayal
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EVENTS

August 2000: Vulgar Betrayal Investigation Shut Down

Vulgar Betrayal, the most significant US government investigation into terrorist financing before 9/11, shuts down. FBI agent Robert Wright launched the investigation in 1996 (see 1996) and was removed from the investigation in late 1999 (see August 3, 1999). Apparently the investigation accomplished little after Wright's departure. [LA Weekly, 8/25/2004; Judicial Watch, 12/15/2004; Robert G. Wright, Jr., v. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 5/16/2005] A March 2000 affidavit named Yassin al-Qadi as a source of terrorist funds in Chicago, but no charges are brought against him. [ABC News, 12/19/2002] Mark Flessner, an assistant US attorney assigned to Vulgar Betrayal in 1996, later will recall, "Vulgar Betrayal was a case where the FBI's intelligence agents would not cooperate with the criminal agents trying to put these guys in jail. They refused to let us arrest them. They only wanted to watch them conduct their business." He will also claim that Frances Fragos Townsend, a Justice Department official working a variety of posts, helps close down the investigation. He will say Townsend did not share information but "deliberately obstructed it. And I found that very disconcerting." He will claim that she completely supports FBI intelligence agents and refuses to share their information with the Vulgar Betrayal investigation. A federal grand jury was impaneled in 1996 to support Vulgar Betrayal, but without the information from FBI intelligence, Flessner did not have enough evidence to return indictments. "I couldn't even get permission to do the basic things you do, such as collecting phone numbers from their targets' incoming and outgoing calls, and addresses from their mail." With the shut down of the investigation in 2000, Flessner will resign from the Justice Department in frustration. After 9/11, Townsend will be appointed President Bush's Homeland Security Adviser and counterterrorism director for the National Security Council. [LA Weekly, 8/25/2004]

Entity Tags: Vulgar Betrayal, US Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, International Terrorism Unit, Fran Townsend, Mark Flessner
Timeline Tags: Complete 911 Timeline



Frances Fragos
Townsend. [Source:
White House]