

## Saudi government corruption in the final chapter of the 9/11 story

Posted by [Ryan Morgan](#) On 07/19/2016



Last Friday, Congress authorized the declassification of the missing 28 pages of the 9/11 commission, revealing a still partially redacted document with heavy implications against the Saudi Arabian government.

Completed in December of 2002, the once-closed chapter of the 9/11 commission was released on July 15th, and is entirely focused on the still-unexplained "Saudi-connection" associated with the terrorist attacks. The document is a dense one, and perhaps difficult to sort through without the recollection of painful memories. It's difficult to arrange order from one of the most chaotic moments in modern memory, and the 28 pages bring disappointingly little in the way of closure.

The document begins by spelling out its major findings, namely that Saudi government officials conducted suspicious activity that appeared to align with the timeline of the arrival and training of the hijackers and the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Among the notable mentions of the document, Omar al-Bayoumi and Osama Bassnan were two recurring names. The claims of the document suggested that these two men were Saudi Naval Officers, and that they acted as intelligence personnel and perhaps as handlers for a number of the hijackers.

The document goes on to spell out a potential money trail of transactions from members of the Saudi government, including Prince Bandar, to these alleged handlers and to various non-profits and charities associated with radicalizing Islamist rhetoric. The money trail is not inconsequential either. At one point the document mentioned that al-Bayoumi, an apparent handler for the hijackers, had received payments through the Saudi-based company "Erean" in the form of a monthly salary, though he was only ever known to have shown up at the company "on one occasion".

Al-Bayoumi also supposedly received around \$500 in monthly allowances. That allowance rose to \$3700 only a month after a pair of the hijackers arrived in the US. That allowance held steady until December of 2000 and never fell below \$3200 a month until August of 2001, just a month before the attacks, at which point he left the country. Furthering the suspicion is the allegation of ties that "Erean" and Avco Dallah, the parent company, had with both Osama Bin Laden and the Saudi government.

Osama Bassnan, another suspect character in discussing the 9/11 attacks, was thoroughly documented by the 28 pages. Bassnan was also regarded as a potential intelligence officer and handler for hijackers, having lived just across the street from Nawaf al-Hazmi and Khalid al-Mihdhar, who were both hijackers. Bassnan's ties to the Saudi government are perhaps less exhaustive, though his wife was alleged to have received checks from Saudi Princess Haifa. While no connection can be solidified to say that Bassnan funded and trained Hazmi of Mihdhar, he was a known associate of Khaled al-Kayed, a commercial airline pilot and certified flight instructor who admitted that Hazmi and Mihdhar "contacted him about learning to fly Boeing jet aircraft."

Over the course of the declassified document, these connections are explored and analyzed at great length. Another incident, now believed to be the "dry-run" for the 9/11 attacks, to determine airline security and the capabilities of the aircraft, was also detailed. Two passengers aboard a 1999 flight from Phoenix to Washington DC were questioned after their flight was grounded when they barged into the plane's cockpit and asked suspicious technical questions about the aircraft. The two individuals claimed they were on travel to the Saudi Embassy for a party, and that the Embassy had purchased the tickets for them. Several organizations including the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) were described as charities with ties to extremism and terrorism, and were noted as recipients of donations from members of the Saudi royal family. Furthermore, the 28 pages catalog seemingly deliberate obstruction and uncooperative behavior by the Saudi government to any questioning about these noted connections.

The release of the 28 pages could fuel conspiracies for decades to come but no truly incriminating missing link is ever revealed. The document raises more questions than it ever answers, features black-mark redactions that continue to hide information and always stops short of making any conclusive statement to claim the Saudi government had an involvement in 9/11.

What has to be understood is that the document, derived from intelligence reports, is subject to a wide range of inaccuracy, and does not constitute substantial evidence. There is no absolute proof or record of al-Bayoumi or Bassnan as Naval Officers or members of the Saudi intelligence community. The claims of Saudi family members providing funding to names like al-Bayoumi and Bassnan are not substantiated by attached banking documents. Even if those money transactions could be proven the conclusion cannot be made, from that point, that the money was set aside to fund terrorist activity. Even if there was evidence to prove record of the transactions and show that the money was earmarked for the training of and carrying out of the 9/11 attacks, the Saudi government at large could still disavow its individual members involved. The release of the document fails to bridge these gaps with any finality.

There still may be so much that we don't know about the 9/11 attacks. The release of these pages raises more questions than it answers:

#### **What was done by the CIA and FBI to investigate the suspicious connections of the Saudi government?**

With the conclusion of the 9/11 commission back at the end of 2002, over thirteen and a half years have passed since the 28 pages of the commission established suspicions of a "Saudi" connection. Though the claims never amount to concrete evidence, it's hard to imagine anyone saying that that many coincidences didn't raise at least substantial suspicion, creating grounds to pursue a further investigation. The 28 pages do little to put minds at ease and bring closure to the friends and families of the 9/11 attacks. What we are waiting to hear now is how our nation's intelligence community went from having all of these suspicions to ultimately recognizing that there was no actionable evidence to further pursue a case against the Saudi government. We are still waiting to hear what justifications the Saudi government has used to explain the mysterious connections.

#### **Given that there is no substantial evidence to support further action against Saudi Arabia, why did they threaten to dump US financial assets if the 28 pages were released?**

Portions of the 28 pages described an odd relationship with the Saudi government, wherein they were at times hesitant to answer questions and cooperate with the US. This last April, with the Senate having unanimously passed a bill allowing for victims of terrorist attacks to sue foreign governments for involvement in terrorist attacks on the US, the Saudi government threatened to dump up to \$750 billion in US treasury securities. If the released 28 pages cannot prove anything and if the Saudi government truly has nothing to hide, why have they been so resistant to the possibility of honestly discussing and hearing out the cases?

#### **Why where the 28 Pages withheld?**

The release of the redacted document was a long-time coming. Advocates on both sides of the isle have been calling for the release of the 28 pages since the beginning and the legislation to hold foreign governments legally accountable for terrorist attacks has been supported widely on both sides of the isle. The released document never points the finger of blame. The redactions to the document were minimal, and purportedly only used to conceal US methods of intelligence gathering and investigating. Nothing seems to be risked in putting forth this document now. It would be interesting to know at what point the CIA and FBI wrapped up their investigation into all of the claims of the 28 pages and found them all lacking. It would provide a commentary in its own right on just how long our government has known the truth about the supposed "Saudi connection" to the 9/11 attacks. Given the bipartisan support for further action, the lack of incriminating statements, and the conclusion of investigations by the intelligence community, the remaining question is in why the document remained hidden from the public victims of this world changing attack.

#### **What else remains?**

Ever since the 9/11 attacks, the rumor mills and conspiracies have gone on. Speculation and wild theorizing have gone on for years, muddling the truth about really happened on that day and the moments surrounding that event. These 28 pages also somewhat confuse the understanding of that day. In the days since the release of the redacted chapter, the anticipation and excitement went from the hope for a missing piece of the puzzle to a disappointing realization that, at least with this link, there is no connection. The 28 pages, without the context of the investigations that followed, reveal no new information. Sen. Bob Graham, who co-chaired the inquiry pushed hard for the release of the document and implied that it represented the start of a greater look into 9/11, with further transparency to come. The question that may linger in the wake of the release of the 28 pages: what, if anything else, does our government know about the events of that day?

The September 11th attacks represent a paradigm shift in the lives of many Americans. The reality of the post 9/11 world is one that is ever apparent. If there was any hope that this moment would represent the confirmation of a massive conspiracy, or bring a wave of closure to the friends and families of the near 3,000 people lost in the attack, that has not been the case. For the time and based off of what is known, these pages exonerate the Saudi government of an involvement in planning the attacks, but even that feeling could soon change if legislation is passed that allows Americans to sue foreign countries involved in terrorism.