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previous | 1, [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#), [12](#), [13](#), [14](#), [15](#), [16](#), [17](#), [18](#), [19](#) | [next](#)

1917: British 'Liberate' Baghdad; Author Will Draw Parallels to 2003 US 'Liberation'



British forces invade Iraq and occupy Baghdad, ostensibly to save the Iraqis from the Ottoman Empire during World War I. In reality, the occupation is at least partly motivated by the desire to secure the Iraqi oil fields for Britain. Lieutenant General Sir Stanley Maude proclaims: “Our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators. You people of Baghdad are not to understand that it is the wish of the British government to impose upon you alien institutions. It is the hope of the British government that once again the people of Baghdad shall flourish, enjoying their wealth and substance under institutions which are in consonance with their sacred laws.” Author and former CIA agent Larry Kolb will write in 2007: “That sounded a lot to me like the rosy assurances our own [American] leaders gave the Iraqis in 2003 not long after we flattened half of Baghdad and then drove our tanks into what was left of it. But history shows that eventually the British liberators were driven out of Iraq by pissed-off locals, the insurgency. Just as eventually British liberators were driven out of Palestine, by both Jews and Arabs. And just as Napoleon, the liberator of Egypt, had eventually been forced by the locals to abandon the Nile in humiliation. The track record of Western armies fighting local insurgencies is abysmal. If President Bush didn’t know that, surely someone on his staff should have.” [\[KOLB, 2007, PP. 93-94\]](#) Three years later, the British will find themselves battling a fierce insurgency in central Iraq (see [Early 1920](#)).

Entity Tags: [Stanley Maude](#), [Larry Kolb](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



(1943-1944): Future CIA Manager Joins OSS



Future CIA manager David Blee joins the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the World War II predecessor of the CIA. [\[NEW YORK TIMES, 8/17/2000; LOS ANGELES TIMES, 8/18/2000; GUARDIAN, 8/22/2000\]](#) During World War II, one of his missions for the OSS involves landing with other team members by submarine on islands off the coast of Thailand to monitor the Japanese fleet. [\[NEW YORK TIMES, 8/17/2000\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Office of Strategic Services](#), [David Blee](#)

Timeline Tags: [Misc Entries](#)



February 1946 and After: Fraudulent 'Communist Rules for Revolution' Published, Used to Argue against Gun Control, Sex Education, Other Ideas



The New World News, a British Moral Rearmament publication, prints what it calls the “Communist Rules for Revolution,” claiming that the “rules” were captured during a raid on a German Communist organization’s headquarters in Dusseldorf in 1919 by Allied forces during World War I, and published in the Bartlesville, Oklahoma (US) Examiner-Enterprise that same year. In 1946, the NWN writes, the attorney general of Florida, George A. Brautigam, obtained them from a known member of the Communist Party, who told him that the “Rules” were then still a part of the Communist program for the United States. According to the NWN, the “Rules” are as follows:

- Corrupt the young; get them away from religion. Get them interested in sex. Make them superficial; destroy their ruggedness.
- Get control of all means of publicity, thereby:
 - Get people’s minds off their government by focusing their attention on athletics, sexy books, plays, and immoral movies.
 - Divide the people into hostile groups by constantly harping on controversial matters of no importance.
 - Destroy the people’s faith in their natural leaders by holding the latter up to contempt, ridicule, and obloquy.
 - Always preach true democracy, but seize power as fast and as ruthlessly as possible.
 - By encouraging government extravagance, destroy its credit, produce years of inflation with rising prices and general discontent.
 - Incite unnecessary strikes in vital industries, encourage civil disorders, and foster a lenient and soft attitude on the part of government toward such disorders.
 - Cause breakdown of the old moral values—honesty, sobriety, self-restraint, faith in the pledged word, ruggedness.
 - Cause the registration of all firearms on some pretext, with a view to confiscating them and leaving the populace helpless.

The “Rules” are a hoax invented by NWN writers: there was no German Communist “Spartacist” headquarters in Dusseldorf, the Examiner-Enterprise never published such a document, and Russian experts at the University of Chicago will label them an “obvious fraud,” “an obvious fabrication,” and “an implausible concoction of American fears and

phobias.” In 1970, the New York Times will investigate the document; no copies of it exist in the National Archives, the Library of Congress, or any of the university libraries it examines. Montana Senator Lee Metcalf (D-MT) will look into the document’s existence around the same time, and will learn that both the FBI and CIA have already investigated it and found it to be “completely spurious.” (Brautigam did endorse the “Rules,” and his statement and signature avowing the legitimacy of the “Rules” will give the document a veneer of legitimacy.) However, the “Rules” will continue to be used to claim that Communists are for a number of ideas unpopular among European and American conservatives, most frequently gun control and sex education. The National Rifle Association is one organization that frequently cites the “Rules” in its arguments against gun-control legislation, citing the Communists’ “secret plans” to “confiscate” Americans’ guns and thus “leav[e] the populace helpless.” American and British lawmakers regularly receive copies of the “Rules” in letters and faxes citing their opposition to gun control, sex education, support for labor, or other “Communist” ideals or entities. In 1992, University of Oklahoma political science professor John George and his co-author Laird Wilcox will write in their book *Nazis, Communists, Klansmen, and Others on the Fringe*, “Widely distributed since the mid-forties, the ‘rules’ have been trundled out at various times when they ‘fit’ or ‘explain’ the issues of the day, especially to argue against firearms control and sex education.” In April 1996, George will say: “These people [meaning far-right American extremists] would love for the document to be real. But it has been exposed again and again as a phony.” Folklorist Jan Harold Brunvand will write: “The rules have to do with dividing people into hostile groups, encouraging government extravagance, and fomenting unnecessary ‘strikes’ in vital industries. What we have lost, the list suggests, is a world without dissent, budget deficits, inflation, and labor unrest. I just can’t remember any such Golden Age.” [[STICKNEY, 1996, PP. XX](#); [FREE INQUIRY, 1999](#); [ROSA LUXEMBURG, 2003](#); [SNOPE \(.COM\), 7/10/2007](#)]

Entity Tags: [George A. Brautigam](#), [John George](#), [Jan Harold Brunvand](#), [Lee Metcalf](#), [Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise](#), [National Rifle Association](#), [University of Chicago](#), [Laird Wilcox](#), [New York Times](#), [New World News](#)

Timeline Tags: [Domestic Propaganda](#)



1947: Future Counterintelligence Chief Joins CIA



David Blee, a former Office of Strategic Services agent (see [\(1943-1944\)](#)), joins the CIA. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 8/17/2000](#); [LOS ANGELES TIMES, 8/18/2000](#); [GUARDIAN, 8/22/2000](#)] Blee will go on to head the agency’s Soviet operations during the Cold War (see [1971](#)) and will also run its counterintelligence activities (see [1978](#)).

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [David Blee](#)

Timeline Tags: [Misc Entries](#)



July 26, 1947: President Truman Signs National Security Act of 1947



President Harry Truman signs the National Security Act of 1947, reorganizing the military and overhauling the government’s foreign policy-making bureaucracy. The act gives birth to three major organizations: the Department of Defense (DOD), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the National Security Council (NSC). The DOD unifies the three branches of the military—the Army, Navy and Air Force—into a single department overseen by a secretary of defense. The act establishes a separate agency, the CIA, to oversee all overt and covert intelligence operations. The act forms the NSC to directly advise the President on all matters of defense and foreign policy. In addition, the act establishes the National Security Resources Board (NSRB) to advise the President “concerning the coordination of military, industrial, and civilian mobilization” in times of war. Should the nation come under attack, the NSRB will be in charge of allocating essential resources and overseeing “the strategic relocation of industries, services, government, and economic activities, the continuous operation of which is essential to the Nation’s security.” [US CONGRESS. HOUSE. SENATE., 7/26/1947; TRAGER, 11/1977]

Entity Tags: [National Security Act of 1947](#), [Harry S. Truman](#), [National Security Council](#), [US Department of Defense](#), [National Security Resources Board](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Civil Liberties](#)



March 1948: US Will Use Force to Prevent Communists from Winning Italian Elections



US State Department spokesman Richard Browning says of Italy’s upcoming elections, “The United States is making it crystal clear that it will use force if necessary to prevent Italy from going communist in its upcoming elections.” The CIA will spend \$20 million to ensure that the Christian Democrats win control of the country’s government. [HUNT, 9/1/2009, PP. 5]

Entity Tags: [US Department of State](#), [Richard Browning](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#)



April 28, 1951: Mosaddeq Elected Prime Minister of Iran



Dr. Muhammed Mosaddeq, or Mossadegh, is democratically elected by the Iranian Parliament. Mosaddeq, who is not a Communist but receives the support of Iran's Communist Party, intends to nationalize Iran's oil industry. Opposition from US and Britain is immediate, with the CIA moving to destabilize the Mosaddeq regime and the British imposing an economic embargo on Iran. [[IRAN CHAMBER SOCIETY, 1/1/2007](#)] (See [1952](#) and [Summer 2004](#).)

Entity Tags: [Muhammad Mosaddeq](#)

Timeline Tags: [US confrontation with Iran](#), [US-Iran \(1952-1953\)](#)



1952: NSA Founded



The National Security Agency (NSA) is founded. It is the successor to the State Department's "Black Chamber" and other military code-breaking and eavesdropping operations dating back to the earliest days of telegraph and telephone communications. It will eventually become the largest of all US intelligence agencies, with over 30,000 employees at its Fort Meade, Maryland, headquarters. It focuses on electronic surveillance, operating a large network of satellites and listening devices around the globe. More even than the CIA, the NSA is the most secretive of US intelligence organizations, [[NEW YORK TIMES, 12/16/2005](#)] The agency will remain little known by the general public until the release of the 1998 film *Enemy of the State*, which will portray the NSA as an evil "Big Brother" agency spying on Americans as a matter of course. [[CNN, 3/31/2001](#)] After it is disclosed during the 1970s that the NSA spied on political dissenters and civil rights protesters, the NSA will be restricted to operating strictly overseas, and will be prohibited from monitoring US citizens within US borders without special court orders. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 12/16/2005](#)]

Entity Tags: [US Department of State](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [George W. Bush](#), [National Security Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Civil Liberties](#)



March 9, 1953: Supreme Court Creates 'State Secrets' Privilege in Ruling





Chief Justice Fred Vinson. [Source: Kansas State Historical Society]

The US Supreme Court upholds the power of the federal government's executive branch to withhold documents from a civil suit on the basis of executive privilege and national security (see [October 25, 1952](#)). The case, *US v Reynolds*, overturns an appellate court decision that found against the government (see [December 11, 1951](#)). Originally split 5-4 on the decision, the Court goes to 6-3 when Justice William O. Douglas joins the majority. The three dissenters, Justices Hugo Black, Felix Frankfurter, and Robert Jackson, refuse to write a dissenting opinion, instead adopting the decision of the appellate court as their dissent.

'State Secrets' a Valid Reason for Keeping Documents out of Judicial, Public Eye - Chief Justice Fred Vinson writes the majority opinion. Vinson refuses to grant the executive branch the near-unlimited power to withhold documents from judicial review, as the government's arguments before the court implied (see [October 21, 1952](#)), but instead finds what he calls a "narrower ground for defense" in the Tort Claims Act, which compels the production of documents before a court only if they are designated "not privileged." The government's claim of privilege in the *Reynolds* case was valid, Vinson writes. But the ruling goes farther; Vinson upholds the claim of "state secrets" as a reason for withholding documents from judicial review or public scrutiny. In 2008, author Barry Siegel will write: "In truth, only now was the Supreme Court formally recognizing the privilege, giving the government the precedent it sought, a precedent binding on all courts throughout the nation. Most important, the Court was also—for the first time—spelling out how the privilege should be applied." Siegel will call the *Reynolds* ruling "an effort to weigh competing legitimate interests," but the ruling does not allow judges to see the documents in order to make a decision about their applicability in a court case: "By instructing judges not to insist upon examining documents if the government can satisfy that 'a reasonable danger' to national security exists, Vinson was asking jurists to fly blind." Siegel will mark the decision as "an act of faith. We must believe the government," he will write, "when it claims [the accident] would reveal state secrets. We must trust that the government is telling the truth."

Time of Heightened Tensions Drives Need for Secrecy - Vinson goes on to note, "[W]e cannot escape judicial notice that this is a time of vigorous preparation for the national defense." Locked in the Cold War with the Soviet Union, and fighting a war in Korea, the US is, Vinson writes, in a time of crisis, and one where military secrets must be kept and even encouraged.

[[U. S. V. REYNOLDS, 3/9/1953](#); [SIEGEL, 2008, PP. 171-176](#)]

Future Ramifications - Reflecting on the decision in 2008, Siegel will write that while the case

will not become as well known as many other Court decisions, it will wield significant influence. The ruling “formally recognized and established the framework for the government’s ‘state secrets’ privilege—a privilege that for decades had enabled federal agencies to conceal conduct, withhold documents, and block civil litigation, all in the name of national secrecy.... By encouraging judicial deference when the government claimed national security secrets, *Reynolds* had empowered the Executive Branch in myriad ways. Among other things, it had provided a fundamental legal argument for much of the Bush administration’s response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Enemy combatants such as Yaser Esam Hamdi (see [December 2001](#)) and Jose Padilla (see [June 10, 2002](#)), for many months confined without access to lawyers, had felt the breath of *Reynolds*. So had the accused terrorist Zacarias Moussaoui when federal prosecutors defied a court order allowing him access to other accused terrorists (see [March 22, 2005](#)). So had the Syrian-Canadian Maher Arar (see [September 26, 2002](#)), like dozens of others the subject of a CIA extraordinary rendition to a secret foreign prison (see [After September 11, 2001](#)). So had hundreds of detainees at the US Navy Base at Guantanamo Bay, held without charges or judicial review (see [September 27, 2001](#)). So had millions of American citizens, when President Bush, without judicial knowledge or approval, authorized domestic eavesdropping by the National Security Agency (see [Early 2002](#)). *US v. Reynolds* made all this possible. The bedrock of national security law, it had provided a way for the Executive Branch to formalize an unprecedented power and immunity, to pull a veil of secrecy over its actions.” [\[SIEGEL, 2008, PP. IX-X\]](#)

Entity Tags: [William O. Douglas](#), [Zacarias Moussaoui](#), [US Supreme Court](#), [Yaser Esam Hamdi](#), [Robert Jackson](#), [Jose Padilla](#), [Felix Frankfurter](#), [Bush administration](#), [Fred Vinson](#), [Barry Siegel](#), [George W. Bush](#), [Hugo Black](#), [Maher Arar](#)

Timeline Tags: [Civil Liberties](#)



[August 19, 1953: Iranian Government Overthrown by Rebels and CIA](#)





CIA coup planner Kermit Roosevelt. [Source: *Find a Grave (.com)*]The government of

Iran is overthrown by Iranian rebels and the CIA in a coup codenamed Operation Ajax. The coup was planned by CIA operative Kermit Roosevelt after receiving the blessings of the US and British governments. Muhammad Mosaddeq is deposed and the CIA promptly reinstates Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi on the throne. The Shah's secret police, SAVAK, trained by the CIA and Israel's Mossad, are widely perceived as being as brutal and terrifying as the Nazi Gestapo in World War II. British oil interests in Iran, partially nationalized under previous governments, are returned to British control. American oil interests are retained by 8 private oil companies, who are awarded 40% of the Iranian oil industry. US General Norman Schwarzkopf, Sr. (father of the general with the same name in the 1991 Gulf War) helps the Shah develop the fearsome SAVAK secret police. [ZNET, 12/12/2001; GLOBAL POLICY FORUM, 2/28/2002] Author Stephen Kinzer will say in 2003, "The result of that coup was that the Shah was placed back on his throne. He ruled for 25 years in an increasingly brutal and repressive fashion. His tyranny resulted in an explosion of revolution in 1979 the event that we call the Islamic revolution. That brought to power a group of fanatically anti-Western clerics who turned Iran into a center for anti-Americanism and, in particular, anti-American terrorism. The Islamic regime in Iran also inspired religious fanatics in many other countries, including those who went on to form the Taliban in Afghanistan and give refuge to terrorists who went on to attack the United States. The anger against the United States that flooded out of Iran following the 1979 revolution has its roots in the American role in crushing Iranian democracy in 1953. Therefore, I think it's not an exaggeration to say that you can draw a line from the American sponsorship of the 1953 coup in Iran, through the Shah's repressive regime, to the Islamic revolution of 1979 and the spread of militant religious fundamentalism that produced waves of anti-Western terrorism." [STEPHEN KINZER, 7/29/2003]

Entity Tags: [Organization for Intelligence and National Security \(Iran\)](#), [Norman Schwarzkopf Sr.](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Kermit Roosevelt](#), [Muhammad Mosaddeq](#), [Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi](#), [Stephen Kinzer](#)

Timeline Tags: [US confrontation with Iran](#), [US-Iran \(1952-1953\)](#)



1954: Guatemalan Leader Removed by CIA Operation



CIA covert Operation PB Success successfully removes Guatemalan leader Arbenz from power. [GLEIJESES, 1992; CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 1994; DOYLE AND KORNBLUH, 1997; CNN PERSPECTIVE, 10/1997; WOODWARD, 1999; WOODWARD, 1999; SCHLESINGER AND KINZER, 1999] The CIA director at this time, Allen Dulles, was formerly the president of the United Fruit Company (UFCO) and the previous CIA director and under-secretary of state, General Walter Bedell Smith, is on the company's board of directors. Smith will become UFCO's president following the overthrow. [BLUM, 1995] Allen Dulles' brother, John Dulles, who is Secretary of State, previously worked as a lawyer defending the United Fruit Company. [GINSBERG, 1996; CNN, 2/21/1999]

Entity Tags: [John Foster Dulles](#), [Allen Welsh Dulles](#), [Walter Bedell Smith](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#), [US-Guatemala \(1901-2002\)](#)



Mid-1954: Ngo Dinh Diem Returns to Head South Vietnamese Government, US Aims Propaganda Campaign at North



Ngo Dinh Diem returns from exile in the US to head the South Vietnamese government. The CIA office in Saigon, under the leadership of Colonel Edward Lansdale, conducts a propaganda campaign aimed at creating the perception that North Vietnam is plagued with massive civil unrest and disorder while there is stability in South Vietnam and widespread popular support for its newly installed leader. [HERRING, 1986, PP. 44; PILGER, 1986, PP. 192] "Paramilitary groups infiltrated across the demilitarized zone on sabotage missions, attempting to destroy the government's printing presses and pouring contaminants into the engines of buses to demobilize the transportation systems. The teams also carried 'psywar' operations to embarrass the Vietminh regime and encourage emigration to the South. They distributed fake leaflets announcing the harsh methods the government was prepared to take and even hired astrologers to predict hard times in the north and good times in the south." [HERRING, 1986, PP. 44] "[Lansdale's team] stimulated North Vietnamese Catholics and the Catholic armies deserted by the French to flee south. SMM teams promised Catholic Vietnamese assistance and new opportunities if they would emigrate. To help them make up their minds, the teams circulated leaflets falsely attributed to the Viet Minh telling what was expected of citizens under the new government. The day following distribution of the leaflets, refugee registration tripled. The teams spread horror stories of Chinese Communist regiments raping Vietnamese girls and taking reprisals against villages. This confirmed fears of Chinese occupation under the Viet Minh. The teams distributed other pamphlets showing the circumference of destruction around Hanoi and other North Vietnamese cities should the United States decide to use atomic weapons. To those it induced to flee over the 300-day period the CIA provided free transportation on its airline, Civil Air Transport, and on ships of the US Navy. Nearly a

million North Vietnamese were scared and lured into moving to the South.” [\[PILGER, 1986, PP. 192\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Ngo Dinh Diem](#), [Bao Dai](#), [Edward Geary Lansdale](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Vietnam \(1947-2001\)](#)



1955: King of Cambodia Opts Not to Join South East Asia Treaty Organization



US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his brother, CIA Director Allen Dulles, each visit Cambodian King Norodom Sihanouk and attempt to persuade him to place Cambodia under the protection of the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), an alliance formed the year before by representatives of Australia, France, Britain, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, and the United States to prevent the spread of Communism in Southeast Asia. Sihanouk kindly declines the offer preferring to adopt a neutral stance in the conflict between his neighbors and the US. [\[BLUM, 1995\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Norodom Sihanouk](#), [Allen Welsh Dulles](#), [John Foster Dulles](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Cambodia \(1955-1993\)](#)



1958-1960: CIA and State Department Interfere in Politics in Laos



In Laos, the CIA and State Department rig elections and sponsor coups at least three times between the years of 1958 and 1960 in order to keep the leftist Pathet Lao party from being included in the country’s government and to ensure that the government does not adopt a neutralist policy towards communism. US objectives in the country are carried out by a secret army (Armee Clandestine) created by the CIA. The army consists of Meo hill tribesmen, other Laotians, Thai, Filipinos, Taiwanese, and South Koreans. These forces are “armed, equipped, fed, paid, guided, strategically and tactically, and often transported into and out of action by the United States,” according to the New York Times. US soldiers supporting operations in Laos work for CIA-front companies like Air America. Those who die are listed as casualties of the Vietnam War. [\[BLUM, 1995\]](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Laos \(1958-1973\)](#)



March 1960-August 1960: CIA Consider Plan to Sabotage Castro Speeches



The CIA's Technical Services Division (TSD) considers plans to undermine Fidel Castro's charismatic appeal by sabotaging his speeches. At one point, there is discussion of spraying Castro's broadcasting studio with a hallucinogenic chemical. The plan is taken off the shelf because the chemical is deemed unreliable. During this period, the TSD laces a box of cigars with a chemical that would produce temporary disorientation, hoping that he will smoke one of the cigars before giving a speech. In another instance, the TSD comes up with a scheme to dust Castro's shoes with thallium salts during a trip outside of Cuba. The salts would cause his beard to fall out. The plan is abandoned when Castro cancels the trip. [[US CONGRESS, 12/18/1975](#)]

Entity Tags: [Fidel Castro](#), [Technical Services Division \(TSD\)](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Cuba \(1959-2005\)](#)



July 1960: CIA Pays Cuban to Arrange Fatal Accident for Raul Castro



The CIA offers to pay a Cuban \$10,000 to arrange a fatal accident involving Fidel Castro's brother, Raul. After the Cuban leaves to meet with Raul, the CIA instructs the local case officer in Havana to abort the operation. The Cuban later says he did not have an opportunity to set up an accident. [[US CONGRESS, 12/18/1975](#)]

Entity Tags: [Raul Castro](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Cuba \(1959-2005\)](#)



August 1960-February 1963: CIA Plans to Poison Cuban Leaders



The CIA plans an operation to poison Fidel Castro, as well as his brother Raul and Che Chevarra, with pills containing botulinum toxin. The plan drags on for more than two years, but is ultimately aborted. [[US CONGRESS, 12/18/1975](#); [CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY INSPECTOR GENERAL, 1/1996](#)]

Entity Tags: [Technical Services Division \(TSD\)](#), [Robert E. Maheu](#), [William Harvey](#), [Sheffield Edwards](#), [Richard Bissell](#), [Raul Castro](#), [James O 'Connell](#), [Ché Guevara](#), [Fidel Castro](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Cuba \(1959-2005\)](#)



October 7, 1960 and February 13, 1961: CIA Poisons Cigars for Castro



A CIA official laces a box of Fidel Castro's favorite cigars with botulinum toxin that is "so potent... a person would die after putting in his mouth." The box of poisoned cigars is then delivered to an unnamed person who is instructed to deliver them to Castro. It is not known what happens to the cigars or if Castro ever receives them. [[US CONGRESS, 12/18/1975](#); [CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY INSPECTOR GENERAL, 1/1996](#)]

Entity Tags: [Fidel Castro](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Cuba \(1959-2005\)](#)



Early 1961-June 1965: CIA Works with Cuban Official on Plan to Assassinate Castro



The CIA works with a high-level Cuban official, codenamed "AM/LASH," on a plan to assassinate Fidel Castro and overthrow his government. In June 1965, the CIA ends its contact with AM/LASH and his associates, citing security concerns. [[US CONGRESS, 12/18/1975](#); [CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY INSPECTOR GENERAL, 1/1996](#)]

Timeline Tags: [US-Cuba \(1959-2005\)](#)



October 25, 1961: Kennedy Orders Guyanese President Deposed



Guyana President Cheddi Jagan pays a visit to the White House, seeking financial aid and offering assurances that Guyana will not host a Soviet base. President Kennedy tells Jagan that the US is not concerned with his left-leaning politics. Kennedy says: "National independence. This is the basic thing. As long as you do that, we don't care whether you are socialist, capitalist, pragmatist or whatever. We regard ourselves as pragmatists." Also in attendance at the meeting are the president's special assistant Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and George Ball, the Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs at the State Department. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 10/30/1994](#); [ISHMAEL, 2005](#) SOURCES: [CHEDDI JAGAN](#)] Following Jagan's departure, US President

John F. Kennedy will meet in secret with his top national security officers and issue a direct order to remove Dr. Jagan from power. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 10/30/1994](#); [CJ RESEARCH CENTER, 1999](#)

SOURCES: UNNAMED US GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS FAMILIAR WITH THE SECRET PAPERS.] Sources will note that “Though many Presidents have ordered the CIA to undermine foreign leaders, they say, the Jagan papers are a rare smoking gun: a clear written record, without veiled words or plausible denials, of a President’s command to depose a Prime Minister.” [[NEW YORK TIMES, 10/30/1994](#)]

Entity Tags: [John F. Kennedy](#), [Arthur M. Schlesinger](#), [Cheddi Jagan](#), [George Ball](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#), [US-Britain-Guyana \(1953-1992\)](#)



1962-1964: CIA Conducts Campaign against Brazilian Politician



The CIA conducts an intensive propaganda campaign against Joao Goulart which dates from at least the 1962 election operation (see [January 1, 1963](#)) and which includes the financing of mass urban demonstrations. [[BLUM, 1995](#)]

Entity Tags: [João Goulart](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#), [US-Brazil \(1961-2003\)](#)



March 15, 1962: US State Department Discusses Toppling President of Guyana



The US State Department drafts a planning document titled, “Possible Courses of Action in British Guiana.” In it, its authors ask: “Can we topple [Dr. Cheddi] Jagan while maintaining at least a facade of democratic institutions,” and “Can the PPP be defeated in new elections without obvious interference?” The paper observes that “it is unproven that CIA knows how to manipulate an election in British Guiana without a backfire.” The document also notes: “Disclosure of US involvement would undermine our carefully nurtured position of anti-colonialism among the new nations of Asia and Africa and damage our position in Latin America. It could also strengthen Jagan over the long term if he became a ‘martyr of Yankee imperialism.’” [[US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 3/15/1962](#)]

Entity Tags: [Cheddi Jagan](#), [US Department of State](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#), [US-Britain-Guyana \(1953-1992\)](#)



Early 1963: CIA Plans to Assassinate Castro with Exploding Sea Shell and Poisoned Diving Suit



The CIA's Task Force W devises two plans to assassinate Fidel Castro. The first one, involving an exploding sea shell that would be placed where Castro regularly dives, is dismissed by the CIA's Technical Services Division (TSD) as impractical. In the second plan, James Donovan (who has been negotiating with Castro for the release of prisoners taken during the Bay of Pigs operation) would present Castro with a contaminated diving suit. TSD decides to give the plan a try. It purchases a diving suit and laces its breathing apparatus with tubercule bacillus. The suit itself is dusted with a fungus that is known to cause a chronic skin disease. But the suit never leaves the laboratory. [[US CONGRESS, 12/18/1975](#); [CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY INSPECTOR GENERAL, 1/1996](#)]

Entity Tags: [Technical Services Division \(TSD\)](#), [James Donovan](#), [Fidel Castro](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Cuba \(1959-2005\)](#)



April, 1963: CIA Organizes General Strike in Guyana



The CIA organizes a general strike in Guyana, through its client trade unions. The CIA channels fund through the international public workers secretariat Public Services International, and via the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions for a strike lasting 80 days. Historian William Blum later notes that its support “was considerably less than total.” The strike is organized by the local Trades Union Council, headed by US-trained Richard Ishmael, who had received tutelage at the American Institute for Free Labor Development, along with other Guyanese officials. The strike is marked by violence and provocation, including attacks on Premier Cheddi Jagan and his family. A British police report later tags Ishmael as involved in “a terrorist group which...carried out bombings and arson attacks against government buildings during the strike.” [[UNITED KINGDOM HOUSE OF COMMONS, 4/5/1966, PP. 1765-67](#)]

Entity Tags: [William Blum](#), [Richard Ishmael](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [American Institute for Free Labor Development](#), [Cheddi Jagan](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#), [US-Britain-Guyana \(1953-1992\)](#)



July 1963: CIA Counterintelligence Manual Warns that Torture Produces Unreliable Information



The CIA's KUBARK interrogation manual is straightforward about the unreliability of torture as a means to acquire useful intelligence. (KUBARK is a CIA cryptogram for the agency itself.) The "KUBARK Counterintelligence Interrogation" manual states: "Intense pain is quite likely to produce false confessions, concocted as a means of escaping from distress. A time-consuming delay results, while investigation is conducted and the admissions are proven untrue. During this respite the interrogatee can pull himself together. He may even use the time to think up new, more complex' admissions' that take still longer to disprove." The KUBARK manual is the product of over 10 years of research and testing, based on the experiences of US soldiers captured and tortured by Chinese interrogators. Waterboarding, called a method of "touchless torture," elicited false confessions from the captured soldiers that the US planned to use biological weapons against North Korea. [[WASHINGTON POST, 10/5/2006](#); [VANITY FAIR, 12/16/2008](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Torture of US Captives](#)



November 1963: South Vietnamese Policies Cause Concern in US



The policies of South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem create concern in Washington when Diem's government intensifies its repression of the Buddhists and clamps down on the press. Also worrisome to his US backers are rumors that he is considering unification with the North. [[HERRING, 1986, PP. 96](#); [NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHIVES, 11/5/2003](#)] When the Kennedy administration learns that a group of South Vietnamese generals are planning a [second] coup attempt, the decision is made to provide them with support. [[NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL STAFF, 8/28/1963](#) ; [US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 10/25/1963](#) ; [NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL STAFF, 10/29/1963](#) ; [US PRESIDENT, 11/1/1963](#) ; [NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHIVES, 11/5/2003](#)] "President Kennedy and his advisers, both individually and collectively, had a considerable role in the coup overall, by giving initial support to Saigon military officers uncertain what the US response might be, by withdrawing US aid from Diem himself, and by publicly pressuring the Saigon government in a way that made clear to South Vietnamese that Diem was isolated from his American ally. In addition, at several of his meetings Kennedy had CIA briefings and led discussions based on the estimated balance between pro- and anti-coup forces in Saigon that leave no doubt the United States had a detailed interest in the outcome of a coup against Ngo Dinh Diem. The CIA also provided \$42,000 in immediate support money to the plotters the morning of the

coup, carried by Lucien Conein, an act prefigured in administration planning.” [\[NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHIVES, 11/5/2003\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Ngo Dinh Diem](#), [John F. Kennedy](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Vietnam \(1947-2001\)](#)



November 22, 1963: CIA Official Gives Cuban Poisoned Pen for Castro



While a US emissary is meeting with Fidel Castro to discuss the possibility of improved relations, a CIA official offers a poison pen to a Cuban, hoping that it will be used by Fidel Castro. [\[US CONGRESS, 12/18/1975\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Fidel Castro](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Cuba \(1959-2005\)](#)



1964: CIA Spends Millions to Prevent Allende Election



The CIA spends \$3 million to influence the elections in order to prevent Salvador Allende from being elected as president of Chile. [\[US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 1968; US CONGRESS, 12/18/1975, PP. 148-160; BLUM, 1995\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Salvador Allende Gossens](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#), [US-Chile \(1964-2005\)](#)



April 1, 1964: CIA-Backed Coup Overthrows Brazilian Government



A CIA-backed military-civilian coup overthrows the Brazilian government of Joao Goulart. [\[COUNTERSPY, 4/1979; NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHIVES, 3/31/2004\]](#) The coup plotters received assurances from the US State Department in advance of Goulart’s ousting that the US would recognize the new government and provide assistance to the rebels if needed. As part of Operation Uncle Sam [\[WASHINGTON POST, 12/29/1976; KEEN, 1992, PP. 359; BOSTON GLOBE, 1/5/2003\]](#) , the US Navy

dispatched tankers to the coast of southern Brazil and mobilized for a possible airlift of 110 tons of ammunition and other equipment including CS gas for crowd control. [CENTRAL

INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 4/1/1964 ; NATIONAL SECURITY ARCHIVES, 3/31/2004] But the Goulart government falls with little resistance and US assistance is not requested. Not wanting to be responsible for bloodshed among Brazilians, Goulart refuses to call on loyalist forces and flees to

Uruguay. [CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 4/1/1964 ; KEEN, 1992, PP. 359]

Entity Tags: [João Goulart](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#), [US-Brazil \(1961-2003\)](#)

 SHARE

July 31, 1964: South Vietnamese Attack North Vietnamese Island



South Vietnamese gun boats attack the North Vietnamese island of Hon Me as part of operation OPLAN 34A. Daniel Ellsberg, a Pentagon official working under US Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, will later describe 34A as a “100 percent US operations, utilizing some South Vietnamese personnel along with... foreign mercenary crews, totally planned and controlled by the US, through MACV [Military Assistance Command Vietnam], CIA and CINCPAC [Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet]; some people in the GVN [Government of (South) Vietnam] had very limited knowledge of the operations, but no hand in planning or managing them.” [ELLSBERG, 2003 SOURCES: DANIEL ELLSBERG]

Entity Tags: [Daniel Ellsberg](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Vietnam \(1947-2001\)](#)

 SHARE

(3.00pm-3:30pm) March 11, 1965: US Ambassador to Ghana and CIA Director Discuss Upcoming Coup Attempt in Ghana



In Washington, D.C., US ambassador to Ghana William P. Mahoney meets with CIA Director John A. McCone and the deputy chief of the CIA’s Africa division [name unknown] to discuss a “Coup d’etat Plot” in Ghana. According to a CIA document summarizing the meeting, Mahoney says that he is uncertain whether the coup, being planned by Acting Police Commissioner Harley and Generals “Otu” and “Ankrah,” will ever come to pass. Notwithstanding, he adds that he is confident that President Kwame Nkrumah will not make it another year, given his waning popularity and Ghana’s deteriorating economy. “In the

interests of further weakening Nkrumah,” Mahoney recommends that the US deny Nkrumah’s forthcoming request for financial assistance, according to the CIA memo. He adds that by refusing the request it would make a “desirable impression on other countries in Africa,” the memo also says. In the event of a coup, Mahoney says a military junta would likely come to power. [[CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 3/11/1965](#); [SEEINGBLACK \(.COM\), 6/7/2002](#)]

Entity Tags: [John A. McCone](#), [William P. Mahoney](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Ghana \(1952-1966\)](#)



September 30, 1965: Junior Officers Attempt Left-Wing Coup in Indonesia



A small group of Indonesian junior military officers loyal to left-wing nationalist President Ahmed Sukarno kidnap and kills six senior army generals and announces the creation of a revolutionary council to rule the country. The officers, led by one of Sukarno’s bodyguards, Colonel Untung, claim the killings were necessary to thwart an imminent, CIA-backed coup against the Sukarno government. This event is known as the “September 30 Affair.” [[PACIFIC AFFAIRS, 1985](#); [STATES NEWS SERVICE, 5/19/1990](#); [SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, 7/10/1999](#)] Interestingly, Indonesian General Suharto, who will take control of Jakarta the following day (see [October 1, 1965](#)), had foreknowledge of the attacks but did nothing to stop them. [[SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, 7/9/1999](#) SOURCES: [ABDUL LATIEF](#)] Prior to this event, tension between Indonesia and the West were on the rise. Sukarno had earlier threatened to nationalize US oil assets. [[SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, 7/10/1999](#)]

Entity Tags: [Ahmed Sukarno](#), [Abdul Latief](#), [Suharto](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Indonesia-East Timor \(1965-2002\)](#)



October 1, 1965: Suharto Comes to Power in Indonesian Coup



Indonesian General Suharto takes control of Jakarta one day after a group of junior military officers killed six senior army generals (see [September 30, 1965](#)). Suharto claims the killings were part of a Communist plan to take over Indonesia. For the next five months, he oversees the slaughter of between 500,000 and 1 million people, many of them targeted because of their affiliation with the PKI, Indonesia’s Communist party. [[PACIFIC AFFAIRS, 1985](#); [STATES NEWS SERVICE, 5/19/1990](#); [SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, 7/9/1999](#); [SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, 7/10/1999](#)] During this period, Suharto is backed by the US, Britain, and Australia. The US embassy in Indonesia

provides the Indonesian army with a list compiled by the CIA consisting of the names of thousands of Communist Party leaders who the Indonesian military hunts down and executes. [STATES NEWS SERVICE, 5/19/1990; SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, 7/10/1999; US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 2001 SOURCES: UNNAMED FORMER CIA OFFICIALS AND US DIPLOMATS]

Entity Tags: [Ahmed Sukarno](#), [Suharto](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Indonesia-East Timor \(1965-2002\)](#)



February 24, 1966: President of Ghana Toppled in CIA-Backed Coup



The Ghanaian army stages a coup, overthrowing the pan-Africanist government of Kwame Nkrumah—who is in Burma at the start of a grand tour aimed at resolving the conflict in Vietnam. [STOCKWELL, 1978; BBC, 11/4/1997; YERGIN AND STANISLAW, 1998] A weak economy (see [1961-Early 1966](#)), exacerbated by the deliberate actions of Western governments to destabilize the country (see [\(3.00pm-3:30pm\) March 11, 1965](#)) (see [March 27, 1965](#)), had severely damaged the president's popularity among the masses. Additionally, the military was upset with Nkrumah's cuts to the defense budget and the declining real wage of army officers. The coup itself was supported by the CIA, which had maintained intimate contact with the plotters for at least a year (see [\(3.00pm-3:30pm\) March 11, 1965](#)). The CIA's involvement in the plot was so close that it managed to recover some classified Soviet military equipment as the coup was happening. [STOCKWELL, 1978; NEW YORKER, 1980; SEEINGBLACK (.COM), 6/7/2002 SOURCES: HOWARD T. BANES]

Entity Tags: [Howard T. Banes](#), [Kwame Nkrumah](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Ghana \(1952-1966\)](#)



1967: Che Guevara Executed in Bolivia



Che Guevara, having gone to Bolivia in the hopes of starting a revolution to overthrow the military government, is captured and executed by Bolivian soldiers trained, equipped and guided by US Green Beret and CIA operatives. [KORNBLUH, N.D.]

Entity Tags: [Ché Guevara](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Bolivia \(1951-2000\)](#)



(1967): Former CIA Station Chief in India Becomes Head of Near East Division



David Blee, previously head of the CIA's station in India, is appointed chief of its Near East division. One of his major responsibilities is tracking the emergence of Palestinian guerrilla groups, in the hope of anticipating their actions against Western targets. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 8/17/2000](#); [GUARDIAN, 8/22/2000](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [David Blee](#)

Timeline Tags: [Misc Entries](#)



April 30, 1968: CIA Director: Military Juntas Better than 'Messy Struggle[s] for Democracy and Freedom' in Latin America



CIA Director Richard Helms, in a classified memorandum entitled "The Political Role of the Military in Latin America," writes: "Latin American military juntas were good for the United States (see [After May 30, 1961](#)). They were the only force capable of controlling military crises. Law and order were better than the messy struggle for democracy and freedom." [[HUNT, 9/1/2009, PP. 7](#)]

Entity Tags: [Richard Helms](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#)



1969-1973: US Bombs Laos to Counter Left-Leaning Group and North Vietnamese Fighters



During the administration of US President Richard Nixon, and under the counsel of his advisor for National Security Affairs Henry Kissinger, the United States drops more than two million tons of bombs on Laos during more than 500,000 bombing missions—exceeding what it had dropped on Germany and Japan during all of World War II—in an effort to defeat the left-leaning Pathet Lao and to destroy North Vietnamese supply lines. The ordnance includes some 90 million cluster bombs, 20-30 percent of which do not detonate (see [After 1973](#)). A Senate report finds: "The United States has undertaken a large-scale air war over Laos to destroy the physical and social infrastructure of Pathet Lao held areas and to interdict North Vietnamese infiltration... throughout all this there has been a policy of subterfuge and secrecy... through

such things as saturation bombing and the forced evacuation of population from enemy held or threatened areas—we have helped to create untold agony for hundreds of thousands of villagers.” And in 1970, Far Eastern Economic Review reports: “For the past two years the US has carried out one of the most sustained bombing campaigns in history against essentially civilian targets in northeastern Laos.... Operating from Thai bases and from aircraft carriers, American jets have destroyed the great majority of villages and towns in the northeast. Severe casualties have been inflicted upon the inhabitants... Refugees from the Plain of Jars report they were bombed almost daily by American jets last year. They say they spent most of the past two years living in caves or holes.” [BLUM, 1995; BBC, 1/5/2001; STARS AND STRIPES, 7/21/2002; BBC, 12/6/2005] Meo villagers who attempt neutrality or refuse to send their 13-year-olds to fight in the CIA’s army, are refused American-supplied rice and “ultimately bombed by the US Air Force.” [BLUM, 1995] The CIA also drops millions of dollars in forged Pathet Lao currency in an attempt to destabilize the Lao economy. [BLUM, 1995] During this period, the existence of US operations in Laos is outright denied. [BLUM, 1995; STARS AND STRIPES, 7/21/2002]

Entity Tags: [US Congress](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#), [Lyndon B. Johnson](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Laos \(1958-1973\)](#)



April 2, 1969: Nixon Begins Secret Political Intelligence Operations



Former New York Police Department detective Jack Caulfield begins his new job as a White House aide. Caulfield was added to the White House by Nixon aide John Ehrlichman after President Nixon’s decision to use private, secretly held funds for political intelligence operations (see [January 30, 1969](#)). Caulfield is to conduct various political intelligence operations without being noticed by the CIA, the FBI, or the Republican National Committee. Originally, the idea was to pay Caulfield out of unspent campaign funds from the 1968 elections (see [November 5, 1968](#)), but Caulfield insisted on being given a White House position. [REEVES, 2001, PP. 67]

Entity Tags: [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#), [John Ehrlichman](#), [John J. ‘Jack’ Caulfield](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



September 29, 1969: Army Refuses to Prosecute Green Berets for Murder; Ellsberg Begins Copying ‘Pentagon Papers’ for Release to Press



The Army drops all charges against six Green Berets accused of murdering a South Vietnamese interpreter, Thai Khac Chuyen, accused of being a North Vietnamese collaborator. The Green Berets did indeed murder Chuyen and drop his body in the South China Sea. The CIA, irate at the murder, alerted senior military officials and the Army begins courts-martial proceedings against the six. However, the White House convinces CIA Director Richard Helms not to let any of his agents testify at the trials; without their testimony, the Secretary of the Army, Stanley Resor, decides that the trials cannot continue. White House press secretary Ron Ziegler solemnly informs reporters that “[t]he president had not involved himself either in the original decision to prosecute the men or in the decision to drop the charges against them.” The news horrifies RAND Corporation defense analyst Daniel Ellsberg. He is convinced that President Nixon and his aides were indeed involved in the decision to stop the CIA from testifying in the case. Ellsberg has long known of a secret document detailing the origins of the Vietnam War; one of only fifteen copies of that document resides in a RAND safe. Ellsberg calls his friend Anthony Russo and secures the use of a Xerox copying machine. The two begin secretly making their own copies of the document. When Ellsberg later leaks the document to the press, it becomes known as the “Pentagon Papers” (see [March 1971](#)). [[REEVES, 2001, PP. 127-132](#)]

Entity Tags: [Nixon administration](#), [Anthony Russo](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Daniel Ellsberg](#), [US Department of the Army](#), [Richard Helms](#), [Thai Khac Chuyen](#), [Stanley Resor](#), [Ron Ziegler](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



Late 1969: Neoconservatives Escape Punishment for Leaking Classified Information



Richard Perle, a young neoconservative just hired for the staff of Senator Henry “Scoop” Jackson (D-WA—see [Early 1970s](#)), is given a classified CIA report on alleged past Soviet treaty violations by CIA analyst David Sullivan. Apparently Sullivan leaks the report to pressure the US government to take a harder stance on the Soviet Union. Sullivan quits before an incensed CIA Director Stansfield Turner can fire him. Turner urges Jackson to fire Perle, but Jackson not only refuses, he also hires Sullivan for his staff. Sullivan and Perle establish an informal right-wing network called “the Madison Group” after their usual meeting place, the Madison Hotel Coffee Shop. [[COUNTERPUNCH, 2/28/2004](#)]

Entity Tags: [Richard Perle](#), ['Madison Group'](#), [David Sullivan](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Stansfield Turner](#), [Henry \(“Scoop”\) Jackson](#)

Timeline Tags: [Neoconservative Influence](#)



(1970): CIA Begins to Investigate Own Head of Counterintelligence



Edward Petty, an officer in the CIA's counterintelligence section, produces a report saying that his boss, the controversial James Angleton, is probably a Soviet mole. The report cites 25 examples of suspicious behavior by Angleton, arguing that his disastrous impact on the CIA's Soviet division demonstrates that he is under Kremlin control. Petty shows the report to several CIA managers, including Near East chief David Blee, and a full investigation is ordered. Angleton is cleared, but the investigation draws attention to his strange conduct and he will soon be replaced. [[GUARDIAN, 8/22/2000](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Clare Edward Petty](#), [David Blee](#), [James Angleton](#)

Timeline Tags: [Misc Entries](#)



March 18, 1970: CIA-Backed Coup Succeeds in Cambodia



While Cambodian King Norodom Sihanouk is on a trip abroad, his top ministers, Lon Nol and Sirik Matak, with CIA backing, usurp control of the country and immediately begin cooperating with the United States military to expel the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong presence in Cambodia. The Khmer Rouge, under the leadership of Pol Pot, and supported by a population terrorized by the US bombing campaign, will wage guerrilla warfare against the new government, overthrowing it in 1975 (see [April 17, 1975](#)). [[BLUM, 1995](#); [LOS ANGELES TIMES, 7/8/1997](#)]

Entity Tags: [Lon Nol](#), [Sirik Matak](#), [Norodom Sihanouk](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Cambodia \(1955-1993\)](#)



June 5, 1970: Nixon Focuses on Domestic Intelligence Gathering



President Nixon meets with FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, CIA Director Richard Helms, and the heads of the NSA and DIA to discuss a proposed new domestic intelligence system. His presentation is prepared by young White House aide Tom Charles Huston (derisively called "Secret Agent X-5" behind his back by some White House officials). The plan is based on the assumption that, as Nixon says, "hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Americans—mostly under 30—are determined to destroy our society." Nixon complains that the various US intelligence agencies spend as much time battling with one another over turf and influence as they do working to locate threats to national security both inside and outside of the country. The

agencies need to prove the assumed connections between the antiwar demonstrators and Communists. The group in Nixon's office will now be called the "Interagency Committee on Intelligence," Nixon orders, with Hoover chairing the new ad hoc group, and demands an immediate "threat assessment" about domestic enemies to his administration. Huston will be the White House liaison. Historian Richard Reeves will later write: "The elevation of Huston, a fourth-level White House aide, into the company of Hoover and Helms was a calculated insult. Nixon was convinced that both the FBI and the CIA had failed to find the links he was sure bound domestic troubles and foreign communism. But bringing them to the White House was also part of a larger Nixon plan. He was determined to exert presidential control over the parts of the government he cared most about—the agencies dealing with foreign policy, military matters, intelligence, law, criminal justice, and general order." [REEVES, 2001, PP. 229-230]

Entity Tags: [Richard Reeves](#), [Tom Charles Huston](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Defense Intelligence Agency](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [J. Edgar Hoover](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#), [Richard Helms](#), [National Security Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Civil Liberties](#), [Nixon and Watergate](#)



July 14, 1970: Nixon Approves 'Huston Plan' for Domestic Surveillance



President Nixon approves the "Huston Plan" for greatly expanding domestic intelligence-gathering by the FBI, CIA and other agencies. Four days later he rescinds his approval. [WASHINGTON POST, 2008] Nixon aide Tom Charles Huston comes up with the plan, which involves authorizing the CIA, FBI, NSA, and military intelligence agencies to escalate their electronic surveillance of "domestic security threats" in the face of supposed threats from Communist-led youth agitators and antiwar groups (see [June 5, 1970](#)). The plan would also authorize the surreptitious reading of private mail, lift restrictions against surreptitious entries or break-ins to gather information, plant informants on college campuses, and create a new, White House-based "Interagency Group on Domestic Intelligence and Internal Security." Huston's Top Secret memo warns that parts of the plan are "clearly illegal." Nixon approves the plan, but rejects one element—that he personally authorize any break-ins. Nixon orders that all information and operations to be undertaken under the new plan be channeled through his chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman, with Nixon deliberately being left out of the loop. The first operations to be undertaken are using the Internal Revenue Service to harass left-wing think tanks and charitable organizations such as the Brookings Institution and the Ford Foundation. Huston writes that "[m]aking sensitive political inquiries at the IRS is about as safe a procedure as trusting a whore," since the administration has no "reliable political friends at IRS." He adds, "We won't be in control of the government and in a position of effective leverage until such time as we have complete and total control of the top three slots of the IRS." Huston suggests breaking into the Brookings Institute to find "the classified material

which they have stashed over there,” adding: “There are a number of ways we could handle this. There are risks in all of them, of course; but there are also risks in allowing a government-in-exile to grow increasingly arrogant and powerful as each day goes by.” [REEVES, 2001, PP. 235-236] In 2007, author James Reston Jr. will call the Huston plan “arguably the most anti-democratic document in American history... a blueprint to undermine the fundamental right of dissent and free speech in America.” [RESTON, 2007, PP. 102]

Entity Tags: [US Department of Defense](#), [National Security Agency](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#), [Brookings Institution](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Ford Foundation](#), [Internal Revenue Service](#), [Tom Charles Huston](#), [James Reston, Jr](#)

Timeline Tags: [Civil Liberties](#), [Nixon and Watergate](#)



July 26-27, 1970: Nixon Rejects Huston Plan



After President Nixon approves of the so-called “Huston Plan” to implement a sweeping new domestic intelligence and internal security apparatus (see [July 14, 1970](#)), FBI director J. Edgar Hoover brings the plan’s author, White House aide Tom Charles Huston (see [June 5, 1970](#)), into his office and vents his disapproval. The “old ways” of unfettered wiretaps, political infiltration, and calculated break-ins and burglaries are “too dangerous,” he tells Huston. When, not if, the operations are revealed to the public, they will open up scrutiny of US law enforcement and intelligence agencies, and possibly reveal other, past illegal domestic surveillance operations that would embarrass the government. Hoover says he will not share FBI intelligence with other agencies, and will not authorize any illegal activities without President Nixon’s personal, written approval. The next day, Nixon orders all copies of the decision memo collected, and withdraws his support for the plan. [REEVES, 2001, PP. 236-237] W. Mark Felt, the deputy director of the FBI, later calls Huston “a kind of White House gauleiter over the intelligence community.” Washington Post reporter Bob Woodward will note that the definition of “gauleiter” is, according to Webster’s Dictionary, “the leader or chief officoal of a political district under Nazi control.” [WOODWARD, 2005, PP. 33-34]

Entity Tags: [W. Mark Felt](#), [Tom Charles Huston](#), [J. Edgar Hoover](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#)

Timeline Tags: [Civil Liberties](#), [Nixon and Watergate](#)



September 4, 1970: Allende Elected President of Chile, Pursues Leftist Program



Socialist Salvador Allende is elected as president, despite extensive CIA efforts (mainly through propaganda) to prevent him from winning (see [1964](#)). He pursues a leftist program, establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba and moving Chile closer to communist countries such as China, North Korea and North Vietnam. He also nationalizes various industries, several of which have significant US business interests. The US responds by continuing support of the opposition and working systematically to weaken Chile's economy. [[US CONGRESS, 12/18/1975, PP. 148-160](#); [KEEN, 1992, PP. 332-336](#); [FEDERATION OF AMERICAN SCIENTISTS, 9/11/2998](#)]

Entity Tags: [Salvador Allende Gossens](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Chile \(1964-2005\)](#)



October 1970-1981: After Nasser's Death, Egyptian President Sadat Brings Back the Muslim Brotherhood and the CIA



After Egyptian President Gamal Abdull Nasser dies in October 1970, he is succeeded as president of Egypt by his former Vice President, Anwar Sadat. Sadat is also a former member of the Muslim Brotherhood, and he promptly reinstates the group as a legal organization and welcomes them back into Egypt. Sadat also has a very close relationship with the head of Saudi intelligence, Kamal Adham. Through Adham, Sadat also develops close working relationships not only with the Saudis, but with the CIA and Henry Kissinger. Sadat uses the power of the religious right, and the Muslim Brothers in particular to contain the Nasserites and their resistance to the radical changes he introduces. During Sadat's tenure in the 1970's Egypt becomes a hotbed of Islamic fundamentalism, and figures like Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman and Ayman al-Zawahiri gain great power in Egypt during this period. Ironically Sadat himself is assassinated in 1981 by Islamic Jihad, an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, in 1981, because of his accommodation with Israel. [[DREYFUSS, 2005, PP. 147-162, 165](#)]

Entity Tags: [Sheikh Ahmed Yassin](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Anwar Sadat](#), [Henry A. Kissinger](#), [Gamal Abdull Nasser](#)

Timeline Tags: [Alleged Use of False Flag Attacks](#)



1971: Former OSS Agent Appointed Head of CIA's Soviet Operations



David Blee, a former Office of Strategic Services agent (see [\(1943-1944\)](#)) who joined the CIA in 1947 (see [1947](#)), is appointed head of the agency's Soviet Division. Thanks to his appointment, Blee replaces James Angleton as the biggest influence on Soviet policy.

Angleton is an extremely controversial figure at the agency who has run counterintelligence for over two decades and views every Soviet defector as a plant. Therefore, the CIA has rebuffed many potential defectors and even imprisoned one defector under what the New York Times will call “brutal conditions.” Angleton’s theory of a “monster plot” by the Soviets against the US has also led to a witch hunt for Soviet moles at the agency, harming morale and effectiveness. For example, the agency was so blind that in 1968 it was unable to predict the Warsaw Pact’s invasion of Czechoslovakia. Blee rejects the “monster plot” theory and reverses Angleton’s policy. The CIA’s doors are thrown open to defectors and this greatly increases the number of spies the agency has in the Soviet bloc. This posting is the high point of Blee’s career and he will subsequently be regarded as one of the agency’s finest ever officers for it (see [September 18, 1997](#)). Former CIA officer Haviland Smith will comment, “He was the architect of the program that turned the clandestine service back on target against the Soviets after all the years of Angleton.” Former agency Deputy Director of Operations Clair George will add, “He had a greater intellectual command of overseas operational activity than any officer I ever knew.” [[NEW YORK TIMES, 8/17/2000](#); [LOS ANGELES TIMES, 8/18/2000](#); [GUARDIAN, 8/22/2000](#)]

Entity Tags: [David Blee](#), [Clair George](#), [James Angleton](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Haviland Smith](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#), [Misc Entries](#)



June 15, 1971: Nixon Demands Injunction to Stop Publication of Pentagon Papers, Orders Investigation



The New York Times publishes its third installment of the “Pentagon Papers” (see [June 13, 1971](#) and [June 14, 1971](#)). A furious President Nixon demands an immediate court injunction to keep the paper from printing more excerpts. He orders: “I want to know who is behind this and I want the most complete investigation that can be conducted.... I don’t want excuses. I want results. I want it done, whatever the cost.” Secretary of State Henry Kissinger informs Nixon that he believes Daniel Ellsberg, who leaked the documents to the Times, is a “fanatic” and a “drug abuser.” Attorney General John Mitchell says that Ellsberg must be part of a communist “conspiracy” and suggests he be tried for treason. Nixon calls together a group of loyal White House aides to investigate Ellsberg’s leak of classified documents. The group will become known as the “plumbers” for their task to “plug the leaks” (see [Late June-July 1971](#)). Other undercover operators, including CIA agent E. Howard Hunt and G. Gordon Liddy, are recruited by White House special counsel Charles Colson. [[HERDA, 1994](#)]

Entity Tags: [Richard M. Nixon](#), [New York Times](#), [John Mitchell](#), [David Young](#), [Daniel Ellsberg](#), [Henry A. Kissinger](#), [Charles Colson](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#), [G. Gordon Liddy](#), ['Plumbers'](#), [Egil Krogh](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)

June 27, 1971, and Beyond: Nixon Campaign 'Agent Provocateur' Funded by White House



Donald Segretti. [Source: Spartacus Educational] Three attorneys—one the assistant attorney general of Tennessee, Alex Shipley—are asked to work as so-called “agent provocateur” for the Campaign to Re-elect the President (CREEP), an organization working to re-elect President Nixon (see [October 10, 1972](#)). The three tell their story to Washington Post reporter Carl Bernstein in late September 1972, and Bernstein’s colleague Bob Woodward learns more from his FBI source, “Deep Throat,” days later (see [October 7, 1972](#) and [October 9, 1972](#)). They all say they were asked to work to undermine the primary campaigns of Democratic presidential candidates by the same man, Donald Segretti, a former Treasury Department lawyer who lives in California. Segretti will later be identified as a CREEP official. Segretti, the attorneys will say, promises them “big jobs” in Washington after Nixon’s re-election (see [November 7, 1972](#)). All three says they rejected Segretti’s offers (see [June 27-October 23, 1971](#)). Segretti himself will deny the allegations, calling them “ridiculous.”

Part of a Larger Pattern? - Bernstein and Woodward connect the Segretti story to other Nixon campaign “dirty tricks” they are already aware of, including efforts by Watergate burglar James McCord (see [June 19, 1972](#)) to “investigate” reporter Jack Anderson, attempts by Watergate surveillance man Alfred Baldwin (see [June 17, 1972](#)) to infiltrate Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Watergate burglar E. Howard Hunt’s successful attempts to electronically “bug” Democratic campaign headquarters (see [May 27-28, 1972](#)) and his investigation of Democratic presidential candidate Edward Kennedy (see [June 19, 1972](#)), and McCord’s rental of an office next to the offices of Democratic presidential candidate Edmund Muskie. To the reporters, the Segretti story opens up speculation that the Nixon campaign had undertaken political espionage efforts long before the Watergate burglary. In their book *All the President’s Men*, Bernstein and Woodward write, “Watergate could have been scheduled before the president’s re-election chances looked so good and perhaps someone had neglected to pull the plug.” Bernstein has heard of CIA operations such as this mounted against foreign governments, called “black operations,” but sometimes more colloquially called “mindf_cking.” [BERNSTEIN AND WOODWARD, 1974, PP. 114-115]

Segretti a 'Small Fish in a Big Pond' - An FBI official investigating CREEP’s illegal activities will call Segretti “a small fish in a big pond,” and will say that at least 50 undercover Nixon

operatives have worked around the country to disrupt and spy on Democratic campaigns. The political intelligence and sabotage operation is called the “offensive security” program both by White House and CREEP officials. FBI investigators will find that many of the acts of political espionage and sabotage conducted by Segretti and his colleagues are traced to this “offensive security” program, which was conceived and directed in the White House and by senior CREEP officials, and funded by the secret “slush fund” directed by CREEP finance manager Maurice Stans (see [September 29, 1972](#)). FBI officials will refuse to directly discuss Segretti’s actions, saying that he is part of the Watergate investigation (see [2:30 a.m. June 17, 1972](#)), but one FBI official angrily calls Segretti’s actions “indescribable.”

White House Connections Confirmed - In mid-October 1972, the Washington Post will identify Dwight Chapin, President Nixon’s appointments secretary, as the person who hired Segretti and received reports of his campaign activities. Segretti’s other contact is Hunt. Segretti also received at least \$35,000 in pay for his activities by Nixon’s personal lawyer, Herbert Kalmbach. [[WASHINGTON POST, 1/31/1973](#)]

Entity Tags: [Donald Segretti](#), [Alex Shipley](#), [Bob Woodward](#), [Carl Bernstein](#), [Herbert Kalmbach](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#), [US Department of the Treasury](#), [Dwight Chapin](#), [Campaign to Re-elect the President](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#), [Elections Before 2000](#)



June 30-July 1, 1971: Nixon Authorizes Brookings Break-In



As another assignment for the newly formed “Plumbers” (see [Late June-July 1971](#)), President Nixon orders chief of staff H. R. Haldeman to have the Brookings Institute burglarized (see [June 17, 1972](#)). The Brookings Institute is a Washington think tank which Nixon believes has copies of the Pentagon Papers. As secretly recorded, Nixon tells Haldeman: “I want the break-in. Hell, they do that” [presumably referring to the Democrats]. “They have a lot of material. I want—the way I want that handled, Bob, is get it over. I want Brookings. Just break in. Break in and take it out. You understand.” Haldeman replies: “Yeah. But you have to get somebody to do it.” Nixon says: “Well, you—that’s what I’m just telling you. Now don’t discuss it here. You’re to break into the place, rifle the files, and bring them out.” Haldeman is untroubled by the order: “I don’t have any problem with breaking in.” Nixon is direct in his orders for the burglary: “Just go in and take them. Go in around 8 or 9 o’clock. That’s right. You go in and inspect and clean it out.... We’re up against an enemy, a conspiracy. They’re using any means. *We are going to use any means.* Is that clear?” The next day, Nixon repeats: “Get it done. I want it done. I want the Brookings Institute’s safe cleaned out.” [[PBS, 1/2/1997](#); [REEVES, 2001, PP. 339](#); [WERTH, 2006, PP. 84-87](#)]

“Talk to Hunt” - When asked who will do it, Nixon replies: “That’s what I’m talking about. Don’t discuss it here. You talk to Hunt.” Nixon is referring to E. Howard Hunt, a recently retired CIA officer currently performing secret operations for Nixon’s aide Charles Colson.

Haldeman says approvingly that CIA director Richard Helms “says he’s ruthless, quiet, careful. He’s kind of a tiger.... He spent 20 years in the CIA overthrowing governments.” [REEVES, 2001, PP. 339]

"Black-Bag" Team Assembled - Ehrlichman’s deputies Egil “Bud” Krogh and David Young, whom he has put in charge of the operation, soon report that they’ve assembled a “black-bag” team and have recommended a “covert operation” to burglarize an office at the Institute. (Krogh sums up Nixon’s thinking quite eloquently: “Anyone who opposes us, we’ll destroy. As a matter of fact, anyone who doesn’t support us, we’ll destroy.”) Ehrlichman approves the project, noting it must not be “traceable.” The same team of burglars who rifle the office will later be used to break into the Democratic headquarters at the Watergate Hotel (see [2:30 a.m. June 17, 1972](#)). [HERDA, 1994; FREMON, 1998; WERTH, 2006, PP. 84-87] The Brookings Institution burglary never takes place. [PBS, 1/2/1997] Ehrlichman will later claim that the Institution was never burglarized because he “shot it down” (see [Late December-Early January 1997](#)). [HERDA, 1994]

Newspaper Editor Targeted for Burglary - Another project, which also apparently never takes place, involves stealing documents from the safe of the editor of the Las Vegas Sun, Hank Greenspun. “Plumbers” burglar James McCord will later explain that Greenspun is a target because of his relationship with eccentric billionaire Howard Hughes and former Hughes associate Robert Maheu, and that Maheu has damaging information on a Democratic presidential candidate, Edmund Muskie, that the Nixon aides want. However, author Carl Oglesby will later claim that the material refers to Nixon and not to Muskie. [SPARTACUS SCHOOLNET, 8/2007; SPARTACUS SCHOOLNET, 8/2007] In 2001, historian Richard Reeves writes that the files contain information about Nixon and Democratic National Committee chairman Lawrence O’Brien. Nixon’s close friend and political financier Charles “Bebe” Rebozo had just gotten \$50,000 in campaign cash from Hughes, and O’Brien is earning \$13,000 a month lobbying for one of Hughes’s corporations. [REEVES, 2001, PP. 431]

Call Girl Operation Turned Down - Another “Plumber,” G. Gordon Liddy, suggests using a coterie of Washington, DC call girls to infiltrate the Democratic campaign organization and bring out information, a suggestion that is not seriously considered. [SPARTACUS SCHOOLNET, 8/2007]

Inappropriate Conversation? - During the discussion, White House counsel John Dean interrupts to say, “Excuse me for saying this, but I don’t think this kind of conversation should go on in the attorney general’s office.” They are meeting in the office of Attorney General John Mitchell. [REEVES, 2001, PP. 431]

Entity Tags: [John Dean](#), [James McCord](#), [John Ehrlichman](#), [Richard Reeves](#), [Las Vegas Sun](#), [John Mitchell](#), [Howard Hughes](#), [Lawrence O’Brien](#), [Hank Greenspun](#), [Edmund Muskie](#), [G. Gordon Liddy](#), [Brookings Institution](#), [Barry Werth](#), [‘Plumbers’](#), [Carl Oglesby](#), [Charles ‘Bebe’ Rebozo](#), [Charles Colson](#), [Egil Krogh](#), [Robert E. Maheu](#), [David Young](#), [H.R. Haldeman](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



July 7, 1971: Nixon Aides Bring Hunt into White House



E. Howard Hunt. [Source: American Patriot Friends Network] Nixon White House aides Charles Colson and John Ehrlichman appoint former CIA agent E. Howard Hunt to the White House staff. Hunt will become a key figure in the “Plumbers” unit that will burglarize and plant surveillance devices in the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee (see [April-June 1972](#)). [SPARTACUS_SCHOOLNET, 8/2007] Hunt is a longtime US intelligence veteran, having started with the CIA’s predecessor, the Office of Special Services (OSS) during World War II. He worked extensively in Central America during the 1950s, helping build the US’s relationship with Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza, working to topple the democratically elected government of Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala, and coordinating US efforts against Cuba’s Fidel Castro. Hunt also writes spy novels. [SPARTACUS_SCHOOLNET, 8/2007]

Entity Tags: [Charles Colson](#), [‘Plumbers’](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [John Ehrlichman](#), [Nixon administration](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



July 20, 1971: Ehrlichman Announces Creation of ‘Plumbers’



Nixon aide John Ehrlichman reports that he has successfully created the special investigations unit ordered by the president (see [Late June-July 1971](#)). His first choice to head the unit, speechwriter Pat Buchanan, refused the position. Ehrlichman rejected fellow aide Charles Colson’s own choice, retired CIA agent E. Howard Hunt, who has recently joined the White House staff (see [July 7, 1971](#)). Ehrlichman turned to his own protege, Egil “Bud” Krogh, and David Young, a former assistant to National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger, to head the unit. Young gives the unit its nickname of “Plumbers” after he hangs a sign on his office door reading, “D. YOUNG—PLUMBER.” Their first hire is former FBI agent and county prosecutor G. Gordon Liddy, a reputed “wild man” currently being pushed out of the Treasury Department for his strident opposition to the administration’s gun control policies. [REEVES, 2001, PP. 348-349]

Entity Tags: [Egil Krogh](#), [Charles Colson](#), [David Young](#), [G. Gordon Liddy](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#), [Patrick Buchanan](#), [John Ehrlichman](#), [US Department of the Treasury](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



August 5, 1971: 'Plumbers' Probe Ellsberg, Decide to Break into Psychiatrist's Office



Nixon aide John Ehrlichman passes on the president's recommendations to the heads of the "Plumbers," Egil Krogh and David Young (see [July 20, 1971](#)), regarding "Pentagon Papers" leaker Daniel Ellsberg (see [Late June-July 1971](#)): "Tell Keogh he should do whatever he considers necessary to get to the bottom of this matter—to learn what Ellsberg's motives and potential further harmful action might be." Within days, Keogh and Young will give Ehrlichman a memo detailing the results of investigations into Ellsberg and a dozen of Ellsberg's friends, family members, and colleagues. The memo also says that the CIA's psychological profile of Ellsberg is "superficial." Keogh and Young recommend a covert operation be undertaken to examine the medical files held by Ellsberg's psychiatrist, Dr. Lewis Fielding (see [September 9, 1971](#)). Ehrlichman approves the idea, with the caveat, "If done under your assurance that it is not traceable." They also suggest that MI5 (British intelligence) wiretaps on Soviet KGB personnel in England in 1952 and 1953, the years when Ellsberg attended Cambridge University, be examined for any mention of Ellsberg. Ehrlichman approves this also. [[REEVES, 2001, PP. 352-353](#)]

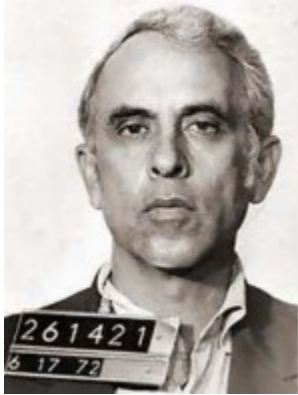
Entity Tags: [David Young](#), [Daniel Ellsberg](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#), [Lewis Fielding](#), [John Ehrlichman](#), [Egil Krogh](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



September 9, 1971: 'Plumbers' Burglarize Psychiatrist Office





Eugenio Martinez. [Source: public domain]

President Nixon's "Plumbers" unit, tasked to plug media leaks from administration officials and outsiders to the media, burglarizes the Los Angeles office of psychiatrist Lewis Fielding to find damaging information on Daniel Ellsberg, the former defense analyst and patient of Fielding who leaked the "Pentagon Papers" to the media. [GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY AND MUSEUM, 7/3/2007] Ellsberg is a former Marine captain in Vietnam and protege of Henry Kissinger who had a change of heart over the war; he then leaked a secret set of Pentagon documents to the New York Times detailing how the Kennedy and Johnson administrations had secretly escalated the war in Vietnam (see [June 13, 1971](#)).

Watergate Connection - One of the burglars is Eugenio Martinez, who later is arrested as one of the five Watergate burglars (see [2:30 a.m. June 17, 1972](#)). Martinez and two others—Felipe de Diego and the mission leader, E. Howard Hunt, who will supervise the Watergate burglary—are all old "CIA hands" heavily involved in anti-Castro activities. Martinez is still active in the CIA, as is Hunt, whom he often refers to by his old CIA code name of "Eduardo." Another Watergate burglar, CIA agent Bernard Barker, is also involved in the Ellsberg burglary.

Martinez: Burglary a Near-Disaster - Hunt tells Martinez and Diego that they are to burglarize the offices of a "traitor" who is spying for the Soviet Union, and that the mission was ordered by the White House, where Hunt is now an aide. Barker tells the Cubans, "We have to find some papers of a great traitor to the United States, who is a son of a b_tch ." The men will become a unit outside the normal law enforcement and intelligence channels, operating within but not part of the CIA, FBI, and "all the agencies," Martinez will later recall. They buy photographic equipment at Sears, and Hunt and Diego use disguises—wigs, fake glasses, false identification, and voice-altering devices. "Barker recognized the name on Hunt's false identification—Edward J. Hamilton—as the same cover name Eduardo had used during the Bay of Pigs," Martinez will recall. The planning, Martinez will recall, is far looser and less meticulous than "anything I was used to in the [CIA]." A disguised Hunt and Diego, masquerading as delivery men, deliver the photographic equipment to the office; later that night, they and Martinez break in and rifle the office. Martinez will write that Hunt and de Diego looked "kind of queerish" in their disguises, with their "Peter Lorre-type glasses, and the funny Dita Beard wigs" (see [February 22, 1972](#)). Before the break-in, Barker, who does not enter, whispers to Martinez, "Hey, remember this name—Ellsberg." Martinez does not recognize the name. [HARPER'S, 10/1974; REEVES, 2001, PP. 369]

Comedy of Errors - The burglars wait for hours until the cleaning lady leaves for the night, and find the door to the building locked. At that point, a fifth man, "George," whom Martinez

learns is G. Gordon Liddy, another of the Watergate burglars also involved in the Ellsberg planning, appears and tells them to break in through a window. [HARPER'S, 10/1974] Three burglars—Bernard Barker, Felipe de Diego, and Eugenio Martinez—perform the actual break-in, while Hunt and Liddy act as lookouts. [REEVES, 2001, PP. 369] The burglary is quickly turning into a comedy of errors, Martinez will recall. “This was nothing new. It’s what the Company did in the Bay of Pigs when they gave us old ships, old planes, old weapons. They explained that if you were caught in one of those operations with commercial weapons that you could buy anywhere, you could be said to be on your own. They teach you that they are going to disavow you. The Company teaches you to accept those things as the efficient way to work. And we were grateful. Otherwise we wouldn’t have had any help at all. In this operation it seemed obvious—they didn’t want it to be traced back to the White House. Eduardo told us that if we were caught, we should say we were addicts looking for drugs.” Martinez finds nothing concerning Ellsberg in the office except for Fielding’s telephone book, which Martinez photographs. Before leaving, Martinez spills some pills from Fielding’s briefcase—“vitamin C, I think”—over the floor to make it seem as if the burglars had broken in looking for drugs. As they leave the office, Martinez spots a police car trailing them, but they are not stopped. “I thought to myself that the police car was protecting us. That is the feeling you have when you are doing operations for the government. You think that every step has been taken to protect you.”

Failure; Training for Bigger Mission? - Martinez feels that the burglary is a failure, but Hunt insists that they celebrate anyway. Martinez tells Diego that the break-in must either be a training exercise for a more important mission to come, or it was a cover operation for something else. “I thought to myself that maybe these people already had the papers of Ellsberg. Maybe Dr. Fielding had given them out and for ethical reasons he needed to be covered. It seemed that these people already had what we were looking for because no one invites you to have champagne and is happy when you fail,” he will write. Martinez’s CIA supervisor is strangely uninterested in the incident. “I was certain then that the Company knew about his activities,” Martinez will write. “But once again my CO did not pursue the subject.” [HARPER'S, 10/1974] Hunt telephones Plumbers supervisor Egil Krogh at 4 a.m. to report that the burglary was a success but they found no files on Ellsberg. [REEVES, 2001, PP. 369]

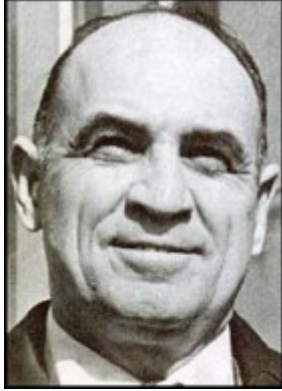
Entity Tags: ['Plumbers'](#), [Dita Beard](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#), [Daniel Ellsberg](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#), [Egil Krogh](#), [Henry A. Kissinger](#), [Eugenio Martinez](#), [Lewis Fielding](#), [Felipe de Diego](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [G. Gordon Liddy](#), [Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



October 1, 1971: McCord Joins CREEP





James W. McCord, Jr. [Source: *Spartacus Educational*] Former FBI and CIA agent James W. McCord joins the staff of the Committee to Re-elect the President (CREEP) as a part-time security consultant. He will become the committee's full-time security coordinator for CREEP in January 1972, and will perform similar duties for the Republican National Committee. [O.T. JACOBSON, 7/5/1974]

Entity Tags: [Republican National Committee](#), [Committee to Re-elect the President](#), [James McCord](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



January 29, 1972: Liddy Proposes 'Operation Gemstone' to Gather Intelligence on Democrats



Gemstone file envelope. [Source: *MedLibrary.org*] “Plumber” G. Gordon Liddy lays out an elaborate \$1 million proposal for a plan for political espionage and campaign “dirty tricks” he calls “Operation Gemstone” to Attorney General John Mitchell. Mitchell is preparing to leave his post to head the Committee to Re-elect the President (CREEP—see [March 1, 1972](#)). “Gemstone” is a response to pressure from President Nixon to compile intelligence on Democratic candidates and party officials, particularly Democratic National Committee chairman Lawrence O’Brien. Liddy gives his presentation with one hand bandaged—he had recently charred it in a candle flame to demonstrate the pain he was willing to endure in the name of will and loyalty. Sub-operations such as “Diamond,” “Ruby,” and

“Sapphire” engender the following, among other proposed activities:

- disrupt antiwar demonstrators before television and press cameras can arrive on the scene, using “men who have worked successfully as street-fighting squads for the CIA” [REEVES, 2001, PP. 429-430] or what White House counsel John Dean, also at the meeting, will later testify to be “mugging squads;” [TIME, 7/9/1973]
 - kidnap, or “surgically relocate,” prominent antiwar and civil rights leaders by “drug[ging]” them and taking them “across the border;”
 - use a pleasure yacht as a floating brothel to entice Democrats and other undesirables into compromising positions, where they can be tape-recorded and photographed with what Liddy calls “the finest call girls in the country... not dumb broads but girls who can be trained and photographed;”
 - deploy an array of electronic and physical surveillance, including chase planes to intercept messages from airplanes carrying prominent Democrats. [REEVES, 2001, PP. 429-430]
- Dean, as he later testifies, is horrified at the ideas. [TIME, 7/9/1973] Mitchell seems more amused than anything else at Liddy’s excesses, he merely says that “Gemstone” is “not quite what I had in mind.” He tells Liddy and Liddy’s boss, CREEP deputy director Jeb Stuart Magruder, to come back with a cheaper and more realistic proposal. [REEVES, 2001, PP. 429-430]

Entity Tags: [John Mitchell](#), [John Dean](#), [Committee to Re-elect the President](#), [G. Gordon Liddy](#), [Jeb S. Magruder](#), [Lawrence O’Brien](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#)

Timeline Tags: [Civil Liberties](#), [Nixon and Watergate](#)



Mid-Late March, 1972: ITT Lobbyist Disavows Memo at Behest of White House



Shortly after syndicated columnist Jack Anderson reveals the existence of a memo that shows criminal collusion between the Republican Party, ITT, and the Justice Department (see [February 22, 1972](#)), CIA and White House agent E. Howard Hunt visits the author of the memo, ITT lobbyist Dita Beard, to persuade her to say publicly that the memo is a forgery, or to disavow it. Beard is currently in hospital, perhaps to treat mental and physical exhaustion and perhaps to keep her away from the press. To conceal his identity during the visit, Hunt wears an ill-fitting red wig similar to one he will have in his possession during the planning for the Watergate burglary (see [2:30 a.m. June 17, 1972](#)). [THE PEOPLE’S ALMANAC, 1981; WOODWARD, 2005, PP. 8-39] A Justice Department official will discuss Hunt’s visit to Beard with Washington Post reporter Bob Woodward in February 1973, and tell Woodward that White House aide Charles Colson sent Hunt on the mission to convince Beard to disavow the memo. The official, reading from FBI files, will tell Woodward that Colson’s testimony to the FBI was done in his office to spare him the embarrassment of having to testify before the grand jury. The FBI did not ask Colson why he sent Hunt to pressure Beard. [BERNSTEIN AND WOODWARD, 1974, PP. 255] On March 21,

Beard will deny ever writing the memo, saying, “I did not prepare it and could not have.” Beard’s belated denial, and ITT’s quick shredding of incriminating documents referencing the connections between the antitrust deal and the convention, will partially defuse the potential scandal. The FBI will publicly claim that the memo is most likely authentic despite pressure from the Nixon White House (see [March 10-23, 1972](#)). [[THE PEOPLE’S ALMANAC, 1981](#); [WOODWARD, 2005, PP. 8-39](#)]

Entity Tags: [Dita Beard](#), [Charles Colson](#), [International Telephone and Telegraph](#), [Jack Anderson](#), [Republican National Committee](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



April-June 1972: 'Plumbers' Plan for Watergate Burglary



According to Watergate burglar Eugenio Martinez (see [2:30 a.m. June 17, 1972](#)), White House aide E. Howard Hunt, whom he calls by his old CIA code name “Eduardo” (see [September 9, 1971](#)), is ratcheting up the activities of the White House “Plumbers” operation. Martinez is not yet aware of the nature of the team’s operations, but believes he is part of a black-ops, CIA-authorized organization working to foil Communist espionage activities. Hunt gives team member Bernard Barker \$89,000 in checks from Mexican banks to cash for operational funds, and orders Barker to recruit new team members. Barker brings in Frank Sturgis, Virgilio Gonzalez, and Reinaldo Pico, all veterans of the CIA’s activities against Cuba’s Fidel Castro. On May 22, the six—Hunt, Barker, Gonzalez, Martinez, Pico, and Sturgis—meet for the first time at the Manger Hays-Adams Hotel in Washington for Hunt’s first briefing. By this point, Martinez will later recall, G. Gordon Liddy, who had been involved in the burglary related to Pentagon Papers leaker Daniel Ellsberg, is involved. Hunt calls Liddy “Daddy,” and, Martinez recalls, “the two men seemed almost inseparable.” They meet another team member, James McCord, who unbeknownst to Martinez is an official with Nixon’s presidential campaign (see [June 19, 1972](#)). McCord is introduced simply as “Jimmy,” an “old man from the CIA who used to do electronic jobs for the CIA and the FBI.” McCord is to be the electronics expert.

Plans to Break into McGovern HQ - Martinez says that the group is joined by “a boy there who had infiltrated the McGovern headquarters,” the headquarters of the campaign of Democratic presidential candidate George McGovern. According to Hunt, they are going to find evidence proving that the Democrats are accepting money from Castro and other foreign governments. (Interestingly, Martinez will write that he still believes McGovern accepted Cuban money.) Hunt soon aborts the mission; Martinez believes “it was because the boy got scared.”

New Plans: Target the DNC - Instead, he and Liddy begin planning to burglarize the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) in the Watergate hotel and office complex. They all move into the Watergate to prepare for the break-in. Martinez will recall: “We brought briefcases and things like that to look elegant. We registered as members of the Ameritus Corporation of Miami, and then we met in Eduardo’s room.” The briefing is

“improvised,” Martinez will recall. Hunt says that the Castro funds are coming to the DNC, not McGovern’s headquarters, and they will find the evidence there. The plans are rather impromptu and indefinite, but Martinez trusts Hunt and does not question his expertise.

[[HARPER'S, 10/1974](#)]

Entity Tags: [Frank Sturgis](#), [Democratic National Committee](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Bernard Barker](#), ['Plumbers'](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#), [Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz](#), [George S. McGovern](#), [James McCord](#), [G. Gordon Liddy](#), [Virgilio Gonzalez](#), [Eugenio Martinez](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



June 17, 1972: White House, Nixon Campaign Mobilizes in Response to Watergate Burglary



Though the five Watergate burglars (see [2:30 a.m. June 17, 1972](#)) are not yet allowed to make telephone calls, phones begin ringing at 5 a.m. at the CIA, the White House, the offices of the Nixon re-election campaign (CREEP), and Nixon’s home in Key Biscayne, where White House aide H. R. Haldeman is. By 3:30 p.m., when the five appear for arraignment (see [June 17, 1972](#)), lawyers are waiting to represent them. At CREEP, accused burglar G. Gordon Liddy, released on bail, is busily shredding files; fellow burglar E. Howard Hunt is doing the same at his office. White House aide Charles Colson orders all White House phone directories listing Hunt as a White House employee destroyed. CREEP deputy director Jeb Magruder speaks to his boss, CREEP director John Mitchell, by phone, then begins burning his copies of the “Gemstone” files (see [January 29, 1972](#)). Later in the day, Liddy bursts into Attorney General Richard Kleindienst’s office saying that Mitchell wants the five burglars—Bernard Barker, Virgilio Gonzales, Eugenio Martinez, James McCord, and Frank Sturgis—released from prison immediately (see [June 17, 1972](#)). Kleindienst does not believe Liddy, and has no authority to release them anyway. [[REEVES, 2001, PP. 501](#)]

Entity Tags: [Frank Sturgis](#), [Charles Colson](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Bernard Barker](#), [Committee to Re-elect the President](#), [Eugenio Martinez](#), [H.R. Haldeman](#), [Richard Kleindienst](#), [G. Gordon Liddy](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#), [Virgilio Gonzales](#), [James McCord](#), [Nixon administration](#), [Jeb S. Magruder](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



2:30 a.m. June 17, 1972: Five 'Plumbers' Caught Burglarizing Democratic Offices in Watergate Hotel





Frank Wills, the security guard who discovers the taped doors and alerts the DC police. [Source: Bettmann / Corbis] Five burglars (see [June 17, 1972](#)) are arrested at 2:30 a.m. while breaking in to the Democratic National Committee (DNC) Headquarters offices in Washington's Watergate hotel and office complex; the DNC occupies the entire sixth floor. [[WASHINGTON POST, 6/18/1972](#); [GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY AND MUSEUM, 7/3/2007](#)]

Discovery - They are surprised at gunpoint by three plainclothes officers of the DC Metropolitan Police. Two ceiling panels have been removed from the secretary's office, which is adjacent to that of DNC chairman Lawrence O'Brien. It is possible to place a surveillance device above those panels that could monitor O'Brien's office. The five suspects, all wearing surgical gloves, have among them two sophisticated voice-activated surveillance devices that can monitor conversations and telephone calls alike; lock-picks, door jimmies, and an assortment of burglary tools; and \$2,300 in cash, most of it in \$100 bills in sequence. They also have a walkie-talkie, a shortwave receiver tuned to the police band, 40 rolls of unexposed film, two 35mm cameras, and three pen-sized tear gas guns. Near to where the men are captured is a file cabinet with two open drawers; a DNC source speculates that the men might have been preparing to photograph the contents of the file drawers.

Guard Noticed Taped Door - The arrests take place after a Watergate security guard, Frank Wills, notices a door connecting a stairwell with the hotel's basement garage has been taped so it will not lock; the guard removes the tape, but when he checks ten minutes later and finds the lock taped once again, the guard calls the police. The police find that all of the stairwell doors leading from the basement to the sixth floor have been similarly taped to prevent them from locking. The door leading from the stairwell to the DNC offices had been jimmied. During a search of the offices, one of the burglars leaps from behind a desk and surrenders. [[WASHINGTON POST, 6/18/1972](#)] The FBI agents responding to the burglary are initially told that the burglars may have been attempting to plant a bomb in the offices. The "bomb"

turns out to be surveillance equipment. [[O.T. JACOBSON, 7/5/1974](#)]

Last Mission for Martinez - One of the burglars, Cuban emigre and CIA agent Eugenio Martinez, will recall the burglary. They have already successfully burglarized a psychiatrist's office in search of incriminating material on Pentagon Papers leaker Daniel Ellsberg (see [September 9, 1971](#)), and successfully bugged the DNC offices less than a month previously (see [May 27-28, 1972](#)), but Martinez is increasingly ill at ease over the poor planning and amateurish behavior of his colleagues (see [Mid-June 1972](#)). This will be his last operation, he has decided. Team leader E. Howard Hunt, whom Martinez calls by his old code name "Eduardo," is obviously intrigued by the material secured from the previous burglary, and wants to go through the

offices a second time to find more. Martinez is dismayed to find that Hunt has two operations planned for the evening, one for the DNC and one for the campaign offices of Democratic candidate George McGovern. Former CIA agent and current Nixon campaign security official James McCord (see [June 19, 1972](#)), the electronics expert of the team, is equally uncomfortable with the rushed, almost impromptu plan. Hunt takes all of the burglars' identification and puts it in a briefcase. He gives another burglar, Frank Sturgis, his phony "Edward J. Hamilton" ID from his CIA days, and gives each burglar \$200 in cash to bribe their way out of trouble. Interestingly, Hunt tells the burglars to keep the keys to their hotel rooms. Martinez later writes: "I don't know why. Even today, I don't know. Remember, I was told in advance not to ask about those things."

Taping the Doors - McCord goes into the Watergate office complex, signs in, and begins taping the doors to the stairwells from the eighth floor all the way to the garage. After waiting for everyone to leave the offices, the team prepares to enter. Gonzalez and Sturgis note that the tape to the basement garage has been removed. Martinez believes the operation will be aborted, but McCord disagrees; he convinces Hunt and the other team leader, White House aide G. Gordon Liddy, to continue. It is McCord's responsibility to remove the tape once the burglars are inside, but he fails to do so. The team is well into the DNC offices when the police burst in. "There was no way out," Martinez will recall. "We were caught." Barker is able to surreptitiously advise Hunt, who is still in the hotel, that they have been discovered. Martinez will later wonder if the entire second burglary might have been "a set-up or something like that because it was so easy the first time. We all had that feeling." The police quickly find the burglars' hotel keys and then the briefcase containing their identification. As they are being arrested, McCord, who rarely speaks and then not above a whisper, takes charge of the situation. He orders everyone to keep their mouths shut. "Don't give your names," he warns. "Nothing. I know people. Don't worry, someone will come and everything will be all right. This thing will be solved." [[HARPER'S, 10/1974](#); [SPARTACUS SCHOOLNET, 8/7/2007](#)]

'Third-Rate Burglary' - White House press secretary Ron Ziegler will respond to allegations that the White House and the Nixon presidential campaign might have been involved in the Watergate burglary by calling it a "third-rate burglary attempt," and warning that "certain elements may try to stretch this beyond what it is." [[WASHINGTON POST, 5/1/1973](#)] The Washington Post chooses, for the moment, to cover it as a local burglary and nothing more; managing editor Howard Simons says that it could be nothing more than a crime committed by "crazy Cubans." [[BERNSTEIN AND WOODWARD, 1974, PP. 19](#)]

CIA Operation? - In the weeks and months to come, speculation will arise as to the role of the CIA in the burglary. The Nixon White House will attempt to pin the blame for the Watergate conspiracy on the CIA, an attempt forestalled by McCord (see [March 19-23, 1973](#)). In a 1974 book on his involvement in the conspiracy, McCord will write: "The Watergate operation was not a CIA operation. The Cubans may have been misled by others into believing that it was a CIA operation. I know for a fact that it was not." Another author, Carl Oglesby, will claim otherwise, saying that the burglary is a CIA plot against Nixon. Former CIA officer Miles Copeland will claim that McCord led the burglars into a trap. Journalist Andrew St. George will claim that CIA Director Richard Helms knew of the break-in before it occurred, a viewpoint supported by Martha Mitchell, the wife of Nixon campaign director John Mitchell, who will tell St. George that McCord is a "double agent" whose deliberate blunders led to the

arrest of the burglars. No solid evidence of CIA involvement in the Watergate conspiracy has so far been revealed. [SPARTACUS_SCHOOLNET, 8/2007]

Entity Tags: [Nixon administration](#), [Howard Simons](#), [Lawrence O'Brien](#), [James McCord](#), [Martha Mitchell](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#), [Richard Helms](#), [Washington Post](#), [Ron Ziegler](#), [George S. McGovern](#), [Miles Copeland](#), [G. Gordon Liddy](#), [John Mitchell](#), [Frank Sturgis](#), [Carl Oglesby](#), [Bob Woodward](#), [Andrew St. George](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Carl Bernstein](#), [Democratic National Committee](#), [Daniel Ellsberg](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#), [Eugenio Martinez](#), [Frank Wills](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#), [Elections Before 2000](#)



June 18, 1972: Reporter Finds Connection between Watergate Burglary, White House



Washington Post reporter Bob Woodward learns that two of the Watergate burglars (see [2:30 a.m. June 17, 1972](#)) have the name “E. Howard Hunt” in their address books, both with notations that indicate Hunt has a post at the White House. Woodward contacts his FBI source, W. Mark Felt—later known as “Deep Throat” (see [May 31, 2005](#))—and asks Felt the first of many Watergate-related questions. Felt is reticent, merely telling Woodward that the burglary will “heat up” before hanging up on Woodward. Unsure what to do next, Woodward calls the White House and asks for Hunt. When no one answers Hunt’s office phone, the White House operator suggests that Hunt may be in the office of Charles Colson, the special counsel to President Nixon. Colson’s office gives Woodward the number of the Mullen Company, a public relations firm for which Hunt writes (Mullen is a possible CIA front company—see [June 17, 1972](#)). Woodward calls Hunt there, and when Hunt answers, asks him why his name is in the address book of two of the Watergate burglars. “Good God!” Hunt shouts, then says he has no comment, and slams down the phone. Within hours, Hunt will go into hiding. White House communications official Ken Clawson tells Woodward that Hunt worked with the White House in declassifying the Pentagon Papers (see [March 1971](#)), and, more recently, on a narcotics enforcement project. Clawson then puzzles Woodward by making the following unsolicited statement: “I’ve looked into the matter very thoroughly, and I am convinced that neither Mr. Colson nor anyone else at the White House had any knowledge of, or participation in, this deplorable incident at the Democratic National Committee.” Woodward soon learns that Hunt was a CIA agent between 1949 and 1970. Woodward again calls Felt, who guardedly tells him that Hunt is connected to the burglaries by far more than mere address books. Felt does not tell Woodward that he has already reviewed Hunt’s White House personnel file, and found that Hunt worked over 600 hours for Colson in less than a year. [BERNSTEIN AND WOODWARD, 1974, PP. 24-25; WOODWARD, 2005, PP. 56-58]

Entity Tags: [W. Mark Felt](#), [Bob Woodward](#), [Charles Colson](#), [Mullen Company](#), [Democratic National Committee](#), [Ken Clawson](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



June 19, 1972: Dean Orders Falsified Documents Removed from Watergate Burglar's Safe



White House counsel John Dean orders the opening of a safe belonging to Watergate burglar E. Howard Hunt (see [2:30 a.m. June 17, 1972](#)). Dean orders that the contents be turned over (six days later, after Dean and other White House officials have had a chance to peruse them) to the FBI. The documents will soon be given to FBI acting director L. Patrick Gray, who keeps them for six months before burning them (see [Late December 1972](#)). Gray will later admit to the incident in his testimony before the Senate Watergate Committee (see [February 28-29, 1973](#)). [[TIME, 4/2/1973](#)] Dean finds in the safe, among other things, a loaded .25 caliber pistol; the attache case of burglar James McCord, loaded with electronic surveillance equipment and a tear gas canister; CIA psychological profiles of Pentagon Papers leaker Daniel Ellsberg (see [March 1971](#)); pages from the Pentagon Papers; memos to and from Nixon aide Charles Colson; two falsified diplomatic cables implicating former President John F. Kennedy in the 1963 assassination of South Vietnam's President Ngo Diem Dinh; and a dossier on the personal life of Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA). Nixon aide John Ehrlichman advises Dean to throw the contents of the safe into the Potomac River. [[REEVES, 2001, PP. 501-502](#)] Shortly thereafter, Washington Post reporter Carl Bernstein, in discussions with a young assistant in White House aide Charles Colson's office, learns that Hunt has been investigating Kennedy's checkered past, particularly the Chappaquiddick tragedy of 1969, in which an apparently inebriated Kennedy drove his car into a lake, drowning his companion of the evening, Mary Jo Kopechne. Hunt was apparently looking for political ammunition against Kennedy in preparation for a possible presidential run. According to a former Nixon administration official, Colson and fellow Nixon aide H. R. Haldeman were "absolutely paranoid" about a Kennedy campaign run. [[BERNSTEIN AND WOODWARD, 1974, PP. 30-31](#)]

Entity Tags: [H.R. Haldeman](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#), [Charles Colson](#), [Carl Bernstein](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Senate Watergate Investigative Committee](#), [L. Patrick Gray](#), [John Ehrlichman](#), [John F. Kennedy](#), [Ngo Dinh Diem](#), [Edward Kennedy](#), [Mary Jo Kopechne](#), [John Dean](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



June 20, 1972: Colson: Blame CIA for Watergate



After an Oval Office discussion about having Watergate burglar G. Gordon Liddy take the entire blame for the Watergate bugging (see [June 21, 1972](#)), President Nixon and his aide Charles Colson have another idea—blame the operation on the CIA. "I think we could develop

a theory as to the CIA if we wanted to,” Colson says. “We know that [burglar E. Howard] Hunt has all those ties with these people [referring to the other Watergate burglars]. He was their boss, and they were all CIA. You take the cash, you go down to Latin America.... We’re in great shape with the Cubans, and they’re proud of it. There’s a lot of muscle in that gang.”

[REEVES, 2001, PP. 506]

Entity Tags: [Charles Colson](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#), [G. Gordon Liddy](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



June 23, 1972: Nixon Orders CIA to Stop FBI Watergate Investigation



Nixon and Haldeman, three days after the June 23 meeting. [Source: *Washington Post*] With the FBI tracing the Watergate burglars’ \$100 bills to GOP fundraiser Kenneth Dahlberg (see [August 1-2, 1972](#)), President Nixon orders the CIA to attempt to stop the FBI from investigating the Watergate conspiracy, using the justification of “national security.” One of the areas Nixon specifically does not want investigated is the \$89,000 in Mexican checks found in the account of one of the Watergate burglars, Bernard Barker (see [April-June 1972](#)). [REEVES, 2001, PP. 508-510; WOODWARD, 2005, PP. 59-60] Author James Reston Jr. will write in 2007: “The strategy for the CIA to block the FBI’s investigation of the Mexican checks... was devised by Haldeman and Nixon. This was a clear obstruction of justice.” [RESTON, 2007, PP. 33-34] The plan, concocted by Nixon campaign chief John Mitchell, is to have deputy CIA director Vernon Walters tell the new FBI Director, L. Patrick Gray, to, in the words of Nixon chief of staff H. R. Haldeman, “stay the hell out of this... this is, ah, business we don’t want you to go any further on it.” Nixon approves the plan. White House aide John Ehrlichman will later testify that he is the one tasked with carrying out Nixon’s command; Nixon tells Ehrlichman and Haldeman to have the CIA “curb the FBI probe.” [O.T. JACOBSON,

 [7/5/1974](#)]

[Nixon: FBI, CIA Should Back out of Investigation](#) - In his discussion with Nixon, Haldeman says

that “the FBI is not under control, because Gray doesn’t exactly know how to control them, and they have, their investigation is now leading into some productive areas, because they’ve been able to trace the money... and it goes in some directions we don’t want it to go.” Haldeman also says that the FBI has a witness in Miami who saw film developed from one of the Watergate burglaries (see [Mid-June 1972](#)). He tells Nixon that the FBI is not aware yet that the money for the burglars can be traced to Dahlberg, who wrote a \$25,000 check that went directly to one of the Watergate burglars. That check is “directly traceable” to the Mexican bank used by the Nixon re-election campaign (CREEP). Haldeman says that he and Ehrlichman should call in both Gray and CIA Director Richard Helms and tell both of them to have their agencies back out of any investigation. Nixon agrees, saying that considering Hunt’s involvement: “that will uncover a lot of things. You open that scab there’s a hell of a lot of things and that we just feel that it would be very detrimental to have this thing go any further. This involves these Cubans, Hunt, and a lot of hanky-panky that we have nothing to do with ourselves.” Haldeman says he believes that Mitchell knew about the burglary as well, but did not know the operational details. “[W]ho was the ass_hole who did?” Nixon asks. “Is it [G. Gordon] Liddy? Is that the fellow? He must be nuts.” Haldeman says Mitchell pressured Liddy “to get more information, and as [Liddy] got more pressure, he pushed the people harder to move harder on....” Both Nixon and Haldeman think that the FBI may believe the CIA, not the White House, is responsible for the burglary; Nixon says: “... when I saw that news summary item, I of course knew it was a bunch of crap, but I thought ah, well it’s good to have them off on this wild hair thing because when they start bugging us, which they have, we’ll know our little boys will not know how to handle it. I hope they will though. You never know. Maybe, you think about it. Good!” A short time later in the conversation, Nixon instructs Haldeman to tell his staffers not to directly lie under oath about their knowledge of the burglary, but to characterize it as “sort of a comedy of errors, bizarre,” and warn the FBI that to continue investigating the burglary would “open the whole Bay of Pigs thing up again. And, ah, because these people are plugging for, for keeps and that they should call the FBI in and say that we wish for the country, don’t go any further into this case.... That’s the way to put it, do it straight.” [\[AMDOCS DOCUMENTS FOR THE STUDY OF AMERICAN HISTORY, 6/1993\]](#) Later in the day, both Walters and CIA Director Richard Helms visit Haldeman to discuss the situation. Helms says that he has already heard from Gray, who had said, “I think we’ve run right into the middle of a CIA covert operation.” Helms and Walters both agree to pressure Gray to abandon the investigation, but their efforts are ineffective; the assistant US attorney in Washington, Earl Silbert, is driving the investigation, not the FBI. [\[REEVES, 2001, PP. 508-510\]](#)

Gray: Improper Use of FBI - Soon after Nixon’s order, acting FBI Director L. Patrick Gray tells Nixon that his administration is improperly using the CIA to interfere in the FBI’s investigation of Watergate. Gray warns Nixon “that people on your staff are trying to mortally wound you.” Gray is himself sharing Watergate investigation files with the White House, but will claim that he is doing so with the approval of the FBI’s general counsel. [\[NEW YORK TIMES, 7/7/2005\]](#) It is unclear whether Gray knows that Nixon personally issued the order to the CIA. Soon after the order is issued, a number of the FBI agents on the case—15 to 20 in all—threaten to resign en masse if the order is carried out. One of the agents, Bob Lill, will later recall: “There was certainly a unanimity among us that we can’t back off. This is ridiculous. This smacks of a cover-up in itself, and we’ve got to pursue this. Let them know in no uncertain terms we’re

all together on this. [T]his request from CIA is hollow.” [WOODWARD, 2005, PP. 189-191] No such mass resignation will take place. Because of evidence being classified and redacted (see [July 5, 1974](#)), it will remain unclear as to exactly if and how much the CIA may have interfered in the FBI’s investigation.

'Smoking Gun' - The secret recording of this meeting (see [July 13-16, 1973](#)), when revealed in the subsequent Watergate investigation, will become known as the “smoking gun” tape—clear evidence that Nixon knew of and participated in the Watergate cover-up. [WASHINGTON POST, 2008]

Entity Tags: [Bob Lill](#), [Vernon A. Walters](#), [Earl Silbert](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#), [G. Gordon Liddy](#), [L. Patrick Gray](#), [John Ehrlichman](#), [Richard Helms](#), [John Mitchell](#), [Kenneth H. Dahlberg](#), [H.R. Haldeman](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



June 26-29, 1972: Dean Asks CIA for Money for Burglars, Is Rebuffed; Nixon Campaign Provides Money Instead



Vernon Walters. [Source: *Medal of Freedom (.com)*] White House counsel John Dean meets with Vernon Walters, the deputy director of the CIA, to ask if the agency can provide “financial assistance” to the five Watergate burglars. Two days later, after checking with his boss, CIA director Richard Helms, Walters refuses Dean’s request. Dean informs his White House and Nixon campaign associates, John Mitchell, Frederick LaRue, and Robert Mardian. On June 29, Dean meets with President Nixon’s personal lawyer, Herbert Kalmbach, and tells him that Mitchell, along with Nixon’s two top aides, H. R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman, want Kalmbach to raise money for the Watergate burglars. Later that day, the finance chairman of the Nixon re-election campaign, Maurice Stans, gives Kalmbach \$75,000 for the burglars. Over the next months, money will continue to be raised and disbursed to the burglars in what may be part of a blackmail scheme orchestrated by one of them, E. Howard Hunt (see [March 21, 1973](#)). [SPARTACUS SCHOOLNET, 8/2007]

Entity Tags: [John Mitchell](#), [H.R. Haldeman](#), [Frederick LaRue](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Herbert Kalmbach](#), [John Dean](#), [John Ehrlichman](#), [Vernon A. Walters](#), [Maurice Stans](#), [Richard Helms](#), [Robert Mardian](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



June 28-29, 1972: FBI Director Tells Bureau Not to Interview Watergate Suspects Due to 'National Security Considerations'



CIA Director Richard Helms confers with FBI Director L. Patrick Gray over the FBI's investigation into the Mexican bank account apparently used to launder illegal campaign contributions (see [Before April 7, 1972](#)). Helms tells Gray that the Midwest finance chairman of the Nixon campaign, Kenneth Dahlberg, last had contact with the CIA in 1961. The FBI is not sure what the nature of this contact between Dahlberg and the CIA is. The next day, Gray tells his deputy, Mark Felt, that neither Dahlberg nor Mexican lawyer Manuel Ogarrio Daguerre (see [Before April 7, 1972](#)) are to be interviewed because of "national security considerations." The CIA's deputy director, Vernon Walters, will tell Gray on June 27 and 28 that neither Dahlberg nor Ogarrio have any connection with the agency, and the CIA has no reason to object to their being interviewed. Gray will give belated permission for the FBI to interview the two on July 6, 1972. Dahlberg will initially lie to the FBI about some of the money he collected that found its way into the account of one of the Watergate burglars (see [2:30 a.m. June 17, 1972](#)). Ogarrio will also be interviewed, but only after Dean reverses his initial decision not to allow the FBI to talk with him. (Note on source: This information comes from a 1974 FBI report about the efficacy of the investigation; much of the information in these sections concerning the CIA is redacted. Also, another section of the FBI report says that Gray canceled the meeting with Helms at the request of Nixon aide John Ehrlichman.)



[O.T. JACOBSON, 7/5/1974]

Entity Tags: [Manuel Ogarrio Daguerre](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Campaign to Re-elect the President](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [L. Patrick Gray](#), [John Dean](#), [Vernon A. Walters](#), [Kenneth H. Dahlberg](#), [Richard Helms](#), [W. Mark Felt](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



July 6, 1972: Gray Tries to Warn Nixon of Aides' Interference with Watergate Investigation



Acting FBI director L. Patrick Gray calls President Nixon to warn him that some of his White House aides are trying to “mortally wound” him by interfering with the FBI and the CIA in the Watergate investigation (see [June 23, 1972](#)). Nixon merely replies, “Pat, you just continue to conduct your aggressive and thorough investigation.” Gray later testifies (see [August 1973](#)), “I expected the president to ask me some questions.” When Gray hears nothing for two weeks from Nixon, he concludes that he is just being “alarmist” about the situation. [[TIME, 8/20/1973](#)]

Entity Tags: [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [L. Patrick Gray](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



September 15, 1972: Watergate Burglars Indicted



Accused Watergate burglar Bernard Barker after being arraigned in June 1972.

[Source: Wally McNamee / Corbis] The first indictments against the five men accused of burglarizing Democratic National Headquarters (see [June 17, 1972](#))—James McCord, Frank Sturgis, Bernard Barker, Eugenio Martinez, and Virgilio Gonzalez—are handed down. White House aides G. Gordon Liddy and E. Howard Hunt are also indicted. [[GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY AND MUSEUM, 7/3/2007](#)]

The indictments are for conspiracy, interception of communications, and burglary. [[O.T. JACOBSON, 7/5/1974](#)]

Washington Post Investigation - In its story of the indictments, the Washington Post will note that the indictments do “not touch on the central questions about the purpose or sponsorship of the alleged espionage” against the Democrats. Post reporter Carl Bernstein asks a Justice Department official why the indictments are so narrowly focused, as the FBI has certainly unearthed the same information as the Post investigation. After the source admits that the Justice Department knows about the campaign “slush fund” and the White House connections to the electronic surveillance, an indignant Bernstein asks why the Post should not run a story accusing the department of ignoring evidence. The official responds that the department does not intend to file any future indictments, and that the investigation is currently “in a state of

repose.” [\[BERNSTEIN AND WOODWARD, 1974, PP. 69-70\]](#)

FBI Continues to Probe - FBI spokesman J. W. Hushen says that the indictments have ended the investigation and the agency has “absolutely no evidence to indicate that any others should be charged.” Contrary to Hushen’s statement and the Justice Department official’s comment to Bernstein, the FBI will continue its investigation. A day later, Deputy Attorney General Henry Peterson says that any charges that the FBI has conducted a “whitewash” of

the Watergate conspiracy are untrue. [\[O.T. JACOBSON, 7/5/1974\]](#) ; [REEVES, 2001, PP. 526-527\]](#)

Bay of Pigs Forged Bond - Martinez will later recall Hunt as one of his heroes from the time of the Cuban Revolution. Hunt, a CIA agent using the code name “Eduardo,” endeared himself to Martinez and other anti-Castro Cubans by denouncing the failed Bay of Pigs invasion as the fault of then-President Kennedy and others unwilling to fight against Fidel Castro. Martinez, himself then a CIA agent and an associate of Barker, Sturgis, McCord, and Gonzalez, will later write, “I can’t help seeing the whole Watergate affair as a repetition of the Bay of Pigs.”

[\[HARPER’S, 10/1974\]](#)

Entity Tags: [James McCord](#), [J. W. Hushen](#), [Henry Peterson](#), [US Department of Justice](#), [Virgilio Gonzalez](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Frank Sturgis](#), [Bernard Barker](#), [G. Gordon Liddy](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#), [Eugenio Martinez](#), [Carl Bernstein](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)

 SHARE

November 20, 1972: Nixon Demands CIA Director Resign



In a private meeting at Camp David, President Nixon demands that CIA director Richard Helms resign immediately. Helms has already refused to use CIA funds to pay “hush money” to the Watergate burglars (see [June 26-29, 1972](#) and [December 21, 1972](#)). He knows that Nixon intends to pin some of the blame for the Watergate conspiracy on the agency, and so refuses to resign. Nixon will fire Helms in February 1973. [\[SPARTACUS SCHOOLNET, 8/2007\]](#); [SPARTACUS SCHOOLNET, 8/2007\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Richard Helms](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)

 SHARE

December 8, 1972: Wife of Watergate Plumber Dies in Suspicious Plane Crash





Dorothy Hunt. [Source: *Spartacus Educational*] Dorothy Hunt, the wife of accused

Watergate burglar E. Howard Hunt (see [2:30 a.m. June 17, 1972](#)), dies in a plane crash that claims the lives of 44 others when it crashes just after takeoff from Chicago's Midway Airport. Some believe that the plane crash may have been planned, though there is no hard evidence to support this contention.

Blackmailing the White House? - Hunt and his fellow "Plumbers" (see [Late June-July 1971](#)) have been regularly receiving "hush money" payments from the Nixon presidential campaign to stay quiet about their activities (see [March 20, 1971](#)). With the prospect of going to prison, Hunt threatened to reveal juicy details of who exactly paid him to organize the Watergate burglary. His wife helped negotiate a payoff deal with Nixon aide Charles Colson. Hunt's fellow Plumber, James McCord, will later claim that Dorothy Hunt said that her husband has information that would "blow the White House out of the water." She was, Colson later admits, "upset at the interruption of payments from Nixon's associates to Watergate defendants." Former Attorney General John Mitchell, the head of Nixon's re-election organization, arranged to have Nixon aide Frederick LaRue pay the Hunts \$250,000 to keep their mouths shut. The day of the crash, Dorothy Hunt had arranged to meet with CBS journalist Michelle Clark, perhaps to discuss the Watergate investigation. Clark, Dorothy Hunt, and Illinois congressman George Collins are aboard the plane, United Airlines Flight 533, when it crashes into a Chicago neighborhood; all three die. Hunt is reported to be carrying \$10,000 in cash as a partial payoff for the burglars (see [February 28, 1973](#)), but some sources will later claim that she was carrying far more. [[SPARTACUS SCHOOLNET, 8/2007](#)] Shortly after the crash, White House aides H. R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman tell Nixon that Mrs. Hunt had distributed \$250,000 in cash to her husband and the other Watergate burglars. The cash was delivered to Mrs. Hunt by White House courier Tony Ulasewicz, whose standard procedure was to take cash from the White House to Washington's National Airport and leave the money in a rented locker. [[REEVES, 2001, PP. 551](#)] In October 1974, Watergate burglar Bernard Barker will confirm that Dorothy Hunt was the burglars' connection to the White House. Barker will recall that, months after the burglary, he met her in Miami, where she told him, "From now on, I will be your contact." [[HARPER'S, 10/1974](#)]

FBI 'Swarms' Crash Site - One reporter, Lalo J. Gastriani, later reports that just after the crash, the downed plane is swarmed by "a battalion of plainclothes operatives in unmarked cars parked on side streets." The neighbors who report this to Gastriani say that some of the "operatives" look like "FBI types," and one neighbor recognizes a "rescue worker" as a CIA agent. Gastriani's account sounds like the worst conspiracy theory and is anything but

conclusive, but future FBI director William Ruckelshaus will later admit that his agency had over 50 agents at the crash site. Interestingly, one of Colson's aides directly involved in overseeing Hunt's "Plumbers," Egil Krogh, will be named as undersecretary of transportation one day after the crash; the position gives Krogh direct control over the two agencies responsible for investigating the crash. Another Nixon aide, Dwight Chapin, soon becomes a top executive at United Airlines. [SPARTACUS SCHOOLNET, 8/2007]

Entity Tags: [Egil Krogh](#), [United Airlines](#), [William Ruckelshaus](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#), [Dorothy Hunt](#), [Charles Colson](#), [Tony Ulasewicz](#), [Bernard Barker](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#), [John Mitchell](#), [Lalo J. Gastriani](#), [Frederick LaRue](#), [George Collins](#), [H.R. Haldeman](#), [Michelle Clark](#), [Frank Sturgis](#), [James McCord](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Dwight Chapin](#), [John Ehrlichman](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



December 21, 1972: McCord Warns White House Not to Pin Blame for Watergate on CIA



Accused Watergate burglar James McCord (see [2:30 a.m. June 17, 1972](#)) writes a letter to former Nixon aide Jack Caulfield in an attempt to warn the Nixon administration not to try to pin the blame for Watergate on the CIA, as some White House aides have suggested. McCord writes in part: "Sorry to have to write you this letter but felt you had to know. If Helms goes [Richard Helms, the director of the CIA, who was asked to resign by Nixon—see [November 20, 1972](#)], and if the WG [Watergate] operation is laid at the CIA's feet, where it does not belong, every tree in the forest will fall. It will be a scorched desert. The whole matter is at the precipice right now. Just pass the message that if they want it to blow, they are on exactly the right course. I'm sorry that you will get hurt in the fallout." [SPARTACUS SCHOOLNET, 8/2007]

Entity Tags: [James McCord](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Richard Helms](#), [John J. 'Jack' Caulfield](#), [Nixon administration](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



1973: CIA Internal Review Finds 'Dozens' of Illegal Domestic Surveillance Operations





CIA Counterintelligence Director James Angleton. [Source: *CI Centre.com*]CIA Director

James Schlesinger orders an internal review of CIA surveillance operations against US citizens. The review finds dozens of instances of illegal CIA surveillance operations against US citizens dating back to the 1950s, including break-ins, wiretaps, and the surreptitious opening of personal mail. The earlier surveillance operations were not directly targeted at US citizens, but against “suspected foreign intelligence agents operating in the United States.” Schlesinger is disturbed to find that the CIA is currently mounting illegal surveillance operations against antiwar protesters, civil rights organizations, and political “enemies” of the Nixon administration. In the 1960s and early 1970s, CIA agents photographed participants in antiwar rallies and other demonstrations. The CIA also created a network of informants who were tasked to penetrate antiwar and civil rights groups and report back on their findings. At least one antiwar Congressman was placed under surveillance, and other members of Congress were included in the agency’s dossier of “dissident Americans.” As yet, neither Schlesinger nor his successor, current CIA Director William Colby, will be able to learn whether or not Schlesinger’s predecessor, Richard Helms, was asked by Nixon officials to perform such illegal surveillance, though both Schlesinger and Colby disapproved of the operations once they learned of them. Colby will privately inform the heads of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees of the domestic spying engaged in by his agency. The domestic spying program was headed by James Angleton, who is still serving as the CIA’s head of counterintelligence operations, one of the most powerful and secretive bureaus inside the agency. It is Angleton’s job to maintain the CIA’s “sources and methods of intelligence,” including the prevention of foreign “moles” from penetrating the CIA. But to use counterintelligence as a justification for the domestic spying program is wrong, several sources with first-hand knowledge of the program will say in 1974. “Look, that’s how it started,” says one. “They were looking for evidence of foreign involvement in the antiwar movement. But that’s not how it ended up. This just grew and mushroomed internally.” The source continues, speaking hypothetically: “Maybe they began with a check on [Jane] Fonda. They began to check on her friends. They’d see her at an antiwar rally and take photographs. I think this was going on even before the Huston plan” (see [July 26-27, 1970](#) and [December 21, 1974](#)). “This wasn’t a series of isolated events. It was highly coordinated. People were targeted, information was collected on them, and it was all put on [computer] tape, just like the agency does with information about KGB agents. Every one of these acts was blatantly

illegal.” Schlesinger begins a round of reforms in the CIA, a program continued by Colby. [\[NEW YORK TIMES, 12/22/1974\]](#)

Entity Tags: [William Colby](#), [Senate Intelligence Committee](#), [Richard Helms](#), [James Angleton](#), [Jane Fonda](#), [Nixon administration](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [James R. Schlesinger](#), [House Intelligence Committee](#)

Timeline Tags: [Civil Liberties](#)



1973-1979: US Starts to Provide Support to Islamists Opposing the Soviets in Afghanistan



In 1973 Afghan Prince Muhammad Daoud ousts the Afghan king with help from the Soviet Union, and establishes an Afghan republic. The CIA in turn begins funding Islamist extremists, including Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, as a resistance movement opposing the Soviets. US allies Iran, with its intelligence agency SAVAK, and Pakistan, with its intelligence agency the ISI, play an important role in funneling weapons and other forms of assistance to the Afghan Islamist militants. After the pro-Soviet coup in April 1978, the Islamic militants with the support of the ISI carry out a massive campaign of terrorism, assassinating hundreds of teachers and civil servants. [\[DREYFUSS, 2005, PP. 260 - 263\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Gulbuddin Hekmatyar](#), [Organization for Intelligence and National Security \(Iran\)](#), [Muhammad Daoud](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [War in Afghanistan](#)



January 8, 1973: Nixon Learns Campaign Bugged McGovern Campaign Manager; Worries about Burglar's Silence



President Nixon and senior aide Charles Colson discuss the Watergate trial just underway (see [January 8-11, 1973](#)). Nixon has apparently just learned that someone in his re-election campaign planted electronic surveillance on Gary Hart, Democratic presidential candidate George McGovern's campaign manager. Nixon tells Colson: "I understand [chief of staff H. R.] Haldeman is after some kid that bugged Gary Hart.... But how could that be? Watergate came before McGovern got off the ground, and I don't know why the hell we bugged McGovern." Colson replies: "Remember. That was after the California primary" (where McGovern clinched the nomination). Nixon grouses: "That's the thing about all of this. We didn't get a g_ddamn thing from any of it that I can see." Colson disagrees: "Well, frankly, we did, but then, what they mainly used, we know." Later in the conversation, Nixon brings up the problem of

Watergate burglar E. Howard Hunt, who has what Nixon calls a “sensitive position” in the Watergate investigation—Hunt knows enough to blow the lid off the entire conspiracy, and has threatened to reveal it if he is not paid (see [Mid-November, 1972](#)). Colson says: “The others [the other six defendants] will just tell the truth and prove their case. But there is one advantage to it. There’ll be a hell of a lot of stuff that’ll come out.... Some counts will be dropped against Hunt. There will be appeals pending in the other cases.” Nixon adds, “As long as this trial is going on, the Congress will keep its g_ddamn, cotton-pickin’ hands off that trial.” Colson is sure the Senate Watergate Committee (see [February 7, 1973](#)) will begin immunizing witnesses to testify.

Using the CIA Connection - As the conversation moves on, Colson agrees with Nixon that he thought the Democrats might drop their interest in the burglary after the election, especially since “I think they figured that these were all guys who were CIA.... And they were all taking orders from people... acting on behalf of John Mitchell [the former head of Nixon’s re-election campaign].” Nixon says that it should be a simple thing to grant Hunt executive clemency, considering Hunt’s wife is dead and he has a child with permanent brain damage suffered in an automobile accident. “We’ll build that son of a b_tch up like nobody’s business. We’ll have Buckley write a column and say that he should have clemency, if you’ve given 18 years of service.” Colson adds that Buckley “served under Hunt in the CIA.” (Conservative columnist William F. Buckley became a CIA agent in 1951, and worked under Hunt in Mexico City.)

Abandoning Five of the Burglars - The five Cuban burglars, Colson says, are irrelevant. They “didn’t have any direct information.... I don’t give a damn if they spend five years in jail.... They can’t hurt us.... Hunt and [G. Gordon] Liddy: direct meetings and discussions are very incriminating to us.” Colson is not worried so much about Liddy, saying: “Apparently he’s one of those masochists. He enjoys punishing himself. That’s okay, as long as he remains stable. I mean, he’s tough.... [Hunt and Liddy are] both good, healthy, right-wing exuberants.” Nixon says wearily, “This... is the last damn fifty miles.” [[RESTON, 2007, PP. 191-195](#)]

Entity Tags: [Gary Hart](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#), [Charles Colson](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [G. Gordon Liddy](#), [George S. McGovern](#), [H.R. Haldeman](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#), [John Mitchell](#), [William F. Buckley](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#), [Elections Before 2000](#)



January 10, 1973: Watergate Burglars Claim No Knowledge of Payments, Clemency Promises



After the press reports that the Watergate burglars will receive cash payments in return for their guilty pleas and their silence (see [January 8-9, 1973](#) and [January 8-11, 1973](#)), Judge John Sirica angrily grills the four Miami-based defendants in court about the claims. To a man, they deny any pressure to plead guilty, any knowledge of cash payments to themselves or their families, and any knowledge of discussions of possible executive clemency. Defendant Virgilio Gonzalez even denies being a former CIA agent, when evidence has already established that he was on a \$100/month retainer by the agency until the day after the

Watergate burglary. (Defendant G. Gordon Liddy laughs aloud when Gonzalez makes this claim.) Gonzalez claims that the entire Watergate operation was somehow involved with the Communist regime of Cuba: Gonzalez says he is committed to “protect[ing] this country against any Communist conspiracy.” Sirica rolls his eyes in disbelief. Gonzalez claims not to know any specifics of the supposed connection between the Democrats and Castro’s Cuba, and says that he trusted the judgement of his superiors, Liddy and E. Howard Hunt. Fellow defendant Bernard Barker claims that none of them were paid for their actions: “These are not men that sell themselves for money,” Barker states. Barker confirms that he worked for Hunt, and says it was an honor for him to perform such a service. Washington Post reporters Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward later write, “The prosecutors’ assurances that everything would come out at the trial were fading into nothingness, as the defendants ducked into the haze of their guilty pleas.” The five who pled guilty are led off to jail before their bail and sentencing hearings. [[BERNSTEIN AND WOODWARD, 1974, PP. 233-235](#); [GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY AND MUSEUM, 7/3/2007](#)] In his Watergate grand jury testimony, White House counsel John Dean will say that President Nixon approved executive clemency for Hunt in December 1972 (see [January 10, 1973](#)). [[BERNSTEIN AND WOODWARD, 1974, PP. 312](#)] In 1974, Barker will write that while in jail, James McCord is their group leader, but they do not fully trust him, partly because he is “very friendly with Alfred Baldwin, and to us Baldwin was the first informer” (see [May 29, 1972](#)). Another disconnection between McCord and the Cubans is his lack of participation in the Ellsberg burglary (see [September 9, 1971](#)). [[HARPER’S, 10/1974](#)]

Entity Tags: [James McCord](#), [Bob Woodward](#), [Bernard Barker](#), [Alfred Baldwin](#), [Carl Bernstein](#), [G. Gordon Liddy](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#), [Virgilio Gonzalez](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#), [John Sirica](#), [John Dean](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



Mid-January-Late January 1973: Watergate Defendant Warns of Dire Consequences if White House Attempts to Blame CIA



During the trial of the “Watergate Seven” (see [January 8-11, 1973](#)), unbeknownst to the press, the prosecution, or Judge John Sirica, Watergate defendant James McCord has been quietly writing anonymous letters to his former supervisors and friends at the CIA. McCord’s letters warn them that the White House intends to blame the agency for the Watergate conspiracy. His last unsigned letter goes to former White House aide Jack Caulfield, now working for the IRS (see [December 21, 1972](#)). “If [CIA director Richard] Helms goes and the Watergate operation is laid at CIA’s feet, where it does not belong, every tree in the forest will fall,” he writes, apparently alluding to his intention to tell what he knows. “Just pass the message that if they want it to blow, they are on exactly the right course.” Caulfield did indeed pass the message to the White House. During the trial, Caulfield met with McCord, representing “the highest level of the White House,” promising money and executive

clemency for McCord if he will plead guilty and stay quiet. McCord does not take the deal (see [March 19-23, 1973](#)). [REEVES, 2001, PP. 561-562]

Entity Tags: [James McCord](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [John J. 'Jack' Caulfield](#), [John Sirica](#), [Richard Helms](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



March 19-23, 1973: McCord Letter Indicates Larger Cover-up of Watergate



Convicted Watergate burglar James McCord (see [January 30, 1973](#)) writes a letter to the presiding judge, John Sirica, in response to Sirica's requests for more information. McCord writes that he is "whipsawed in a variety of legalities"—he may be forced to testify to the Senate (see [February 7, 1973](#)), and he may be involved in future civil and other criminal proceedings. He also fears unspecified "retaliatory measures... against me, my family, and my friends should I disclose" his knowledge of the Watergate conspiracy. But McCord wants some leniency from Sirica in sentencing. McCord alleges that the five defendants who pled guilty did so under duress. The defendants committed perjury, McCord continues, and says that others are involved in the burglary. The burglary is definitely not a CIA operation, though "[t]he Cubans may have been misled" into thinking so. McCord writes, "I know for a fact that it was not," implying inside knowledge of at least some CIA workings. McCord requests to speak with Sirica privately in the judge's chambers, because he "cannot feel confident in talking with an FBI agent, in testifying before a Grand Jury whose US attorneys work for the Department of Justice, or in talking with other government representatives." In his discussion with Sirica, he makes the most explosive charge of all: he and his fellow defendants lied at the behest of former Attorney General John Mitchell, now the head of the Nixon re-election campaign, and current White House counsel John Dean. [BERNSTEIN AND WOODWARD, 1974, PP. 275-276; TIME, 1/7/1974; JAMES W. MCCORD, JR, 7/3/2007; GERALD R. FORD LIBRARY AND MUSEUM, 7/3/2007] It seems that McCord writes his letter to Sirica in retaliation for President Nixon's firing of CIA director Richard Helms, and the White House's attempts to pin the blame for the Watergate conspiracy on the CIA (see [December 21, 1972](#)).

Entity Tags: [Richard Helms](#), [James McCord](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [John Dean](#), [John Mitchell](#), [John Sirica](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



May 11, 1973: All Charges Against Pentagon Papers Leaker Dropped; Judge Blasts Governmental Misconduct



US District Court Judge W. M. Byrne, Jr dismisses all charges against “Pentagon Papers” leaker Daniel Ellsberg (see [March 1971](#)) and Ellsberg’s co-defendant, Anthony Russo. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 5/11/1973](#)] Byrne was shocked to learn that Watergate burglars G. Gordon Liddy and E. Howard Hunt had supervised the burglary of the office of Ellsberg’s psychiatrist (see [September 9, 1971](#)). The source of the information was probably White House counsel John Dean. [[BERNSTEIN AND WOODWARD, 1974, PP. 307](#)] Initially, government prosecutors had insisted that Ellsberg had never been wiretapped, but FBI director William Ruckelshaus found that Ellsberg had indeed been recorded, during a conversation with former Kissinger aide Morton Halperin, who had been wiretapped (see [June 19, 1972](#)). Ruckelshaus tells the court that Halperin had been monitored for 21 months. It is the first public acknowledgement that the Nixon administration had used wiretaps against its political enemies (see [June 27, 1973](#)). Additionally, the government had broken the law when it failed to disclose the wiretap to Ellsberg’s defense lawyers. [[BERNSTEIN AND WOODWARD, 1974, PP. 313](#)] Byrne cites “improper government conduct shielded so long from public view” and an array of governmental misconduct in dismissing the charges. “The conduct of the government has placed the case in such a posture that it precludes the fair, dispassionate resolution of these issues by a jury,” Byrne rules. Ellsberg and Russo were charged with theft, conspiracy, and fraud in the case. The government’s actions in attempting to prosecute Ellsberg and Russo “offended a sense of justice,” he says. One of the governmental actions that Byrne decries was the wiretapping of Ellsberg’s telephone conversations by the FBI in 1969 and 1970, and the subsequent destruction of the tapes and surveillance logs of those conversations. Byrne is also disturbed by the burglary of the offices of Ellsberg’s psychiatrist by government agents (see [June 30-July 1, 1971](#) and [September 9, 1971](#)), and the apparent involvement of the FBI and the CIA in the prosecution of the case at the “request of the White House.” Referring to the burglary, Byrne says, “We may have been given only a glimpse of what this special unit did.” After the trial, Ellsberg is asked if he would disclose the Pentagon documents again, and he replies, “I would do it tomorrow, if I could do it.” [[NEW YORK TIMES, 5/11/1973](#)]

Entity Tags: [Nixon administration](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Anthony Russo](#), [Daniel Ellsberg](#), [Morton H. Halperin](#), [W. M. Byrne, Jr](#), [US Department of Defense](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



[May 16, 1973: Watergate Conspiracy Far Deeper than Reported, Felt Tells Woodward; GOP ‘Mole’ on Watergate Committee](#)





Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein in the offices of the

Washington Post. [Source: Bettmann / Corbis] Washington Post reporter Bob Woodward writes a memo to his editor, Ben Bradlee, largely based on his meetings with his FBI background source, “Deep Throat” (FBI deputy director W. Mark Felt—see [May 31, 2005](#)). The memo is full of material that will soon come out in either Senate testimony or the media, but also contains some information that Woodward cannot sufficiently confirm to allow him to write a news report. One of the most explosive items Woodward writes is the line, “Dean talked with Senator Baker after Watergate committee formed and Baker is in the bag completely, reporting back directly to White House.” If this is true, then according to former White House counsel John Dean, now cooperating with the Senate investigation, then the ranking Republican senator on the committee, Howard Baker (R-TN), is a White House “mole,” providing information directly to the White House about the committee’s deliberations, discussions, and future plans. The memo also reports that President Nixon personally threatened Dean and that another White House aide, Jack Caulfield, threatened Watergate burglar James McCord by saying “your life is no good in this country if you don’t cooperate” with the White House efforts to keep the Watergate conspiracy secret. The list of “covert national and international things” done by the Nixon re-election campaign were begun by campaign chief John Mitchell: “The list is longer than anyone could imagine.” According to Felt, “[t]he covert activities involve the whole US intelligence community and are incredible.” Felt refuses to give Woodward “specifics because it is against the law. The cover-up had little to do with the Watergate, but was mainly to protect the covert operations.” Felt has also told Woodward that Nixon himself is being blackmailed by one of the Watergate burglars, E. Howard Hunt (see [June 20-21, 1972](#)), at a total cost of around \$1 million; the blackmail scheme involves just about every Watergate-connected figure in the White House. One reason the White House “cut loose” Mitchell was because Mitchell could not raise his portion of the money. Felt also told Woodward that senior CIA officials, including CIA director Richard Helms and deputy director Vernon Walters, are involved to some extent. Dean has explosive information that he is ready to reveal, but “plumber” G. Gordon Liddy is willing to go to jail or even die before revealing anything. Finally, rumors are running through the White House and the law enforcement and intelligence communities that Nixon is having “fits of ‘dangerous’ depression.” Some of this information will later be confirmed and reported, some of it will remain unconfirmed.

[[BERNSTEIN AND WOODWARD, 1974, PP. 317-321](#); [SPARTACUS SCHOOLNET, 8/2007](#)] Felt also warns Woodward that he, fellow Post reporter Carl Bernstein, and others at the newspaper may be under CIA surveillance and may even be in personal danger. The reporters confirm much of what Felt provided in a discussion with a Dean associate the next day. But both reporters and the Post editors worry that the new information might be part of an elaborate White House scheme to set up the reporters with false, discreditable information. In the following months, information elicited in the Senate committee hearings verifies everything Felt told Woodward, except the warning about being possibly wiretapped by the CIA. That is never verified.

[[BERNSTEIN AND WOODWARD, 1974, PP. 317-321](#)]

Entity Tags: [G. Gordon Liddy](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Carl Bernstein](#), [Bob Woodward](#), [Ben Bradlee](#), [Washington Post](#), [W. Mark Felt](#), [John Mitchell](#), [Senate Watergate Investigative Committee](#), [John J. 'Jack' Caulfield](#), [John Dean](#), [Howard Baker](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#), [Vernon A. Walters](#), [Richard Helms](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



August 1973: CIA Director Testifies about Nixon Administration's Domestic Surveillance Program



Former CIA director Richard Helms. [*Source: Search.com*]

Former CIA director Richard Helms indirectly confirms the involvement of the Nixon administration in his agency's illegal domestic surveillance operations during his testimony before the Senate Watergate investigative committee. Helms tells the committee that he was told by Nixon's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board that the CIA could "make a contribution" in domestic intelligence operations. "I pointed out to them very quickly that it could not, there was no way," Helms testifies. "But this was a matter that kept coming up in the context of feelers: Isn't there somebody else who can take on these things if the FBI isn't doing them as well as they should, as there are no other facilities?" (FBI director J. Edgar Hoover's opposition to the idea of spying on US citizens for Nixon's political purposes is well documented.) CIA officials say that, despite Helms's testimony, Helms began the domestic spying program as asked, in the beginning to investigate beliefs that the antiwar movement was permeated by foreign intelligence agents in 1969 and 1970. "It started as a foreign intelligence operation and it

bureaucratically grew,” one source says in 1974. “That’s really the answer.” The CIA “simply began using the same techniques for foreigners against new targets here.” The source will say James Angleton, the CIA’s director of counterintelligence (see [1973](#)), began recruiting double agents inside the antiwar and civil rights organizations, and sending in “ringers” to penetrate the groups and report back to the CIA. “It was like a little FBI operation.” Angleton reportedly believes that both the protest groups and the US media are riddled with Soviet intelligence agents, and acts accordingly to keep those groups and organizations under constant watch. One source will say Angleton has a “spook mentality.” Another source will say that Angleton’s counterintelligence bureau is “an independent power in the CIA. Even people in the agency aren’t allowed to deal directly with the CI [counterintelligence] people. Once you’re in it,

you’re in it for life.” [\[NEW YORK TIMES, 12/22/1974\]](#) 

Entity Tags: [Senate Watergate Investigative Committee](#), [Richard Helms](#), [J. Edgar Hoover](#), [James Angleton](#), [Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board](#)

Timeline Tags: [Civil Liberties](#), [Nixon and Watergate](#)



September 11, 1973: CIA Policies in Chile Lead to Assassination of Allende, Rise of Pinochet



CIA covert policies (at an expense of \$8 million from 1970-73) lead to a coup d’etat in which Allende is killed and Augusto Pinochet brought to power. [\[KORNBLUH, N.D.; TIME, 9/24/1973; US CONGRESS, 12/4/1975, PP. 148-160; BBC, 11/14/2000\]](#) After Allende’s assassination, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger will explain to Congress, “The issues are much too important for the Chilean voters to be left to decide for themselves.” [\[HUNT, 9/1/2009, PP. 8\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Henry A. Kissinger](#), [Augusto Pinochet](#), [Salvador Allende Gossens](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#), [US-Chile \(1964-2005\)](#)



September 24-25, 1973: Hunt Testifies before Watergate Committee





Howard Hunt during the Senate hearings. [Source: Bettmann / Corbis] Convicted

Watergate burglar E. Howard Hunt testifies before the Senate Watergate Committee. He has been adamant about remaining silent before the investigators, both when he was interrogated by the FBI and the Watergate grand jury prosecutors, and had inspired the four so-called “Cubans” among the burglars—Bernard Barker, Virgilio Gonzales, Eugenio Martinez, and Frank Sturgis—to also remain silent. The “Cubans” are aghast at Hunt’s open testimony in the Senate; among other things, he confirms that former Nixon White House and campaign aides John Mitchell, John Dean, and Jeb Magruder were primarily responsible for the covert actions of the Nixon campaign, and says that the CIA is heavily involved in domestic activities. Hunt’s fellow White House aide, G. Gordon Liddy, who has also remained obstinately silent, is overtly disgusted at Hunt. When Hunt is returned to his jail cell, Liddy asks the guards to transfer him to another block, away from Hunt, and says, “From now on, it’s every man for himself.” [VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY TELEVISION NEWS ARCHIVE, 9/25/1973; HARPER’S, 10/1974]

Entity Tags: [Frank Sturgis](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Bernard Barker](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [G. Gordon Liddy](#), [Senate Watergate Investigative Committee](#), [Eugenio Martinez](#), [Jeb S. Magruder](#), [Virgilio Gonzales](#), [John Dean](#), [John Mitchell](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)

 SHARE

1974: Future Counterterrorism Chief Joins CIA



Cofer Black joins the CIA. He will go on to be the chief of the CIA’s Counterterrorist Center when the 9/11 attacks occur. [BOSTON GLOBE, 11/2/2007]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Cofer Black](#)

Timeline Tags: [Misc Entries](#)

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June 4-5, 1974: Neoconservatives, Cold Warriors Begin Attacking Government Policies, Findings towards Soviet Union



A group of conservative strategic thinkers and policymakers attends a dinner party in Santa Monica, California. It is at this dinner party that the notorious “Team B” intelligence analysis team will be formed (see [Early 1976](#)). The cohost of the gathering is Albert Wohlstetter (see [1965](#)), the eminent neoconservative academic and policy analyst. The next day, the guests join fellow conservative ideologues at a Beverly Hills conference called “Arms Competition and Strategic Doctrine.” Wohlstetter uses selectively declassified intelligence data to accuse the Pentagon of systematically underestimating Soviet military might. Wohlstetter will soon publish his arguments in the Wall Street Journal, Foreign Policy magazine, and Strategic Review. In July, respected Cold War figure Paul Nitze will use Wohlstetter’s assertions in testimony before the House Armed Services Committee to accuse Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and the CIA of dangerously underestimating both the Soviet Union’s military strength and its intentions. Some old-line Cold Warriors—many of whom find themselves in sympathy with the upstart neoconservatives—begin attacking both the CIA’s intelligence reporting and the US-Soviet policy of detente. Author Craig Unger will write, “This was the beginning of a thirty-year fight against the national security apparatus in which the [neoconservatives] mastered the art of manipulating intelligence in order to implement hard-line, militaristic policies.” [[UNGER, 2007, PP. 48-49](#)]

Entity Tags: [US Department of Defense](#), [Paul Nitze](#), [House Armed Services Committee](#), [Craig Unger](#), [‘Team B’](#), [Henry A. Kissinger](#), [Albert Wohlstetter](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#), [Neoconservative Influence](#)



June 20-August 14, 1974: CIA, Hughes Corporation Attempts to Retrieve Sunken Soviet Submarine; Retrieval Risks Confrontation with Soviet Union





The Glomar Explorer. [Source: Federation of American

Scientists]The CIA attempts to carry out a secretive recovery, code-named Project Jennifer, of a Soviet Golf-II ballistic submarine that sunk in April 1968 in the Pacific Ocean. The submarine, carrying nuclear missiles, had sunk in over three miles of water. Analysts believe the submarine may have been a rogue on its way to attack Hawaii. The Pentagon is capable of carrying out the necessary deep-sea recovery effort itself, but President Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger decide instead to outsource the recovery to a private firm, Summa Corporation, headed by eccentric billionaire Howard Hughes. The cover story, which has Summa attempting to mine manganese from the ocean floor, is only preserved by CIA Director William Colby feeding Watergate leads to investigative journalist Seymour Hersh to keep Hersh from finding out more about the recovery mission (see [February 1975](#)). Summa has built an enormous recovery ship, the *Glomar Explorer*, for the mission, and the ship goes to the site. Kissinger badly wants the submarine for verification of arms control analyses of Soviet military and nuclear capabilities, as well as for his dealings with defense hawks such as Defense Secretary James Schlesinger. The *Glomar* has been on site since June, but for the last two weeks an armed Soviet trawler has been near the recovery vessel, taking photographs and making the civilian crew nervous. Many in Washington worry that the Soviets may try to board the *Glomar*. Kissinger feels that the “intelligence coup” of the recovered sub makes the possibility of a confrontation with the Soviets worthwhile. Ford, like Kissinger and the other senior officials informed of the operation, knows that the *Glomar* is completely vulnerable, but if President Ford sends US naval vessels to the site, the Soviets will do the same, thus escalating the situation. Worse, the closest Navy vessels are days away. This is Ford’s first test against the Soviets. Ford orders the *Glomar* to continue operations, but holds off sending naval vessels to the site just yet. [[WERTH, 2006, PP. 28-30](#); [FEDERATION OF AMERICAN SCIENTISTS, 9/14/2006](#)] The rescue attempt is unsuccessful; as the sub is being pulled to the surface, it breaks apart, irretrievably scattering missiles, computer components, secret codes, and everything else of real value. [[WERTH, 2006, PP. 56](#)] However, unconfirmed accounts say the CIA manages to retrieve a number of items, including three nuclear missiles, two nuclear torpedoes, the ship’s code machine, and various code books. [[FEDERATION OF AMERICAN SCIENTISTS, 9/14/2006](#)]

Entity Tags: [William Colby](#), [US Department of Defense](#), [Summa Corporation](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#), [Gerald Rudolph Ford, Jr.](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Seymour Hersh](#), [Howard Hughes](#), [Henry A. Kissinger](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#), [Nixon and Watergate](#)

July 5, 1974: Justice Department Issues Mixed Report on FBI Investigation of Watergate



The Justice Department's Office of Planning and Evaluation (OPE) submits a report on the role and actions of the FBI in the Watergate investigations. The report finds that, even with the attempts of former Attorneys General John Mitchell and Richard Kleindienst, White House aides John Dean and Jeb Magruder, and others to "mislead and thwart the Bureau's legitimate line of inquiry," and the "contrived covers" used to direct attention away from the White House, the FBI investigation was "the ultimate key to the solution of not only the Watergate break-in (see [2:30 a.m. June 17, 1972](#)) but the cover itself." The report continues: "There can be no question that the actions of former Attorneys General Mitchell and Kleindienst served to thwart and/or impede the Bureau's investigative effort. The actions of John W. Dean at the White House and Jeb S. Magruder at the Committee to Re-elect the President were purposefully designed to mislead and thwart the Bureau's legitimate line of inquiry. At every stage of the investigation there were contrived covers placed in order to mislead the investigators." The OPE notes the following problems in the investigation, and provides explanations of some:

- Providing information concerning ongoing investigations to the White House, and allowing Dean to actually sit in on interviews of White House personnel (see [June 22, 1972](#)).
- Failing to interview key members of CREEP, the Nixon re-election campaign organization, as well as allowing CREEP attorneys to sit in on interviews of CREEP employees and allowing those attorneys access to FBI investigative materials. The report says that the investigation initially focused on James McCord and E. Howard Hunt, and interviewed CREEP officials tied directly to them. The net was widened later on. However, the report acknowledges that many CREEP employees undoubtedly lied to FBI investigators, "most notably John Mitchell, Jeb Magruder, Bart Porter, Sally Harmony, and Maurice Stans." Porter and Magruder in particular "lied most convincingly." Another CREEP employee, Robert Reisner (Magruder's assistant), was not interviewed because Reisner successfully hid from FBI investigators. The FBI believes it was Reisner who cleaned out the "Operation Gemstone" files from Magruder's office (see [January 29, 1972](#) and [September 29, 1972](#)). Numerous other financial and other files were also destroyed after being requested by the FBI, most notably Alfred Baldwin's surveillance tapes and logs from the Democratic offices in the Watergate (see [May 29, 1972](#)). Many of these files were destroyed by G. Gordon Liddy. "It is apparent that most [CREEP] people in the summer of 1972 were quite willing to lie and/or tell us considerably less than the full truth," the report notes.
- An untenable delay in searching and securing Watergate burglar E. Howard Hunt's desk in the White House, putting the contents of that desk at risk of being removed, and the "[a]lleged activities by former Acting Director [L. Patrick] Gray to limit, contain, or obstruct FBI investigation of Watergate" (see [June 22, 1972](#)). Gray is known to have destroyed materials

from Hunt's desk given to him by Dean, and is known to have extensively interfered with the FBI's investigation (see [June 28-29, 1972](#) and [Late December 1972](#)). The report notes that while it cannot find specific evidence that Gray broke any laws in his attempts to impede the FBI's investigation into the Watergate conspiracy, it is clear that Gray cooperated with the White House, specifically through Dean, to ensure that the White House was always aware of what avenues of investigation were being pursued. The OPE says that Gray's destruction of files from Hunt's safe did not necessarily impede the FBI's investigation, because it has no way of knowing what was in those files. The report says that it is unfortunate that "many people make no distinction between the FBI's actions and Mr. Gray's actions."

- Failure to interview key individuals with knowledge of the suspicious monies found in the burglars' bank accounts.

- Failing to secure and execute search warrants for the burglars' homes, automobiles, and offices. The OPE says that many of those issuing this criticism "should know better," and claims that the FBI agents involved did their level best to obtain search warrants within the bounds of the law. The report notes that after the burglary, the assistant district attorney prosecuting the case, Earl Silbert, did not believe there was probable cause to search burglar James McCord's home or office until after July 10, 1972, when Baldwin told the FBI that he had taken surveillance equipment to McCord's home (see [June 17, 1972](#)). Even then, Silbert decided that because of the amount of time—23 days—that had expired, a search warrant would have been pointless.

- Failing to identify and interview a number of people listed in the burglars' address books. The OPE report notes that the decision to interview far less than half of the names in the books was made by FBI agents in the Miami field office, and due to the "fast moving extensive investigation which was then being conducted," the decision to only track down a selected few from the books was right and proper. The report notes that subsequent interviews by reporters of some of the people in the address books elicited no new information. The report also notes that Gray refused to countenance interviews of the remaining subjects in the address book while the trial of the seven burglars (see [January 8-11, 1973](#)) was underway.

- Failing to find and remove a surveillance device from the Democratic National Committee headquarters (see [September 13, 1972](#)). The OPE calls this failure "inexplicable."

- Failure to thoroughly investigate CREEP agent Donald Segretti (see [June 27, 1971, and Beyond](#)) and other CREEP operatives. The OPE finds that because Segretti was initially uncooperative with FBI investigators, and because an "extensive investigation" turned up nothing to connect Segretti with the Watergate conspiracy, the agents chose not to continue looking into Segretti's actions. Only after press reports named Segretti as part of a massive, White House-directed attempt to subvert the elections process (see [October 7, 1972](#)) did the FBI discuss reopening its investigation into Segretti. After reviewing its information, the FBI decided again not to bother with Segretti. The OPE finds that the decision was valid, because Segretti had not apparently broken any federal laws, and the FBI does not conduct violations of election laws unless specifically requested to do so by the Justice Department. The report also says that politics were a concern: by opening a large, extensive investigation into the Nixon campaign's "dirty tricks," that investigation might have impacted the upcoming


presidential elections.

- Media leaks from within the FBI concerning key details about the investigation (see [May 31, 2005](#)). The report finds no evidence to pin the blame for the leaks on any particular individual. The report notes that New York Times reporter John Crewdson seemed to have unwarranted access to FBI documents and files, but says it has turned that matter over to another agency inside the bureau.

- Failing to interview, or adequately interview, key White House officials such as H. R. Haldeman, Charles Colson, Dwight Chapin, and others. The report justifies the decision not to interview Haldeman because the FBI had no information that Haldeman had any knowledge of, or involvement in, the burglary itself.

- “Alleged attempt on part of Department of Justice officials to limit, contain, or obstruct FBI investigation.” The report is particularly critical of Kleindienst’s concealment of his contact with Liddy about the burglary (see [June 17, 1972](#)).

- “Alleged attempt by CIA officials to interfere, contain, or impede FBI Watergate investigation.” The report notes that during the Senate Watergate Committee hearings, Republican co-chairman Howard Baker (R-TN) tried repeatedly to assert that the CIA was behind the burglary. The report calls Baker’s theory “intriguing” but says no evidence of CIA involvement on any operational level was ever found. The report notes that there is still no explanation for the discussions regarding the CIA paying the burglars (see [June 26-29, 1972](#)), or the CIA’s involvement with Hunt before the burglary—loaning him cameras, providing him with materials for a disguise, and helping Hunt get film from the first burglary developed. According to the report, Gray stopped the FBI from pursuing these leads. The FBI report says that the CIA involvement apparently had nothing to do with the Watergate burglary, but was more in support of Hunt’s activities with the Ellsberg break-in (see [September 9, 1971](#)).

- “Alleged activities on part of White House officials to limit, contain, or obstruct FBI Watergate investigation (Dean, Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Colson, et cetera).” The report notes, “There is absolutely no question but that the president’s most senior associates at the White House conspired with great success for nine months to obstruct our investigation.” The report says it was “common knowledge” throughout the investigation that the White House was paying only “lip service” to investigators’ requests for honest, complete answers; the report cites Dean as a specific offender.  [\[O.T. JACOBSON, 7/5/1974 \]](#)

Entity Tags: [Donald Segretti](#), [Richard Kleindienst](#), [Office of Planning and Evaluation \(FBI\)](#), [Nixon administration](#), [Robert Reisner](#), [Sally Harmony](#), [Democratic National Committee](#), [US Department of Justice](#), [Alfred Baldwin](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Charles Colson](#), [Maurice Stans](#), [L. Patrick Gray](#), [Senate Watergate Investigative Committee](#), [John Dean](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Committee to Re-elect the President](#), [Earl Silbert](#), [Dwight Chapin](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#), [G. Gordon Liddy](#), [John Mitchell](#), [Howard Baker](#), [Herbert L. Porter](#), [James McCord](#), [H.R. Haldeman](#), [John Crewdson](#), [Jeb S. Magruder](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



August 8, 1974: Bill Clinton Says Nixon Should Resign



Law professor and House candidate Bill Clinton. [Source: *About (.com)*] Bill Clinton, a University of Arkansas law professor and candidate for the House of Representatives, says his opponent, John Paul Hammerschmidt (R-AR), is wrong in opposing President Nixon's resignation, and is wrong to question whether Nixon committed impeachable offenses. Hammerschmidt now says the House should begin digging into Nixon's alleged crimes, but Clinton retorts, "I don't see how in the world he can say that when a year ago he was saying we should forget about it and he voted against giving funds for the House Judiciary Committee staff." Clinton says: "I think it's plain that the president should resign and spare the country the agony of this impeachment and removal proceeding. I think the country could be spared a lot of agony and the government could worry about inflation and a lot of other problems if he'd go on and resign." There is "no question that an admission of making false statements to government officials and interfering with the FBI and the CIA is an impeachable offense," Clinton says. [ARKANSAS GAZETTE, 8/8/1974]

Entity Tags: [William Jefferson \("Bill"\) Clinton](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [John Paul Hammerschmidt](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#), [House Judiciary Committee](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



October 1974: Watergate Burglar Says He Never Asked for 'Hush Money,' but Simply What Any Clandestine Intelligence Operative Would Expect





E. Howard Hunt. [Source: Michael Brennan / Corbis] Convicted Watergate

burglar and former CIA operative E. Howard Hunt (see [2:30 a.m. June 17, 1972](#)) denies that his requests for money from the Nixon White House ever amounted to blackmail or “hush money” (see [Mid-November, 1972](#) and [January 8-9, 1973](#)). Writing in Harper’s magazine, Hunt says his situation was comparable to a CIA agent caught and incarcerated in a foreign country. Those agents, he says, are entitled to expect that the government will financially support their families and continue to pay their salaries until the agents are released.

Comparisons to CIA Agents Captured by Foreign Governments - He compares himself to American pilot Francis Gary Powers, whose U-2 surveillance plane was shot down over the Soviet Union during the Eisenhower administration, and who was financially supported by the government until his release. Another agent, John Downey, was kept prisoner for 20 years by China; when he returned, Hunt notes, he was paid twenty years’ worth of back salary. Hunt says that his situation is no different, and that not only was his efforts to secure large sums of cash from the Nixon administration understandable in the context of these captured intelligence agents, but something that should have been expected and handled without comment. “It was this time-honored understanding that for a time buoyed the hopes of the seven men who were indicted—and in two cases tried—for surreptitious entry into Democratic National Headquarters at the Watergate,” he writes. “That their attorneys’ fees were partially paid, that family living allowances were provided—and that these support funds were delivered by clandestine means—was to be expected.”

Dropoff of White House Support - He names then-Nixon campaign chairman John Mitchell, Mitchell’s deputy Jeb Magruder, and then-White House counsel John Dean as the “official sponsors of their project.” The fact that the White House and the CIA paid on Hunt’s demands “clearly indicates,” Hunt claims, “a perception on the Haldeman-Ehrlichman level of the appropriateness of clandestine support.” (H. R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman were then-President Nixon’s top aides and closest confidantes.) It is only because “[a]s time passed, however, the burden of providing moneys was assumed by less sophisticated personnel” that Hunt’s “urgent requests for overdue support began to be interpreted as threats, i.e. ‘blackmail.’” He says that Dean and perhaps Nixon “misconstrued” the situation. Since there was no question that the “Watergate Seven” would be granted immunity from prosecution, “there was no question of buying silence, of suppressing the truth with ‘hush money.’” He concludes: “The Watergate Seven understood the tradition of clandestine support. Tragically for the nation, not all the president’s men were equally aware.” [HARPER’S, 10/1974]

Conflict with Other Versions of Events - Hunt’s reconstruction of events directly clashes with

others' recollections and interpretations, as well as the facts themselves (see [June 20-21, 1972](#), [June 26-29, 1972](#), [June 29, 1972](#), [July 7, 1972](#), [July 25, 1972](#), [August 29, 1972](#), [December 8, 1972](#), [January 10, 1973](#), [January 10, 1973](#), [March 13, 1973](#), [March 21, 1973](#), [March 21, 1973](#), and [July 5, 1974](#)).

Entity Tags: [Francis Gary Powers](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Eisenhower administration](#), [H.R. Haldeman](#), [Jeb S. Magruder](#), [John Mitchell](#), [John Downey](#), [John Dean](#), [Nixon administration](#), [John Ehrlichman](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



December 21, 1974: New York Times Reveals CIA Spied on US Citizens for Decades



HUGE C.I.A. OPERATION REPORTED IN U.S. AGAINST ANTIWAR FORCES, OTHER DISSIDENTS IN NIXON YEARS



1974 New York Times headline. [Source: New York Times]The

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has repeatedly, and illegally, spied on US citizens for years, reveals investigative journalist Seymour Hersh in a landmark report for the New York Times. Such operations are direct violations of the CIA's charter and the law, both of which prohibit the CIA from operating inside the United States. Apparently operating under orders from Nixon officials, the CIA has conducted electronic and personal surveillance on over 10,000 US citizens, as part of an operation reporting directly to then-CIA Director Richard Helms. In an internal review in 1973, Helms's successor, James Schlesinger, also found dozens of instances of illegal CIA surveillance operations against US citizens both past and present (see [1973](#)). Many Washington insiders wonder if the revelation of the CIA surveillance operations tie in to the June 17, 1972 break-in of Democratic headquarters at Washington's Watergate Hotel by five burglars with CIA ties. Those speculations were given credence by Helms's protests during the Congressional Watergate hearings that the CIA had been "duped" into taking part in the Watergate break-in by White House officials.

Program Beginnings In Dispute - One official believes that the program, a successor to the routine domestic spying operations during the 1950s and 1960s, was sparked by what he calls

“Nixon’s antiwar hysteria.” Helms himself indirectly confirmed the involvement of the Nixon White House, during his August 1973 testimony before the Senate Watergate investigative committee (see [August 1973](#)).

Special Operations Carried Out Surveillance - The domestic spying was carried out, sources say, by one of the most secretive units in CI, the special operations branch, whose employees carry out wiretaps, break-ins, and burglaries as authorized by their superiors. “That’s really the deep-snow section,” says one high-level intelligence expert. The liaison between the special operations unit and Helms was Richard Ober, a longtime CI official. “Ober had unique and very confidential access to Helms,” says a former CIA official. “I always assumed he was mucking about with Americans who were abroad and then would come back, people like the Black Panthers.” After the program was revealed in 1973 by Schlesinger, Ober was abruptly transferred to the National Security Council. He wasn’t fired because, says one source, he was “too embarrassing, too hot.” Angleton denies any wrongdoing.

Supposition That Civil Rights Movement 'Riddled' With Foreign Spies - Moscow, who relayed information about violent underground protesters during the height of the antiwar movement, says that black militants in the US were trained by North Koreans, and says that both Yasser Arafat, of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and the KGB were involved to some extent in the antiwar movement, a characterization disputed by former FBI officials as based on worthless intelligence from overseas. For Angleton to make such rash accusations is, according to one member of Congress, “even a better story than the domestic spying.” A former CIA official involved in the 1969-70 studies by the agency on foreign involvement in the antiwar movement says that Angleton believes foreign agents are indeed involved in antiwar and civil rights organizations, “but he doesn’t know what he’s talking about.”

'Cesspool' of Illegality Distressed Schlesinger - According to one of Schlesinger’s former CIA associates, Schlesinger was distressed at the operations. “He found himself in a cesspool,” says the associate. “He was having a grenade blowing up in his face every time he turned around.” Schlesinger, who stayed at the helm of the CIA for only six months before becoming secretary of defense, informed the Department of Justice (DOJ) about the Watergate break-in, as well as another operation by the so-called “plumbers,” their burglary of Daniel Ellsberg’s psychiatrist’s office after Ellsberg released the “Pentagon Papers” to the press. Schlesinger began a round of reforms of the CIA, reforms that have been continued to a lesser degree by Colby. (Some reports suggest that CIA officials shredded potentially incriminating documents after Schlesinger began his reform efforts, but this is not known for sure.) Intelligence officials confirm that the spying did take place, but, as one official says, “Anything that we did was in the context of foreign counterintelligence and it was focused at foreign intelligence and foreign intelligence problems.”

'Huston Plan' - But the official also confirms that part of the illegal surveillance was carried out as part of the so-called “Huston plan,” an operation named for former White House aide Tom Charles Huston (see [July 26-27, 1970](#)) that used electronic and physical surveillance, along with break-ins and burglaries, to counter antiwar and civil rights protests, “fomented,” as Nixon believed, by so-called black extremists. Nixon and other White House officials have long denied that the Huston plan was ever implemented. “[O]bviously,” says one government intelligence official, the CIA’s decision to create and maintain dossiers on US citizens “got a push at that time....The problem was that it was handled in a very spooky way. If you’re an

agent in Paris and you're asked to find out whether Jane Fonda is being manipulated by foreign intelligence services, you've got to ask yourself who is the real target. Is it the foreign intelligence services or Jane Fonda?" Huston himself denies that the program was ever intended to operate within the United States, and implies that the CIA was operating independently of the White House. Government officials try to justify the surveillance program by citing the "gray areas" in the law that allows US intelligence agencies to encroach on what, by law, is the FBI's bailiwick—domestic surveillance of criminal activities—when a US citizen may have been approached by foreign intelligence agents. And at least one senior CIA official says that the CIA has the right to engage in such activities because of the need to protect intelligence sources and keep secrets from being revealed.

Surveillance Program Blatant Violation of Law - But many experts on national security law say the CIA program is a violation of the 1947 law prohibiting domestic surveillance by the CIA and other intelligence agencies. Vanderbilt University professor Henry Howe Ransom, a leading expert on the CIA, says the 1947 statute is a "clear prohibition against any internal security functions under any circumstances." Ransom says that when Congress enacted the law, it intended to avoid any possibility of police-state tactics by US intelligence agencies; Ransom quotes one Congressman as saying, "We don't want a Gestapo." Interestingly, during his 1973 confirmation hearings, CIA Director Colby said he believed the same thing, that the CIA has no business conducting domestic surveillance for any purpose at any time: "I really see less of a gray area [than Helms] in that regard. I believe that there is really no authority under that act that can be used." Even high-level government officials were not aware of the CIA's domestic spying program until very recently. "Counterintelligence!" exclaimed one Justice Department official upon learning some details of the program. "They're not supposed to have any counterintelligence in this country. Oh my God. Oh my God." A former FBI counterterrorism official says he was angry upon learning of the program. "[The FBI] had an agreement with them that they weren't to do anything unless they checked with us. They double-crossed me all along." Many feel that the program stems, in some regards, from the long-standing mistrust between the CIA and the FBI. How many unsolved burglaries and other crimes can be laid at the feet of the CIA and its domestic spying operation is unclear. In 1974, Rolling Stone magazine listed a number of unsolved burglaries that its editors felt might be connected with the CIA. And Senator Howard Baker (R-TN), the vice chairman of the Senate Watergate investigative committee, has alluded to mysterious links between the CIA and the Nixon White House. On June 23, 1972, Nixon told his aide, H.R. Haldeman, "Well, we protected Helms from a hell of a lot of things." [\[NEW YORK TIMES, 12/22/1974\]](#)

Entity Tags: [US Department of Justice](#), [William Colby](#), [Seymour Hersh](#), [Rolling Stone](#), [Richard Ober](#), [Tom Charles Huston](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#), [Daniel Ellsberg](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Richard Helms](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Black Panthers](#), [Howard Baker](#), [James Angleton](#), [New York Times](#), [H.R. Haldeman](#), [KGB](#), [James R. Schlesinger](#), [Jane Fonda](#), [Henry Howe Ransom](#)

Timeline Tags: [Civil Liberties](#), [Nixon and Watergate](#)



Early 1975: Vice President Rockefeller Investigates CIA; Blocks Democrats from Getting Information for Better Investigation



Vice President Nelson Rockefeller (see [December 19, 1974 and After](#)) is instrumental in keeping Senate Democrats from finding out too much about the intelligence community's excesses. When the New York Times reveals the existence of a decades-old illegal domestic surveillance program run by the CIA (see [December 21, 1974](#)), President Ford heads off calls from Democrats to investigate the program by appointing the "Rockefeller Commission" to investigate in the Democrats' stead. Senate Democrats, unimpressed with the idea, create the Church Committee to investigate the intelligence community (see [April, 1976](#)). Rockefeller is adept at keeping critical documents out of the hands of the Church Committee and the press. When Senator Frank Church asks for materials from the White House, he is told that the Rockefeller Commission has them; when he asks Rockefeller for the papers, he is told that he cannot have them because only the president can authorize access. One Church aide later calls Rockefeller "absolutely brilliant" in denying them access in a friendly manner. "He winked and smiled and said, 'Gee, I want to help you but, of course I can't—not until we've finished our work and the president approves it,'" the aide recalls. Senator John Tower (R-TX), the vice chairman of the committee, will later reflect, "We were very skillfully finessed." But even Rockefeller, who has his own history of involvement with the CIA, is taken aback at the excesses of the CIA, particularly its history of assassinating foreign leaders. Rockefeller will eventually turn that information over to the Church Committee, giving that body some of the most explosive evidence as yet made public against the agency. [[US SENATE, 7/7/2007](#)]

Entity Tags: [Gerald Rudolph Ford, Jr.](#), ['Rockefeller Commission'](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Church Committee](#), [Frank Church](#), [John Tower](#), [Nelson Rockefeller](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



February 1975: Media Reports on 'Project Jennifer'; New York Times Sat on Story



The Los Angeles Times prints the first story on the apparently failed Project Jennifer, the CIA's 1974 attempt to raise a sunken Soviet submarine (see [June 20-August 14, 1974](#)). [[FEDERATION OF AMERICAN SCIENTISTS, 9/14/2006](#)] The New York Times's Seymour Hersh had learned of the secret project in mid-1974, and had prepared a story for publication while it was still underway, but the CIA persuaded the newspaper not to publish the story. After the Los Angeles Times prints its piece, the New York Times publishes the Hersh story, with a lengthy explanation of the agreement not to publish the story almost a year before. [[SALON, 12/22/2005](#)]

Entity Tags: [New York Times](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Project Jennifer](#), [Seymour Hersh](#), [Los Angeles Times](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#)



April 18, 1975: CIA Manager Says Agency Does Not Spy on Americans



Testifying before the Rockefeller Commission on the CIA's activities in the US, the CIA's Assistant Deputy Director for Operations David Blee indicates the agency does not spy on Americans. "We have always said that we did not operate that way [spying on the US's own citizens], but that we went about it much more inefficiently, which is by penetrating the foreign government or foreign subversive operation and finding if that led us to an American, rather than trying to see what Americans were doing, and seeing if they were in touch with those groups," he tells the commission. "In this, we operate very differently from practically all of the other security and intelligence services, which typically watch their own citizens to see what they are doing." [\[US CONGRESS, 4/13/1976\]](#)

Entity Tags: ['Rockefeller Commission'](#), [David Blee](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Civil Liberties](#), [Misc Entries](#)



November 1975: CIA Instructs Dutch Not to Arrest A. Q. Khan over Passage of Nuclear Secrets; Khan Flees to Pakistan



Ruud Lubbers. *[Source: ru(.nl)]*After the BVD, a Dutch intelligence agency, informs the CIA that it intends to arrest A. Q. Khan over the passage of nuclear secrets to Pakistan (see [Mid-October 1975](#)), the CIA tells the Dutch to let Khan continue with his activities. Former Dutch Minister of Economic Affairs Ruud Lubbers will say, "The Americans wished to

follow and watch Khan to get more information.” Lubbers questions this and the CIA tells him to block Khan’s access to the secrets, which the Dutch do by promoting him to a job where he no longer has access to sensitive data from the uranium enrichment company Urenco. Lubbers will later suggest that the real reason the US does not want Khan arrested is because of its interest in helping Pakistan, an enemy of Soviet-leaning India. Because Khan no longer has access to the sensitive data after his promotion, the CIA cannot find out anything by monitoring him. In addition, the promotion alerts Khan to the fact he may be under surveillance, and he flees to Pakistan in mid-December. Authors David Armstrong and Joe Trento will later comment: “What no one yet realized was that Khan had already absconded with the plans for almost every centrifuge on Urenco’s drawing board, including the all-important G-2 [centrifuge]. It would prove to be one of the greatest nuclear heists of all time.” [\[ARMSTRONG AND TRENTO, 2007, PP. 54\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Ruud Lubbers](#), [Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Abdul Qadeer Khan](#)

Timeline Tags: [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)



Before November 4, 1975: George H. W. Bush Named CIA Director to Suit Rumsfeld’s Political Aspirations



In preparation for the upcoming “Halloween Massacre” (see [November 4, 1975 and After](#)), Chief of Staff Donald Rumsfeld, who has what he thinks are secret ambitions for the presidency (see [September 21, 1974 and After](#)), convinces President Ford to name George H. W. Bush as CIA director because of that position’s political liabilities. When Bush accepts the position, Rumsfeld says this will “sink the son of a b_tch for good.” During his Senate confirmation hearings, Bush will publicly be asked to promise that he won’t be Ford’s running mate in 1976. “Bush thought that was a total violation of his Constitutional rights,” Pete Seeley, who will become Bush’s press secretary in 1981, will recall. “He was not happy. But he was always a team player and he did as he was asked.” Bush always believes Rumsfeld planted this question. Bush will never forgive Rumsfeld for trying to sabotage his political aspirations. [\[UNGER, 2007, PP. 52-53\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Donald Rumsfeld](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Gerald Rudolph Ford, Jr](#)

Timeline Tags: [Neoconservative Influence](#)



November 20, 1975: Congress Finds at Least Eight CIA Plots to Assassinate Castro



The Senate Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations releases its report, “Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders,” which finds “concrete evidence of at least eight plots involving the CIA to assassinate Fidel Castro from 1960 to 1965.” [[US CONGRESS, 12/18/1975](#)]

Entity Tags: [Fidel Castro](#), [US Congress](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Cuba \(1959-2005\)](#)

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(1976): CIA Manager Warns US Knows Little about Shah of Iran



CIA manager David Blee files a report warning others at the agency about the situation in Iran. Blee, who has some experience in Middle Eastern affairs (see [\(1967\)](#)), cautions that the US knows little about Iranian leader Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, in particular his stockpiling of military equipment. [[LOS ANGELES TIMES, 8/18/2000](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [David Blee](#)

Timeline Tags: [US confrontation with Iran](#), [US International Relations](#), [Misc Entries](#)

 SHARE

January 29, 1976: Pike Committee Report Criticizing US Intelligence Agencies Is Suppressed



Representative Otis Pike. [*Source: Spartacus Educational*]A House of Representatives committee, popularly known as the Pike Committee after its chairman, Otis Pike (D-NY), investigates questionable US intelligence activities. The committee operates in tandem with the Senate’s investigation of US intelligence activities, the Church Committee (see [April,](#)

[1976](#)). Pike, a decorated World War II veteran, runs a more aggressive—some say partisan—investigation than the more deliberate and politically balanced Church Committee, and receives even less cooperation from the White House than does the Church investigation. After a contentious year-long investigation marred by inflammatory accusations and charges from both sides, Pike refuses demands from the CIA to redact huge portions of the report, resulting in an accusation from CIA legal counsel Mitchell Rogovin that the report is an “unrelenting indictment couched in biased, pejorative and factually erroneous terms.” Rogovin also tells the committee’s staff director, Searle Field, “Pike will pay for this, you wait and see.... There will be a political retaliation.... We will destroy him for this.” (It is hard to know exactly what retaliation will be carried out against Pike, who will resign from Congress in 1978.)

Battle to Release Report - On January 23, 1976, the investigative committee voted along party lines to release the report unredacted, sparking a tremendous outcry among Republicans, who are joined by the White House and CIA Director William Colby in an effort to suppress the report altogether. On January 26, the committee’s ranking Republican, Robert McCorty, makes a speech saying that the report, if released, would endanger national security. On January 29, the House votes 246 to 124 not to release the report until it “has been certified by the President as not containing information which would adversely affect the intelligence activities of the CIA.” A furious Pike retorts, “The House just voted not to release a document it had not read. Our committee voted to release a document it had read.” Pike threatens not to release the report at all because “a report on the CIA in which the CIA would do the final rewrite would be a lie.” The report will never be released, though large sections of it will be leaked within days to reporter Daniel Schorr of the Village Voice, and printed in that newspaper. Schorr himself will be suspended from his position with CBS News and investigated by the House Ethics Committee (Schorr will refuse to disclose his source, and the committee will eventually decide, on a 6-5 vote, not to bring contempt of Congress charges against him). [[SPARTACUS EDUCATIONAL, 2/16/2006](#)] The New York Times will follow suit and print large portions of the report as well. The committee was led by liberal Democrats such as Pike and Ron Dellums (D-CA), who said even before the committee first met, “I think this committee ought to come down hard and clear on the side of stopping any intelligence agency in this country from utilizing, corrupting, and prostituting the media, the church, and our educational system.” The entire investigation is marred by a lack of cooperation from the White House and the CIA. [[GERALD K. HAINES, 1/20/2003](#)]

Final Draft Accuses White House, CIA of 'Stonewalling,' Deception - The final draft of the report says that the cooperation from both entities was “virtually nonexistent,” and accuses both of practicing “foot dragging, stonewalling, and deception” in their responses to committee requests for information. CIA archivist and historian Gerald Haines will later write that the committee was thoroughly deceived by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who officially cooperated with the committee but, according to Haines, actually “worked hard to undermine its investigations and to stonewall the release of documents to it.” [[SPARTACUS EDUCATIONAL, 2/16/2006](#)] The final report accuses White House officials of only releasing the information it wanted to provide and ignoring other requests entirely. One committee member says that trying to get information out of Colby and other CIA officials was like “pulling teeth.” For his part, Colby considers Pike a “jackass” and calls his staff “a ragtag,

immature, and publicity-seeking group.” The committee is particularly unsuccessful in obtaining information about the CIA’s budget and expenditures, and in its final report, observes that oversight of the CIA budget is virtually nonexistent. Its report is harsh in its judgments of the CIA’s effectiveness in a number of foreign conflicts, including the 1973 Mideast war, the 1968 Tet offensive in Vietnam, the 1974 coups in Cyprus and Portugal, the 1974 testing of a nuclear device by India, and the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union, all of which the CIA either got wrong or failed to predict. The CIA absolutely refused to provide any real information to either committee about its involvement in, among other foreign escapades, its attempt to influence the 1972 elections in Italy, covert actions in Angola, and covert aid to Iraqi Kurds from 1972 through 1975. The committee found that covert actions “were irregularly approved, sloppily implemented, and, at times, had been forced on a reluctant CIA by the President and his national security advisers.” Indeed, the Pike Committee’s final report lays more blame on the White House than the CIA for its illegal actions, with Pike noting that “the CIA does not go galloping off conducting operations by itself.... The major things which are done are not done unilaterally by the CIA without approval from higher up the line.... We did find evidence, upon evidence, upon evidence where the CIA said: ‘No, don’t do it.’ The State Department or the White House said, ‘We’re going to do it.’ The CIA was much more professional and had a far deeper reading on the down-the-road implications of some immediately popular act than the executive branch or administration officials.... The CIA never did anything the White House didn’t want. Sometimes they didn’t want to do what they did.” [GERALD K. HAINES, 1/20/2003]

Entity Tags: [William Colby](#), [Village Voice](#), [Otis G. Pike](#), [Robert McCorty](#), [Pike Committee](#), [US Department of State](#), [New York Times](#), [Mitchell Rogovin](#), [Ron Dellums](#), [House Ethics Committee](#), [Gerald Haines](#), [Church Committee](#), [Searle Field](#), [Daniel Schorr](#), [Henry A. Kissinger](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [CBS News](#)

Timeline Tags: [Civil Liberties](#)



February 28, 1976: Ford Limits US Intelligence Agencies’ Abilities to Spy on US Citizens, Bans Political Assassinations



President Ford issues Executive Order 11905, which limits the power of the CIA, the NSA, and military intelligence to engage in surveillance of US citizens. Perhaps its most well-known provision is a total ban on “political assassinations” by US government personnel. [GERALD R. FORD, 2/18/1976; ROBERTS, 2008, PP. 38] The provision is sparked by the Church Commission’s finding (see [April, 1976](#)) that assassination is “unacceptable in our society,” and a political embarrassment, especially botched attempts such as the CIA’s efforts to kill Cuba’s Fidel Castro. [GRANT J. LILLY, 4/6/2006]

Entity Tags: [National Security Agency](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Church Commission](#), [Gerald Rudolph Ford, Jr](#)

Timeline Tags: [Civil Liberties](#)

EVENTS

Page 2 of 19 (1807 events (use filters to narrow search))

[previous](#) | [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#), [12](#), [13](#), [14](#), [15](#), [16](#), [17](#), [18](#), [19](#) | [next](#)

April, 1976: Church Committee Reports on Domestic Surveillance and Other Illegal Activities by US Intelligence Agencies





Senator Frank Church. [Source: Wally McNamee / Corbis]

A Senate committee tasked to investigate the activities of US intelligence organizations finds a plethora of abuses and criminal behaviors, and recommends strict legal restraints and firm Congressional oversight. The “Church Committee,” chaired by Senator Frank Church (D-ID), a former Army intelligence officer with a strong understanding of the necessity for intelligence-gathering, notes in its final report that the CIA in particular had been overly cooperative with the Nixon administration in spying on US citizens for political purposes (see [December 21, 1974](#)); US intelligence agencies had also gone beyond the law in assassination attempts on foreign government officials in, among other places, Africa, Latin America, and Vietnam. Church himself accused the CIA of providing the White House with what, in essence, is a “private army,” outside of Congressional oversight and control, and called the CIA a “rogue elephant rampaging out of control.” The committee will reveal the existence of hitherto-unsuspected operations such as HT Lingual, which had CIA agents secretly opening and reading US citizens’ international mail, and other operations which included secret, unauthorized wiretaps, dossier compilations, and even medical experiments. For himself, Church, the former intelligence officer, concluded that the CIA should conduct covert operations only “in a national emergency or in cases where intervention is clearly in tune with our traditional principles,” and restrain the CIA from intervening in the affairs of third-world nations without oversight or consequence. CIA director William Colby is somewhat of an unlikely ally to Church; although he does not fully cooperate with either the Church or Pike commissions, he feels that the CIA’s image is badly in need of rehabilitation. Indeed, Colby later writes, “I believed that Congress was within its constitutional rights to undertake a long-overdue and thoroughgoing review of the agency and the intelligence community. I did not share the view that intelligence was solely a function of the Executive Branch and must be protected from Congressional prying. Quite the contrary.” Conservatives later blame the Church Commission for “betray[ing] CIA agents and operations,” in the words of American Spectator editor R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr, referencing the 1975 assassination of CIA station chief Richard Welch in Greece. The chief counsel of the Church Committee accuses CIA defenders and other conservatives of “danc[ing] on the grave of Richard Welch in the most cynical way.” It is documented fact that the Church Commission exposed no agents and no operations, and compromised no sources; even Colby’s successor, George H.W. Bush, later admits that Welch’s death had nothing to do with the Church Committee. (In 1980, Church will lose re-election to the Senate in part because of accusations of his committee’s responsibility for Welch’s death by his Republican opponent, Jim McClure.) [AMERICAN PROSPECT, 11/5/2001](#); [HISTORY](#)

[MATTERS ARCHIVE, 3/27/2002](#); [ASSASSINATION ARCHIVES AND RESEARCH CENTER, 11/23/2002](#)]

Final Report Excoriates CIA - The Committee's final report concludes, "Domestic intelligence activity has threatened and undermined the Constitutional rights of Americans to free speech, association and privacy. It has done so primarily because the Constitutional system for checking abuse of power has not been applied." The report is particularly critical of the CIA's successful, and clandestine, manipulation of the US media. It observes: "The CIA currently maintains a network of several hundred foreign individuals around the world who provide intelligence for the CIA and at times attempt to influence opinion through the use of covert propaganda. These individuals provide the CIA with direct access to a large number of newspapers and periodicals, scores of press services and news agencies, radio and television stations, commercial book publishers, and other foreign media outlets." The report identifies over 50 US journalists directly employed by the CIA, along with many others who were affiliated and paid by the CIA, and reveals the CIA's policy to have "their" journalists and authors publish CIA-approved information, and disinformation, overseas in order to get that material disseminated in the United States. The report quotes the CIA's Chief of the Covert Action Staff as writing, "Get books published or distributed abroad without revealing any US influence, by covertly subsidizing foreign publicans or booksellers....Get books published for operational reasons, regardless of commercial viability....The advantage of our direct contact with the author is that we can acquaint him in great detail with our intentions; that we can provide him with whatever material we want him to include and that we can check the manuscript at every stage.... [The agency] must make sure the actual manuscript will correspond with our operational and propagandistic intention." The report finds that over 1,000 books were either published, subsidized, or sponsored by the CIA by the end of 1967; all of these books were published in the US either in their original form or excerpted in US magazines and newspapers. "In examining the CIA's past and present use of the US media," the report observes, "the Committee finds two reasons for concern. The first is the potential, inherent in covert media operations, for manipulating or incidentally misleading the American public. The second is the damage to the credibility and independence of a free press which may be caused by covert relationships with the US journalists and media organizations."

CIA Withheld Info on Kennedy Assassination, Castro Plots, King Surveillance - The committee also finds that the CIA withheld critical information about the assassination of President John F. Kennedy from the Warren Commission, information about government assassination plots against Fidel Castro of Cuba (see, e.g., [November 20, 1975](#), [Early 1961-June 1965](#), [March 1960-August 1960](#), and [Early 1963](#)); and that the FBI had conducted a counter-intelligence program (COINTELPRO) against Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Mafia boss Sam Giancana was slated to testify before the committee about his organization's ties to the CIA, but before he could testify, he was murdered in his home—including having six bullet wounds in a circle around his mouth. Another committee witness, union leader Jimmy Hoffa, disappeared before he could testify. Hoffa's body has never been found. Mafia hitman Johnny Roselli was murdered before he could testify before the committee: in September 1976, the Washington Post will print excerpts from Roselli's last interview, with journalist Jack Anderson, before his death; Anderson will write, "When [Kennedy assassin Lee Harvey] Oswald was picked up, the underworld conspirators feared he would crack and disclose information that might lead to them. This almost certainly would

have brought a massive US crackdown on the Mafia. So Jack Ruby was ordered to eliminate Oswald.” (Anderson’s contention has not been proven.) The murders of Giancana and Roselli, and the disappearance and apparent murder of Hoffa, will lead to an inconclusive investigation by the House of the assassinations of Kennedy and King. [[SPARTACUS EDUCATIONAL, 12/18/2002](#)]

Leads to FISA - The findings of the Church Committee will inspire the passage of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) (see [1978](#)), and the standing committees on intelligence in the House and Senate. [[ASSASSINATION ARCHIVES AND RESEARCH CENTER, 11/23/2002](#)]

Simultaneous Investigation in House - The Church Committee operates alongside another investigative body in the House of Representatives, the Pike Committee (see [January 29, 1976](#)).

Church Committee Smeared After 9/11 - After the 9/11 attacks, conservative critics will once again bash the Church Committee; former Secretary of State James Baker will say within hours of the attacks that the Church report had caused the US to “unilaterally disarm in terms of our intelligence capabilities,” a sentiment echoed by the editorial writers of the Wall Street Journal, who will observe that the opening of the Church hearings was “the moment that our nation moved from an intelligence to anti-intelligence footing.” Perhaps the harshest criticism will come from conservative novelist and military historian Tom Clancy, who will say, “The CIA was gutted by people on the political left who don’t like intelligence operations. And as a result of that, as an indirect result of that, we’ve lost 5,000 citizens last week.” [[GERALD K. HAINES, 1/20/2003](#)]

Entity Tags: [Washington Post](#), [Tom Clancy](#), [William Colby](#), [Southern Christian Leadership Conference](#), [R. Emmett Tyrrell](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#), [HT Lingual](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Jack Anderson](#), [Frank Church](#), [Church Committee](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Sam Giancana](#), [Jack Ruby](#), [James R. Hoffa](#), [Pike Committee](#), [Martin Luther King, Jr.](#), [James A. Baker](#), [Lee Harvey Oswald](#), [John F. Kennedy](#), [Jim McClure](#), [Johnny Roselli](#), [Warren Commission](#)

Timeline Tags: [Civil Liberties](#)



September 1, 1976-Early 1980s: Secret Intelligence Cabal Works with Rogue CIA Elements to Influence Middle East and Africa





Alexandre de Marenches. [Source: Thierry Orban/ Corbis Sygma]

Prince Turki al-Faisal, head of Saudi intelligence from 1979, will say in a 2002 speech in the US, “In 1976, after the Watergate matters took place here, your intelligence community was literally tied up by Congress. It could not do anything. It could not send spies, it could not write reports, and it could not pay money. In order to compensate for that, a group of countries got together in the hope of fighting Communism and established what was called the Safari Club. The Safari Club included France, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Iran.” [SCOTT, 2007, PP. 62] An Egyptian reporter digging through Iranian government archives will later discover that the Safari Club was officially founded on September 1, 1976. Alexandre de Marenches, head of the French external intelligence service SDECE, was the chief instigator of the group. Millions are spent to create staff, offices, communications, and operational capability. Periodic secret conferences are held in Saudi Arabia, France, and Egypt. This group plays a secret role in political intrigues in many countries, mostly in Africa and the Middle East. For instance, a rebellion in Zaire is put down by Moroccan and Egyptian troops, using French air support. It also plays a role in the US-Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of 1979. [COOLEY, 2002, PP. 15-17] Author Joe Trento will later allege that the Safari Club, and especially the Saudi intelligence agency led by Kamal Adham and then his nephew Prince Turki from 1979 onwards, fund off-the-books covert operations for the CIA. But rather than working with the CIA as it is being reformed during the Carter administration, this group prefers to work with a private CIA made up of fired agents close to ex-CIA Director George Bush Sr. and Theodore Shackley, who Trento alleges is at the center of a “private, shadow spy organization within” the CIA until he is fired in 1979. The Safari Club and rogue CIA will play a major role in supporting the mujaheddin in Afghanistan. [SCOTT, 2007, PP. 63-64, 111] It is not clear when the Safari Club disbands, but its existence was exposed not long after the shah was deposed in Iran in 1979, and it seems to have disappeared by the time de Marenches stepped down from being head of French intelligence in 1982. [COOLEY, 2002, PP. 15-17]

Entity Tags: [Theodore Shackley](#), [Kamal Adham](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Alexandre de Marenches](#), [Safari Club](#), [Turki al-Faisal](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



November 1976: Team B Browbeats CIA Analysts, 'Proves' Soviets Far Ahead of US in Military, Nuclear Capabilities




A team of young, mid-level CIA and DIA analysts, informally dubbed “Team A,” debates the neoconservative/hardline group of outside “analysts” known as “Team B” (see [Early 1976](#)) over the CIA’s estimates of Soviet military threats and intentions. The debate is a disaster for the CIA’s group. Team B uses its intellectual firepower and established reputations of members such as Richard Pipes and Paul Nitze to intimidate, overwhelm, and browbeat the younger, more inexperienced CIA analysts. “People like Nitze ate us for lunch,” recalls one member of Team A. “It was like putting Walt Whitman High versus the [NFL’s] Redskins. I watched poor GS-13s and GS-14s [middle-level analysts with modest experience and little real influence] subjected to ridicule by Pipes and Nitze. They were browbeating the poor analysts.” Howard Stoertz, the national intelligence officer who helped coordinate and guide Team A, will say in hindsight, “If I had appreciated the adversarial nature [of Team B], I would have wheeled up different guns.” Team A had prepared for a relatively congenial session of comparative analysis and lively discussion; Team B had prepared for war. Ideology Trumps Facts - Neither Stoertz nor anyone else in the CIA appreciated how thoroughly Team B would let ideology and personalities override fact and real data. While CIA analysts are aware of how political considerations can influence the agency’s findings, the foundation of everything they do is factual—every conclusion they draw is based on whatever facts they can glean, and they are leery of extrapolating too much from a factual set. Team A is wholly unprepared for B’s assault on their reliance on facts, a line of attack the CIA analysts find incomprehensible. “In other words,” author Craig Unger will write in 2007, “facts didn’t matter.” Pipes, the leader of Team B, has argued for years that attempting to accurately assess Soviet military strength is irrelevant. Pipes says that because it is irrefutable that the USSR intends to obliterate the US, the US must immediately begin preparing for an all-out nuclear showdown, regardless of the intelligence or the diplomatic efforts of both sides. Team B is part of that preparation. [[BULLETIN OF ATOMIC SCIENTISTS, 4/1993](#); [UNGER, 2007, PP. 53-57](#)] Intelligence expert John Prados, who will examine the contesting reports, later says that while the CIA analysts believe in “an objective discoverable truth,” the Team B analysts engaged in an “exercise of reasoning from conclusions” that they justify, not in factual, but in “moral and ideological terms.” According to Prados’s analysis, Team B had no real interest in finding the truth. Instead, they employed what he calls an adversarial process similar to that used in courts of law, where two sides present their arguments and a supposedly impartial judge chooses one over the other. Team B’s intent was, in essence, to present the two opposing arguments to Washington policy makers and have them, in author J. Peter Scoblic’s words, “choose whichever truth they found most convenient.” [[SCOBLIC, 2008, PP. 98](#)]

Attacking the Intelligence Community - The first sentence of Team B’s report is a frontal assault on the US intelligence community. That community, the report says, had “substantially misperceived the motivations behind Soviet strategic programs, and thereby tended consistently to underestimate their intensity, scope, and implicit threat.” Team B

writes that the intelligence community has failed to see—or deliberately refused to see—that the entire schema of detente and arms limitations negotiations are merely elements of the Soviet push for global domination.

Fighting and Winning a Nuclear War - Team B writes that the Soviets have already achieved measurable superiority in nuclear weaponry and other military benchmarks, and will use those advantages to cow and coerce the West into doing its bidding. The Soviets worship military power “to an extent inconceivable to the average Westerner,” the report asserts. The entire Soviet plan, the report goes on to say, hinges on its willingness to fight a nuclear war, and its absolute belief that it can win such a war. Within ten years, Team B states, “the Soviets may well expect to achieve a degree of military superiority which would permit a dramatically more aggressive pursuit of their hegemonial objectives.” [\[SCOBLIC, 2008, PP. 94-95\]](#)

Lack of Facts Merely Proof of Soviets' Success - One example that comes up during the debate is B's assertion that the USSR has a top-secret nonacoustic antisubmarine system. While the CIA analysts struggle to point out that absolutely no evidence of this system exists, B members conclude that not only does the USSR have such a system, it has probably “deployed some operation nonacoustic systems and will deploy more in the next few years.” The absence of evidence merely proves how secretive the Soviets are, they argue. [\[BULLETIN OF ATOMIC SCIENTISTS, 4/1993; UNGER, 2007, PP. 53-57\]](#) Anne Cahn, who will serve in the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in the Carter administration, later says of this assertion, “They couldn't say that the Soviets had acoustic means of picking up American submarines, because they couldn't find it. So they said, well maybe they have a non-acoustic means of making our submarine fleet vulnerable. But there was no evidence that they had a non-acoustic system. They're saying, 'we can't find evidence that they're doing it the way that everyone thinks they're doing it, so they must be doing it a different way. We don't know what that different way is, but they must be doing it. '... [The fact that the weapon doesn't exist] doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. It just means that we haven't found it yet.” Cahn will give another example: “I mean, they looked at radars out in Krasnoyarsk and said, ‘This is a laser beam weapon,’ when in fact it was nothing of the sort.... And if you go through most of Team B's specific allegations about weapons systems, and you just examine them one by one, they were all wrong.... I don't believe anything in Team B was really true.” [\[BULLETIN OF ATOMIC SCIENTISTS, 4/1993; COMMON DREAMS \(.ORG\), 12/7/2004; BBC, 1/14/2005\]](#)

Soviet Strike Capabilities Grossly Exaggerated - Team B also hammers home warnings about how dangerous the Soviets' Backfire bomber is. Later—too late for Team A—the Team B contentions about the Backfire's range and refueling capability are proven to be grossly overestimated; it is later shown that the USSR has less than half the number of Backfires that B members loudly assert exist (500 in Team B's estimation, 235 in reality). B's assertions of how effectively the Soviets could strike at US missile silos are similarly exaggerated, and based on flawed assessment techniques long rejected by the CIA. The only hard evidence Team B produces to back their assertions is the official Soviet training manual, which claims that their air-defense system is fully integrated and functions flawlessly. The B analysts even assert, without evidence, that the Soviets have successfully tested laser and charged particle beam (CPB) weapons. [\[BULLETIN OF ATOMIC SCIENTISTS, 4/1993; QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF SPEECH, 5/2006\]](#)  (The facility at Semipalatansk that is supposedly testing these laser weapons for deployment

is in reality a test site for nuclear-powered rocket engines.) [[SCOBLIC, 2008, PP. 96](#)]

Fundamental Contradiction - One befuddling conclusion of Team B concerns the Soviets' ability to continue building new and expensive weapons. While B acknowledges "that the Soviet Union is in severe decline," paradoxically, its members argue that the threat from the USSR is imminent and will grow ever more so because it is a wealthy country with "a large and expanding Gross National Product."

Allegations 'Complete Fiction' - Cahn will say of Team B's arguments, "All of it was fantasy.... [I]f you go through most of Team B's specific allegations about weapons systems, and you just examine them one by one, they were all wrong." The CIA lambasts Team B's report as "complete fiction." CIA director George H. W. Bush says that B's approach "lends itself to manipulation for purposes other than estimative accuracy." His successor, Admiral Stansfield Turner, will come to the same conclusion, saying, "Team B was composed of outsiders with a right-wing ideological bent. The intention was to promote competition by polarizing the teams. It failed. The CIA teams, knowing that the outsiders on B would take extreme views, tended to do the same in self-defense. When B felt frustrated over its inability to prevail, one of its members leaked much of the secret material of the proceedings to the press" (see [Late November, 1976](#)). Former CIA deputy director Ray Cline says Team B had subverted the National Intelligence Estimate on the USSR by employing "a kangaroo court of outside critics all picked from one point of view." Secretary of State Henry Kissinger says that B's only purpose is to subvert detente and sabotage a new arms limitation treaty between the US and the Soviet Union. [[BULLETIN OF ATOMIC SCIENTISTS, 4/1993](#); [COMMON DREAMS \(.ORG\), 12/7/2004](#); [BBC, 1/14/2005](#);

[QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF SPEECH, 5/2006](#) ; [UNGER, 2007, PP. 53-57](#)]

Costs of Rearmament - In 1993, after reviewing the original Team B documents, Cahn will reflect on the effect of the B exercise: "For more than a third of a century, assertions of Soviet superiority created calls for the United States to 'rearm.' In the 1980s, the call was heeded so thoroughly that the United States embarked on a trillion-dollar defense buildup. As a result, the country neglected its schools, cities, roads and bridges, and health care system. From the world's greatest creditor nation, the United States became the world's greatest debtor—in order to pay for arms to counter the threat of a nation that was collapsing."

[[BULLETIN OF ATOMIC SCIENTISTS, 4/1993](#)] Former Senator Gary Hart (D-CO) will agree: "The Pro-B Team leak and public attack on the conclusions of the NIE represent but one element in a series of leaks and other statements which have been aimed as fostering a 'worst case' view for the public of the Soviet threat. In turn, this view of the Soviet threat is used to justify new weapons systems." [[QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF SPEECH, 5/2006](#)]

Entity Tags: [Howard Stoertz](#), [Henry A. Kissinger](#), [Stansfield Turner](#), [Richard Pipes](#), [J. Peter Scoblic](#), [Ray Cline](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Craig Unger](#), [Defense Intelligence Agency](#), ['Team A'](#), [Gary Hart](#), [Anne Cahn](#), ['Team B'](#), [Carter administration](#), [Arms Control and Disarmament Agency](#), [Paul Nitze](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#), [Neoconservative Influence](#)

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Late November, 1976: Team B Breaches Security to Successfully Whip up Fears of Soviet Threat



Although the entire “Team B” intelligence analysis experiment (see [Early 1976](#), [November 1976](#), and [November 1976](#)) is supposed to be classified and secret, the team’s neoconservatives launch what author Craig Unger will call “a massive campaign to inflame fears of the red menace in both the general population and throughout the [foreign] policy community—thanks to strategically placed leaks to the Boston Globe and later to the New York Times.” Times reporter David Binder later says that Team B leader Richard Pipes is “jubilant” over “pok[ing] holes at the [CIA]’s analysis” of the Soviet threat. Team B member John Vogt calls the exercise “an opportunity to even up some scores with the CIA.” [\[UNGER, 2007, PP. 57\]](#) Team member George Keegan tells reporters, “I am unaware of a single important category in which the Soviets have not established a significant lead over the United States... [This] grave imbalance in favor of Soviet military capability had developed out of a failure over the last 15 years to adjust American strategic thinking to Soviet strategic thinking, and out of the failure of the leadership of the American intelligence community to ‘perceive the reality’ of the Soviet military buildup.” Keegan’s colleague William van Cleave agrees, saying that “overall strategic superiority exists today for the Soviet Union,” and adds, “I think it’s getting to the point that, if we can make a trade with the Soviet Union of defense establishments, I’d be heartily in favor of it.” [\[SCOBLIC, 2008, PP. 95\]](#)

Used to Escalate Defense Spending - The experiment is far more than a dry, intellectual exercise or a chance for academics to score points against the CIA. Melvin Goodman, who heads the CIA’s Office of Soviet Affairs, will observe in 2004: “[Defense Secretary Donald] Rumsfeld won that very intense, intense political battle that was waged in Washington in 1975 and 1976. Now, as part of that battle, Rumsfeld and others, people such as Paul Wolfowitz, wanted to get into the CIA. And their mission was to create a much more severe view of the Soviet Union, Soviet intentions, Soviet views about fighting and winning a nuclear war.” Even though Wolfowitz’s and Rumsfeld’s assertions of powerful new Soviet WMD programs are completely wrong, they use the charges to successfully push for huge escalations in military spending, a process that continues through the Ford and Reagan administrations (see [1976](#)) [\[COMMON DREAMS \(.ORG\), 12/7/2004\]](#); [BBC, 1/14/2005\]](#) , and resurface in the two Bush administrations. “Finally,” Unger will write, “a band of Cold Warriors and neocon ideologues had successfully insinuated themselves in the nation’s multibillion-dollar intelligence apparatus and had managed to politicize intelligence in an effort to implement new foreign policy.” [\[UNGER, 2007, PP. 57-58\]](#)

Kicking Over the Chessboard - Former senior CIA official Richard Lehman later says that Team B members “were leaking all over the place... putting together this inflammatory document.” Author and university professor Gordon R. Mitchell will write that B’s practice of “strategically leaking incendiary bits of intelligence to journalists, before final judgments were reached in the competitive intelligence exercise,” was another method for Team B members to promulgate their arguments without actually proving any of their points. Instead of participating in the debate, they abandoned the strictures of the exercise and leaked their unsubstantiated findings to the press to “win” the argument. [\[QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF SPEECH,](#)

 [5/2006](#)]

'[One Long Air Raid Siren](#)' - In 2002, defense policy reporter Fred Kaplan will sardonically label Team B the “Rumsfeld Intelligence Agency,” and write: “It was sold as an ‘exercise’ in intelligence analysis, an interesting competition—Team A (the CIA) and Team B (the critics). Yet once allowed the institutional footing, the Team B players presented their conclusions—and leaked them to friendly reporters—as the truth,” a truth, Team B alleges, the pro-detente Ford administration intends to conceal. Kaplan will continue, “The Team B report read like one long air-raid siren: The Soviets were spending practically all their GNP on the military; they were perfecting charged particle beams that could knock our warheads out of the sky; their express policy and practical goal was to fight and win a nuclear war.” Team B is flatly wrong across the board, but it still has a powerful impact on the foreign policy of the Ford administration, and gives the neoconservatives and hardliners who oppose arms control and detente a rallying point. Author Barry Werth will observe that Rumsfeld and his ideological and bureaucratic ally, White House chief of staff Dick Cheney “drove the SALT II negotiations into the sand at the Pentagon and the White House.” Ford’s primary opponent, Ronald Reagan, and the neocons’ public spokesman, Senator Henry Jackson, pillory Ford for being soft on Communism and the Soviet Union. Ford stops talking about detente with the Soviets, and breaks off discussions with the Soviets over limiting nuclear weapons. Through Team B, Rumsfeld and the neocons succeed in stalling the incipient thaw in US-Soviet relations and in weakening Ford as a presidential candidate. [[WERTH, 2006, PP. 341](#)]

Entity Tags: [New York Times](#), [Paul Wolfowitz](#), [Reagan administration](#), [Richard \(“Dick”\) Cheney](#), [George Keegan](#), [Richard Pipes](#), [William van Cleave](#), [John Vogt](#), [Ronald Reagan](#), [Richard Lehman](#), [Henry \(“Scoop”\) Jackson](#), [Melvin A. Goodman](#), [Gerald Rudolph Ford, Jr.](#), [Bush administration](#), [Boston Globe](#), [Barry Werth](#), [’Team B’](#), [Craig Unger](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Donald Rumsfeld](#), [David Binder](#), [Gordon R. Mitchell](#), [Ford administration](#), [Fred Kaplan](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#), [Neoconservative Influence](#)

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[December 26, 1976: CIA Director Bush Discusses Team B Findings with Press](#)



After CIA Director George H. W. Bush meets with the New York Times’s David Binder, the Times publishes a front-page story about the “Team B” analysis experiment (see [November 1976](#)). Up till now, Bush has been foursquare against leaking information to the press, especially classified information such as the Team B affair. Dr. Anne Cahn, who will serve in President Carter’s Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, later writes that Bush’s sudden about-face may be sparked in part by President-elect Carter’s refusal to assure Bush that he would continue as CIA director in the new administration. Bush soon appears on NBC’s Meet the Press, and because of Bush’s media leaks and other Team B press revelations (see [Late](#)

[November, 1976](#)), three separate Congressional committees announce their intention to hold hearings on the entire exercise. [[BULLETIN OF ATOMIC SCIENTISTS, 4/1993](#)]

Entity Tags: [New York Times](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), ['Team B'](#), [David Binder](#), [James Earl "Jimmy" Carter, Jr.](#), [Anne Cahn](#)

Timeline Tags: [Neoconservative Influence](#)



1977: US Government Provides Classified Intelligence to US Corporations



The US Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board recommended in 1970 that “economic intelligence be considered a function of national security” equal to that of other intelligence. In 1977, the NSA, CIA, and Department of Commerce forms a joint “Office of Intelligence Liaison” (later renamed the “Office of Executive Support”) specifically authorized to handle “foreign intelligence” of interest to the Commerce Department, much of it provided by the NSA. The other countries using Echelon, the NSA’s satellite surveillance program, which include Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, all operate similar programs. President Bill Clinton will extend this operation in 1993. In 1993, the European company Panavia will be specifically targeted over aircraft sales to the Middle East. In 1994, US companies will be given NSA and CIA intelligence intercepts that help them win contracts in Indonesia. Other information that will be provided by US intelligence to US and allied corporations include information about the emission standards for Japanese automobiles, 1995 trade negotiations over the US importing of Japanese luxury cars, France’s participation in the GATT trade negotiations of 1993, and the 1997 Asian-Pacific Economic Conference. [[SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENTS OFFICE, 8/15/2000](#)]

Entity Tags: [William Jefferson \(“Bill”\) Clinton](#), [Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board](#), [National Security Agency](#), [Office of Executive Support](#), [Panavia](#)

Timeline Tags: [Civil Liberties](#)



April 13, 1977: Frost Demonstrates Nixon’s Early Complicity in Watergate Conspiracy



In his first interview session with former President Richard Nixon about Watergate (see [April 13-15, 1977](#)), David Frost moves from the erased Watergate tape (see [November 21, 1973](#)) to Nixon’s damning conversation with Charles Colson about “stonewalling” the Watergate investigation. This time around, Frost is far more prepared and ready to deal with Nixon’s tactics of obfuscation and misdirection than in earlier interviews (see [April 6, 1977](#)).

Surprise Information - Nixon is unaware that Frost knows about his conversation that same day with Colson (see [June 20, 1972](#)). Along with what is known about his conversation with Haldeman, the Colson conversation puts Nixon squarely in the midst of the conspiracy at its outset. More important than Frost's command of the facts is Frost's springing of a "surprise card" (Frost researcher James Reston Jr.'s words) on Nixon at the beginning of the Watergate sessions. Nixon obviously must contend with the questions of what else Frost knows, and how he would ask about it. As Frost details excerpts from the Colson conversation, about "stonewalling" and "hav[ing] our people delay, avoiding depositions," Reston watches Nixon on the monitor. Reston will later recall: "His jawline seemed to elongate. The corners of his mouth turned down. His eyes seemed more liquid. One could almost see the complicated dials in his head turning feverishly. It was a marvelously expressive face. The range of movement both within the contours of the visage and with the hands was enormous." Frost concludes with the question, "Now, somewhere you were pretty well informed by this conversation, weren't you?" After some fumbling and half-hearted admissions of some knowledge, Nixon begins justifying his actions in the conspiracy: "My motive was not to cover up a criminal action, but to be sure that as any slip over—or should I say slop over, a better word—any slop over in a way that would damage innocent people or blow it into political proportions."

[[RESTON, 2007, PP. 124-126](#)]

Pinning Nixon down on CIA Interference - Frost asks about the conversations of June 23 (see [June 23, 1972](#)), when Nixon told his aides to have the CIA interfere with the FBI's investigation of the burglary. Nixon tries dodging the point, emphasizing how busy he was with other matters that day and quibbling about the definition of the phrase "cover-up," but finally says that he had no criminal motive in ordering the CIA to stop the FBI from investigating the matter of the Mexican checks found in Watergate burglar Bernard Barker's bank accounts. He was merely engaged in political containment, he says, and besides, two weeks later, the FBI traced the checks to a Mexican bank anyway (see [Before April 7, 1972](#) and [August 1-2, 1972](#)). Nixon emphasizes his instructions to then-FBI director L. Patrick Gray to move forward on the investigation (see [July 6, 1972](#)). (Later, Nixon staff member Jack Brennan will admit that they had almost convinced Nixon to admit to the illegality of the June 23 orders, but Nixon had demurred.)

'You Joined a Conspiracy that You Never Left' - It now falls to Frost to confront Nixon with the strictures of the law and the evidence that he had broken those laws. Frost says, "But surely, in all you've just said, you have proved exactly that that was the case, that there was a cover-up of criminal activity because you've already said, and the record shows you knew, that Hunt and Liddy [E. Howard Hunt and G. Gordon Liddy, the leaders of Nixon's "Plumbers"] were involved... you knew that, in fact, criminals would be protected." Nixon protests, "Now just a moment," but Frost says, "Period." Frost lectures Nixon on obstruction of justice, saying: "The law states that when intent and foreseeable consequences are sufficient, motive is completely irrelevant.... If I try to rob a bank and fail, that's no defense. I still tried to rob a bank. I would say you tried to obstruct justice and succeeded in that period" between June 23 and July 6. Nixon retorts that he does not believe Frost knows much about the details of the obstruction of justice statutes, but fails to move Frost, who has been carefully instructed in the obstruction statutes all week. Frost eventually says: "Now, after the Gray conversation, the cover-up went on. You would say that you were not aware of it. I was

arguing that you were part of it as a result of the June 23 conversation.” Nixon repeats, “You’re gonna say that I was a part of it as a result of the June 23 conversation?” Reston later writes, “It was a crucial moment, a moment that took considerable courage for David Frost.” Frost replies: “Yes.... I would have said that you joined a conspiracy that you never left.” “Then we totally disagree on that,” Nixon retorts. Reston later writes: “No journalist in America, I concluded, would have had the courage of Frost in that vital moment. But therein lay the failing of American journalism. For Frost here was an advocate. He was far beyond the narrow American definition of ‘objective journalism.’” [TIME, 5/9/1977; RESTON, 2007, PP. 124-126]

Entity Tags: [David Frost](#), [Bernard Barker](#), [Charles Colson](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#), [L. Patrick Gray](#), [James Reston, Jr.](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [G. Gordon Liddy](#), [Jack Brennan](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



1978: Former Head of CIA’s Soviet Operations Appointed Head of Counterintelligence



David Blee, a former head of the CIA’s Soviet division (see [1971](#)), is appointed head of counterintelligence at the agency. [NEW YORK TIMES, 8/17/2000; LOS ANGELES TIMES, 8/18/2000]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [David Blee](#)

Timeline Tags: [Misc Entries](#)



January 24, 1978: Executive Order Bans Domestic Surveillance, Political Assassinations



President Jimmy Carter. [Source: *The Sietch.org*] President Jimmy Carter issues Executive Order 12036, in effect banning domestic surveillance by the CIA and other US intelligence agencies. Carter writes, “No agency within the Intelligence Community shall

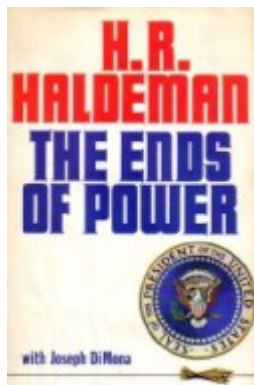
engage in any electronic surveillance directed against a United States person abroad or designed to intercept a communication sent from, or intended for receipt within, the United States except as permitted by the procedures established pursuant to section 2-201.” That exception allows for the surveillance of US citizens in the case of acquiring “[i]nformation about the capabilities, intentions and activities of foreign powers, organizations, or persons and their agents.... The measures employed to acquire such information should be responsive to legitimate governmental needs and must be conducted in a manner that preserves and respects established concepts of privacy and civil liberties.” The order also flatly prohibits any assassinations by government officials, saying, “No person employed by or acting on behalf of the United States Government shall engage in, or conspire to engage in, assassination.... No agency of the Intelligence Community shall request or otherwise encourage, directly or indirectly, any person, organization, or government agency to undertake activities forbidden by this order or by applicable law.” [[WHITE HOUSE, 1/24/1978](#)]

Entity Tags: [James Earl “Jimmy” Carter, Jr.](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Civil Liberties](#)



[February 1978: Haldeman’s New Book Says CIA, Democrats Involved in Watergate; Blames Nixon, Colson for Conspiracy](#)



H. R. Haldeman’s “The Ends of Power.” [[Source: Amazon \(.com\)](#)] Former Nixon aide H. R. Haldeman, in his autobiography *The Ends of Power*, advances his own insider theory of the genesis of the Watergate burglaries (see [July 26-27, 1970](#)). Haldeman, currently serving a one-year prison sentence for perjuring himself during his testimony about the Watergate cover-up, became so angered while watching David Frost interview former President Nixon, and particularly Nixon’s attempts to pin the blame for Watergate on Haldeman and fellow aide John Ehrlichman (see [April 15, 1977](#)), that he decided to write the book to tell his version of events. Some of his assertions:

[Nixon, Colson Behind 'Plumbers;' Watergate Burglary 'Deliberately Sabotaged'](#) - He writes that he believes then-President Nixon ordered the operation that resulted in the burglaries and

surveillance of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) headquarters because he and Charles Colson, the aide who supervised the so-called “Plumbers” (see [Late June-July 1971](#)), were both “infuriated with [DNC chairman Lawrence] O’Brien’s success in using the ITT case against them” (see [February 22, 1972](#)). Colson, whom Haldeman paints as Nixon’s “hit man” who was the guiding spirit behind the “Plumbers,” then recruited another White House aide, E. Howard Hunt, who brought in yet another aide, G. Gordon Liddy. Haldeman goes into a more interesting level of speculation: “I believe the Democratic high command knew the break-in was going to take place, and let it happen. They may even have planted the plainclothesman who arrested the burglars. I believe that the CIA monitored the Watergate burglars throughout. And that the overwhelming evidence leads to the conclusion that the break-in was deliberately sabotaged.” O’Brien calls Haldeman’s version of events “a crock.” As for Haldeman’s insinuations that the CIA might have been involved with the burglaries, former CIA director Richard Helms says, “The agency had nothing to do with the Watergate break-in.” Time magazine’s review of the book says that Haldeman is more believable when he moves from unverifiable speculation into provable fact. One such example is his delineation of the conspiracy to cover up the burglaries and the related actions and incidents. Haldeman writes that the cover-up was not a “conspiracy” in the legal sense, but was “organic,” growing “one step at a time” to limit political damage to the president. [Story of Kennedy Ordering Vietnamese Assassination Actually True](#) - He suggests that the evidence Hunt falsified that tried to blame former president John F. Kennedy of having then-South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem assassination (see [Mid-September 1971](#)) may have pointed to the actual truth of that incident, hinting that Kennedy may have ordered the assassination after all.

[US Headed Off Two Potentially Catastrophic Nuclear Incidents with USSR, China](#) - He also writes of a previously unsuspected incident where Nixon and other US officials convinced the Soviets not to attack Chinese nuclear sites. And Haldeman tells of a September 1970 incident where the US managed to head off a second Cuban Missile Crisis. Both stories of US intervention with the Soviets are strongly denied by both of Nixon’s Secretaries of State, Henry Kissinger, and William Rogers.

[Duality of Nixon's Nature](#) - Haldeman says that while Nixon carried “greatness in him,” and showed strong “intelligence, analytical ability, judgment, shrewdness, courage, decisiveness and strength,” he was plagued by equally powerful flaws. Haldeman writes that Nixon had a “dirty, mean, base side” and “a terrible temper,” and describes him as “coldly calculating, devious, craftily manipulative... the weirdest man ever to live in the White House.” For himself, Haldeman claims to have always tried to give “active encouragement” to the “good” side of Nixon and treat the “bad” side with “benign neglect.” He often ignored Nixon’s “petty, vindictive” orders, such as giving mass lie detector tests to employees of the State Department as a means of finding security leaks. He writes that while he regrets not challenging Nixon more “frontally” to counter the president’s darker impulses, he notes that other Nixon aides who had done so quickly lost influence in the Oval Office. Colson, on the other hand, rose to a high level of influence by appealing to Nixon’s darker nature. Between the two, Haldeman writes, the criminal conspiracy of Watergate was created. (Colson disputes Haldeman’s depiction of his character as well as the events of the conspiracy.) Haldeman himself never intended to do anything illegal, denies any knowledge of the

“Gemstone” conspiracy proposal (see [January 29, 1972](#)), and denies ordering his aide Gordon Strachan to destroy evidence (see [June 18-19, 1972](#)).

Reconstructing the 18 1/2 Minute Gap - Haldeman also reconstructs the conversation between himself and Nixon that was erased from the White House tapes (see [June 23, 1972](#) and [July 13-16, 1973](#)). Time notes that Haldeman reconstructs the conversation seemingly to legally camouflage his own actions and knowledge, “possibly to preclude further legal charges against him...” According to Haldeman’s reconstruction, Nixon said, “I know one thing. I can’t stand an FBI interrogation of Colson... Colson can talk about the president, if he cracks. You know I was on Colson’s tail for months to nail Larry O’Brien on the [Howard] Hughes deal (see [April 30 - May 1, 1973](#); O’Brien had worked for Hughes, and Nixon was sure O’Brien had been involved in illegalities). Colson told me he was going to get the information I wanted one way or the other. And that was O’Brien’s office they were bugging, wasn’t it? And who’s behind it? Colson’s boy Hunt. Christ. Colson called [deputy campaign chief Jeb Magruder] and got the whole operation started. Right from the g_ddamn White House... I just hope the FBI doesn’t check the office log and put it together with that Hunt and Liddy meeting in Colson’s office.” Time writes, “If the quotes are accurate, Nixon is not only divulging his own culpability in initiating the bugging but is also expressing a clear intent to keep the FBI from learning about it. Thus the seeds of an obstruction of justice have been planted even before the celebrated June 23 ‘smoking gun’ conversation, which ultimately triggered Nixon’s resignation from office.” Haldeman says he isn’t sure who erased the tape, but he believes it was Nixon himself. Nixon intended to erase all the damning evidence from the recordings, but since he was, Haldeman writes, “the least dexterous man I have ever known,” he quickly realized that “it would take him ten years” to erase everything.

‘Smoking Gun’ Allegations - Haldeman also makes what Time calls “spectacular... but unverified” allegations concerning the June 23, 1972 “smoking gun” conversations (see [June 23, 1972](#)). The focus of that day’s discussion was how the White House could persuade the CIA to head off the FBI’s investigation of the Watergate burglary. The tape proved that Nixon had indeed attempted to block the criminal investigation into Watergate, and feared that the money found on the burglars would be traced back to his own re-election campaign committee. Haldeman writes that he was confused when Nixon told him to tell the CIA, “Look, the problem is that this will open up the whole Bay of Pigs thing again.” When Haldeman asked Helms to intercede with the FBI, and passed along Nixon’s warning that “the Bay of Pigs may be blown,” Helms’s reaction, Haldeman writes, was electric. “Turmoil in the room, Helms gripping the arms of his chair, leaning forward and shouting, ‘The Bay of Pigs had nothing to do with this. I have no concern about the Bay of Pigs.’” Haldeman writes, “I was absolutely shocked by Helms’[s] violent reaction. Again I wondered, what was such dynamite in the Bay of Pigs story?” Haldeman comes to believe that the term “Bay of Pigs” was a reference to the CIA’s secret attempts to assassinate Cuban dictator Fidel Castro. The CIA had withheld this info from the Warren Commission, the body that investigated the assassination of President Kennedy, and Haldeman implies that Nixon was using the “Bay of Pigs thing” as some sort of blackmail threat over the CIA. Haldeman also hints, very vaguely, that Nixon, when he was vice president under Dwight D. Eisenhower, was a chief instigator of the actual Bay of Pigs invasion. (Time notes that while Vice President Nixon probably knew about the plans, “he certainly had not been their author.”)

Other Tidbits - Haldeman writes that Nixon's taping system was created to ensure that anyone who misrepresented what Nixon and others said in the Oval Office could be proven wrong, and that Nixon had Kissinger particularly in mind. Nixon kept the tapes because at first he didn't believe he could be forced to give them up, and later thought he could use them to discredit former White House counsel John Dean. He says Nixon was wrong in asserting that he ordered Haldeman to get rid of the tapes. Haldeman believes the notorious "deep background" source for Washington Post reporters Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward was actually Fred Fielding, Dean's White House deputy. Interestingly, Haldeman apparently discovered the real identity of "Deep Throat" in 1972 to be senior FBI official W. Mark Felt (see [October 19, 1972](#)). It is unclear why Haldeman now writes that Fielding, not Felt, was the Post source.

Not a Reliable Source - Time notes that Haldeman's book is far from being a reliable source of information, characterizing it as "badly flawed, frustratingly vague and curiously defensive," and notes that "[m]any key sections were promptly denied; others are clearly erroneous." Time concludes, "Despite the claim that his aim was finally to 'tell the truth' about the scandal, his book is too self-protective for that." And it is clear that Haldeman, though he writes how the cover-up was "morally and legally the wrong thing to do—so it should have failed," has little problem being part of such a criminal conspiracy. The biggest problem with Watergate was not that it was illegal, he writes, but that it was handled badly. He writes, "There is absolutely no doubt in my mind today that if I were back at the starting point, faced with the decision of whether to join up, even knowing what the ultimate outcome would be, I would unhesitatingly do it." [[TIME, 2/27/1978](#); [SPARTACUS SCHOOLNET, 8/2007](#)]

Entity Tags: [Fred Fielding](#), [William P. Rogers](#), [E. Howard Hunt](#), [Democratic National Committee](#), [David Frost](#), [Charles Colson](#), [W. Mark Felt](#), [Bob Woodward](#), [Carl Bernstein](#), [US Department of State](#), [Lawrence O'Brien](#), [Richard Helms](#), [John Dean](#), [Jeb S. Magruder](#), [Howard Hughes](#), [Henry A. Kissinger](#), [Gordon Strachan](#), [Dwight Eisenhower](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#), [H.R. Haldeman](#), [John F. Kennedy](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



September 1978: CIA Manager Asks Other Agencies to Evaluate Anti-Soviet Signals Intelligence Project



David Blee, head of counterintelligence at the CIA, asks the NSA, FBI, and allied representatives to form a committee to evaluate the potential for a signals intelligence project codenamed VENONA and directed against the Soviet Union over the next two years. Howard W. Kulp and Mildred Hayes, who will go on to head the VENONA unit in later years, represent the NSA on the committee. [[CENTER FOR CRYPTOLOGIC HISTORY, 1/1/2001](#)]

Entity Tags: [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [David Blee](#), [Howard W. Kulp](#), [Mildred Hayes](#), [National Security Agency](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#), [Misc Entries](#)



1979-1991: US Government Ignores Over 700 Tips about BCCI's Criminal Activities



According to a 1992 Congressional investigation led by Congressman Charles Schumer (D-NY), between 1979 and 1991, federal law enforcement agencies receive more than 700 tips about BCCI's criminal activities. The criminal BCCI bank will finally be shut down in 1991 (see [July 5, 1991](#)). The tips include BCCI involvement in:

- Promoting political unrest in Pakistan.
- Smuggling arms to various countries, including Syria, Libya, and Iran.
- Financing terrorist groups.
- Links to organized crime in the US and Italy.

Time magazine reporters Jonathan Beaty and S.C. Gwynne will later comment in a book: "Too many people knew too much about BCCI, and they knew it long before the bank spun itself into bankruptcy and scandal.... That [CIA Deputy Director] Robert Gates could jokingly refer to it in a conversation with Customs chief William von Raab as the "bank of crooks and criminals" three years before the scandal broke merely reflects the run of knowledge around Washington. Indeed, it would probably have been difficult to find very many people with real power who did not know about the bank, based on the wide distribution of CIA reports." Schumer will later conclude: "At the very least, there was nobody putting together all the pieces.... You could make a credible case that somebody told them not to do anything about BCCI." [[BEATY AND GWYNNE, 1993, PP. 346](#)]

Entity Tags: [William von Raab](#), [Bank of Credit and Commerce International](#), [Charles Schumer](#), [Robert M. Gates](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



February-November 4, 1979: US Attempt to Create De Facto Alliance with Khomeini's Iranian Government Ends Disastrously



After the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi is deposed in Iran and Ayatollah Khomeini takes over as Iran's new leader in February 1979, the US is interested in continuing to work with the Iranian government. At first the US is taken aback by the new fundamentalist Islamic government, and National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski contemplates fomenting a

military coup to stop Khomeini. But Khomeini is fiercely anti-communist, and Brzezinski soon decides that Iran's new government can become part of an effective anti-Soviet alliance he calls the "arc of crisis" (see [November 1978-February 1979](#)). The US embassy in Teheran, Iran, remains open, and more US officials come to Iran and begin tentative talks there. [\[DREYFUSS, 2005, PP. 236-243\]](#) The CIA in particular begins secretly collaborating with Iranian intelligence, providing information about the Soviet Union, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The CIA and Iran both covertly work to destabilize the pro-Soviet government in Afghanistan. [\[DREYFUSS, 2005, PP. 264-265\]](#) In early November 1979, Brzezinski secretly meets with Iranian Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, as well as Iran's foreign minister and defense minister, in Algiers, Algeria. But shortly before the meeting, the US agrees to allow the Shah, dying with cancer, to come to the US for medical treatment. Khomeini is enraged, and on November 4, just three days after the Algeria meeting begins, Khomeini arranges for students to take over the US embassy in Teheran and seize hostages. This realigns political forces in Iran and allows Khomeini to sideline Bazargan and other others meeting in Algeria, rendering the negotiations there moot. Brzezinski's attempts to create a de facto alliance with Iran collapse. The US hostages will be held for over a year before finally being freed. [\[DREYFUSS, 2005, PP. 240-243\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi](#), [Mehdi Bazargan](#), [Seyyed Ruhollah Khomeini](#), [Zbigniew Brzezinski](#)

Timeline Tags: [US confrontation with Iran](#), [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)



May 1979: CIA Begins Working with Hekmatyar and Other Mujaheddin Leaders Chosen by ISI



As the US mobilizes for covert war in Afghanistan (see [1978](#) and [July 3, 1979](#)), a CIA special envoy meets Afghan mujaheddin leaders at Peshawar, Pakistan, near the border to Afghanistan. All of them have been carefully selected by the Pakistani ISI and do not represent a broad spectrum of the resistance movement. One of them is Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a drug dealer with little support in Afghanistan, but who is loyal to the ISI. The US will begin working with Hekmatyar and over the next 10 years over half of all US aid to the mujaheddin will go to his faction (see [1983](#)). Hekmatyar is already known as brutal, corrupt, and incompetent. [\[MCCOY, 2003, PP. 475\]](#) His extreme ruthlessness, for instance, his reputation for skinning prisoners alive, is considered a plus, as it is thought he will use that ruthlessness to kill Russians. [\[DREYFUSS, 2005, PP. 267-268\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Gulbuddin Hekmatyar](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)



July 3, 1979: President Carter Approves Covert Aid to Anti-Soviet Forces in Afghanistan



President Carter authorizes covert aid for opponents of the Communist government in Afghanistan. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter's National Security Adviser, will state in 1998, "According to the official version of history, CIA aid to the mujaheddin began... after the Soviet army invaded Afghanistan... But the reality, secretly guarded until now, is completely otherwise: Indeed, it was July 3, 1979 that President Carter signed the first directive for secret aid to the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. And that very day, I wrote a note to the president in which I explained to him that in my opinion this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention.... We didn't push the Russians to intervene, but we knowingly increased the probability that they would." [LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR (PARIS), 1/15/1998] After Brzezinski's confession, other US officials who denied US involvement prior to the Soviet invasion will change their story as well. For instance, Charles Cogan, who is head of the CIA covert aid program to Afghanistan at this time, will call Carter's approval on this day a "very modest beginning to US involvement." [COOLEY, 2002, PP. 10] In fact, even this is not correct because the CIA had been aiding the rebels since at least the year before (see 1978 and 1973-1979). The Soviets invade Afghanistan by the end of 1979 (see December 8, 1979).

Entity Tags: [Zbigniew Brzezinski](#), [James Earl "Jimmy" Carter, Jr.](#), [Charles Cogan](#)

Timeline Tags: [War in Afghanistan](#)



October 15-16, 1979: Rightists Assert Control of El Salvador's Post-Coup Armed Forces



Almost immediately after a military coup in El Salvador is successful, reformist heads of the military junta are forced out and reactionaries are let in. Two rightists, Colonel José Guillermo García and CIA asset Colonel Nicolás Carranza, are given the positions of minister and vice-minister of defense, respectively. [MONTGOMERY, 1995, PP. 75-76]

Entity Tags: [José Guillermo García](#), [Nicolás Carranza](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-El Salvador \(1980-2002\)](#)



December 8, 1979: Soviet Forces, Lured in by the CIA, Invade Afghanistan





Soviet tanks entering Afghanistan in late 1979.

[Source: Banded Artists Productions] The Soviet Union invades Afghanistan. The Russians were initially invited in by the Afghan government to deal with rising instability and army mutinies, and they start crossing the border on December 8. But on December 26, Russian troops storm the presidential palace, kill the country's leader, Haizullah Amin, and the invitation turns into an invasion. [BLUM, 1995, PP. 342] Later declassified high-level Russian documents will show that the Russian leadership believed that Amin, who took power in a violent coup from another pro-Soviet leader two months before, had secret contacts with the US embassy and was probably a US agent. Further, one document from this month claims that "the right wing Muslim opposition" has "practically established their control in many provinces... using foreign support." [COOLEY, 2002, PP. 8] It has been commonly believed that the invasion was unprovoked, but the Russians will later be proven largely correct. In a 1998 interview, Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Jimmy Carter's National Security Adviser, will reveal that earlier in the year Carter authorized the CIA to destabilize the government, provoking the Russians to invade (see [July 3, 1979](#)). [LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR (PARIS), 1/1998; MIRROR, 1/29/2002] Further, CIA covert action in the country actually began in 1978 (see [1978](#)), if not earlier (see [1973-1979](#)). The US and Saudi Arabia will give a huge amount of money (estimates range up to \$40 billion total for the war) to support the mujaheddin guerrilla fighters opposing the Russians, and a decade-long war will ensue. [NATION, 2/15/1999]

Entity Tags: [United States](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), [Haizullah Amin](#), [Zbigniew Brzezinski](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)



1980-1989: \$600 Million for Afghan War Passes through Bin Laden Charity Fronts



From 1980 to 1989, about \$600 million is passed through Osama bin Laden's charity fronts, according to Michael Scheuer, head of the CIA's first bin Laden unit. Most of it goes through the charity front Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK), also known as Al-Kifah. The money generally comes from donors in Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf, and is used to arm and supply the

mujaheddin fighting in Afghanistan. Mohammad Yousaf, a high ranking ISI official, will later say, “It was largely Arab money that saved the system,” since so much of the aid given by the CIA and Saudi Arabia was siphoned away before it got to Afghanistan. “By this I mean cash from rich individuals or private organizations in the Arab world, not Saudi government funds. Without those extra millions the flow of arms actually getting to the mujaheddin would have been cut to a trickle.” [DREYFUSS, 2005, PP. 279-280] Future CIA Director Robert Gates will later claim that in 1985 and 1986, the CIA became aware of Arabs assisting and fighting with the Afghan mujaheddin, and the CIA “examined ways to increase their participation, perhaps in the form of some sort of ‘international brigade,’ but nothing came of it.” [COLL, 2004, PP. 146] However, a CIA official involved in the Afghan war will claim that the CIA directly funded MAK (see [1984 and After](#)).

Entity Tags: [Maktab al-Khidamat](#), [Robert M. Gates](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Michael Scheuer](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Mohammad Yousaf](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)



April 1980: New Leader of Lebanese Militia Forms Alliances with Hezbollah, US Agencies, and Others



Nabih Berri in 1982. [Source: Reza / Corbis] Nabih Berri takes over the Amal Militia, a Shi’a Lebanese paramilitary organization, and tries to build it up as a power base for himself. Although not a fundamentalist Muslim, Berri allies himself with the new regime in Iran and Hezbollah, a fundamentalist Lebanese Shi’a party backed by Iran. Berri also manages to convince Syrian authorities that he will represent their interests in Lebanon and comes to a similar arrangement with the Ba’ath party in Iraq. This is a difficult balance for Berri to keep, as journalists Joe and Susan Trento will later point out, “If he displeased the Iranian mullahs who controlled the supply of money to Hezbollah in Lebanon, he would lose his grip on power.” Former intelligence officer Michael Pilgrim will comment, “Berri was targeted for CIA recruitment and so were members of his militia... I think it’s safe to say we financed his early trips to Iran.” He also commences relationships with the Drug Enforcement Agency and Defense Intelligence Agency. Unsurprisingly, some of the consequences of this are bad for the

US, and the Trentos will comment: “The relationship would end in a series of deadly disasters for members of our armed services and the CIA. According to US intelligence officials who served in Lebanon at the time, Berri kept the peace with [Iran] and the Shi’a by allowing them to attack Westerners in his Amal-controlled territory. To prove his loyalty to the Shi’a and keep the alliance that was essential to his power base, he failed to pass on intelligence to the United States.” Based on interviews with former intelligence officers and associates of Berri, the Trentos will conclude that he facilitated attacks on the US by Hezbollah by allowing their operatives to pass Amal checkpoints without warning the US, for example before attacks on the US embassy and Marine barracks in 1983 in which hundreds die (see [April 18-October 23, 1983](#)). [[TRENTO AND TRENTO, 2006, PP. 74-77](#)]

Entity Tags: [Nabih Berri](#), [Michael Pilgrim](#), [Drug Enforcement Administration](#), [Hezbollah](#), [Amal](#), [Defense Intelligence Agency](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [US confrontation with Iran](#), [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Summer 1980: CIA Agent: Republicans Open Secret Channel to Iran in Preparation for ‘October Surprise,’ Arms Deals



Robert Sensi’s membership card in Republicans Abroad. [*Source: Larry J. Kolb*] According to a later account by Robert Sensi, a young CIA agent with excellent contacts among prominent Arabs, the Republican National Committee opens what Sensi calls “a secret channel to Iran.” Sensi is not only alluding to the secret plans for the US to sell arms to Iran, which is just developing (see [Early 1980](#)), but to the “October Surprise” of the November 1980 US presidential elections (see [October 1980](#)). Sensi will bring the matter up to author and fellow CIA agent Larry Kolb in a Washington, DC, hotel bar in 1986, but will not go into detail. Sensi will note that CIA Director William Casey has been involved in the US’s secret dealings with Iran since the outset, as has Robert Carter, the deputy director of Ronald Reagan’s presidential campaign. Sensi will say that Casey, Carter, and the other participants are using the overseas political organization Republicans Abroad as cover for more covert activities. The organization is “a great drawing card,” according to Sensi, who is a member. “It gives us access to embassies and a lot of people we would have had a hard time getting to without the cachet of representing the ruling party in the United States.” Writing in 2007, Kolb will

reflect on the Republican Party’s “own in-house team of covert operatives, as capable of conducting espionage and sabotage for the Republican Party as for the CIA. It seemed the Republicans were still doing what they had been caught doing during Watergate. Spying on and sabotaging the Democrats. Ratf_cking, as the Republican operatives called it (see [October 7, 1972](#)). Coming just a few years after the Watergate national Passion Play and all it had put our country through, this seemed flagrant and foul, like sleaze squared. And like politics-as-usual.” [[KOLB, 2007, PP. 28-29](#)]

Entity Tags: [Republican National Committee](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Larry Kolb](#), [Ronald Reagan](#), [William Casey](#), [Robert Carter](#), [Robert Sensi](#), [Republicans Abroad](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#), [Elections Before 2000](#)



Mid-1980s-late 1990s: ‘Joe T’ Begins Working for CIA



Joe T., an engineer, begins working for the CIA. [[WASHINGTON POST, 8/10/2003](#) SOURCES: UNNAMED US INTELLIGENCE, US ADMINISTRATION, AND/OR UN INSPECTORS]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Joe Turner](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



September 1980: Pro-American Military Coup Takes Place in Turkey



General Kenal Evren leads a military coup in Turkey. Richard Perle, in a 1999 article, will justify the pro-American coup as “a response by the Turkish armed forces to the breakdown of order and security and the rise of terrorism and widespread random violence in Turkey.” According to Perle, the wave of terrorism in Turkey “threatened to undermine American support, both popular and official, for Turkey and for close cooperation in security affairs between the United States and Turkey.” [[FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE, 9/1999](#)] Perle says Turkey’s civilian government failed to maintain law and order. Conveniently, the clampdown that follows the coup enables the new government to begin implementing the pro-US strategic agenda that was laid out during the 1979 meeting arranged by Perle’s mentor, Albert Wohlstetter (see [1979](#)). It is now known that the terrorism that destabilized Turkey in the late 1970s was predominately the work of secret groups run by the Turkish military in conjunction with the CIA and NATO. [[PROGRESSIVE, 4/1997](#); [COVERT ACTION QUARTERLY, 6/1997](#); [GANSER, 12/17/2004](#)]

Entity Tags: [Kenal Evren](#), [Richard Perle](#), [Albert Wohlstetter](#)

Timeline Tags: [Alleged Use of False Flag Attacks](#)



October 1980: Reagan Advisers Obtain Confidential Documents from Carter Campaign



Advisers to presidential candidate Ronald Reagan obtain stolen confidential briefing books that were meant to prepare opponent Jimmy Carter for an upcoming debate. The documents are allegedly passed from campaign manager and future CIA Director William Casey to top Reagan campaign aide James Baker. Reagan and his advisers presumably use the materials to gain an advantage over Carter in the nationally televised debate on October 28, 1980. Some of those behind the theft will reportedly form a secret parallel government after Reagan is elected president (see [January 1980-July 1987](#)). The theft will become publicly disclosed in 1983, causing internal strife and finger-pointing within the administration. [[CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 6/10/1983](#); MIAMI HERALD, 7/5/1987]

Entity Tags: [James Earl “Jimmy” Carter, Jr.](#), [James A. Baker](#), [Reagan administration](#), [Ronald Reagan](#), [William Casey](#)

Timeline Tags: [Civil Liberties](#)



November 1980: Reagan Adviser Welcomed at Village Held by Kymer Rouge



Ray Cline, former deputy director of the CIA, visits a Khmer Rouge camp inside Cambodia as a senior foreign-policy adviser to President-elect Ronald Reagan. A Khmer Rouge press release reports that Cline “was warmly greeted by thousands of villagers.” [[BLUM, 1995](#)]

Entity Tags: [Ray Cline](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Cambodia \(1955-1993\)](#)



1982: CIA, NSC Official Becomes Bush’s Foreign Policy Adviser





Donald Gregg. [Source: Spartacus Educational] Vice President George H. W. Bush asks CIA agent and National Security Council official Donald Gregg to serve as his national security and foreign policy adviser. Gregg agrees, and retires from the CIA. Gregg will work closely with Bush and former CIA agent Felix Rodriguez to help put together a covert operation to supply the Nicaraguan Contras with arms, cash, and supplies. [[SPARTACUS SCHOOLNET, 12/28/2007](#)]

Entity Tags: [National Security Council](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Contras](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Felix Rodriguez](#), [Donald Gregg](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



January 28, 1981: Reagan Officials Planning to Sell Arms to Iran



Alexander Haig. [Source: Wally McNamee / Corbis] The newly installed Reagan administration publicly maintains a hard line against Iran, a nation vastly unpopular among Americans who have not forgiven that nation for holding 52 of its citizens hostage for well over a year and murdering a CIA station chief. (Years later, Vice President Bush will call it “an understandable animosity, a hatred, really,” and add, “I feel that way myself.”) President Reagan’s secretary of state, Alexander Haig, says bluntly, “Let me state categorically today there will be no military equipment provided to the government of Iran.” Yet within weeks of

taking office, Reagan officials will begin putting together a continuing package of secret arms sales to Iran. [[NEW YORKER, 11/2/1992](#)]

Entity Tags: [Alexander M. Haig, Jr.](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Reagan administration](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [US confrontation with Iran](#), [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



February 1981 and After: US Allegedly Helps Turn Soviet Soldiers Fighting in Afghanistan into Drug Addicts



Alexandre de Marenches, head of French intelligence and leader of the Safari Club, a secret cabal of intelligence agencies, meets President Reagan at the White House shortly after Reagan's inauguration. De Marenches proposes a joint French-American-ISI operation to counter the Soviets in Afghanistan, and dubs it Operation Mosquito. As de Marenches will later explain in his memoirs, he suggests making fake Russian newspapers with articles designed to demoralize Soviet troops, and other propaganda. He also suggests the US take drugs seized by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and other agencies that would normally be destroyed and secretly supply them to Soviet soldiers fighting in Afghanistan instead. According to de Marenches, the idea is ultimately rejected because of fear of media leaks. But in fact, fake issues of the Soviet army newspaper later do appear in Kabul, Afghanistan. And large quantities of hashish, opium, and heroin are made available to Soviet soldiers, resulting in widespread addiction. Such addiction to local drugs would have taken place to some degree in any case, but intriguingly, some quantities of cocaine also appear in Afghanistan. At the time, cocaine is only grown in South America. A team of Russian military historians will later write a candid book on the Afghan war and one will say, "there certainly was circumstantial evidence for some kind of systematic program" to addict Soviet soldiers. [[COOLEY, 2002, PP. 106-108](#)] In 1982, a secret memo will exempt the CIA from reporting on drug smuggling conducted by CIA officers or assets (see [February 11, 1982](#)). Mathea Falco, head of the State Department's International Narcotics Control program, will later allege that the CIA and ISI worked together to encourage the mujaheddin to addict Soviet troops. And a book cowritten by two Time magazine reporters will allege that "a few American intelligence operatives were deeply emeshed in the drug trade" during the war. [[SCOTT, 2007, PP. 124-125](#)]

Entity Tags: [Mathea Falco](#), [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#), [Alexandre de Marenches](#), [Ronald Reagan](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [War in Afghanistan](#)



May 1981: Soviet Union Prepares for US First Strike



Yuri Andropov, the head of the Soviet KGB intelligence agency, tells a group of KGB officers that the US is actively preparing for war with the USSR, and warns of “the possibility of a nuclear first strike” by the Americans. The KGB describes the program thusly: “One of the chief directions for the activity of the KGB’s foreign service is to organize detection and assessment of signs of preparation [for a surprise nuclear attack] in all possible areas, i.e., political, economic and military sectors, civil defense and the activity of the special services.” Andropov, who will become the head of the Soviet government in 1982, helps direct the KGB and GRU (the Soviet military intelligence agency) to make preparations for that strike its top priority. The agencies instruct Soviet agents in NATO capitals and Japan to make “close observation[s] of all political, military, and intelligence activities that might indicate preparations for mobilization.” The program, called VRYAN (the Soviet acronym for “Surprise Nuclear Missile Attack”), takes even greater priority once Andropov rises to power. [FISCHER, 3/19/2007; SCOBLIC, 2008, PP. 134] (Others such as CIA researcher Benjamin Fischer will refer to the program in their writings as “Operation RYAN.”) Fischer will write that VRYAN, or RYAN, is based on “genuine fears” among the Soviet military and political leadership. Andropov’s KGB in particular feels that the international situation, or what the Soviets call the “correlation of world forces,” is “turning against the USSR and increasing its vulnerability.” In conjunction with the Reagan’s administration hardline stance towards the Soviet Union, an increase in US-led military exercises and psychological warfare missions conducted close to Soviet borders, and an increase in the US’s ability to thwart Soviet early warning systems, this perception prompts the Soviets to not only voice their concern over the possibility of a US first strike, but to prepare for it. Fischer also notes that in some ways, Operation VRYAN and Moscow’s uneasiness over the US threat is sparked by bitter memories of Operation Barbarossa, the 1941 surprise invasion of the Soviet Union by the Nazis. The program, Fischer will write, abandons caution and the usual tradecraft of intelligence-gathering, and instead relies on often-unreliable data supplied by East German intelligence sources. [FISCHER, 3/19/2007]

Entity Tags: [Operation VRYAN](#), [Yuri Andropov](#), [Benjamin Fischer](#), [KGB](#), [Russian Military Intelligence \(GRU\)](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#)



Shortly After May 1, 1981: Pakistani Dictator Orders A. Q. Khan to Prepare Cold Test; CIA Learns of Plan



Pakistani dictator Muhammad Zia ul-Haq orders nuclear scientist A. Q. Khan to prepare for a cold test of a nuclear weapon. The instruction is given shortly after Khan tells Zia that he has

managed to enrich uranium to weapons grade (see [\(March-April 1981\)](#)), and after Zia visits the facility where Khan works, re-naming it after him. The CIA will soon learn of this instruction.

[[LEVY AND SCOTT-CLARK, 2007, PP. 84-85, 90](#)]

Entity Tags: [Abdul Qadeer Khan](#), [Muhammad Zia ul-Haq](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)



June 21, 1981: Two Members of 'Operation Red Dog,' White Supremacist-Led Plan to Overthrow Government of Caribbean Island Nation, Convicted of Conspiracy, Violation of Neutrality Act



Douglas Bay, Dominica. [Source: *Happy Tellus (.com)*]

Two of three mercenaries accused of plotting to overthrow the government of the tiny Caribbean island nation of Dominica are found guilty of conspiracy and violation of the Neutrality Act. Stephen Don Black, a prominent Alabama Ku Klux Klan leader, and Joe Daniel Hawkins, a Klansman from Mississippi, are found guilty of the charges. Both are found not guilty of violating five firearms statutes. The plot began in 1979, when the neighboring island country of Grenada was taken over by a socialist regime with ties to the Communist government of Cuba's Fidel Castro. Mike Perdue, a former Marine and prominent white supremacist, discussed retaking Grenada with ousted former Prime Minister Eric Gairy. Perdue sought out Klan Imperial Wizard David Duke, who put him in touch with white supremacist Donald Clarke Andrews, then living in Canada. Andrews had led the white supremacist group Western Guard, and after serving a jail sentence for neo-Nazi activities, founded a new pro-Aryan group, the Nationalist Party of Canada. Andrews convinced Perdue that Dominica might be a good place from which to stage a coup in Grenada. Dominica was in the grip of grinding poverty, having been devastated by a hurricane in 1979 and plagued with racial violence from a splinter group of Rastafarians called the Dreads. The island's government was unstable and, Perdue and Andrews believed, ripe for overthrow. Perdue partnered with another supremacist, Wolfgang Droege, and began planning to stage a coup that would place former Prime Minister Patrick John back in power. Even though John was something of a leftist, and wanted to displace the much more right-wing and pro-American Prime Minister, Eugenia Charles, in September 1980 Perdue and John agreed in writing to commence what they called "Operation Red Dog," a violent coup with the goal of placing John back in charge of the government. The Washington Times will later report: "The coup forged some odd alliances. [It] united right-wing North Americans and Caribbean leftists, white nationalists and black revolutionaries; First World

capitalists and Third World Socialists.” Canadian writer Stewart Bell later describes Perdue as a man of no real political convictions and a lust for money who routinely lies about his Vietnam experience (he never served in Southeast Asia, and did not tell his companions that he was a homosexual), and Droege as a German-Canadian high school dropout with neo-Nazi sympathies. Others involved in the putative coup are nightclub owner and white supremacist Charles Yanover, gunrunner Sydney Burnett-Alleyne (who supplied the initial connection to John), Black, Hawkins, and a small number of others. The mercenaries’ plan was to put John back in power; in return, John would give them license to use the island as a haven for casinos, drug smuggling, and money laundering. Almost from the outset, the conspiracy was infiltrated by two agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF), John Osburg and Wally Grafton, who were alerted to the planned coup by charter boat captain Mike Howell. Perdue had tried to hire Howell to take the mercenaries to Dominica, and told Howell that his was a CIA operation. Members of the operation also talked to others about it; one even gave a “secret” interview to a radio reporter in Hamilton. Osburg and Grafton alerted law enforcement authorities; on the night of the raid, federal authorities overwhelmed the small band of mercenaries, arrested them all, and confiscated a large number of firearms, 10 pounds of dynamite, over 5,000 rounds of ammunition, and a large red-and-black Nazi flag. The operation was later derisively termed the “Bayou of Pigs,” a joking reference to the 1961 attempt by right-wing American mercenaries to overthrow Castro’s government. John was arrested in Dominica. Perdue and six other participants have already pled guilty to violating the Neutrality Act. Before his sentencing of three years in prison, Black says, “What we were doing was in the best interests of the United States and its security in the hemisphere, and we feel betrayed by our own government.” [\[TIME, 5/11/1981; UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL, 6/21/1981; NEW TIMES, 2/19/1998; WASHINGTON TIMES, 10/5/2008; WINNIPEG FREE PRESS, 11/2/2008\]](#) After serving his jail term, Black will go on to found the influential white supremacist organization Stormfront (see [March 1995](#) and [June 22, 2008](#)).

Entity Tags: [Eugenia Charles](#), [Washington Times](#), [Eric Gairy](#), [Don Black](#), [David Duke](#), [Charles Yanover](#), [Wally Grafton](#), [US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms](#), [Wolfgang Droege](#), [Stormfront](#), [Ku Klux Klan](#), [John Osburg](#), [Joe Daniel Hawkins](#), [Mike Howell](#), [Sydney Burnett-Alleyne](#), [Mike Perdue](#), [Donald Clarke Andrews](#), [Stewart Bell](#), [Patrick John](#)

Timeline Tags: [US Domestic Terrorism](#)



1982: Future WMD Chief Joins CIA



West Point graduate Rolf Mowatt-Larssen joins the CIA. He will go on to hold a number of senior positions at the agency, including deputy associate director of central intelligence for military support, chief of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Department, Counterterrorism Center, and finally chief of the Europe division in the directorate of operations. His overseas assignments will include Moscow, Stockholm, Athens, Zurich, and Oslo. Mowatt-Larssen will

also receive a number of awards, including the CIA Director's Award, Distinguished Career Intelligence Medal, Commendation Medal, and Secretary of Defense Civilian Distinguished Service Medal. [[US DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, 12/2/2008](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Rolf Mowatt-Larsen](#)

Timeline Tags: [Misc Entries](#)



February 11, 1982: CIA Is Given Green Light to Take Part in Illegal Drug Trade in Afghanistan



CIA Director William Casey gets a legal exemption sparing the CIA for a requirement that they report on drug smuggling by CIA officers, agents, or assets. Attorney General William French Smith grants the exemption in a secret memorandum. On March 2, Casey thanks Smith for the exemption, saying it will help protect intelligence sources and methods. [[COOLEY, 2002, PP. 110-111](#)] There are allegations that in 1981 President Reagan approved a covert program to weaken Soviet soldiers fighting in Afghanistan by addicting them to illegal drugs (see [February 1981 and After](#)). A book cowritten by two Time magazine reporters will even allege that “a few American intelligence operatives were deeply emeshed in the drug trade” during the war. [[SCOTT, 2007, PP. 124-125](#)] President Clinton will rescind the exemption in 1995. [[COOLEY, 2002, PP. 111](#)]

Entity Tags: [William French Smith](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [William Casey](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)



After June 16, 1982: Arrest of 'Rogue' Agent Leads US to Divert Blame for Terrorist Acts from Iran to Libya



According to investigative journalists Joe and Susan Trento, the arrest of former CIA agent Edwin Wilson, who was involved in business dealings with Libya, has serious consequences for US terrorism policy: “Throughout the 1980s the United States used its intelligence services to divert blame from Iran and Hezbollah onto Libya as part of its entanglement in Iran-Contra with the so-called moderate Iranians with whom the Reagan administration dealt. Ever since international arms dealer Edwin Wilson had been captured and imprisoned in the early 1980s, American intelligence and the White House had labeled Libya a rogue nation, and Libyan dictator Mu’ammar al-Qadhafi a terrorist leader. The intelligence operation went so far that the United States actually recruited a gang of Lebanese criminals to pretend to be a cell of Libyan-backed terrorists conducting violent acts around the world.... These activities, all

choreographed by the CIA, were fed to allies such as West Germany as authentic intelligence that implicated Libya for terrorists acts that were either fake or were, in reality, authorized by Iran and carried out by Hezbollah and other surrogate groups.”

Benefit to Iran - This policy apparently benefits Iran: “The Reagan administration had given the Iranians plenty of cards to play. The biggest card was the help it had provided making Libya seem like the ultimate source of all terrorist acts.... When the Reagan administration turned Libya into a vicious terrorist nation operating throughout Europe, that gave Iran the perfect opening for retribution.”

No action against Hezbollah - In addition, it prevents the US from taking action against Hezbollah, even though Hezbollah is killing Americans: “Because of the Iran-Contra scandal—the selling of weapons to Iran to fund the war in Central America—the Reagan administration ended up protecting Iran’s number one terrorist proxy, Hezbollah, while at the same time Hezbollah’s terrorists were killing and kidnapping hundreds of Americans. While secretly working with the Iranian government, the Reagan administration manipulated intelligence to blame Libya for terrorist attacks for which Hezbollah was responsible. During the 1980s Hezbollah killed and terrorized hundreds of Americans in Beirut, bombing the US Marine barracks, blowing up the CIA station, and killing State Department employees in a bomb attack on the US embassy. Hezbollah did all this with the help of local militia leaders whom the United States relied on as its secret conduits to Iran for its sale of weapons.” [TRENTO AND TRENTO, 2006, PP. XVI, 64-5]

Entity Tags: [Joseph Trento](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Edwin Wilson](#), [Iran](#), [Susan Trento](#), [Hezbollah](#), [Mu’ammarr al-Qadhafi](#)

Timeline Tags: [US confrontation with Iran](#), [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



November-December 1982: Rep. Charlie Wilson Pushes for Expansion of US Support for Anti-Soviet Forces in Afghanistan



In November 1982, US Representative Charlie Wilson (D-TX) travels to Islamabad, Pakistan, and meets with President Muhammad Zia ul-Haq. He promises Zia to deliver a crucial weapons system that has so far been denied by the US—the latest radar systems for Pakistan’s F-16 fighter planes. Wilson also meets with CIA Station Chief Howard Hart, who is in charge of providing support for the Afghan resistance to the Soviets. He urges Hart to expand the program and stresses that vast amounts of money can be made available. [CRILE, 2003, PP. 106-129] The next month, President Zia comes to the US to meet with President Reagan. Zia first meets with Wilson in Houston and expresses his gratitude for helping Pakistan acquire F-16 radar systems (see [November-December 1982](#)). Wilson then broaches the subject of Pakistan secretly purchasing arms from Israel for the Afghan War. Zia agrees to this in principle. [CRILE, 2003, PP. 131-132]

Entity Tags: [Ronald Reagan](#), [Charlie Wilson](#), [Howard Hart](#), [Muhammad Zia ul-Haq](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)



1983-1987: CIA Assets in Afghanistan Push Agency's Interests within ISI



According to Mohammad Yousaf, director of the Pakistani ISI's Afghan Bureau during this period, the CIA has many paid assets among the Afghan mujaheddin during this period. One function of these CIA assets is to lobby the ISI for the CIA's policies, especially with regard to weapons procurement. [[YOUSAF AND ADKIN, 1992, PP. 91-92](#)]

Entity Tags: [Mohammad Yousaf](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)



March 17, 1983: Bush's Foreign Policy Adviser, Ex-CIA Agent Create Plan to Supply Nicaraguan Contras



Vice President George Bush hosts a secret meeting with his foreign policy adviser, Donald Gregg (see [1982](#)), and former CIA agent Felix Rodriguez. The meeting is the first impetus of the National Security Council (NSC)'s initiative to secretly, and illegally, fund the Nicaraguan Contras in an attempt to overthrow that country's socialist government. Rodriguez agrees to run a central supply depot at Ilopango Air Base in El Salvador. In a memo to NSC chief Robert McFarlane, Gregg will note that the plan is rooted in the experience of running "anti-Vietcong operations in Vietnam from 1970-1972." Gregg will also note that "Felix Rodriguez, who wrote the attached plan, both worked for me in Vietnam and carried out the actual operations outlined above." [[SPARTACUS SCHOOLNET, 12/28/2007](#)] Rodriguez and Gregg, along with others such as Watergate burglar Frank Sturgis (see [April-June 1972](#)), were part of the CIA's "Operation 40," an assassination squad that operated in Cuba and the Caribbean during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Rodriguez tried at least once, in 1961, to assassinate Cuban dictator Fidel Castro. In 1967, Rodriguez interrogated and executed South American revolutionary Che Guevara. He was part of the infamous and shadowy Operation Phoenix during the Vietnam War. [[SPARTACUS SCHOOLNET, 1/17/2008](#)]

Entity Tags: [Felix Rodriguez](#), [Donald Gregg](#), [Contras](#), [Robert C. McFarlane](#), [Fidel Castro](#), [Frank Sturgis](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Ché Guevara](#), ['Operation 40'](#), [National Security Council](#), ['Operation Phoenix'](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



March 27, 1983: Soviet Union Calls US 'Star Wars' Proposal 'Insane'



In an unusual display of rhetorical anger, the Soviet Union's General Secretary, Yuri Andropov, responds to the US's announcement of its development of an anti-ballistic missile defense (SDI, or "Star Wars"—see [March 23, 1983](#)) by accusing President Reagan of "inventing new plans on how to unleash a nuclear war in the best way, with the hope of winning it." CIA analyst Benjamin Fischer will later call Andropov's statement "unprecedented." Ignoring the counsel of his own advisers to remain calm, Andropov, with unusually heated rhetoric, denounces the US program as a "bid to disarm the Soviet Union in the face of the US nuclear threat." Such space-based defense, he says, "would open the floodgates of a runaway race of all types of strategic arms, both offensive and defensive. Such is the real significance, the seamy side, so to say, of Washington's 'defensive conception.'... The Soviet Union will never be caught defenseless by any threat.... Engaging in this is not just irresponsible, it is insane.... Washington's actions are putting the entire world in jeopardy." Andropov's statement violates what Fischer will describe as a "longstanding taboo" against "citing numbers and capabilities of US nuclear weapons in the mass media" as well as "referr[ing] to Soviet weapons with highly unusual specificity." Fischer will go on to note: "[F]or the first time since 1953, the top Soviet leader was telling his nation that the world was on the verge of a nuclear holocaust. If candor is a sign of sincerity, then Moscow was worried." [[FISCHER, 3/19/2007](#); [SCOBLIC, 2008, PP. 134](#)]

Entity Tags: [Ronald Reagan](#), [Strategic Defense Initiative](#), [Yuri Andropov](#), [Benjamin Fischer](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#)



November 2-11, 1983: 'Able Archer' Almost Starts Nuclear Exchange





Test firing of a US Pershing II IRBM. [Source: US Army / Public domain]

The US and its NATO allies carry out a military exercise called “Able Archer,” or “Able Archer 83,” designed to simulate the use of nuclear weapons in an assault against the Soviet Union, and to test command and control procedures. The military exercise comes perilously close to touching off a real nuclear exchange with the USSR. The exercise—not the first of its kind, but the most expansive—is huge, spanning Europe from Turkey to Scandinavia; it involves the heads of state of countries like Great Britain and Germany; and, perhaps most alarmingly for the Soviets, involves NATO forces escalating their military alert levels to DEFCON-1, at which point NATO nuclear weapons have their safeguards disabled and are ready for launch. The Soviet’s VRYAN program to detect a possible assault (see [May 1981](#)) is extremely active. On November 8, Moscow sends high-priority telegrams to its KGB stations in Western Europe demanding information about a possible surprise first attack on the USSR. Though little actual evidence exists, some sources erroneously tell Moscow that NATO ground forces are mobilizing. The KGB concludes that “Able Archer” is a cover for a real military assault; Warsaw Pact fighter units armed with nuclear weapons are put on alert in East Germany and Poland. [[SCOBLIC, 2008, PP. 134-135](#); [CARDIFF WESTERN NEWS, 11/10/2008](#)]

‘Frighteningly Close’ to Nuclear War, Says Soviet Intelligence Official - Oleg Gordievsky, the intelligence chief of the Soviet embassy in London and a British double agent, warns the British that the West is entering what he calls a “danger zone.” The Daily Telegraph will later write, “It was on Nov. 8-9 that the Kremlin had pressed what came close to a panic button.” [[WASHINGTON POST, 10/16/1988](#)] In his memoirs, Gordievsky will write: “In the tense atmosphere generated by the crises and rhetoric of the past few months, the KGB concluded that American forces had been placed on alert—and might even have begun the countdown to war. ... [D]uring ABLE ARCHER 83 it had, without realizing it, come frighteningly close—certainly closer than at any time since the Cuban missile crisis of 1962.” [[FISCHER, 3/19/2007](#)]

Reagan ‘Shocked’ at Soviet Reaction - The exercise ends without incident, but National

Security Adviser Robert McFarlane will later admit, “The situation was very grave.” Secretary of State George Shultz terms the exercise “a close call” and “quite sobering.” In early 1984, when the CIA reports that the Soviets had been convinced that the US was readying a nuclear strike, President Reagan will be, in author J. Peter Scoblic’s words, “shocked” to realize that he and his administration “had nearly started a nuclear war.” Reagan, in McFarlane’s recollection, will show “genuine anxiety” and begin talking about the concept of Armageddon—the Biblical end times—with his advisers. [[FISCHER, 3/19/2007](#); [SCOBLIC, 2008, PP. 134-135](#)]

Entity Tags: [Operation VRYAN](#), [Ronald Reagan](#), [North Atlantic Treaty Organization](#), [KGB](#), [J. Peter Scoblic](#), [George Shultz](#), [Robert C. McFarlane](#), ['Able Archer'](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Oleg Gordievsky](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#)



1984: CIA Assists Iraq in Chemical Weapons Attacks



The CIA secretly provides Iraqi intelligence with instructions on how to “calibrate” its mustard gas attacks on Iranian troops. [[WASHINGTON POST, 12/15/1986](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#), [US-Iraq 1980s](#)



Early 1984: Port Authority Establishes Office of Special Planning



Peter Goldmark. [*Source: Environmental Defense Fund*]Peter Goldmark, the executive director of the New York Port Authority, is concerned that, in light of terrorist attacks occurring around the world (see [April 18-October 23, 1983](#)), Port Authority facilities, including

the World Trade Center, could become terrorist targets. [[ASSOCIATED PRESS, 9/28/2005](#); [NEW YORK TIMES, 10/27/2005](#)] He therefore creates a unit called the Office of Special Planning (OSP) to evaluate the vulnerabilities of all Port Authority facilities and present recommendations to minimize the risks of attack. The OSP is staffed by Port Authority police and civilian workers, and is headed by Edward O’Sullivan, who has experience in counterterrorism from earlier careers in the Navy and Marine Corps. In carrying out its work, the OSP will consult with such US agencies as the FBI, CIA, Secret Service, NSA, and Defense Department. It will also consult with security officials from other countries that have gained expertise in combating terrorism, such as England, France, Italy, and Israel. [[GLANZ AND LIPTON, 2004, PP. 226](#); [NEW YORK COUNTY SUPREME COURT, 1/20/2004](#)] According to Peter Caram, head of the Port Authority’s Terrorist Intelligence Unit, the OSP will develop “an expertise unmatched in the United States.” [[CARAM, 2001, PP. 12](#)] In 1985 it will issue a report called “Counter-Terrorism Perspectives: The World Trade Center” (see [November 1985](#)). [[NEW YORK COURT OF APPEALS, 2/16/1999](#)] It will exist until 1987. [[VILLAGE VOICE, 1/5/2000](#)]

Entity Tags: [Office of Special Planning](#), [Peter Goldmark](#), [New York Port Authority](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



March 3, 1984: CIA Station Chief in Beirut Kidnapped; Will Die in Captivity



Lt. Col. William Buckley. [*Source: Arlington Cemetery (.net)*] William Buckley, the CIA station chief in Beirut, is kidnapped by militants who claim to be part of a mysterious organization they call Islamic Jihad. Buckley will die in June 1985, after 15 months of captivity, neglect, and torture. The CIA will not acknowledge his death until 1987. His body will not be returned to the US until December 1991. Buckley’s captivity, and that of at least five other American hostages, will be cited as one of the precipitating factors in the Iran-Contra arms deals. [[PBS, 2000](#); [ARLINGTON CEMETERY \(.NET\), 4/23/2006](#)] (Note: Some sources cite the date of his capture as March 16, not March 3.) [[NEW YORK TIMES, 11/19/1987](#)] It remains unclear exactly who Buckley’s captors are. This “Islamic Jihad” organization is not the same group as

is later led by Sunni militant Ayman al-Zawahiri, nor is it the Palestinian organization of the same name. In the 2001 book *Sacred Rage*, author Robin B. Wright notes that a group spokesman claims, “We are neither Iranians, Syrians nor Palestinians, but Muslims who follow the precepts of the Koran.” Wright calls the organization “a mysterious group about which nothing was known” except for its “pro-Iranian” ideology, probably “more of an information network for a variety of cells or movements rather than a cohesive or structured independent group of extremists.” [WRIGHT, 2001, PP. 73, 85] New Yorker reporter Jeffrey Goldberg later writes that he believes the organization is either a precursor to the Lebanese militant organization Hezbollah or a more violent adjunct to that organization. [NEW YORKER, 10/14/2002]

Entity Tags: [Ayman al-Zawahiri](#), [Jeffrey Goldberg](#), [William Francis Buckley](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Hezbollah](#), [Robin B. Wright](#), [Islamic Jihad Organization](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



May 1984: CIA Officer Introduces NSC’s Oliver North to Nicaraguan Contra Leaders



Duane Clarridge, a CIA officer who has cultivated contacts with Nicaraguan rebels, introduces National Security Council staffer Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North to the leaders of the Nicaraguan “Contras,” currently operating out of Honduras. The Contras are dedicated to the overthrow of the Socialist, democratically elected Sandinista government. Because the US government views the Sandinistas as aligned with the Communist government of Cuba, it too opposes the Sandinistas, and views the Contras as a band of “freedom fighters” worthy of support. Clarridge tells the Contra leaders that if Congress cuts off aid to the Contras in light of recent revelations that the CIA mined Nicaraguan harbors, North will continue working with them on a covert basis. [NEW YORK TIMES, 11/19/1987]

Entity Tags: [Contras](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Duane Clarridge](#), [Oliver North](#), [National Security Council](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



August 1984: CIA Establishes Intelligence Link With Iraq



The CIA establishes a direct intelligence link with Iraq. [WASHINGTON POST, 12/15/1986]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Iraq 1980s](#)



(September 1984-September 1986): Later Head of CIA's Alec Station Serves in Central African Republic



Richard Blee, a CIA officer who will later go on to head the agency's Osama bin Laden unit before 9/11 (see [June 1999](#)), serves in the Central African Republic. The State Department's September 1984, January 1985, May 1985, and September 1986 publications "Key Officers of Foreign Service Posts" will list Blee as the consular officer at the US embassy in Bangui. [[US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 9/1984, PP. 12](#); [US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 1/1985, PP. 12](#); [US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 5/1985, PP. 12](#); [US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 9/1986, PP. 12](#)] However, given his CIA affiliation he is presumably attached to the CIA station there.

Entity Tags: [US Department of State](#), [CIA Bangui Station](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Richard Blee](#)

Timeline Tags: [Misc Entries](#)



October 1984: CIA Afghan Covert Operations Budget Increases



Rep. Charlie Wilson. [*Source: Sam Houston State University*] Primarily due to the pressure from Rep. Charlie Wilson (D-TX), the CIA's budget for the Afghan covert operations is tripled in a matter of a few weeks. The CIA initially resisted accepting the funds, but according to William Casey's executive assistant Robert Gates, "Wilson just steamrolled [CIA Near East Division Chief Charles]—and the CIA for that matter." [[CRILE, 2003, PP. 102](#)] Richard Clarke, a State Department analyst who later will become counterterrorism "tsar" for Presidents Clinton and George W. Bush, will claim, "Unclassified studies show that [covert aid] grew from \$35 million in 1982 to \$600 million in 1987. With few exceptions, the funds bought

materiel that was given to Afghan fighters by [the ISI]. CIA personnel were not authorized to enter Afghanistan, except rarely.” [CLARKE, 2004, PP. 50]

Entity Tags: [Robert M. Gates](#), [Charlie Wilson](#), [Richard A. Clarke](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Charles Cogen](#), [William Casey](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)



October 10, 1984: Second Boland Amendment Outlaws CIA, Defense Department, or Third-Party Funding of Contras



Congress passes the second Boland Amendment, which outlaws the use of “third-party nations” to support the Contras. The bill also bars the use of funds by the CIA, the Defense Department, or any intelligence agency for “supporting, directly or indirectly, military or paramilitary operations in Nicaragua by any nation, group, organization or individual.” [PBS, 2000] The amendment is largely in response to the efforts of the Reagan administration to get around the restrictions of the first amendment (see [December 1982](#)), and the CIA’s mining of three Nicaraguan harbors. This amendment is far more restrictive than the first, saying flatly, “During fiscal year 1985, no funds available to the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Defense, or any other agency or entity of the United States involved in intelligence activities may be obligated or expended for the purpose or which would have the effect of supporting, directly or indirectly, military or paramilitary operations in Nicaragua by any nation, group, organization, movement, or individual.” [NEW YORK TIMES, 7/10/1987; HOUSE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE, 2005; SAVAGE, 2007, PP. 53] “There are no exceptions to the prohibition,” says Edward Boland (D-MA), the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee and the primary sponsor of the amendment. Contra supporters in Congress denounce the bill, with Dick Cheney (R-WY) calling it a “killer amendment” that will force the Contras “to lay down their arms.” After President Reagan signs it into law, Cheney launches a lengthy, determined effort to persuade his colleagues to rescind the amendment. Inside the White House, particularly in the National Security Council, a number of Reagan officials, including National Security Adviser John Poindexter and his aide Colonel Oliver North, begin conspiring to circumvent the amendment with a complex scheme involving selling arms to Iran at inflated prices in exchange for American hostages held by Lebanese militants, and using the profits to fund the Contras. [SAVAGE, 2007, PP. 53]

Entity Tags: [US Congress](#), [US Department of Defense](#), [Richard \(“Dick”\) Cheney](#), [National Security Council](#), [John Poindexter](#), [Edward Boland](#), [Contras](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Ronald Reagan](#), [Reagan administration](#), [Oliver North](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



1984 and After: CIA Allegedly Funds Bin Laden's Main Charity Front



Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK), also known as Al-Kifah, is Osama bin Laden's main charity front in the 1980s. The US government will later call it the "precursor organization to al-Qaeda" (see [Late 1984](#)). In 2005, investigative journalist Joe Trento will write, "CIA money was actually funneled to MAK, since it was recruiting young men to come join the jihad in Afghanistan." Trento will explain this information comes from "a former CIA officer who actually filed these reports" but who cannot be identified because he still works in Afghanistan. MAK was founded in 1984 (see [Late 1984](#)) and was disbanded around 1996 (see [Shortly After November 19, 1995](#)). However, Trento will not specify exactly when CIA aid to MAK began or how long it lasted. [TRENTO, 2005, PP. 342] Bin Laden appears to have other at least indirect contact with the CIA around this time (see [1986](#)).

Entity Tags: [Joseph Trento](#), [Maktab al-Khidamat](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)



December 14, 1984: Deputy Intelligence Director Recommends US Air Strikes against Nicaraguan Military Targets



Deputy Director of Intelligence Robert Gates sends what he calls a "straight talk" memo to his boss, CIA Director William Casey. Gates recommends the US openly deploy military forces to cripple Nicaragua's "Marxist-Leninist" Sandinista government and elevate the Contras into power. Among his "politically more difficult" recommendations, Gates pushes for "the use of air strikes to destroy a considerable portion of Nicaragua's military buildup." Gates's recommendations, which would be tantamount to the US declaring war on Nicaragua, will in large part not be followed. [CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 12/14/1984 ; FOREIGN POLICY, 10/22/2010]

Entity Tags: [William Casey](#), [Robert M. Gates](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#), [US-Nicaragua \(1979-\)](#), [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



1985-1988: CIA Finds 'Tons' of Material for Nuclear Weapons Is Going to Pakistan





A 2007 satellite image of the Khan Research

Laboratories in Kahuta. [Source: GeoEye] Richard Barlow, an analyst working on Pakistan's nuclear program who was released by the State Department in the early 1980s (see [1981-1982](#)), is hired by the CIA's Office of Scientific and Weapons Research (OSWR). Barlow re-analyzes the data and confirms his earlier conclusions—that Pakistan is pursuing a covert nuclear weapons program. Barlow learns about the trade in dual-use components—tools and equipment that can be used to make nuclear weapons, but also for other, non-nuclear purposes, meaning trade in them is hard to spot and regulate. One example of this is a California couple that exports dozens of high-speed cathode-ray oscilloscopes and special cameras to Hong Kong, where they are picked up by Pakistani agents. Barlow realizes that such a large number of oscilloscopes must be for nuclear weapons manufacturing, and also finds a link between the purchase and the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC). Barlow will later comment, “There was tons of it and most of it was ending up in [Pakistan]. Pakistan had a vast network of procurers, operating all over the world.” Barlow also finds that the material is going to a secret nuclear facility near Islamabad, the Khan Research Laboratories, where sensors pick up high levels of enriched uranium in the air and in dust on [trucks] leaving the laboratories. [[NEW YORKER](#), 3/29/1993; [GUARDIAN](#), 10/13/2007] Despite this, in order to prevent Congress from cutting of aid to the anti-Soviet mujaheddin, which flows through Pakistan, US authorities will repeatedly insist Pakistan is not working on a nuclear program (see [August 1985-October 1990](#)).

Entity Tags: [Richard Barlow](#), [Office of Scientific and Weapons Research \(CIA\)](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission](#), [Kahuta Research Laboratories](#)

Timeline Tags: [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)



February 15, 1985: D. G. 'Chip' Tatum Makes Contact with Felix Rodriguez, Briefed on Pegasus Missions



During a flight to La Cieba, Honduras, CIA operative D.G. "Chip" Tatum is instructed to make contact with Major Felix Rodriguez, assigned by Oliver North as Tatum's local handler. Upon arrival in La Cieba, Tatum meets Rodriguez, who then takes the crew to a CIA safe house for the night. Following dinner, Tatum and Rodriguez plan their four-month support calendar. Tatum is scheduled to leave Honduras in June 1985. Tatum is instructed that in addition to flying normal MEDEVAC missions, his duties will include a covert group of missions, the control word for these missions being Pegasus, and with Pegasus missions to take priority over normal medical evacuations. Rodriguez also instructs Tatum as to his chain of command. Missions could be ordered by any of the following:

- Oliver North (assistant national security advisor to the White House);
- Amiram Nir (former Israeli intelligence officer (Mossad) and advisor to Vice President Bush);
- Felix Rodriguez (CIA). [[TATUM, 1996](#)]

Entity Tags: [Oliver North](#), [Amiram Nir](#), [Felix Rodriguez](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



March 1985: Reagan Sharply Increases Covert Support to Afghan Rebels



Ronald Reagan with Afghan mujaheddin leaders.

[Source: *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library*] (click image to enlarge) President Reagan issues a secret National Security Decision Directive to sharply escalate US covert action in Afghanistan. No longer content to simply help harass Soviet forces in Afghanistan, the directive leads to sharp increase in military and other aid to the mujaheddin to completely defeat the Soviets. The CIA begins supplying mujaheddin rebels with "extensive satellite reconnaissance data of

Soviet targets on the Afghan battlefield, plans for military operations based on the satellite intelligence, intercepts of Soviet communications, secret communications networks for the rebels, delayed timing devices for tons of C-4 plastic explosives for urban sabotage and sophisticated guerrilla attacks, long-range sniper rifles, a targeting device for mortars that was linked to a US Navy satellite, wire-guided anti-tank missiles, and other equipment.” CIA Director William Casey also sees the directive as an opportunity to launch attacks inside the Soviet Union itself (see [1984-March 1985](#) and [1985-1987](#)). [WASHINGTON POST, 7/19/1992]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Ronald Reagan](#), [William Casey](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)



May 1985: 'Fuller Memo' Codifies US Policy Towards Arming Iran



Graham Fuller. [Source: Ohio University]The US tilts ever more sharply towards Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war, even though the Reagan administration continues to maintain a posture of overt neutrality in the conflict. The administration has provided covert military aid for both sides in the struggle (see [1981](#) and [October 1983](#)), and has been divided over which regime to support (see [January 14, 1984](#)). It is already involved in “Operation Staunch,” a program designed by Secretary of State George Shultz to stem the flow of weapons to Iran. Now, some officials are arguing that it is time to reverse that course. Graham Fuller, the CIA’s national intelligence officer for the Middle East, writes two controversial secret memos advocating that the administration begin providing support for Iran against Iraq. Fuller is presenting a position long held by national security director Robert McFarlane and two of McFarlane’s aides, Oliver North and Howard Teicher. This pro-Iran group has recently been joined by CIA director William Casey. Both McFarlane and Casey are supportive of Fuller’s memo. Fuller writes in a May 17 memo, “Our tilt to Iraq was timely when Iraq was against the ropes and the Islamic revolution was on a roll. The time may now

have to come to tilt back.” Fuller argues that the US should once again authorize Israel to ship US arms to Iran. Ironically, this is the mirror image of Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger’s argument in favor of supporting Iraq: the US must counter one covert policy with another (see [Early 1982](#)). The pro-Iranian coalition within the administration gives scant consideration to the hostage-taking of seven Americans by Hezbollah, a Lebanese Shi’ite militant group with strong ties to Iran’s theocratic regime. On May 20, Fuller circulates a second memo, called a “Special National Intelligence Estimate” (SNIE), that is only read by a handful of senior White House officials (Ronald Reagan is one of the recipients; George Bush is not). Fuller’s memo is written almost entirely for Reagan’s benefit, and in its arguments, becomes a basis for renewed arms sales to Iran and the resulting Iran-Contra scandal. Fuller evokes one of Reagan’s favorite themes, the trouncing of the Soviet Union in the global arena: “We know that the USSR views Iran as ‘the prize’ in the Gulf. Moscow will improve relations when and where it can... until it gains major influence in that state. The disturbing possibility is that the USSR is far more likely than the US to be first in finding opportunities to improve its ties to Iran.” Interestingly, in 1991, during Robert Gates’s Senate hearings on becoming the director of the CIA, it is learned that Fuller’s memo contradicts the views of career Soviet analysts at the agency, who believe that the Soviet Union has no real hope of making inroads into the Iranian regime. The USSR is the chief arms supplier for Iraq, Iran’s bitter enemy and current opponent in a long and bloody war. Iran is arming the Afghan mujaheddin, the Islamist resistance fighters viewed as a threat by Saddam Hussein. Several CIA analysts will later testify that they believe Fuller deliberately slanted his memo for political reasons. In 1992, Fuller himself will admit that he was wrong, but will deny any politicization. Regardless, Fuller’s memo becomes a critical document shaping the Reagan policy to arm Iran. It is not clear whether Vice President Bush ever saw the memo, but whether he did or not, beginning in 1985 he takes part in numerous White House meetings where the arming of Iran is discussed. If he has objections to the policy, he never voices them. [[TIME, 11/17/1986](#); [NEW YORKER, 11/2/1992](#)]

Entity Tags: [Ronald Reagan](#), [Saddam Hussein](#), [William Casey](#), [Robert M. Gates](#), [Oliver North](#), [Reagan administration](#), [Robert C. McFarlane](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Graham Fuller](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Howard Teicher](#), [Caspar Weinberger](#), [Hezbollah](#), [George Shultz](#)

Timeline Tags: [US confrontation with Iran](#), [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



July-September 1985: Joint US-Egyptian Military Offensive against Libya Proposed by NSC, Rejected by Pentagon



National Security Council officials, led by NSC Director Robert McFarlane, Deputy Director John Poindexter, and senior NSC official Oliver North, develop a two-part strategy to topple the regime of Libyan dictator Mu’ammar al-Qadhafi. The plan is dubbed “Operation Flower,” with its two components called “Operation Tulip” and “Operation Rose,” respectively.

Operation Tulip would be a covert CIA strategy using Libyan exiles to move into Tripoli and overthrow al-Qadhafi in a coup d'état. Operation Rose proposes a joint US-Egyptian military campaign against the Libyan government. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger considers the entire idea “ludicrous,” as do his deputy Richard Armitage and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. However, CIA Director William Casey orders his deputy, Robert Gates, to study the idea. When the CIA produces Gates’s report favoring the idea, the Pentagon develops a military plan deliberately designed to scuttle the idea. The proposed US-Egyptian deployment, the Pentagon strategy says, would require six divisions and 90,000 US troops. Gates says the strategy looks “a lot like the [World War II] invasion of Normandy.” He registers his opposition to such a huge operation, warning that many American citizens as well as US allies would oppose any such overt military campaign. State Department officials concur with Gates’s analysis, and the US ambassador to Egypt, Nick Veliotis, says he believes Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak would want nothing to do with the idea, in part because Mubarak has little confidence in the US military’s willingness to fight for an extended period of time, and so it would leave Egyptian forces to fight alone. Although Poindexter and other NSC officials continue to push the plan, even proposing it to an unimpressed Mubarak, no one else in the Reagan administration supports it, and it is never implemented. [[WILLS, 2003, PP. 172-175; FOREIGN POLICY, 10/22/2010](#)]

Entity Tags: [Richard Armitage](#), [Mu’ammār al-Qadhafi](#), [Joint Chiefs of Staff](#), [John Poindexter](#), [Hosni Mubarak](#), [Caspar Weinberger](#), [National Security Council](#), [Reagan administration](#), [Nick Veliotis](#), [US Department of Defense](#), [Oliver North](#), [Robert M. Gates](#), [Robert C. McFarlane](#), [William Casey](#), [US Department of State](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#)



September 1985: Ali Mohamed Moves to US; CIA Role Is Disputed



Ali Mohamed, pictured in a US army video. [*Source: US Army*]The CIA claims to have put Ali Mohamed on a terrorist watch list to prevent him from coming to the US (see

1984). Somehow, Mohamed gets a US visa anyway. After learning that he has been given a visa, the CIA supposedly issues a warning to other Federal agencies that a suspicious character might be traveling to the US. Mohamed is able to move to the US nonetheless. [NEW YORK TIMES, 12/1/1998; SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, 11/4/2001] The State Department will not explain how he is able to move to the US despite such warnings. [NEW YORK TIMES, 12/1/1998] In 1995, after Mohamed's name publicly surfaces at the trial of Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, the Boston Globe will report that Mohamed had been admitted to the US under a special visa program controlled by the CIA's clandestine service. This will contradict the CIA's later claims of disassociating themselves from Mohamed and attempting to stop him from entering the US. [BOSTON GLOBE, 2/3/1995; NEW YORK TIMES, 10/30/1998] Mohamed befriends an American woman he meets on the airplane flight to the US. They get married less than two months later, and he moves to her residence in Santa Clara, California. The marriage will help him to become a US citizen in 1989. [SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, 9/21/2001]

Entity Tags: [US Department of State](#), [Ali Mohamed](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Mid-September 1985: North Persuades Former CIA Agent to Assist in Funneling Illegal Funds, Arms to Contras



The National Security Council's Oliver North persuades former CIA officer Felix Rodriguez to help him divert funds and weapons to the Nicaraguan Contras (see [December 6, 1985](#) and [April 4, 1986](#)). Rodriguez agrees to set up the servicing of CIA transport planes and other aircraft at the Ilopango Air Base in San Salvador, El Salvador. Rodriguez works out of Ilopango, helping the Salvadoran Air Force in its own counter-insurgency activities. Rodriguez was placed at Ilopango by Donald Gregg, a former CIA agent who now serves as the foreign policy adviser to Vice President Bush (see [March 17, 1983](#)). While in El Salvador, Rodriguez uses the alias "Max Gomez." [FINAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL FOR IRAN/CONTRA MATTERS: CHAPTER 25: UNITED STATES V. ELLIOTT ABRAMS: NOVEMBER 1986, 8/4/1993]

Entity Tags: [National Security Council](#), [Donald Gregg](#), [Felix Rodriguez](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Oliver North](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Contras](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



October 1985: North Helps Distribute Humanitarian Aid to Contras



The first meeting of the State Department's Nicaraguan Humanitarian Assistance Office (NHAO) is held. Two aides to Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams (see [April 19, 1985 and After](#) and [September 4, 1985](#)) attend the meeting. During the meeting, National Security Council (NSC) officer Oliver North offers the services of former CIA agent Felix Rodriguez to assist in distributing the \$27 million in humanitarian aid recently approved for the Contras (see [August 1985](#)). Rodriguez is helping North channel illegal funds to the Contras (see [Mid-September 1985](#)). The agreement is to channel the funds to the Contras through El Salvador's Ilopango Air Base, Rodriguez's center of operations. By early 1986, the legal NHAO fund distribution will merge with the illegal North fund distribution (see [December 6, 1985](#) and [April 4, 1986](#)). [[FINAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL FOR IRAN/CONTRA MATTERS: CHAPTER 25: UNITED STATES V. ELLIOTT ABRAMS: NOVEMBER 1986, 8/4/1993](#)] Some of the \$27 million is never used for humanitarian purposes, but instead used to buy weapons, both for the Contras and for the mujaheddin in Afghanistan. [[SPARTACUS SCHOOLNET, 12/28/2007](#)]

Entity Tags: [Oliver North](#), [Elliott Abrams](#), [Felix Rodriguez](#), [Nicaraguan Humanitarian Assistance Office](#), [Contras](#), [US Department of State](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



November 24-25, 1985: CIA Sends Anti-Aircraft Missiles from Israel to Iran



The CIA arranges for the shipment of 18 Hawk anti-aircraft missiles from Israel to Iran, ferried aboard a CIA front company transport plane. Within days, the Iranians reject the missiles because they do not meet their requirements. Some of the US officials involved in the missile transfer later claim they believe the CIA plane carried oil-drilling parts, and not weapons. After the transfer, John McMahon, the deputy director of the CIA, says that the agency can no longer provide covert assistance to Iran without explicit authorization from President Reagan. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 11/19/1987](#)] Reagan will authorize the sale of the missiles a month later (see [December 5, 1985](#)).

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [John McMahon](#), [Ronald Reagan](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



Late 1985 and After: State Department Official Joins NSC, CIA Officials in Funding Contras



Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams (see [April 19, 1985 and After](#)) joins the National Security Council (NSC)'s Oliver North and the CIA's Central American Task Force chief Alan

Fiers as the principal members of a Restricted Interagency Group (RIG) which works on Central American affairs for the Reagan administration. Abrams, a staunch supporter of Nicaragua's Contras, becomes aware of North's machinations to divert US funds to the Contras (see [December 6, 1985](#) and [April 4, 1986](#)) in spite of Congress's prohibition on such funding (see [October 10, 1984](#)). Abrams will also become directly involved in secret, illegal efforts to secure funding for the Contras from other nations (see [June 11, 1986](#)). [[FINAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL FOR IRAN/CONTRA MATTERS: CHAPTER 25: UNITED STATES V. ELLIOTT ABRAMS: NOVEMBER 1986, 8/4/1993](#)]

Entity Tags: [Restricted Interagency Group](#), [Contras](#), [Oliver North](#), [Elliott Abrams](#), [Alan Fiers](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



December 7, 1985: Top White House Officials Meet to Discuss Iran Arms Sales



President Reagan, Secretary of State George Shultz, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, outgoing National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane, and McFarlane's replacement, John Poindexter, all meet at the White House to discuss the government's arms sales to Iran. Later statements by the participants conflict on key details. Some will say that a consensus is reached to end arms sales to Iran, but Deputy CIA Director John McMahon will recall that no such consensus is reached. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 11/19/1987](#)]

Entity Tags: [Ronald Reagan](#), [Caspar Weinberger](#), [George Shultz](#), [John Poindexter](#), [John McMahon](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



December 12, 1985: Plane Crash in Canada Kills 256; Evidence Suggests Links to Iran-Contra and BCCI Covert Operations





Wreckage from the Gander crash. [Source: Canadian

Broadcasting Corporation] On December 12, 1985, shortly after takeoff from Gander, Newfoundland, Arrow Air Flight 1285 stalls and crashes about half a mile from the runway. All 256 passengers and crew on board are killed, including 248 US soldiers. The plane was coming from Egypt and refueling in Newfoundland before continuing on to the US. At the time, the crash is widely reported to be an accident, caused by icing on the airplane wings. Official US and Canadian investigations will also support that conclusion. However, information will later come out suggesting the crash was not an accident:

- Members of Islamic Jihad, a branch of the Hezbollah militant group (and not to be confused with the Islamic Jihad group headed by Ayman al-Zawahiri), immediately take credit for the crash. In one call to the Reuters news agency in Beirut, the caller knows details of the plane flight not yet mentioned in the press.

- Within hours of the crash, Maj. Gen. John Crosby arrives at the crash site and reportedly tells maintenance workers he wants to “bulldoze over the crash site immediately.” The White House also quickly publicly claims there is “no evidence of sabotage or an explosion in flight,” despite the fact that Hezbollah had just taken credit for the crash and the investigation is just beginning. While the site is not bulldozed, there is no effort to meticulously sift the wreckage for clues, which is standard procedure for such air crashes.

- An FBI forensic team flies to Newfoundland within hours of the crash, but then merely sits in a hotel room. After 36 hours, the team accepts a declaration that terrorism was not involved and returns home. The FBI will later claim the Canadian government did not allow their team to visit the site. [TIME, 4/27/1992]

- In 1988, the nine-member Canadian Aviation Safety Board will issue a split verdict. Five members will attribute the crash to ice formation, and four members claim it was an explosion. A former Canadian supreme court justice is appointed to decide if there should be a new investigation. He concludes that the available evidence does not support ice on the wings as being a cause, let alone a probable cause, of the crash. But he also rules against a new investigation, saying it would cause more pain to the victims’ families. [TIME, 4/27/1992; CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION, 12/12/2005]

- Later declassified autopsy reports show that soldiers had inhaled smoke in the moments

before they died, indicating there had been a fire on board before the plane hit the ground.

[[CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION, 12/12/2005](#)]

- Five witnesses in the remote location where the plane crash will sign sworn statements that they saw the plane burning before it fell.

- An examination of the fuselage will show outward holes, indicating an explosion from within.

- Four members of the refueling crew will later assert there was no icing problem before the plane took off. The plane crashed about one minute after take off.

- Six heavy crates had been loaded into the plane's cargo bay in Egypt without military customs clearance. Witnesses will later claim that weapons, including TOW antitank missiles, were being stockpiled in Egypt near where the plane took off. At the time, the US was secretly selling these types of missiles to Iran as part of an arms for hostages deal.

- In the wake of public exposure of the Iran-Contra Affair, it will be revealed that Arrow Air is a CIA front company and was regularly used by Lt. Col. Oliver North to ship arms.

- Most of the crash victims were US Airborne troops returning from multinational peacekeeping duties in Egypt, but more than 20 Special Forces personnel were also on board. They were from elite counterterrorist units often used on hostage rescue missions.

- Just days before the crash, Iranian officials threatened to retaliate after North sent them a shipment of the wrong missiles. North wrote three days earlier that he was determined to continue to arms shipments. "To stop now in midstream, would ignite Iranian fire. Hostages would be our minimum losses." One theory is that Iran used militant surrogates connected to Hezbollah to punish North for sending the wrong missiles. [[TIME, 4/27/1992](#)]

- Gene Wheaton, a private investigator hired by victims' relatives unsatisfied with the official explanation, later claims that a duffel bag stuffed with US currency was found in the wreckage. Two men in civilian clothes, who other personnel at the crash cite believe were from the CIA, took custody of the money. Neither the money nor the heavy crates will be mentioned by the official investigation.

- In the early 1990s, two Time magazine reporters will be writing a book about the BCCI bank scandal. They will develop a reliable source, a private arms dealer using the alias Heinrich. Heinrich tells the reporters that a large amount of cash was on the Gander flight, and he tells them this before any accounts of cash being on the plane are reported in the media. Heinrich, who takes part in numerous arms deals with high-level BCCI officials, will tell the reporters: "This money on the plane was money that [BCCI founder Agha Hasan] Abedi, money that the bank had provided US intelligence for covert operations. The money was being used by the American military. I have no idea what for. You don't ask these kinds of questions of these people.... One of the bank men—perhaps I should call him an associate of the bank men—was a little angry about this money. He believed it was being, ah, appropriated, by some of the special forces soldiers. Someone else thought perhaps it was being diverted to another operation. I only know that the subject of the Gander crash came up, and these people talked about BCCI money going down with it." [[BEATY AND GWYNNE, 1993, PP. 231-233](#)]

Entity Tags: [Oliver North](#), [John Crosby](#), [“Heinrich”](#), [Gene Wheaton](#), [Agha Hasan Abedi](#), [Hezbollah](#), [Bank of Credit and Commerce International](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Islamic Jihad Organization](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



1986: CIA Analyst Realizes State Department Is Protecting Pakistani Nuclear Proliferators by Not Sharing Intelligence



Richard Barlow, a CIA analyst of Pakistan’s nuclear program (see [1985-1988](#)), realizes that officials in the State Department are refusing to share information with the CIA, the Commerce Department, and US Customs about the Pakistani program. In particular, the State Department is aware of the identities of key Pakistani agents who are illicitly purchasing nuclear weapons technology in the US, but it does not pass their names on to the CIA and the other two agencies. By withholding this information, the State Department is able to neutralize the other agencies’ counter-proliferation attempts. State Department officials also approve questionable export licenses for Pakistan (see [1986](#)). [[GUARDIAN, 10/13/2007](#)]

Entity Tags: [US Department of State](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Office of Scientific and Weapons Research \(CIA\)](#), [Richard Barlow](#), [Pakistan](#)

Timeline Tags: [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)



January 7, 1986: US Plans Further Arms Sales to Iran



John Poindexter. [*Source: US Navy*] In a meeting between President Ronald Reagan, Vice President George Bush, Secretary of State George Shultz, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, CIA Director William Casey, and new National Security Adviser John

Poindexter, the participants discuss whether to sell 4,000 Israeli-owned, US-made antitank missiles to Iran as another arms-for-hostages deal (see [September 15, 1985](#)). Shultz and Weinberger, as they have before, oppose any dealings with Iran. Bush, according to records of the meeting, fails to express any views at all, but Shultz will recall Bush supporting the deal. In 1988, Bush will tell a reporter that he doesn't remember any such conflict over the arms sales, saying, "I never really heard them that clearly. And the reason is that the machinery broke down—it never worked as it should. The key players with the experience weren't ever called together... to review the decisions that were made at a lower level." It is hard to imagine any higher levels of the executive branch of government than what is represented in this meeting. In 1987, Bush will tell the Tower Commission investigating the deal that he didn't know enough about the arms-for-hostages deals to be able to express an informed opinion about the decision to make the deals, and doesn't remember the meeting as a "showdown session," testimony contradicted by both Weinberger and Shultz in their own statements to the commission. [[NEW YORKER, 11/2/1992](#)]

Entity Tags: [George Shultz](#), [Caspar Weinberger](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Ronald Reagan](#), [Tower Commission](#), [William Casey](#), [John Poindexter](#)

Timeline Tags: [US confrontation with Iran](#), [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



January 9, 1986: North, CIA Official Discuss Possible Connection to Vice President



National Security Council officer Oliver North, running the secret and illegal network that diverts funds from US-Iranian arms sales to the Nicaraguan Contras (see [December 6, 1985](#) and [April 4, 1986](#)), has a phone conversation with CIA official Alan Fiers (see [Summer 1986](#)). A diary entry by North documenting the conversation reads in part, "Felix talking too much about V.P. connection." "Felix" is CIA agent Felix Rodriguez, a key member of North's network (see [May 27, 1987](#)). It is not clear whether the "V.P." notation refers to Vice President George H. W. Bush or to former CIA official Donald Gregg, now Bush's foreign policy adviser and a liaison to Rodriguez. In later testimony before the Iran-Contra Congressional committee (see [May 5, 1987](#)), Gregg will deny that Bush's office was involved in recruiting Rodriguez to work with North. [[TIME, 7/22/1991](#)] Gregg has a long and clandestine relationship with Rodriguez, going back as far as 1959, when the two were involved in "Operation 40," a CIA-led attempt to overthrow Cuba's Fidel Castro. [[SPARTACUS SCHOOLNET, 2/3/2008](#)] Gregg also worked with Rodriguez in covert operations during the Vietnam War. [[SPARTACUS SCHOOLNET, 12/28/2007](#)]

Entity Tags: [Fidel Castro](#), [Contras](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Alan Fiers](#), [Donald Gregg](#), [Felix Rodriguez](#), [National Security Council](#), [Oliver North](#), [Joint House-Senate Iran-Contra Committee](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



February 7-8, 1986: CIA, State Department Officials Worry about North's Connections to Humanitarian Funds



CIA and State Department officials begin learning, to their dismay, about the illegal merging of legitimate Congressional funding of the Nicaraguan Contras with the illegal funding operation driven by National Security Council (NSC) official Oliver North (see [October 1985](#)). A senior CIA official in Central America cables Washington reporting the emergency landing of one of North's Caribou transport planes on a road in El Salvador, and the potential embarrassment of reports from United Press International (UPI) about the plane. The official reports that North's liaison in El Salvador, former CIA agent Felix Rodriguez (see [Mid-September 1985](#)), is "'coordinating' all of this with Ollie North (one supposes on open phone). [I] had to say, honestly, that [I] knew nothing of this Caribou and indeed had not heard anything from [CIA official Alan Fiers—see [Late 1985 and After](#)] on the subject for two weeks. Rodriguez [sic] has just called [an embassy official] to advise that UPI is on the downed Caribou and wants a story. Charge's position is that he has no knowledge re this A/C [aircraft]. God knows what Felix Rodriguez [sic] is saying." William Walker, the deputy for Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams (see [September 4, 1985](#)), discusses the matter with the US Ambassador to El Salvador, Edwin Corr, expressing the same concerns. Walker says that "Ollie and Max," referring to North and Rodriguez (by his pseudonym, "Max Gomez"), "are to have nothing to do w/humanitarian assistance deliveries, etc." Walker tells Corr to "impress on Fiers that we cannot proceed in this 'fouled up manner.' This is the 3d recent screw up & Washington being surprised by unknown & uncoordinated activities." It is unclear as to what other "screw ups" Corr is referring. Walker will later testify, falsely, that he had never heard of Felix Rodriguez until August 1986. [[FINAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL FOR IRAN/CONTRA MATTERS: CHAPTER 25: UNITED STATES V. ELLIOTT ABRAMS: NOVEMBER 1986, 8/4/1993](#)]

Entity Tags: [William Walker](#), [US Department of State](#), [Alan Fiers](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [United Press International](#), [Contras](#), [Elliott Abrams](#), [Felix Rodriguez](#), [Edwin Corr](#), [Oliver North](#)



March 1986: Congress Denies Contras \$100 Million



Congress narrowly defeats a measure pushed by, among others, Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams (see [September 4, 1985](#)), for \$100 million in military and other aid for the Nicaraguan Contras. Abrams, National Security Council officer Oliver North (see [December 6, 1985](#) and [April 4, 1986](#)), and senior CIA official Alan Fiers (see [Late 1985 and After](#)) quickly fly to Central America to reassure Contra officials that they will continue to receive funding from

the Reagan administration. [[FINAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL FOR IRAN/CONTRA MATTERS: CHAPTER 25: UNITED STATES V. ELLIOTT ABRAMS: NOVEMBER 1986, 8/4/1993](#)] Congress will approve the funding three months later (see [June 16, 1986](#)).

Entity Tags: [Elliott Abrams](#), [Contras](#), [Oliver North](#), [Reagan administration](#), [Alan Fiers](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



After Mid-April 1986: CIA Allegedly Sets Up Fake Bomb Plot to Influence European Opinion



The La Belle disco in Berlin after it was bombed. [Source:

AFP]European public opinion begins to turn after the US launches a deadly strike against Libya, in retaliation for the bombing of a Berlin disco in which two American servicemen died (see [April 5, 1986 and After](#)). The CIA therefore works to spread the idea that the Libyans intend to plant another bomb in Berlin, a propaganda operation designed to reshape European public opinion. According to a CIA officer involved in the operation, the first step is “to convince German intelligence and police there was a terrorist cell.” To achieve this, a Lebanese CIA asset named Jamal Hamdan, who helps the US in various ways around this time, makes a series of phone calls from an apartment in Cyprus to suspected terrorists in Germany. Hamdan also tells a relative living in West Berlin that his brother Ali and a friend will enter the city carrying a package, which, it is implied, is a bomb. Ali Hamdan and the friend then enter West Berlin illegally from the east and are arrested by German police, who wrongly believe that they actually have a bomb and the plot is real. Word of the plot is leaked to the US press, enabling the Reagan administration to quell criticism of the attack on Libya. The CIA then steps in and has the two men held in Germany released. [[TRENTO AND TRENTO, 2006, PP. 89-90](#)]

Entity Tags: [Libya](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Ali Hamdan](#), [Reagan administration](#), [Jamal Hamdan](#)

Timeline Tags: [Alleged Use of False Flag Attacks](#), [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



May 1986: Air Transport Owner Refuses to Run Supplies to Contras, Informs CIA Director of Program



Gene Wheaton, a former Marine and CIA asset who served as a counter-terrorism adviser to the Shah of Iran and the current co-owner of a cargo airline called National Air, had agreed to help the Reagan administration run supplies and arms to the Nicaraguan Contras. However, Wheaton sours on the deal when he learns that retired General Richard Secord is heading that portion of the operation (see [November 19, 1985](#)). Wheaton formed a poor opinion of Secord and Secord's colleague, the National Security Council's Oliver North, during a 1985 attempt to win federal contracts to supply humanitarian aid to insurgents such as the Contras and the mujaheddin of Afghanistan. Wheaton reveals his knowledge of the secret Contra supply program to William Casey, the head of the CIA. But Casey says the government is not involved in the program, and refuses to take action. Wheaton will discuss his limited knowledge of the program with reporters from the San Francisco Examiner, resulting in embarrassing questions for Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. [[SPARTACUS SCHOOLNET, 12/28/2007](#); [SPARTACUS SCHOOLNET, 12/29/2007](#)]

Entity Tags: [National Air](#), [Caspar Weinberger](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Gene Wheaton](#), [William Casey](#), [Oliver North](#), [Richard Secord](#), [Reagan administration](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



May 16, 1986: Reagan Asks about Private Funding for Contras



Senior White House officials attend a National Security Planning Group (NSPG) meeting on the subject of Central America. Attending the meeting are President Reagan, Vice President Bush, Secretary of State George Shultz, Treasury Secretary James Baker, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, CIA Director William Casey, and White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan. The interests of the Nicaraguan Contras are represented by Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams (see [September 4, 1985](#)), NSC officer Oliver North (see [December 6, 1985](#) and [April 4, 1986](#)), and senior CIA official Alan Fiers (see [Late 1985 and After](#)). According to minutes of the meeting, North reminds the group that under the 1986 Intelligence Authorization Bill, the State Department can legally approach other countries for non-military funding for the Contras. During the ensuing discussion, Reagan asks, according to the minutes: "What about the private groups who pay for ads for the contras? Have they been contacted? Can they do more than ads?" This indicates that Reagan is well aware of the private, illegal funding being channeled to the Contras. Fiers will later give a somewhat different version of events in his testimony to the Iran-Contra grand jury (see [July 17, 1991](#)), recalling Reagan asking about "Ollie's people" working with the Contras and asking if they could help with funding. Fiers

will recall the question causing tension among the group, and then someone quickly responding, “that’s being worked on.” After the meeting, North becomes more outspoken in his descriptions of his illegal funding of the Contras. [[FINAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL FOR IRAN/CONTRA MATTERS: CHAPTER 25: UNITED STATES V. ELLIOTT ABRAMS: NOVEMBER 1986, 8/4/1993](#)]

Entity Tags: [William Casey](#), [Contras](#), [Caspar Weinberger](#), [Alan Fiers](#), [Donald Regan](#), [Ronald Reagan](#), [Elliott Abrams](#), [James Baker](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [George Shultz](#), [Oliver North](#), [Reagan administration](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



Late May, 1986: McFarlane and North Visit Iran to Negotiate Arms for Hostages



Robert McFarlane. [*Source: Shelly Katz / Time Life / Getty Images*]A delegation secretly sent to Iran by the White House to break the arms-for-hostages deadlock (see [November 3, 1986](#)) returns to Iran. The two countries have been at an impasse since January, when President Reagan authorized the sale of 4,000 antitank missiles to Iran but US officials insisted that all of the American hostages held by Hezbollah be freed before the missiles would be delivered, a condition the Iranians have refused (see [January 17, 1986](#)). The US delegation—actually the third such delegation to secretly visit Tehran—includes former National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane; McFarlane’s longtime supporter and current National Security Council member Oliver North; CIA expert George Cave; and North’s NSC colleague, Howard Teicher. Israel, which will facilitate the arms transfer, sends Amiram Nir, a counterterrorism adviser to Prime Minister Shimon Peres. [[TIME, 11/17/1986](#); [NEW YORKER, 11/2/1992](#)] McFarlane and North bring with them more spare parts for Iran’s Hawk anti-aircraft missiles. They attempt, and fail, to persuade the Iranians to facilitate the release of all American hostages. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 11/19/1987](#)] The delegation’s mission has borne no fruit, as the Iranians insisted on “sequencing,” or releasing the hostages two at a time as arms shipments were delivered. Part of the problem surrounds the Iranians’ belief that they are being charged outrageous prices for the missiles, a perception given credence by the fact that

profits from the weapons sales are being used to fund Nicaragua's Contra rebel movement.

[[TIME](#), 11/17/1986; [NEW YORKER](#), 11/2/1992]

Unusual Negotiation Tactics - Part of the negotiations involves North, the NSC staffer who coordinates the administration's dealings with the Contras, offering the Iranians a Bible signed by President Reagan and a chocolate cake. In response, the Iranians stall. Hezbollah will release a few US hostages and take others hostage, maintaining the status quo. [[DUBOSE AND BERNSTEIN, 2006, PP. 65](#)]

Explicit Briefing of President, Vice President - McFarlane later briefs both Reagan and Vice President Bush on the arms-for-hostage negotiations (see [May 29, 1986](#)).

Entity Tags: [Shimon Peres](#), [Ronald Reagan](#), [Robert C. McFarlane](#), [Oliver North](#), [Hezbollah](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [National Security Council](#), [Amiram Nir](#), [George Cave](#), [Howard Teicher](#)

Timeline Tags: [US confrontation with Iran](#), [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



Summer 1986: CIA Official Told to Lie to Congress



Alan Fiers, the head of the CIA's Central America task force, learns of the Reagan administration's illegal diversion of funds from the sale of weapons to Iran to the Nicaraguan Contras (see [December 6, 1985](#) and [April 4, 1986](#)). Fiers informs his superior, Deputy Director of Operations Clair George. Instead of acting on the knowledge, George orders Fiers to conceal his knowledge of the diversions. George will order Fiers to lie to Congress about it in November 1986 (see [November 25, 1986](#)). Fiers will later plead guilty to lying to Congress (see [July 17, 1991](#)). [[TIME](#), 7/22/1991]

Entity Tags: [Clair George](#), [Alan Fiers](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



Mid-1986 and After: Interagency Nuclear Weapons Group Comes to View State Department as 'Security Problem'





CIA manager Richard Kerr. [Source: CIA] Officials designated to the Nuclear Export Violations Working Group (NEVWG), a top-secret panel aiming to prevent nuclear weapons technology being exported from the US, become suspicious of the State Department, and try not to share information with it. The panel, formed in mid-1986, brings together experts from the policy, law-enforcement, and intelligence communities. The group is suspicious of the State Department because it has a reputation for tipping off Pakistan about surveillance of Pakistani buyers of nuclear weapons technology in the US by sending diplomatic protests to the Pakistani government. A senior Customs Service official will say, “The State Department constituted a security problem for us.” One analyst will say of an operation to catch Pakistani agents in the US (see [Before July 1987](#)), “We were sure they’d manage to screw it up.” At one point CIA manager Richard Kerr summons senior State Department officials to a meeting for a “pointed discussion” about the steady flow of protests to Pakistan. Kerr will later say that the State Department is “extremely active” in the matter, but “What they were doing it for was to persuade the Pakistanis to stop.” [[NEW YORKER, 3/29/1993](#)]

Entity Tags: [US Department of State](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Richard Kerr](#)

Timeline Tags: [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)



[July 23, 1986: CIA Director: Vice President Should Ask Hussein to Increase Bombing of Iran](#)





George H.W. Bush. [Source: [George Herbert Walker Bush.net](http://GeorgeHerbertWalkerBush.net)]CIA Director William Casey

meets with Vice President George Bush (himself a former CIA director). Casey is a hardline conservative, nominally at odds with the more traditional, moneyed conservatism of Bush, but Casey has learned to trust Bush's abilities. "Casey knew there was nobody in government who could keep a secret better," a former CIA official will observe. "He knew that Bush was someone who could keep his confidence and be trusted. Bush had the same capacity as Casey to receive a briefing and give no hint that he was in the know." Casey wants Bush to run a secret errand to Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi dictator, as part of a scheme Casey has concocted to force the hand of Iran (see [July 23, 1986](#)). Specifically, Casey wants Bush to have Hussein step up his bombing of Iranian territory. Bush is already going to the Middle East to, as Bush told reporters, "advance the peace process." Casey's idea is to force Iran's hand by having Hussein escalate his air strikes into the heart of that nation; in return, Iran would have to turn to the US for missiles and other air defense weapons. That would give the US leverage in negotiating with Iran for the release of the US hostages it holds. Two Reagan administration officials later say that Casey is also playing two rival policy factions within the administration (see [January 14, 1984](#)). Bush complies with Casey's request; in doing so, Bush, as reporters Murray Waas and Craig Unger will write in 1992, puts himself "directly in the center of action—in a role at the very point where a series of covert initiatives with Iraq and Iran converge[s]." [NEW YORKER, 11/2/1992; AFFIDAVIT, UNITED STATES V. CARLOS CARDOEN, ET AL. [CHARGE THAT TELEDYNE WAH CHANG ALBANY ILLEGALLY PROVIDED A PROSCRIBED SUBSTANCE, ZIRCONIUM, TO CARDOEN INDUSTRIES

 [AND TO IRAQ\], 1/31/1995](#) ; [MSNBC, 8/18/2002](#)]

Entity Tags: [William Casey](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#)

Timeline Tags: [US confrontation with Iran](#)



Before July 28, 1986: Vice President Briefed on Arms-for-Hostages Scheme



Vice President Bush, planning to leave for Iraq on a secret errand to persuade Saddam Hussein to escalate his bombing of Iranian targets in order to increase pressure on Iran to release American hostages (see [July 28-August 3, 1986](#)), is briefed by two top National Security

Council aides, Oliver North and Howard Teicher, before leaving for the Middle East. Teicher will later recall: “We told him what the status was, that [US] arms had gone to Iran. We were preparing him for a possible briefing by either [Shimon Peres, the prime minister of Israel] or [Amiram] Nir [Peres’s counterterrorism adviser]. We didn’t want him to discuss it with anyone else, for security reasons. He asked us some questions, but he didn’t express any opinions.” While Bush will repeatedly deny ever discussing the Iranian arms sales with William Casey (see [July 23, 1986](#)), a former CIA official will say in 1992 that Casey did brief Bush extensively about the program. “Casey felt Bush had a methodical, orderly manner for the task,” the official will say. “[Casey] had great confidence in him to carry it out. He said he briefed Bush in great detail about the initiative to bomb Iran.” [\[NEW YORKER, 11/2/1992\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Howard Teicher](#), [Amiram Nir](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Shimon Peres](#), [Oliver North](#), [William Casey](#), [Saddam Hussein](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



July 28-August 3, 1986: Vice President Bush Secretly Pressures Hussein to Escalate Air Strikes Into Iran



Vice President Bush, secretly planning to ask Iraq to increase its bombing of Iran in order to give the US more leverage in its hostage negotiations with Iran (see [July 23, 1986](#)), leaves for the Middle East on July 28. The trip is given a public face as an attempt by Bush to, as he tells reporters, “advance the peace process.” His political handlers, already thinking about the 1988 presidential elections, want to increase his public stature as a potential world leader. Bush is accompanied by his wife Barbara, a platoon of reporters, and a television crew hired by his political action committee to document the trip for future campaign purposes. But his staffers play down the possible impact of the trip. “This is not a trip designed to establish new breakthroughs,” says one Bush adviser. “It’s like tending a garden. If you don’t tend the garden, the weeds grow up. And I think there are a lot of weeds in that garden.” Much of the trip, such as the visit to Jordan, is planned primarily as a series of photo opportunities, with Bush’s PR team even exhorting the Jordanians to feature camels in each shot (camels are few in Jordan).

Hostage Break - Bush learns while still in flight that an American hostage, the Reverend Lawrence Jenco, has just been released by his Hezbollah captors, most likely at the behest of the Iranians (see [January 8, 1985](#)). Jenco’s release, according to reporters Murray Waas and Craig Unger, is “a measure of Iran’s deep ambivalence about the negotiations. Iran need[s] weapons and [does] not want the deal to die. At the same time, the Iranians [a]re apoplectic because, according to their estimates, they were being overcharged by six hundred per cent [for US weapons], and they had not yet received parts for two hundred and forty Hawk missiles.” Jenco’s release is in return for the US expediting the shipment of the missile parts. [\[NEW YORKER, 11/2/1992; AFFIDAVIT. UNITED STATES V. CARLOS CARDOEN, ET AL. \[CHARGE THAT TELEDYNE WAH](#)

[CHANG ALBANY ILLEGALLY PROVIDED A PROSCRIBED SUBSTANCE, ZIRCONIUM, TO CARDOEN INDUSTRIES AND TO IRAQ\],](#)



[1/31/1995](#) ; [MSNBC, 8/18/2002](#)]

Effectiveness of the Message - Bush meets with several regional leaders, including Egypt's Hosni Mubarak (see [July 28-August 3, 1986](#)). In the 48 hours following the meeting with Mubarak, Iraq launches 359 air strikes against Iran, including numerous strikes far deeper into Iran than it has done before. Apparently the message was effective. In return, while Bush is still "advancing the peace process," the CIA begins providing the Iraqis with highly classified tactical information about Iranian military movements and strike targets. Evidently Iraq's Saddam Hussein, previously suspicious of US motives and advice, felt more confident in the battle strategies advocated by such a high-level US official. When Bush returns to Washington on August 5, he is debriefed by Casey. According to one Casey aide, "Casey kept the return briefing very close to his vest. But he said Bush was supportive of the initiative and had carried out his mission." [[NEW YORKER, 11/2/1992](#)]

Entity Tags: [Reagan administration](#), [Saddam Hussein](#), [William Casey](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Barbara Bush](#), [Hosni Mubarak](#), [Oliver North](#)

Timeline Tags: [US confrontation with Iran](#)



August 1986: CIA Provides Iraq With Direct Satellite Intelligence Feeds



The CIA establishes "a direct, top-secret Washington-Baghdad link to provide the Iraqis with better and more timely satellite information." As a result, "The Iraqis receive the information from satellite photos 'several hours' after... bombing raid[s].... " The US-provided intelligence information is considered "vital" to Iraqi military strategy. [[WASHINGTON POST, 12/15/1986](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Iraq 1980s](#)



August 12, 1986: Contra Liaison Claims Contras Being Sold Shoddy Goods; Indicates Link between Contras and Bush



Former CIA agent Felix Rodriguez, the liaison between the Nicaraguan Contras and the National Security Council (see [Mid-September 1985](#)), comes to Washington to argue that retired General Richard Secord (see [November 19, 1985](#) and [February 2, 1987](#)) is providing shoddy airplanes and goods to the Contras at exorbitant prices. Rodriguez meets with his

patron, Donald Gregg, the foreign affairs adviser to Vice President Bush (see [March 17, 1983](#) and [October 10, 1986](#)). Gregg then meets with other administration officials to discuss Rodriguez's concerns. Officials discuss Rodriguez's claim that his "working w/VP [Bush] [is a] blessing for CIA," indicating that despite later denials (see [December 1986](#) and [August 6, 1987](#)), Bush is well aware of Rodriguez's activities on behalf of the Contras and may be facilitating them. According to Gregg's notes, he is particularly concerned that Rodriguez is "go[ing] around to bars saying he is buddy of Bush... we want to get rid of him from his [involvement] w[ith] private ops. Nothing was done so he still is there shooting his mouth off." [FINAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL FOR IRAN/CONTRA MATTERS: CHAPTER 25: UNITED STATES V. ELLIOTT ABRAMS: NOVEMBER 1986, 8/4/1993]

Entity Tags: [Donald Gregg](#), [Contras](#), [National Security Council](#), [Richard Secord](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Felix Rodriguez](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



September 1986: CIA Provides Afghan Rebels Stinger Missiles



Mujaheddin preparing to fire a stinger missile. [Source: *National Geographic*] Worried that the Soviets are winning the war in Afghanistan, the US decides to train and arm the mujaheddin with Stinger missiles. The Soviets are forced to stop using the attack helicopters that were being used to devastating effect. Some claim the Stingers turn the tide of the war and lead directly to Soviet withdrawal. Now the mujaheddin are better trained and armed than ever before. [COLL, 2004, PP. 11, 149-51; CLARKE, 2004, PP. 48-50] The British Special Air Service (SAS) train the mujaheddin in how to use the Stingers (see [1980-1989](#)).

Entity Tags: [Special Air Service](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)



September 19, 1986: Iranians Seek More US Arms, Take More Hostages



Richard Secord. [Source: Bettmann / Corbis] Ali Hashemi Bahramani, a high-ranking officer in the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, meets secretly with NSC official Oliver North. Bahramani has a shopping list of arms Iran wants to buy from the US, particularly weapons and other material to defend the country against the recent escalation of Iraqi air strikes (see [July 23, 1986](#)). The plan to force Iran to trade US hostages for arms (see [July 23, 1986](#)) seems to be working. But for the US the plan has a fatal flaw: as hostages are released, Hezbollah, the Lebanese militant group controlled by Iran, simply kidnaps more Americans (see [September 9-12, 1986](#)). North's assistant, Richard Secord, later states that it is evident the Iranians negotiating the release of the hostages are the same ones responsible for ordering the new kidnappings. But North, his boss John Poindexter, and CIA Director William Casey continue with the Iranian initiative regardless. One driving factor, Secord will note, is that by this point, \$3.8 million in profits from the Iranian arms sales has been diverted to the Nicaraguan Contras. [[NEW YORKER, 11/2/1992](#)]

Entity Tags: [William Casey](#), [John Poindexter](#), [Oliver North](#), [Richard Secord](#), [Ali Hashemi Bahramani](#)

Timeline Tags: [US confrontation with Iran](#), [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



September 25, 1986: Costa Rica Reveals Illegal Contra Airstrip, Role of US Government Remains Secret



Costa Rica's Minister of Public Security holds a press conference and announces the discovery of an illegal airstrip in northern Costa Rica that is being used to resupply the Nicaraguan Contras (see [Summer 1985](#)). US government officials have tried unsuccessfully to threaten the

Costa Rican government with the loss of US aid if they make their knowledge of the airstrip public (see [Early September 1986](#)). But two of the US officials closely involved with the Contras, National Security Council officer Oliver North and CIA officer Alan Fiers, succeed in planting a false cover story about the airstrip for the press conference. The cover story denies any US government involvement in securing the airstrip or having it built, portraying it as a rogue operation by private Contra supporters. [[FINAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL FOR IRAN/CONTRA MATTERS: CHAPTER 25: UNITED STATES V. ELLIOTT ABRAMS: NOVEMBER 1986, 8/4/1993](#)]

Entity Tags: [Oliver North](#), [Alan Fiers](#), [Contras](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



(Shortly After September 26, 1986): Bin Laden Associate Obtains Photos for CIA



Essam al Ridi, a US-based Muslim who supports the mujaheddin in the Soviet-Afghan War, helps the CIA obtain photographs of a downed Russian helicopter, according to a statement al Ridi will later make to the New York Times. Al Ridi is an associate of leading Islamists Abdullah Azzam (see [Early 1983-Late 1984](#) and [Early 1989](#)) and Osama bin Laden (see [1984](#) and [Early 1993](#)), and helps them purchase weapons. Al Ridi will help the FBI after the 1998 African embassy bombings (see [October 1998](#)). [[NEW YORK TIMES, 6/3/2002](#)] The CIA introduced stinger missiles into the war in late September 1986 to great effect against Soviet helicopters (see [September 1986](#)). [[COLL, 2004, PP. 149-151](#)] Presumably therefore, the CIA is asking al Ridi to get photos of a helicopter downed by a stinger shortly after they were introduced.

Entity Tags: [Essam al Ridi](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



October 1986: CIA's Casey Meets With Iraqi Officials to Confirm Satellite Intelligence Is Helping Iraqi Military Efforts



CIA Director William J. Casey meets with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz and Iraq's ambassador to the United States, Nizar Hamdoon, to make sure the new Washington-Baghdad intelligence link (see [August 1986](#)) is helping the Iraqis and to encourage more attacks on Iranian economic targets. [[WASHINGTON POST, 12/15/1986](#) SOURCES: UNNAMED SOURCES WITH FIRST HAND KNOWLEDGE]

Entity Tags: [William Casey](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Kizam Hamdoon](#), [Tariq Aziz](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Iraq 1980s](#)



October 5, 1986: CIA Transport Plane Shot Down in Nicaragua; Story Reveals Illegal Contra-Arms Program



Eugene Hasenfus sits among the weapons captured from his downed cargo plane. His Sandinista captors surround him. [Source: Nancy McGirr / Reuters / Corbis] A CIA C-123 transport plane (see [November 19, 1985](#)) is shot down in southern Nicaragua by a Sandinista soldier wielding a surface-to-air missile. The transport plane left an airfield in El Salvador with arms and other supplies intended for the Nicaraguan Contras. Three crew members—US pilots William Cooper and Wallace Sawyer, Jr, and an unidentified Latin American—die in the crash, but one, a “cargo kicker” named Eugene Hasenfus, ignores CIA orders and parachutes to safety—and capture by the Sandinistas. Hasenfus is a construction worker from Wisconsin who signed on to do temporary work with CIA contractors, and has no intention of “going down with the plane.” The next day, newspapers around the world run stories with Hasenfus’s face peering out from their front pages.

Reveals US’s Arming of Contras - The Hasenfus shoot-down will break the news of the Reagan administration’s secret arming of the Contras in their attempt to bring down the democratically elected Socialist government of Nicaragua. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 11/19/1987](#); [FINAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL FOR IRAN/CONTRA MATTERS: CHAPTER 25: UNITED STATES V. ELLIOTT ABRAMS: NOVEMBER 1986, 8/4/1993](#); [DUBOSE AND BERNSTEIN, 2006, PP. 64](#)]

Damage Control - Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams (see [Late 1985 and After](#)) is the designated US spokesman on the Hasenfus shutdown. Abrams coordinates with his fellow

Contra supporters, the NSC’s Oliver North and the CIA’s Alan Fiers, and with the US Ambassador to El Salvador, Edwin Corr, on how to handle the situation. Between the three, they coordinate a denial from the Salvadoran military about any Salvadoran or US involvement in the Hasenfus flight. As for themselves, they agree not to flatly lie about anything, because they cannot be sure of what Hasenfus will say, but they agree to remain as quiet as possible and hope the media sensation surrounding Hasenfus dies down with little long-term effect. According to notes taken by Corr during one meeting, everyone knows that a leak —“eventually someone in USG [the US government] will finally acknowledge some ‘winking.’ Salv role now more public”—is inevitable. It is eventually decided that the Contras themselves will take all responsibility for the flight. Fiers worries that the flight will be connected to previous humanitarian aid supplied to the Contras (see [October 1985](#)). They also confirm that Felix Rodriguez, North’s liaison to the Contras in Central America (see [Mid-September 1985](#)), is in Miami, hiding from the press. Hasenfus will later acknowledge making at least ten supply flights into Nicaragua (see [October 9, 1986](#)). [[FINAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL FOR IRAN/CONTRA MATTERS: CHAPTER 25: UNITED STATES V. ELLIOTT ABRAMS: NOVEMBER 1986, 8/4/1993](#)]

Entity Tags: [Eugene Hasenfus](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Elliott Abrams](#), [Contras](#), [Reagan administration](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



October 9, 1986: Connections between CIA, US Government, and Contras Alleged



CIA cargo handler Eugene Hasenfus, in the custody of Nicaraguan officials after his transport plane filled with weapons and supplies for the Contras was shot down (see [October 5, 1986](#)), publicly states that he had made ten other trips to ferry arms and supplies to the Contras. Six of those were from the Ilopango airfield in El Salvador (see [Mid-September 1985](#)). He also states that he worked closely with two CIA agents, “Max Gomez” and “Ramon Medina.” “Gomez” is actually Felix Rodriguez, who serves as the liaison between the Contras and National Security Council officer Oliver North. “Medina” is another CIA operative, Rafael Quintero. Hasenfus says that Gomez and Medina oversaw the housing for the crews, transportation, refueling, and flight plans. The same day as Hasenfus’s public statement, Nicaraguan officials reveal that one of Hasenfus’s crew members, who died in the crash, carried cards issued by the Salvadoran Air Force identifying them as US advisers. And, the Nicaraguans claim, one of the crew members had a business card identifying him as an official with the US’s Nicaraguan Humanitarian Assistance Office (NHAO—see [October 1985](#)). [[FINAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL FOR IRAN/CONTRA MATTERS: CHAPTER 25: UNITED STATES V. ELLIOTT ABRAMS: NOVEMBER 1986, 8/4/1993](#); [SPARTACUS SCHOOLNET, 12/29/2007](#)]

Entity Tags: [Felix Rodriguez](#), [Contras](#), [Eugene Hasenfus](#), [Rafael Quintero](#), [Nicaraguan Humanitarian Assistance Office](#), [Oliver North](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



October 10, 1986: Press Alleges Bush, Not CIA, Is Government Link to Contras



The US press reports that Vice President Bush, and not the CIA, is the US government link to the downed CIA flight intended to supply weapons to the Nicaraguan Contras (see [October 5, 1986](#) and [October 9, 1986](#)). The San Francisco Examiner reports that Felix Rodriguez, the CIA liaison between the Contras and the White House (see [Mid-September 1985](#)), was assigned to El Salvador's Ilopango airfield by Bush's foreign policy adviser, former CIA official Donald Gregg (see [January 9, 1986](#)). [[FINAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL FOR IRAN/CONTRA MATTERS: CHAPTER 25: UNITED STATES V. ELLIOTT ABRAMS: NOVEMBER 1986, 8/4/1993](#)]

Entity Tags: [Contras](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Donald Gregg](#), [Felix Rodriguez](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



October 11-14, 1986: State Department Official Denies Any Knowledge of Contra Connection to Vice President



After the press identifies former CIA agent Felix Rodriguez as Contra liaison "Max Gomez" (see [October 10-15, 1986](#)), and learns that Rodriguez reports to Vice President Bush's foreign policy adviser, Donald Gregg (see [October 10, 1986](#)), Bush denies any knowledge of Rodriguez's involvement with the Contras. Bush admits to having met Rodriguez a few times, but refuses to clarify what relationship, if any, they may have. Bush tells one reporter that Rodriguez is a US counter-insurgency adviser working with the government of El Salvador, an assertion strongly denied by the Salvadoran government. Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, who has lied repeatedly to Congress about the government's role in supplying and supporting the Contras (see [October 10-15, 1986](#)), tells the House Intelligence Committee that he knows nothing of any link between Rodriguez and Bush that concerns the Contras. [[FINAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL FOR IRAN/CONTRA MATTERS: CHAPTER 25: UNITED STATES V. ELLIOTT ABRAMS: NOVEMBER 1986, 8/4/1993](#)]

Entity Tags: [Elliott Abrams](#), [Donald Gregg](#), [House Intelligence Committee](#), [Felix Rodriguez](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



Mid-October, 1986: Reagan Staffer Abrams and CIA Officials Lie to Congress about Administration Involvement with Contras



The Reagan administration, reeling from the revelation that it has illegally armed the Nicaraguan Contras (see [October 5, 1986](#)), attempts to conceal its workings in Nicaragua. In a closed session of the House Intelligence Committee, Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, joined by CIA officials, assures committee members that the US government is not involved in supplying the Contras. According to the witnesses, the CIA claims it had nothing to do with Eugene Hasenfus, the cargo handler who survived the recent downing of a CIA transport plane and in doing so revealed the existence of the illegal arms deals. Supposedly, the only involvement by US officials was to offer public encouragement. The committee Democrats do not believe anything Abrams or the CIA officials say, but at least one committee member, Dick Cheney (R-WY) offers his support. According to the summary written by the administration staffer taking notes that day, “Mr. Cheney said he found our ignorance credible.” There is far more going on than the committee Democrats know—or than Cheney will tell them. For years, Cheney has been urging Congress to authorize aid to the Contras, but the majority Democrats have been inconsistent in their support. As authors Lou Dubose and Jake Bernstein will later characterize the situation, Abrams, a self-described former socialist turned enthusiastic neoconservative, and others in the administration, such as National Security Council staffer Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North, have now taken matters into their own hands (see [October 5, 1986](#)), in direct violation of US law. Committee Democrats are as yet unaware that Reagan officials such as North have also been negotiating arms-for-hostages deals with Iran, in a covert three-way deal involving Iran, the US, and the Contras (see [November 3, 1986](#)). [DUBOSE AND BERNSTEIN, 2006, PP. 65]

Entity Tags: [Eugene Hasenfus](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Contras](#), [Elliott Abrams](#), [Reagan administration](#), [Oliver North](#), [House Intelligence Committee](#), [Lou Dubose](#), [Jake Bernstein](#), [Richard \(“Dick”\) Cheney](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



November 1986-November 1987: Soviet Union Decides to End Afghan War, US Learns of Decision





Edvard Shevardnadze. [Source: US Defense Department] The Politburo of the Soviet Communist Party decides that the Soviet-Afghan War should end “within one year or two.” This follows on from a tentative and secret agreement within the Politburo the previous year to eventually withdraw from Afghanistan. The withdrawal will be formalized in an agreement signed in Geneva in April 1988 (see [April 1988](#)) and the last troops will leave Afghanistan in February 1989 (see [February 15, 1989](#)). Soviet Foreign Minister Edvard Shevardnadze will inform US Secretary of State George Shultz of the decision the year after it is taken and the CIA will learn of it by November 1987. [LEVY AND SCOTT-CLARK, 2007, PP. 132-3, 486]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [George Shultz](#), [Soviet Union](#), [Edvard Shevardnadze](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)



November 10, 1986 and After: Reagan, Officials Decide to Deny Iran-Contra Arms Allegations



The Reagan administration, led by CIA Director William Casey and National Security Adviser John Poindexter (Robert McFarlane’s replacement), decides to downplay and deny any arms-for-hostages deals as reported in the world press (see [November 3, 1986](#)), while maintaining the secret negotiations with Iran. President Reagan accepts their advice. In notes Reagan takes during a clandestine meeting about the situation, he writes, “Must say something because I’m being held out to dry.” [DUBOSE AND BERNSTEIN, 2006, PP. 65-66]

Entity Tags: [William Casey](#), [John Poindexter](#), [Reagan administration](#), [Robert C. McFarlane](#), [Ronald Reagan](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



November 25, 1986: CIA Official Lies to Congress about Diversion of Funds to Contras



Alan Fiers, the head of the CIA's Central America task force, testifies to Congress that neither he nor any of his superiors in the agency knew of the illegal diversion of funds to the Nicaraguan Contras (see [December 6, 1985](#) and [April 4, 1986](#)). Fiers is lying. He was ordered by his superior, Deputy Director of Operations Clair George, to conceal his knowledge of the fund diversions (see [Summer 1986](#)). Fiers will admit to lying five years later, and plead guilty to misdemeanor charges arising from his false testimony (see [July 17, 1991](#)). [[TIME, 7/22/1991](#)]

Entity Tags: [Contras](#), [Alan Fiers](#), [Clair George](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



Late November 1986: Iran-Contra Scandal Will Not Affect US-Iraq Intelligence Link, Says CIA Director



Shortly after the Iran-Contra scandal is first revealed in the press, CIA Director William J. Casey meets with Iraq's ambassador to the United States, Nizar Hamdoon, a second time (see [October 1986](#)) and assures him that the new Washington-Baghdad intelligence link (see [August 1986](#)) will remain open. [[WASHINGTON POST, 12/15/1986](#)]

Entity Tags: [William Casey](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Kizam Hamdoon](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#), [US-Iraq 1980s](#), [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



December 15, 1986-1989: 'Blind Sheikh' Obtains First US Visas with Help from CIA



Radical Muslim leader Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman obtains his first US visa via the CIA. A State Department official will later discover this was the first of six US visas given to him between 1986 and 1990. All are approved by CIA agents acting as consular officers at US embassies in Sudan and Egypt. "The CIA officers claimed they didn't know the sheikh was one of the most notorious political figures in the Middle East and a militant on the State Department's list of undesirables." But one top New York investigator will later say, "Left with the choice between pleading stupidity or else admitting deceit, the CIA went with stupidity." [[BOSTON GLOBE, 2/3/1995](#); [NEW YORKER, 3/17/1995](#)] Abdul-Rahman uses the visas to attend conferences of Islamic students in the US. Then he visits Pakistan, where he preaches at Peshawar, visits the Saudi embassy in Islamabad, and is "lionized at receptions heavily attended by Americans."

He plays a prominent role in recruiting mujaheddin fighters to fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan. [KEPEL, 2002, PP. 300] In 1989, Abdul-Rahman is arrested in Egypt and held under very closely guarded house arrest, but he manages to escape one year later, possibly by being smuggled out of his house in a washing machine. The CIA gives him another US visa and he moves to the US (see [July 1990](#)). [NEW YORK TIMES, 1/8/1995] Journalist Simon Reeve will claim in his 1999 book *The New Jackals* that, “The CIA, it is now clear, arranged the visa[s] to try and befriend the Sheikh in advance of a possible armed fundamentalist revolution in Egypt.” According to a retired CIA official, the CIA recalled mistakes made with the Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran and were trying to win Abdul-Rahman’s trust. [REEVE, 1999, PP. 60]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Omar Abdul-Rahman](#), [Simon Reeve](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



December 17, 1986: State Department Official Claims Not to Know Contra Liaison



Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, testifying before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, says that before the Iran-Contra revelations of October 1986 (see [October 5, 1986](#), [October 10-15, 1986](#), and [October 11-14, 1986](#)) he had never even heard of CIA agent Felix Rodriguez, the liaison between the Nicaraguan Contras and the National Security Council (see [Mid-September 1985](#)). As he has done so many times before, Abrams is lying. When he took his position in July 1985 (see [April 19, 1985 and After](#)), Rodriguez was already working out of the Ilopango airfield in El Salvador. Notes taken by the US Ambassador to El Salvador, Edwin Corr, indicate that Abrams knew of Rodriguez by September 1985 at the latest (see [September 4, 1985](#)). During that month, Abrams and Corr discussed Rodriguez in at least one meeting. (Corr will later say he cannot recall any such meeting.) Rodriguez was also a frequent topic of discussion in meetings held in late 1985 by the Restricted Interagency Group (RIG—see [Late 1985 and After](#)) chaired by Abrams. And Abrams was aware of concerns within the government about Rodriguez’s involvement in disbursing humanitarian funds allocated by the US Congress to the Contras (see [October 1985](#)). [FINAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL FOR IRAN/CONTRA MATTERS: CHAPTER 25: UNITED STATES V. ELLIOTT ABRAMS: NOVEMBER 1986, 8/4/1993]

Entity Tags: [Elliott Abrams](#), [Contras](#), [Edwin Corr](#), [Restricted Interagency Group](#), [Felix Rodriguez](#), [National Security Council](#), [House Foreign Affairs Committee](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



December 18, 1986: CIA Director Casey Has Brain Cancer Surgery



CIA Director William Casey, one of the key figures in the Iran-Contra affair, undergoes surgery for a brain tumor (see [December 15, 1986](#)). [\[PBS, 2000\]](#) The lymphoma tumor will be removed and proven to be malignant. Doctors will refuse to give details about the size and placement of the tumor, any possible cognitive or physical loss caused by the tumor, or any prognosis for possible recovery. The particular cancer is a “B-cell lymphoma of the large cell type,” a quite rare and extraordinarily aggressive form of cancer. Experts say that most cancers of this type occur in people whose immune systems have been compromised, often by treatment for other cancers or people who suffer from AIDS. Casey may have undergone treatment for cancer at an earlier date [\[NEW YORK TIMES, 12/24/1986\]](#) ; it will later be learned that Casey had undergone treatment for prostate cancer. [\[NEW YORK TIMES, 5/7/1987\]](#) Casey will resign as CIA director shortly after his cancer treatments begin (see [February 2, 1987](#)). He will die six months after the surgery (see [May 6, 1987](#)).

Entity Tags: [William Casey](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



(1987): CIA Obtains Detailed Information about Pakistan Nuclear Weapons Plant



After a uranium-enrichment facility in Kahuta, Pakistan, becomes operational and starts producing weapons-grade material for Pakistan’s nuclear program, the CIA finds a way to obtain “firsthand information, in detail,” about the work on nuclear weapons there. It is not known how the information is obtained. [\[NEW YORKER, 3/29/1993\]](#) The CIA previously obtained a complete set of floor plans for the facility (see [Mid-1980s](#)).

Entity Tags: [Kahuta Research Laboratories](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)



February 2, 1987: CIA Director Casey Resigns Due to Terminal Illness; Iran-Contra Committee Unable to Question Him



CIA Director William Casey abruptly resigns due to terminal brain cancer (see [December 18, 1986](#)). Casey’s illness makes him unavailable to testify before the Congressional Iran-Contra investigation, a huge boon for committee Republicans who are determined to keep the truth

of Iran-Contra from being revealed (see [January 6-7, 1987](#)). Casey had been one of the prime movers behind the Iran arms sales, and was National Security Council staffer Oliver North's prime supervisor in what insiders call "the Enterprise"—the ad hoc organization run by North and retired General Richard Secord (see [November 19, 1985](#)) that trained, supplied, and even at times fought for Nicaragua's Contras. North and Secord's organization managed to evade Congressional oversight and ignore laws passed to limit US involvement in the Nicaraguan insurgency (see [October 10, 1984](#)). According to upcoming testimony from North, Casey saw "the Enterprise" as such a success that it should serve as a model for other US covert operations around the globe. It was Casey's idea to have foreign countries such as Saudi Arabia (see [July, 1984](#)) and Brunei (see [June 11, 1986](#)) supply money to the Contras, over the objections of White House officials such as Secretary of State George Shultz, who told Casey in reference to the phrase "quid pro quo" that he should remember that "every quid had a quo." As one Democratic congressman later puts it, Casey was the "godfather" of the entire Iran-Contra operation, and his unavailability to the committee is a tremendous blow to its ability to find the truth. [[DUBOSE AND BERNSTEIN, 2006, PP. 70](#)]

Entity Tags: [George Shultz](#), [Contras](#), [William Casey](#), [Richard Secord](#), [Oliver North](#), [Joint House-Senate Iran-Contra Committee](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



March 1987: A. Q. Khan Says Pakistan Has Nuclear Weapons, then Retracts Claims



A. Q. Khan. [Source: CBC]A. Q. Khan, father of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, tells an Indian reporter that the program has been successful (see [1987](#)). "What the CIA has been saying about our possessing the bomb is correct," he says, adding, "They told us Pakistan could never produce the bomb and they doubted my capabilities, but they now know we have it." He says that Pakistan does not want to use the bomb, but "if driven to the wall there will be no option left." The comments are made during a major Indian army exercise known as Brass Tacks that Pakistanis consider a

serious threat, as it is close to the Pakistani border. In fact, at one point the Indian commanding general is reported to consider actually attacking Pakistan—an attack that would be a sure success given India’s conventional superiority. According to reporter Seymour Hersh, the purpose of the interview is “to convey a not very subtle message to the Indians: any attempt to dismember Pakistan would be countered with the bomb.” This interview is an embarrassment to the US government, which aided Pakistan during the Soviet-Afghan War, but has repeatedly claimed Pakistan does not have nuclear weapons (see [August 1985-October 1990](#)). Khan retracts his remarks a few days later, saying he was tricked by the reporter. [[NEW YORKER, 3/29/1993](#)]

Entity Tags: [Seymour Hersh](#), [Abdul Qadeer Khan](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)



Mid-March through Early April, 1987: Iran-Contra Committee Wrestles over Logistics



The Democratic and Republican leaders of Congress’s joint Iran-Contra investigation begin meetings to discuss the logistics of the upcoming public hearings (see [May 5, 1987](#)). Speaker of the House Jim Wright (D-TX) later recalls that House committee chairman “Lee Hamilton and I bent over backwards to be fair to the Republicans.” Many of the committee Republicans are not predisposed to return the favor. Moderate Republican Warren Rudman (R-NH), the co-chairman of the Senate committee, recalls that deep divides were forming between the committee’s moderate Republicans and the more hardline Republicans led by Dick Cheney (R-WY). “The meetings were very, very intensive,” Rudman will recall. Cheney helps put together the Republican committee members’ staff, and includes a number of hardline Reagan loyalists: the Justice Department’s Bruce Fein; the former assistant general counsel to the CIA, David Addington; and others. Notably, it is during the Iran-Contra hearings where Cheney and Addington form their lasting professional association.

Artificial Deadline - The first battle is over the length of the hearings. Cheney’s hardliners want the hearings over with quickly—“like tomorrow,” one former staffer recalls. Hamilton will recall: “Did I know Dick wanted to shorten it? Yes, I knew that.” Committee Democrats, fearful of extending the proceedings into the 1988 presidential campaign and thusly being perceived as overly partisan, agree to an artificial ten-month deadline to complete the investigation and issue a final report. Authors Lou Dubose and Jake Bernstein later write that the deadline is “an invitation to the administration to stall while simultaneously burying the committee under mountains of useless information.” When, in the fall of 1987, the committee receives large amounts of new information, such as White House backup computer files, Cheney’s hardliners will succeed in insisting that the committee adhere to the deadline.

Jousting with the Special Prosecutor - The committee also has trouble co-existing with the special prosecutor’s concurrent investigation (see [December 19, 1986](#)). The special

prosecutor, Lawrence Walsh, wants a long, intensive investigation culminating in a round of prosecutions. The committee worries that in light of Walsh's investigation, key witnesses like Oliver North and John Poindexter would refuse to testify before the committee, and instead plead the Fifth Amendment. Rudman and committee counsel Arthur Liman want Walsh to quickly prosecute North for obstruction of justice based on North's "shredding party" (see [November 21-25, 1986](#)). Rudman believes that he can get his Republican colleagues to agree to defer their investigation until after North's trial. But Walsh declines. Rudman later says: "Walsh might have been more successful if he had followed our suggestion.... But he had this grand scheme of conspiracy." As such, the committee has a difficult choice: abort the investigation or grant North immunity from prosecution so he can testify. Cheney and his hardliners, and even some Democrats, favor not having North testify in deference to his upcoming prosecution. "People were all over the place on that one," Rudman will recall. Hamilton is the strongest proponent of immunity for North. "He believed that North had information no one else had," a staffer will recall. Hamilton and the moderate Republicans are more interested in finding the details of the Iran-Contra affair rather than preparing for criminal prosecutions. The committee eventually compromises, and defers the testimony of North and Poindexter until the end of the investigation. Another committee staffer later recalls, "Hamilton was so fair-minded and balanced that in order to get agreements, he gave ground in areas where he shouldn't have."

North Deal 'Dooms' Investigation - Dubose and Bernstein later write, "The deal the committee struck with North's canny lawyer, Brendan Sullivan, doomed Walsh's investigation and the hearings." The committee offers North "use immunity," a guarantee that his testimony cannot be used against him in future prosecutions. The committee also agrees, unwisely, to a series of further caveats: they will not depose North prior to his testimony, his testimony will be strictly limited in duration, the committee will not recall North for further testimony, and he will not have to produce documents to be used in his testimony until just days before his appearance. [[DUBOSE AND BERNSTEIN, 2006, PP. 70-72, 77](#)]

Entity Tags: [Oliver North](#), [Jake Bernstein](#), [David S. Addington](#), [Bruce Fein](#), [Brendan Sullivan](#), [Arthur Liman](#), [James C. \('Jim'\) Wright, Jr.](#), [John Poindexter](#), [Joint House-Senate Iran-Contra Committee](#), [Lawrence E. Walsh](#), [Richard \("Dick"\) Cheney](#), [Warren Rudman](#), [Lee Hamilton](#), [Lou Dubose](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



April 1987: Hamid Gul Becomes Head of ISI





Hamid Gul serving as a Pakistani military officer in the 1980's. [Source: PBS / Nova] Gen. Hamid Gul is made head of Pakistan's ISI. [YOUSAF AND ADKIN, 1992, PP. 91-92] General Gul is a favorite of CIA Station Chief Milt Bearden and US ambassador to Pakistan Arnie Raphel, who view him as an ally and a potential national leader of Pakistan. [BEARDEN AND RISEN, 2003, PP. 301] According to Bearden, however, he will later (sometime after 1990) turn against the US. [BEARDEN AND RISEN, 2003, PP. 358, 523-524] Evidence will later appear that in the late 1990s Gul is somehow able to give the Taliban advanced warning of US attempts to assassinate bin Laden with missile strikes (see [July 1999](#)). In 2004, allegations will appear in the US media that Gul was a key participant in the 9/11 plot and "bin Laden's master planner" (see [July 22, 2004](#)).

Entity Tags: [Milt Bearden](#), [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#), [Mark Adkin](#), [Arnie Raphel](#), [Hamid Gul](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



[April 7, 1987: Cheney Lauds Former CIA Director Casey](#)



Iran-Contra investigative committee member Dick Cheney (R-WY) tells a reporter that former CIA Director William Casey, who recently resigned due to terminal brain cancer (see [February 2, 1987](#)), was "one of the best CIA directors the agency had ever had." Referring to Casey's inability to testify in the Iran-Contra hearings, Cheney says, "I don't think it's fair to criticize the man based on speculation and innuendo (see [May 5, 1987](#)), and to do so at a time when he is incapable of defending himself strikes me as in extremely poor taste." As for Iran-Contra itself, Cheney says, "I think there's a very real possibility that it's going to be at best a footnote in the history books." [DUBOSE AND BERNSTEIN, 2006, PP. 70]

Entity Tags: [William Casey](#), [Richard \("Dick"\) Cheney](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



May 5, 1987: Secord Names Casey, CIA and State Department Officials as Co-Conspirators



In the first day of testimony before the Joint House-Senate Iran-Contra Committee (see [May 5, 1987](#)), General Richard Secord (see [September 19, 1986](#)) testifies that CIA Director William Casey was one of the driving forces behind the illegal sales of arms to Iran, and the equally illegal diversion of profits from those arms to the Nicaraguan Contras. Secord, the leadoff witness, testifies that in addition to Casey, CIA and State Department officials aided in the efforts to provide the Contras with weapons and funds. Secord says he spoke with Casey about arming the Contras three times. He does not go into detail about what specific information he received from Casey during these conversations, but says the quality and amount of information was disappointing: “I was never able to get the professional intelligence I was accustomed to having.” Secord testifies that under Casey, high-ranking CIA agents in Honduras and Costa Rica gave him intelligence and other assistance. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 5/7/1987](#)]

Entity Tags: [Joint House-Senate Iran-Contra Committee](#), [Contras](#), [Richard Secord](#), [Reagan administration](#), [William Casey](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)

EVENTS

Page 3 of 19 (1807 events (use filters to narrow search))

[previous](#) | [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#), [12](#), [13](#), [14](#), [15](#), [16](#), [17](#), [18](#), [19](#) | [next](#)

May 6, 1987: Former CIA Director Casey Dies



Former CIA Director William Casey (see [February 2, 1987](#)) dies as a result of his inoperable brain cancer. Casey was a key figure in the Iran-Contra machinations. Authors Lou Dubose and Jake Bernstein will later write, “In death he would become a helpful scapegoat for Oliver North and a resting place for missing information that would have filled out the contours of the scandal.” [\[DUBOSE AND BERNSTEIN, 2006, PP. 70\]](#) Casey had been named as one of the architects of the scheme to use profits from illegal arms sales to Iran to secretly fund the Nicaraguan Contras (see [May 5, 1987](#)). He had been hospitalized since April 25, and unable to testify in the Iran-Contra hearings. The immediate cause of death is what doctors call “aspiration pneumonia,” which may mean that Casey inhaled food or food particles in his lungs that set up a toxic chemical reaction. A physician not involved in Casey’s treatment says that Casey may have had trouble swallowing properly. The hospital in Glen Cove, Long Island refuses to give any more details. Despite the swirling Iran-Contra controversy, President Reagan says of his longtime colleague and friend: “His nation and all those who love freedom honor today the name and memory of Bill Casey. In addition to crediting him with rebuilding America’s intelligence capability, history will note the brilliance of his mind and strategic vision, his passionate commitment to the cause of freedom and his unhesitating willingness to make personal sacrifices for the sake of that cause and his country.” [\[NEW YORK TIMES, 5/7/1987\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Lou Dubose](#), [Oliver North](#), [Ronald Reagan](#), [William Casey](#), [Contras](#), [Jake Bernstein](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



[May 27, 1987: CIA Operative Testifies, Turns Questioning into Anti-Soviet Diatribe](#)



Felix Rodriguez, in US Army uniform. *[Source: Cuba Informazione]* CIA operative Felix Rodriguez testifies before the Iran-Contra committee (see [May 5, 1987](#)). Rodriguez, a Cuban exile and former US Army officer, is notorious for his involvement in the execution of South American revolutionary Ernesto “Che” Guevara in 1967. Rodriguez also ran covert

assassination operations for the CIA during the Vietnam War. Rodriguez's connection to the White House was through Donald Gregg, the national security adviser to Vice President Bush (see [March 17, 1983](#)). Gregg had helped station Rodriguez at an airport in El Salvador, where Rodriguez could, under the pseudonym "Max Gomez," manage the Contra resupply operation for Oliver North and Richard Secord (see [Mid-September 1985](#) and [November 19, 1985](#)). CIA cargo handler Eugene Hasenfus (see [October 5, 1986](#)) told his Sandinista captors that "Max Gomez" was his contact with the CIA. Rodriguez's testimony is potentially explosive, but committee member Dick Cheney (R-WY) has no interest in eliciting any such information. Instead, he invites Rodriguez to launch a well-scripted diatribe against allowing the Soviet Union to establish a Communist foothold in Latin America. [[DUBOSE AND BERNSTEIN, 2006, PP. 73-74](#)]

Entity Tags: [Eugene Hasenfus](#), [Richard Secord](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Felix Rodriguez](#), [Donald Gregg](#), [Richard \("Dick"\) Cheney](#), [Oliver North](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



Before July 1987: 'High-Ranking US Officials' Tip Off Pakistan about US Arrests over Nuclear Weapons Program



The CIA sets a trap to catch operatives connected to Pakistan's nuclear weapons program who are buying components in the US, but "two high-ranking US officials extremely close to the White House" tip off Pakistan and only a minor player is caught. Initially, a Pakistani businessman contacts a Pennsylvania company called Carpenter Steel and asks to buy a specific type of metal used only in constructing centrifuges to enrich uranium. The Department of Energy learns of the contact and informs Richard Barlow, a CIA analyst focused on Pakistan's nuclear program. Barlow realizes that both the businessman, Arshad Pervez, and his handler, Inam ul-Haq, a retired brigadier in the Pakistani army, are well-known Pakistan government operatives. Barlow and US Customs set up a sting at a bugged hotel room, but Pervez arrives without ul-Haq, the main target. Barlow then finds that the officials have tipped off Pakistan, even though the information about the operation was closely held (see [Mid-1986 and After](#)). Barlow finds cables implicating the two high-ranking officials in the tip-off: Robert Peck, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State of Near East Affairs, and another official at the under secretary level. A trail of paperwork definitively proves sabotage within the State Department and the tip-off is found "buried within the lawyerly language of a demarche to Islamabad, subtly phrased so as to protect those who had sent it." Barlow will later comment: "The CIA went mad. These were criminal offenses." However, the State Department argues an inquiry would disclose state secrets and the investigation is abandoned, just before President Ronald Reagan again certifies that "Pakistan does not possess a nuclear explosive device." There will later be a stormy congressional hearing about the affair (see [July 1987 or Shortly After](#)). [[NEW YORKER, 3/29/1993](#); [LEVY AND SCOTT-CLARK, 2007, PP. 169](#); [GUARDIAN, 10/13/2007](#)] Ul-Haq will later be arrested in Germany and extradited to the US, but he will only

serve a very short sentence. His nuclear transactions in the US will also be linked to the criminal BCCI bank (see [July 11, 1991](#)).

Entity Tags: [US Department of State](#), [Robert Peck](#), [Arshad Pervez](#), [Richard Barlow](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Office of Scientific and Weapons Research \(CIA\)](#), [Inam ul-Haq](#), [Pakistan](#)

Timeline Tags: [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)



July 7-10, 1987: North Testifies before Iran-Contra Committee



Oliver North testifying before the Iran-Contra Committee. [Source:

Bettmann / Corbis] Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North testifies before the joint House-Senate Iran-Contra investigative committee. During the course of his testimony, he says he does not know if President Reagan had any knowledge of the diversion of funds from Iranian arms sales to the Nicaraguan Contras (see [December 6, 1985](#) and [April 4, 1986](#)). North also testifies that William Casey, the recently deceased CIA director (see [May 6, 1987](#)), knew of and approved the diversion of funds to the Contras. North admits that the Iranian arms sales were initially designed to help facilitate the release of the American hostages being held by Hezbollah. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 11/19/1987](#)]

Tour de Force - North's testimony is a "tour de force," in the words of authors Lou Dubose and Jake Bernstein, that allows Republicans the opportunity to reverse the field of the hearings and go on the offensive instead of defending the conduct of the Reagan administration.

North, a Marine lieutenant colonel, wears his full-dress Marine uniform throughout his entire testimony with rows of ribbons festooning his chest. Handsome and full of righteous patriotism, he is striking on television, and contrasts well with the nasal, disdainful committee lawyers (see [May 5, 1987](#)) who spend four days interrogating him.

Need to Free Hostages Trumps Law - For the first two days, North and House counsel John Nields spar for the cameras. North says that Casey had directed him to create the so-called "Enterprise" (see [November 19, 1985](#) and [February 2, 1987](#)), the clandestine organization that supported the Nicaraguan Contras with money, weapons, and sometimes US personnel. North admits to shredding untold amounts of evidence after the operation came to light (see

[November 21-25, 1986](#)). He also admits to lying to Congress in previous testimony. But all of his actions are justified, he says, by the need to get Iran to free the American hostages. “I’d have offered the Iranians a free trip to Disneyland if we could have gotten Americans home for it,” he declares in response to one question about US arms sales to Iran. Senate counsel Arthur Liman will later write, “He made all his illegal acts—the lying to Congress, the diversion [of funds from Iranian arms sales to the Contras], the formation of the Enterprise, the cover-up—seem logical and patriotic.”

Targeting Covert Operations - Niels’s preferred line of questioning—covert operations—makes many committee members uncomfortable. Some House Democrats want to use the investigation to further their own goals of limiting covert actions, and others simply want the truth to be revealed. In contrast, House Republicans are united in opposition to any details of covert operations being revealed on national television and thus hampering the president’s ability to conduct future operations as needed. After the first day of North’s testimony, committee member Dick Cheney (R-WY) exults on PBS that North “probably was as effective as anybody we’ve had before the committee in coming forward very aggressively and stating what he did, saying why he did it, arguing that he was in fact authorized to take the activities that he did.”

Leaky Congress Unfit to Know of Covert Ops, North Contends - North echoes Cheney’s position that the question is not whether White House officials broke the law, but whether Congress was fit to consider the question of national security at all. North goes so far as to question the propriety of the hearings themselves: “I believe that these hearings, perhaps unintentionally so, have revealed matters of great secrecy in the operation of our government, and sources of methods of intelligence activities have clearly been revealed, to the detriment of our security.” North’s message is clear: Congress is not fit to handle covert operations or, by and large, to even know about them. Best for the legislature to allow the White House and the intelligence community to do what needs doing and remain quiet about it. North’s contention that Congress has leaked vital national security information is shot down by Senate committee chairman Daniel Inouye (D-HI), who not only forces North to admit that he has no evidence of his contention, but that the White House, not Congress, is the main source of leaked classified information. Indeed, North himself has leaked information (see [July 7-10, 1987](#)). Inouye’s co-chair, Warren Rudman (R-NH) will later say: “The greatest leaks came out of the White House. North and company were the biggest leakers of all during that period.” [DUBOSE AND BERNSTEIN, 2006, PP. 75-78] Niels, addressing North’s implication that the NSC has no obligation to tell the truth to Congress, says towards the end of his session with North: “We do believe in a democracy in which the people, not one lieutenant colonel, decide important policy issues, don’t we? ... You denied Congress the facts North had admitted to lying about the government’s involvement with the Hasenfus plane. You denied the elected representatives of the people the facts.” [BOSTON GLOBE, 7/9/1987]

Impact on Public Opinion - Results will differ on North’s popularity with viewers (see [July 9-31, 1987](#)).

Entity Tags: [Daniel Inouye](#), [William Casey](#), [Arthur Liman](#), [Warren Rudman](#), [Ronald Reagan](#), [Richard \(“Dick”\) Cheney](#), [Hezbollah](#), [Jake Bernstein](#), [Contras](#), [John Niels](#), [Bush administration](#), [Oliver North](#), [Joint House-Senate Iran-Contra Committee](#), [Lou Dubose](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



July 22, 1987: Defense Official Fails to Recollect Details of North Meetings in Testimony



Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Armitage, who has attended some of Oliver North's Restricted Interagency Group (RIG) meetings (see [Late 1985 and After](#) and [July 1986 and After](#)), testifies before the Joint House-Senate Committee investigating Iran-Contra (see [May 5, 1987](#)). Armitage is asked about RIG meetings in which North recited a list of his activities in coordinating the Contras, discussed the private funding of the Contras, and demanded item-by-item approval from group members: “[D]o you recall, regardless of what dates, regardless of where it was, regardless of whether it had exactly the players he said—because he could have gotten all that wrong—do you recall any meeting at which he did anything close to what his testimony suggests?” Armitage replies, “I do not.” [[FINAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL FOR IRAN/CONTRA MATTERS: CHAPTER 25: UNITED STATES V. ELLIOTT ABRAMS: NOVEMBER 1986, 8/4/1993](#)] It is not until RIG member Alan Fiers, a former CIA official, testifies in 1991 about North's behaviors that verification of North's discussion of such specifics about Contra activities and funding will be made public (see [July 17, 1991](#)).

Entity Tags: [Joint House-Senate Iran-Contra Committee](#), [Alan Fiers](#), [Richard Armitage](#), [Restricted Interagency Group](#), [Oliver North](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



August 1987-1988: Analyst of Pakistan's Nuclear Program Forced Out of CIA after Telling Truth to Congress



Following a stormy Congressional subcommittee hearing where he contradicted CIA manager David Einsel about Pakistan's nuclear program (see [July 1987 or Shortly After](#)), analyst Richard Barlow is forced out of the CIA. Barlow will later say that he leaves because Einsel makes his job impossible: “Einsel went crazy. I was told that my personal behavior at the hearing had been unprofessional. I was accused of being unpatriotic and almost scuttling the Afghanistan program. I was viewed as being disloyal.” [[GUARDIAN, 10/13/2007](#)] He will also say: “These people were determined that nothing like this was ever going to happen ever again—no more arrests, no more truth to the Congress.... I was targeted by some in the Directorate of Operations; they made my life miserable.” [[RAW STORY, 4/30/2007](#)] Commenting on his position during the Cold War, he will add: “We had to buddy-up to regimes we didn't see eye-to-eye with, but I could not believe we would actually give Pakistan the bomb. How could any US

administration set such short-term gains against the long-term safety of the world?” Barlow’s job description is re-written six weeks after the hearing, removing him from work on Pakistan’s nuclear weapons, and he leaves the CIA for the Customs Service a year later.

[[GUARDIAN, 10/13/2007](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Richard Barlow](#), [Office of Scientific and Weapons Research \(CIA\)](#), [David Einsele](#)

Timeline Tags: [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)



September 1987-March 1989: Head US Consular Official Claims He’s Told to Issue Visas to Unqualified Applicants



Michael Springmann. [Source: *Michael Springmann*] Michael Springmann, head US consular official in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, later claims that during this period he is “repeatedly ordered... to issue [more than 100] visas to unqualified applicants.” He turns them down, but is repeatedly overruled by superiors. [[BBC, 11/6/2001](#); [ST. PETERSBURG TIMES, 11/25/2001](#)] In one case, two Pakistanis apply for visas to attend a trade show in the US, but they are unable to name the trade show or city in which it will be held. When Springmann denies them a visa, he gets “an almost immediate call from a CIA case officer, hidden in the commercial section [of the consulate], that I should reverse myself and grant these guys a visa.” Springmann refuses, but the decision is reversed by the chief of the consular section. Springmann realizes that even the ambassador, Walter Cutler, is aware of the situation, which becomes “more brazen and blatant” as time goes on. On one occasion Springmann is even told, “If you want a job in the State Department in future, you will change your mind.” [[CBC RADIO ONE, 7/3/2002](#); [TRENTO, 2005, PP. 344-6](#)] Springmann loudly complains to numerous government offices, but no action is taken. He is fired and his files on these applicants are destroyed. He later learns that recruits from many countries fighting for bin Laden against Russia in Afghanistan were funneled through the Jeddah office to get visas to come to the US, where the recruits would travel to train for the Afghan war. According to Springmann, the Jeddah consulate was run by the CIA and staffed almost entirely by intelligence agents. This visa system may have continued at least through

9/11, and 11 of the 19 9/11 hijackers received their visas through Jeddah (see [November 2, 1997-June 20, 2001](#)), possibly as part of this program (see [October 9, 2002](#) and [October 21, 2002](#)). [[BBC, 11/6/2001](#); [ST. PETERSBURG TIMES, 11/25/2001](#); [CBC RADIO ONE, 7/3/2002](#); [ASSOCIATED PRESS,](#)

[7/17/2002](#) ; FOX NEWS, 7/18/2002]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [US Consulate, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia Office](#), [Michael Springmann](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)



September 14, 1987-March 2005: Arrested Militant Not Asked by US about Various Crimes



Fawaz Younis, a Lebanese militant associated with the Amal militia, a Shiite organization that is influential in Lebanon at this time, is arrested in international waters near Cyprus on September 14, 1987 during a joint FBI-CIA operation. However, US authorities fail to ask him about activities in Lebanon, such as the murders of CIA officers, kidnappings of US citizens who will later be part of an arms-for-hostages deal with Iran (see [Late May, 1986](#)), and an attack on the US marine barracks in Beirut, where over 200 people were killed (see [April 18-October 23, 1983](#)). Authors Joe and Susan Trento will say, “The key to all these unasked questions may be that those in charge did not want to know the answers.” For example, he is not asked about cooperation between the Amal group, which had a covert relationship with the CIA, and Hezbollah in the bombings. One possible reason for this is that Amal head Nabih Berri has “full knowledge of the arms-for-hostages deal,” an aspect of the Iran-Contra scandal. After Younis is released in 2005, the Trentos will interview him and he will say that Amal was co-responsible for the attacks: “Nothing happened in areas we controlled without Amal’s cooperation.” He will also say that Berri ordered some of the hijackings and that he cannot understand “why the United States allowed him to get away with it.” In addition, he will comment, “Privately, people in our government will say we cannot act [against Islamic militancy] in Lebanon because Nabih Berri is a valuable US intelligence asset,” and, “That lack of action is seen by the Hezbollah as evidence of America’s lack of seriousness and resolve in the War on Terror.” Regarding 9/11, he will say, “I have no doubt that our experience in breaking through airport security, developing sources and help among airport staff, was information that Hezbollah passed on to al-Qaeda.” [[TRENTO AND TRENTO, 2006, PP. 213-215-7](#)]

Entity Tags: [Fawaz Younis](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Joseph Trento](#), [Nabih Berri](#), [Hezbollah](#), [Amal](#), [Susan Trento](#)

Timeline Tags: [Alleged Use of False Flag Attacks](#), [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



September 18, 1987: Lebanese Hijacker Is First Known Islamist Terrorist to Be Rendered by US



A group of US agencies, comprising the CIA, FBI, DEA, and Defense Department, cooperates on the capture and rendition of Fawaz Younis, an Islamic militant linked to Lebanon's Amal militia who was previously involved in two airplane hijackings.

Arrested, Transferred to US - Younis is captured after being lured to a boat in international waters off Cyprus. He is then arrested and transferred to an aircraft carrier, from where he is flown directly to the US. The operation, which costs US\$20 million, is so complicated because of rules set by the Justice Department. [TRENTO AND TRENTO, 2006, PP. 78-94] Author Stephen Grey will call the rules "very tight." CIA manager Duane Clarridge will say, "This meant that Younis had to be apprehended by the FBI in international waters or airspace, remain in constant custody of the feds, and remain clear of the turf of any sovereign nation—for the entire duration of his 4,000-mile journey to the United States." [GREY, 2007, PP. 133-134]

Details of Hijackings - In the first hijacking, Younis seized a plane in Beirut and attempted to fly it to Tunis, where the Arab League was meeting. The aim was to pressure the League into urging the Palestine Liberation Organization to leave Lebanon, as relations between it and local people had deteriorated. In the second hijacking, which took place five days later, the plane was seized by a team from Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah, who beat the passengers and shot one of them, US Navy diver Robert Stethem. Posing as a crewman during a stopover in Beirut, Younis entered the plane and took control of the hijacking. The passengers were removed from the plane in groups, and dispersed through Beirut. They were later released in return for safe passage for the hijackers (see [June 14-30, 1985](#)).

Lured by Informant - The man who lured Younis to the boat is Jamal Hamdan, who had previously worked with the CIA on a false flag operation in Germany (see [After Mid-April 1986](#)). Authors Joe and Susan Trento will describe Hamdan as "a street hustler, murderer and drug dealer," adding, "Hamdan's Beirut police file is impressive." Thanks to his connection to Amal, Hamdan was able to operate for a time despite his killings, but in 1985 he murdered a senior Druze official and then his sister-in-law, leading to his imprisonment. Amal leader and US intelligence asset Nabih Berri informed the US that Hamdan could help them with some drug cases, and he began providing the DEA and CIA with information about US-based drug dealers, which got him released from prison.

Deal for Asylum - In return for helping the operation to capture Younis, dubbed operation Goldenrod, Hamdan insisted on "huge cash payments" and asylum for himself and his family in the US. The Trentos will comment, "In other words, the FBI arranged to bring into our country a murderer and terrorist in return for the capture of an airplane hijacker who had never killed any Americans." [TRENTO AND TRENTO, 2006, PP. 78-94]

Entity Tags: [US Department of Defense](#), [Jamal Hamdan](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Duane Clarridge](#), [Amal](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Drug Enforcement Administration](#), [Fawaz Younis](#), [Stephen Grey](#)

Timeline Tags: [Torture of US Captives](#), [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



1988: US Increases Intelligence For Iraq



The US increases the amount of military intelligence it provides Iraq, a significant portion of which is channeled to the Iraqis through the CIA's Baghdad office. [[WASHINGTON POST, 12/30/2002](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#), [US-Iraq 1980s](#)



April 10, 1988: Munitions Explosion Hides Evidence US Aid to Mujaheddin Is Really Funding A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Program



In the 1980s, ISI Director Akhtar Abdur Rahman was supervising a secret trade in which CIA weapons meant to go to mujaheddin fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan were sold to others by the ISI. The profits were then used to fund the Kahuta Research Laboratories, which A. Q. Khan was using to develop a Pakistani nuclear bomb (see [1980s](#)). To disguise where the weapons were coming from, the CIA bought Soviet-made weapons on the black market then shipped them to the ISI. The ISI stored them at an arms depot in Ojiri, near the town of Rawalpindi. By 1988, the US finally demands an independent audit of the depot, after persistent reports of corruption. On April 10, 1988, several weeks before US inspectors are to arrive, the arms depot blows up. The explosion is so massive that it kills 100 and injures over 1,000. The Pakistani government will officially determine the explosion was an accident. However, Hamid Gul, who became ISI director in 1987 (see [April 1987](#)), conducts a secret audit for the ISI about the explosion and confirms that it was caused by sabotage to hide the massive theft of munitions. The US ambassador to Pakistan estimates that about \$125 million worth of explosives are destroyed in the blast. [[LEVY AND SCOTT-CLARK, 2007, PP. 131-132](#)]

Entity Tags: [Hamid Gul](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#), [Akhtar Abdur Rahman](#), [Kahuta Research Laboratories](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)



June 1988: Justice Department Memo Approves Rendition



The Justice Department issues a memo formally authorizing the use of rendition as a technique by the CIA and FBI to transport terrorist suspects from foreign countries. The terrorists are to be brought to the US, where they will face trial. This is the first known official use of the term rendition, although it is already in informal use. According to CIA Director William Webster, the technique is to be used in countries like Lebanon, due to the poor state of the judicial system there, and the other country's government does not have to be informed or approve the operation. Webster will comment, "It seems to me that you have a different set of circumstances in a country like Lebanon which has no capacity to provide law enforcement or assistance than going to another neighbor such as Sweden or someplace and lifting somebody out of there." Webster will point out that US courts will not consider seizing a terrorist in another country a bar to trying him in the US, as courts "do not much care how the defendant happened to come into America." [\[WASHINGTON POST, 11/4/1989; GREY, 2007, PP. 133-134\]](#) At least one such rendition operation was carried out before the memo was issued (see [September 18, 1987](#)).

Entity Tags: [William H. Webster](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [US Department of Justice](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Torture of US Captives](#)



August 17, 1988: Pakistani President Zia Killed in Plane Crash



Arnold Raphel. *[Source: Robert Nickelsberg / Time Life Pictures / Getty*

Images] Pakistan's president Muhammad Zia ul-Haq is killed in an airplane crash. The plane went into a steep dive, then recovered regaining altitude. Then it dove a second time and crashed. [\[YOUSAF AND ADKIN, 1992, PP. 91-92\]](#) ISI Director Akhtar Abdur Rahman, US ambassador to Pakistan Arnold Raphel, and other Pakistani and US officials are also killed. A joint US-Pakistani investigation fails to definitively explain what caused the crash. [\[COLL, 2004, PP. 178-179\]](#) According to Mohammad Yousaf, the ISI's Afghan Bureau chief, the crash was due to sabotage. Yousaf does not know who was responsible, but later says that the US State Department was instrumental in the cover-up. Yousaf points out several reasons why the

State Department might want to cover up the crime even if the US were not involved in the assassination itself. [YOUSAF AND ADKIN, 1992, PP. 91-92] Richard Clarke, a State Department analyst who later will become counterterrorism “tsar” for Presidents Clinton and Bush Jr., believes that Zia’s death and the destruction of a major weapons stockpile used by the CIA and ISI around the same time (see [April 10, 1988](#)) were both ordered by the Soviets as revenge for being defeated in Afghanistan. Clarke says, “I could never find the evidence to prove that the Soviet KGB had ordered these two acts as payback for their bitter defeat, but in my bones I knew they had.” [CLARKE, 2004, PP. 50]

Entity Tags: [Mohammad Yousaf](#), [Akhtar Abdur Rahman](#), [Muhammad Zia ul-Haq](#), [Richard A. Clarke](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Autumn 1988: CIA Has Secret Slush Fund for Covert Operations at BCCI; Fails to Tell US Customs about It



William von Raab. [Source: *Sobran.com*] In 1991, the Financial Times will report, “[T]here are persistent allegations that slush funds [at the criminal BCCI bank] were used for illegal, covert CIA operations.” US Customs Commissioner William von Raab will later allege that in the autumn of 1988, as he is preparing arrests regarding drug money laundering charges against a BCCI subsidiary in Florida, he approaches CIA Deputy Director Robert Gates for help. Gates does give Raab a CIA document about BCCI. But, according to the Times, “Gates failed to disclose the CIA’s own use of BCCI to channel payments for covert operations, which the customs chief learned about only later—and thanks to documents supplied to him by British customs agents in London.” The Times will cite the Iran-Contra arms-for-hostages scandal as one example of how the CIA used BCCI for covert operations.

[FINANCIAL TIMES, 8/10/1991]

Entity Tags: [William von Raab](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Bank of Credit and Commerce International](#), [Robert M. Gates](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [Iran-Contra Affair](#)

 SHARE

October 1988: State Department Envoy Warns Against Continued Support of Militant Islamists



Milton Bearden. *[Source: Publicity photo]* State Department Special Envoy Ed McWilliams, stationed in Islamabad, sends a widely distributed cable to Washington warning that continued support for the Islamist militants will have disastrous consequences. This leads to a long and bitter debate between those who agree with McWilliams, and those, including CIA Station Chief Milton Bearden, who believe that the manipulation of the Islamists has been a huge success that can and should be continued and replicated elsewhere. In response to the warning, the embassy investigates McWilliams, searching for weaknesses such as alcoholism and homosexuality. [\[COLL, 2004, PP. 184\]](#) Additionally, the CIA “raises serious questions about his handling of classified materials.” [\[COLL, 2004, PP. 176-204\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Milton Bearden](#), [Ed McWilliams](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)

 SHARE

After December 21, 1988: CIA Worried Lockerbie Investigation Will Expose Dealings with Iran





CIA covert operations manager Ted Shackley. *[Source: [nndb\(.com\)](#)]* Following the bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, the CIA is apparently worried that an investigation of the attack, which may have been conducted or assisted by Iran or one of its surrogates, will uncover dealings between the US and Iran. Journalists Joe and Susan Trento will comment: “To avoid criticism that the United States was doing business with terrorists should the secret negotiations with Iran [Iran-Contra, etc.] be exposed, the CIA participated in a bizarre campaign to divert blame for terrorist acts from Iran and Iran’s surrogate, Hezbollah, to Libya. If there was a comprehensive investigation into the Pan Am 103 tragedy, everything might be exposed. The major behind-the-scenes player in all this activity was the former number two man in covert operations at the CIA, Theodore G. Shackley.” [\[TRENTO AND TRENTO, 2006, PP. 67\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Theodore Shackley](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Joseph Trento](#), [Susan Trento](#)

Timeline Tags: [US confrontation with Iran](#), [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



Late 1980s: Ramzi Yousef Recruited by CIA?



Ramzi Yousef. *[Source: [Associated Press](#)]* Al-Qaeda bomber Ramzi Yousef is said to be recruited by the CIA, though details are not known. Author Richard Labeviere reported without elaboration in a 1999 book, “A classified FBI file indicates that [Yousef] was recruited by the local branch of the CIA.” [\[LABEVIERE, 1999, PP. 220-221\]](#) In 1995, Newsday will report, “FBI

officials also are considering a probe of whether the CIA had any relationship with Yousef, who fought with the CIA-financed mujaheddin in Afghanistan in the 1980s.” [NEWSDAY, 4/16/1995] But there appears to be no further reporting on whether such a probe was conducted. Yousef is believed to have masterminded a series of bombings in the early 1990s, including the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and the planned Bojinka attack, before being captured in 1995 (see [February 7, 1995](#)). If Yousef was recruited by the CIA, it may have been in the late 1980s when the CIA recruited and trained thousands of people around the world to fight in Afghanistan (see [1986-1992](#)). In the late 1980s, Yousef was studying engineering at a Wales college, but he’d also joined the Muslim Brotherhood while there. During a break from school in 1988, he went to one of bin Laden’s training camps in Afghanistan and spent several months honing his bomb-making skills. [MILLER, STONE, AND MITCHELL, 2002, PP. 78]

Entity Tags: [Ramzi Yousef](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Muslim Brotherhood](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



February 16, 1989-December 1990: CIA Continues to Work with ‘Blind Sheikh’ and Supports Mujaheddin Despite Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan



Although the Soviets withdraw from Afghanistan in February 1989 (see [February 15, 1989](#)), the CIA continues to support the mujaheddin because the Soviet-allied Communist government stays in power in Kabul. Apparently, the CIA and the Saudi government continue to fund the mujaheddin at least until December 1990, although it could be longer because the Communist government remains in power in Kabul until 1992. The “Blind Sheikh,” Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, reportedly has been working with the CIA in the 1980s to help unite the mujaheddin factions fighting each other (see [Late 1980s](#)). The Village Voice will later report that according to a “very high-ranking Egyptian official,” Abdul-Rahman continues to work with the CIA after moving to Brooklyn in July 1990 (see [July 1990](#)). He “work[s] closely with the CIA, helping to channel a steady flow of money, men, and guns to mujaheddin bases in Afghanistan and Pakistan.” But despite working with the CIA, Abdul-Rahman still considers the US the “Great Satan” and does not try to hide this. In one radio broadcast, he says that “Americans are descendants of apes and pigs who have been feeding from the dining tables of the Zionists, Communism, and colonialism.” Matti Steinberg, an expert on Islamic fundamentalism, says that Abdul-Rahman’s “long-term goal is to weaken US society and to show Arab rulers that the US is not an invulnerable superpower.” The Egyptian official will later complain, “We begged America not to coddle the sheikh.” [VILLAGE VOICE, 3/30/1993]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Omar Abdul-Rahman](#), [Matti Steinberg](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)



March 1989: CIA Director Acknowledges Iraq Largest Producer of Chemical Weapons



CIA director William Webster acknowledges to Congress that Iraq is the largest producer of chemical weapons in the world. [US CONGRESS, 3/1989]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [William H. Webster](#)

Timeline Tags: [US-Iraq 1980s](#)



(April 25-May 1989): US Holds Secret Meetings with Egyptian Terror Group Headed by 'Blind Sheikh'



Members of Egyptian militant group Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, whose spiritual head is the 'Blind Sheikh,' Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, hold a series of secret meetings with US officials at the American embassy in Cairo. The meetings are initiated by Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, which wants to co-operate with the US, because it thinks the US is co-operating with and supporting the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. At the meetings, representatives of the group tell the US:

- Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya has between 150,000 and 200,000 members;
- One of the representatives at the meetings sat on Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya's shura, or leadership council, between 1981 and 1988. The 11 members of the group's shura are named at the meetings, as is its operational commander;
- Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya thinks highly of Saudi Arabian King Fahd, but believes he should take a stronger line against Iran. However, Abdul-Rahman met an Iranian delegation in Pakistan in autumn 1988;
- The group will not attack US diplomats;
- Abdul-Rahman travels to the US yearly, and also travels to Britain;
- The group is not as secret and violent as represented by the Egyptian government and has undergone a "change in thinking," becoming concerned about its radical and violent image. Embassy officials are skeptical about some of the claims, as the group's representatives reveal more than the officials think is prudent. One year after the meetings, Abdul-Rahman will be issued a US visa by a CIA officer and move to the US (see [July 1990](#)). [[US EMBASSY IN CAIRO,](#)

 [4/25/1989](#) ; [US EMBASSY IN CAIRO, 5/3/1989](#) ]

Entity Tags: [Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya](#), [United States](#), [Omar Abdul-Rahman](#), [US Embassy in Cairo](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



(May 1989-January 1991): Later Head of CIA's Alec Station Serves in Niger



Richard Blee, a CIA officer who will later go on to head the agency's Osama bin Laden unit before 9/11 (see [June 1999](#)), serves in Niger. The State Department's May 1989, September 1989, January 1990, September 1990, and January 1991 publications "Key Officers of Foreign Service Posts" will list him as the political officer at the US embassy in Niamey. [[US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 5/1989, PP. 35](#); [US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 9/1989, PP. 35](#); [US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 1/1990, PP. 35](#); [US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 9/1990, PP. 32](#); [US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 1/1991, PP. 62](#)] However, given his CIA affiliation, Blee is presumably attached to the CIA station there.

Entity Tags: [US Department of State](#), [Richard Blee](#), [CIA Niamey Station](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Misc Entries](#)



(June-November 1989): US Considers Rendition Operation against Lockerbie Bombers, If Found



According to CIA Director William Webster, the US considers mounting a rendition operation against the bombers of Pan Am Flight 103. The plane was blown up over Lockerbie, Scotland, causing 270 fatalities in December 1988. Nearly a year later, Webster tells the Washington Post that the administration hopes to locate, seize, and bring to the US for trial the terrorists responsible for the bombing. However, it is not known who committed the bombing at this point. Discussion of the US response to the bombing leads the Justice Department to issue a memo formally authorizing the technique of rendition (see [June 1988](#)). [[WASHINGTON POST, 11/4/1989](#)] As of fall 2008, the full list of operatives involved in the bombing is not known and there are no public records of any of the known alleged bombers being rendered to the US.

Entity Tags: [William H. Webster](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Torture of US Captives](#)



June 4, 1989: Ali Mohamed Shows US Military Training Videos to Muslim Radicals



Ali Mohamed, a spy for bin Laden working in the US military, trains Muslim radicals. On this date, he travels with El Sayyid Nosair to the Al-Kifah Refugee Center in Brooklyn, a charity connected to bin Laden and the CIA, and shows training videos from the Fort Bragg military base where US Special Forces train. A former FBI agent will later comment, “You have an al-Qaeda spy who’s now a US citizen, on active duty in the US Army, and he brings along a video paid for by the US government to train Green Beret officers and he’s using it to help train Islamic terrorists so they can turn their guns on us.... By now the Afghan war is over.” [[LANCE, 2006, PP. 48](#)] Nosair, who watches the videos, will assassinate a Jewish leader in New York one year later (see [November 5, 1990](#)).

Entity Tags: [El Sayyid Nosair](#), [Ali Mohamed](#), [Al-Kifah Refugee Center](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



June 7, 1989: Prime Minister Bhutto Tells US Congress Pakistan Does Not Have Nuclear Weapon



Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in 1991. [*Source: BBC*] Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto tells a joint session of the US Congress: “[W]e do not possess nor do we intend to make a nuclear device. That is our policy.” The statement receives “thunderous cheers” from members of both houses. However, Bhutto has been aware of Pakistan’s nuclear program for some time (see [After November 16, 1988](#)) and recently received a detailed briefing on it from the CIA (see [June 1989](#)). [[NEW YORKER, 3/29/1993](#)]

Entity Tags: [Benazir Bhutto](#)

Timeline Tags: [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)



August 2, 1989: Petra Bank Collapses; Ahmed Chalabi Flees



Mohammed Said Nabulsi, Jordan's central bank governor, orders the country's banks to deposit 30 percent of their foreign exchange holdings with the central bank. The measure is part of an effort to enforce regulations on liquidity ratios and reduce the outflow of foreign exchange from Jordan. Petra, run by Ahmed Chalabi, is the only bank among the 20 that is unable to comply with the order. At the urging of Nabulsi, King Hussein puts Petra under government supervision and orders an audit of the bank's books. Petra's board of directors are replaced and an investigation begins. Two weeks later, in August 1989, Chalabi flees the country—reportedly with \$70 million. According to Hudson Institute's Max Singer, Prince Hassan personally drives Chalabi to the Jordanian border, helping him escape. The investigation subsequently uncovers evidence of massive fraud. “The scale of fraud at Petra Bank was enormous,” Nabulsi will later recall. “It was like a tiny Enron.” Arthur Andersen determines that the bank's assets are overstated by \$200 million. The bank is found to have enormous bad debts (about \$80 million); “unsupported foreign currency balances at counterparty banks” (about \$20 million); and money purportedly owed to the bank which could not be found (about \$60 million). Millions of dollars of depositors' money had been routed to the Chalabi family empire in Switzerland, Lebanon, and London, in the form of loans that had not been repaid. The Chalabi family's Swiss and Lebanese firms, Mebco and Socofi, are later put into liquidation. As a result of the fraud, the Jordanian government is forced to pay \$200 million to depositors whose money had disappeared, and to avert a potential collapse of the country's entire banking system. [[AMERICAN PROSPECT, 11/18/2002](#); [GUARDIAN, 4/14/2003](#); [SALON, 5/4/2004](#); [COUNTERPUNCH, 5/20/2004](#); [NEW YORKER, 6/7/2004](#); [CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, 6/15/2004](#)] Chalabi later provides a different account of what happened. According to Zaab Sethna, a spokesman for the Iraqi National Congress, King Hussein of Jordan turned on Chalabi in coordination with Iraq because Chalabi was “using the bank to fund [Iraqi] opposition groups and learning a lot about illegal arms transfers to Saddam.” Petra Bank was also providing the CIA with information on the Jordanian-Iraqi trade. [[AMERICAN PROSPECT, 11/18/2002](#); [NEW YORKER, 6/7/2004](#)]

Entity Tags: [Mohammed Said Nabulsi](#), [Hussein bin Talal](#), [Petra Bank](#), [Arthur Andersen](#), [Middle East Banking Corp.](#), [Ahmed Chalabi](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



Fall 1989: Plame Assigned to Athens for CIA Recruiting Duty



Valerie Plame, a young CIA case officer (see [Fall 1985](#)), begins her first tour of foreign duty in Athens, Greece. She will remain there for three years, functioning out of the US Embassy under diplomatic cover as, primarily, a recruiter of foreign nationals to serve as CIA assets. Athens is a beautiful but dangerous assignment, with the radical leftist group known as

“November 17” having killed a number of US officials over the past years, including CIA station chief Richard Welch in 1975. Plame’s station chief, Doug Smith, will remember her as an ambitious agent who worked hard: “It’s rare that someone on a first tour does a really wonderful job. She did well.” Her deputy station chief, who only allows himself to be identified as “Jim,” will add that he has “a very high opinion of Valerie” and the caliber of her work. [[WILSON, 2007, PP. 319-321](#)]

Entity Tags: [Doug Smith](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Valerie Plame Wilson](#), [“Jim” \(CIA case officer\)](#)

Timeline Tags: [Niger Uranium and Plame Outing](#)



October 2-6, 1989: Bush Authorizes Closer Ties, More Aid to Iraq



James A. Baker. [*Source: Library of Congress*]By this date, all international banks have cut off loans to Iraq. Notwithstanding, President Bush, ignoring warnings from his own departments about the alarming buildup of the Iraqi military and Iraq’s continued development of weapons of mass destruction (see [June 1989](#) and [September 1989](#)), signs the secret National Security Directive 26 establishing closer ties to the Baghdad regime and providing \$1 billion in agricultural loan guarantees to that government. These funds allow Iraq to continue its development of weapons of mass destruction. Four days later, Secretary of State James Baker meets with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz and promises that the US will not curb restrictions on high-technology exports to Iraq. Baker is ignoring the CIA’s warnings that Iraq is using some of this technology to develop a nuclear weapon. The State Department’s minutes of the Baker-Aziz meeting reads in part, “[T]he Secretary admitted that the US does have concerns about proliferation, but they are worldwide concerns.” [[US PRESIDENT, 10/2/1989](#); [LOS ANGELES TIMES, 2/23/1992](#); [NEW YORKER, 11/2/1992](#); [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 7/10/2002](#)]

Entity Tags: [James A. Baker](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [US Department of State](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Tariq Aziz](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#), [US-Iraq 1980s](#)



November 1989: CIA Director Meets with Kuwaiti Head of Security



CIA Director William Webster meets with Kuwait's head of security, Brigadier Fahd Ahmed al-Fahd. Iraq will claim after its invasion and occupation of Kuwait (see [August 2, 1990](#)) that it had located a Kuwaiti memorandum summarizing their conversation, a memo both the CIA and Kuwaiti government officials will claim is a forgery, though both sides will admit the meeting actually took place. Iraq will accuse the CIA and Kuwait of collaborating to destabilize Iraq's economy and government (see [Late August, 1990](#)). The memo reads in part: "We agreed with the American side that it was important to take advantage of the deteriorating economic situation in Iraq in order to put pressure on that country's government to delineate our common border. The Central Intelligence Agency gave us its view of appropriate means of pressure, saying that broad cooperation should be initiated between us on condition that such activities be coordinated at a high level." [[NATIONMASTER, 12/23/2007](#)]

Entity Tags: [William H. Webster](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Fahd Ahmed al-Fahd](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



November 2, 1989: Kuwait, CIA Agree on Policy to Pressure Iraq Over Border Dispute



Kuwait's Director General of State Security sends a memo to the Minister of the Interior summarizing a meeting with CIA Director William Webster. He writes: "We agreed with the American side that it was important to take advantage of the deteriorating economic situation in Iraq in order to put pressure on that country's government to delineate our common border. The Central Intelligence Agency gave us its view of appropriate means of pressure, saying that broad cooperation should be initiated between us on condition that such activities be coordinated at a high level." When Iraq invades Kuwait (see [August 2, 1990](#)), Iraqi officials find this memo and confront the Kuwaiti foreign minister with it during an Arab summit meeting in mid-August 1990. Upon seeing the memo, the Kuwaiti official reportedly faints. [[AHMED, 10/2/2001](#)] The US claims the memo is a forgery. [[OFFICE OF GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS,](#)

[1/21/2003](#)]

Entity Tags: [William H. Webster](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#), [US-Iraq 1980s](#)

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November 24, 1989: Bin Laden's Mentor Assassinated



Sheikh Abdullah Azzam. [Source: CNN] Bin Laden's mentor Sheikh Abdullah Azzam is killed by a car bomb in Afghanistan. The killing is never solved. Azzam has no shortage of enemies. Suspects include the Mossad, CIA, Afghan warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the ISI, and bin Laden. The reason bin Laden is suspected is because he and Azzam were increasingly at odds over what approach to take since the Soviet Union had been driven from Afghanistan earlier in the year (see [February 15, 1989](#)). [SLATE, 4/16/2002; COLL, 2004, PP. 204] In 1998, Mohammed Sadiq Odeh will be arrested and later convicted for a role in the 1998 African embassy bombings. He reportedly will tell US interrogators that bin Laden "personally ordered the killing of Azzam because he suspected his former mentor had ties with the CIA." However, it is not known if Odeh was just passing on a rumor. [GUNARATNA, 2003, PP. 32] Regardless, in the wake of Azzam's death, bin Laden takes control of Azzam's recruiting and support network, Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK)/Al-Kifah, and merges it with al-Qaeda, which was formed the year before (see [August 11-20, 1988](#)). [SLATE, 4/16/2002; COLL, 2004, PP. 204]

Entity Tags: [Mohammed Sadiq Odeh](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Abdullah Azzam](#), [Maktab al-Khidamat](#), [Osama bin Laden](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)

 SHARE

1990: Later Defender of Waterboarding Joins CIA



John Kiriakou, who will later make a crucial intervention in the US debate on the ethics of waterboarding (see [December 10, 2007](#)), joins the CIA. He will remain with the agency until 2004, and will also play a role in the Plame affair (see [4:30 p.m. June 10, 2003](#)). [MOTHER JONES, 12/21/2007]

Entity Tags: [John Kiriakou](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Torture of US Captives](#), [Misc Entries](#)



January 23, 1990: CIA Director Stresses Importance of Mideast Oil to US Interests



Speaking before the Senate Armed Services Committee, CIA Director William Webster acknowledges the West's increasing dependency on Middle East oil. "I want to mention two key Middle East related issues that will continue to have a major impact on US interests," he tells senators. "[One] Oil. Western dependence on Persian Gulf oil will rise dramatically. By the year 2000, gulf states will supply an estimated 40 percent of Western oil, up from about 30 percent today. Meanwhile, US dependence is expected to rise from about 10 percent to roughly 25 percent by the end of the decade. [Two] The Arab-Israeli peace process. If the peace process does not advance over the next several years, the Intifadah is likely to become more violent, terrorism will probably rise, and Arab pressure on the United States to impose a settlement will increase." [\[US CONGRESS, 1/23/1990\]](#)

Entity Tags: [William H. Webster](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



May 1990: US Embassies Underestimate Risk of Nuclear War Due to Suppressed Intelligence



Staff at the US embassies in India and Pakistan underestimate the seriousness of a crisis between the two countries (see [January-May 1990](#)), because they have been given manipulated intelligence about Pakistan's nuclear capability. As they think Pakistan does not have nuclear weapons, they assume the crisis will not escalate into war. The US has been aware that Pakistan does have a nuclear weapons program and a nuclear weapon for some time (see [1987-1989](#) and [May 1990](#)), but has been suppressing this knowledge so that it could continue to support anti-Soviet mujaheddin and sell fighters to Pakistan (see [August-September 1989](#)). An example of the way the seriousness of the crisis is not appreciated is that US ambassador to India William Clark learns that the Pakistani air force is practicing dropping nuclear bombs, but is wrongly told that this is not important because the intelligence suggests Pakistan does not have nuclear weapons. The CIA, State Department, Pentagon, and White House are actually aware that this is a serious warning sign (see [May 1990](#)), but the intelligence has been altered to indicate Pakistan does not have nuclear weapons. For example, a report to Defense Secretary Dick Cheney by Pentagon analyst

Richard Barlow was completely rewritten and Barlow's conclusions were reversed to say Pakistan did not have nuclear weapons (see [Mid-1989](#)). Barlow was later fired from his job due to his opposition to an arms deal (see [August 4, 1989](#)). [[LEVY AND SCOTT-CLARK, 2007, PP. 209-210](#)]

Entity Tags: [US Department of State](#), [Bush administration](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Richard \("Dick"\) Cheney](#), [William Clark](#), [Richard Barlow](#), [US Department of Defense](#)

Timeline Tags: [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)



Mid- to Late-1990s: CIA Suffers 'Brain Drain'



In the mid-1990s, the CIA suffers "brain drain," as budget restrictions cause the agency to get rid of many of its most experienced officials. CIA official Michael Scheuer will later explain: "They called it a buyout program through the whole federal government, and they thought they were going to get rid of the deadwood. What happened was they lost the age-40-to-48 group of very strong potential senior officers, those people who couldn't stand the bureaucracy anymore. They couldn't stand the crap, so they retired, and we lost a whole generation." In 1997, George Tenet becomes the new CIA director (see [July 11, 1997](#)) and he attempts to stop the loss of talent. He even initiates a massive recruitment drive for the CIA's Directorate of Operations' clandestine service. But according to a Vanity Fair article, "unfortunately, the training of these new spies remained very much old-school: they were taught how to operate undercover in European embassies, but not how to infiltrate Islamic terrorist cells." Tenet's choice for the latest deputy director of operations typifies the problem. His pick is Jack Downing, a 57-year-old veteran CIA officer who served as station chief in Moscow and Beijing during the Cold War. Scheuer will comment, "Downing was a Marine, and then he was a very, very successful officer during the Cold War, but he didn't have a clue about transnational targets, and he didn't like analysts." [[VANITY FAIR, 11/2004](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Jack Downing](#), [Michael Scheuer](#), [George J. Tenet](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



Around July 25, 1990: US Manipulation of Iraq-Kuwait Conflict?





Barry Lando. [Source: *Master Media Speakers*]

Author and investigative producer Barry Lando later writes that the entire Iraq-Kuwait dispute may have been manipulated to some extent by the UUS, with the meeting between US Ambassador April Glaspie and Iraq's Saddam Hussein (see [July 25, 1990](#)) a centerpiece of the operation. In February 2007, Lando will say, "After Iraq's war with Iran ended, the Kuwaitis manipulated the world oil price through their production—they greatly increased their oil production, which dropped the world oil price (see [May 28-30, 1990](#) and [Mid-1990](#)). That really hurt Iraq, because Saddam was counting on oil revenues to rebuild after the war. He went to the Kuwaitis and he said, look, back off because you're killing my economy. The Kuwaitis refused to back down. Later it came out that the Kuwaiti's leaders had been meeting with the CIA exactly to put pressure on Saddam Hussein. [Glaspie] told Saddam Hussein that we will not take any position as far as your border disputes with Kuwait go. Her superior, Assistant Secretary of State John Kelly, also testified before Congress a couple of days later (see [July 31, 1990](#)). When asked point blank, 'If Saddam invades Kuwait, do we have any treaty with Kuwait?' he said, 'No, we don't.'" [[BUZZFLASH \(.COM\), 2/23/2007](#)]

Entity Tags: [Saddam Hussein](#), [April Glaspie](#), [Barry Lando](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [John Kelly](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



August 1990: Computer Dealer Wrongly Claims Justice Department Gave Him PROMIS Software



Charles Hayes, a surplus computer dealer, claims he has purchased computers with PROMIS software installed on them from the US Attorneys' Office for the Eastern District of Kentucky. Hayes, who the House Judiciary Committee will say has "alleged ties to both United States and foreign intelligence communities," says that the Harris-Lanier word processing equipment he purchased came with 5 1/4-inch computer disks and he believes these disks contain the enhanced version of the PROMIS software. When the committee investigates, the Justice Department refuses to provide some computer equipment related to these allegations (see [February 12, 1991](#)), but the disks turn out not to contain the software (see [February 13, 1991](#)). (However, the computer equipment Hayes purchased does contain sensitive

information that should not have been disclosed, including grand jury material and information regarding confidential informants.) Hayes will also make a number of other allegations about PROMIS. According to an October 1990 memo drafted by William Hamilton, owner of the company that developed PROMIS, Hayes told him he can identify 300 locations where the software has been installed illegally by the government. In addition, a businessman named Earl Brian allegedly sold the software to the CIA in 1983 for implementation on computers purchased from Floating Point Systems and what the CIA called PROMIS Datapoint. Brian has supposedly sold about \$20 million of PROMIS licenses to the government. Hayes will later make the same claims in person to the committee on numerous occasions, adding that he has received information from unnamed sources within the Canadian government saying that Brian sold the PROMIS software to the Canadian government in 1987. The committee will say that he makes “numerous promises” that confirming documentation will be provided by unnamed Canadian officials. However, on August 16, 1991, Hayes will say the Canadian officials have decided not to cooperate with the committee. In its final report, the committee will call the allegations “intriguing,” but point out that Hayes “has not provided any corroborating documentation.” [\[US CONGRESS, 9/10/1992\]](#)

Entity Tags: [William Hamilton](#), [Charles Hayes](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [House Judiciary Committee](#), [Earl Brian](#)

Timeline Tags: [Inslaw and PROMIS](#)



August 8-9, 1990: US Diplomats Decide to Confront Hussein Rather than Negotiate



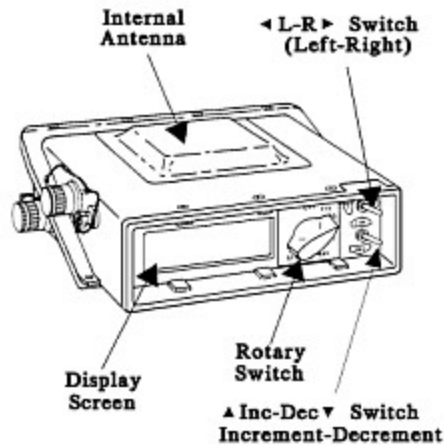
The US diplomats at the embassy in Baghdad, led by Deputy Chief of Mission Joseph Wilson, hold a long and sobering discussion of the possibilities confronting them in the days and weeks to come. They are well aware of the grim fate meted out to several Americans during the 1958 revolution (see [1958](#)), and realize that they, too, may be killed in the near future. As Wilson will later write, they ask themselves: “If, in all likelihood, we were going to die anyway, did we want to go meekly to our deaths delivering useless diplomatic notes to a brutal regime, or did we want to be defiant, treating the Iraqi actions as the outrages they were? We opted for the latter code of conduct. That decision—to stand up and confront Saddam [Hussein] at every opportunity—set the tone at the embassy from that moment on.” Wilson will add: “Months later, after I’d left Baghdad, a psychologist at the CIA told me that the only way to deal with a personality like Saddam’s is to stand up to him: to be defiant, antagonistic, and intimidating. We had not had the benefit of such CIA wisdom back in August, but our instincts were still on the mark.” [\[WILSON, 2004, PP. 126-127\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Joseph C. Wilson](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)

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Mid-August 1990: US Air Force Official Determines Coordinates Used to Plot Strikes against Iraqi Targets



A sketch of a 1990 US Army GPS system similar to that used by the Air Force.

[Source: Department of the Army] Shortly after Iraq invades Kuwait (see [August 2, 1990](#)), a US Air Force official arrives at the Baghdad airport with a Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) receiver in a briefcase. He is driven to the US Embassy. At the embassy, he takes a position in the courtyard and takes a single GPS reading. He then flies to the US, where he gives the GPS receiver to CIA officials in Langley, Virginia. The CIA determines the precise GPS location of the embassy from the Air Force officer's reading. That set of grid coordinates will serve as the center of the large and sophisticated coordinate system used to designate military strike targets in and around Baghdad during Operation Desert Storm (see [January 16, 1991 and After](#)). [NATIONMASTER, 12/23/2007]

Entity Tags: [US Department of the Air Force](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)

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Late August, 1990: Iraq Presents CIA-Kuwait Memo as Proof of Plot to Destabilize Iraq



Iraqi officials claim to have found a memorandum summarizing the November 1989 meeting between CIA Director William Webster and Kuwaiti head of security Brigadier Fahd Ahmed Al-Fahd (see [November 1989](#)). According to a Washington Post article, when Kuwait's foreign minister is confronted with the document at an Arab summit, the minister faints. Iraq cites this memorandum as evidence of a CIA-Kuwaiti plot to destabilize Iraq both politically and

economically (see [May 28-30, 1990](#)). Both CIA and Kuwaiti officials call the meeting between Webster and al-Fahd “routine,” and claim the memorandum is a forgery. [[NATIONMASTER, 12/23/2007](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Fahd Ahmed al-Fahd](#), [William H. Webster](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



September 20, 1990: US Diplomat Joseph Wilson Faces Down Iraqis, Prevents Americans from Being Taken Hostage



As tensions escalate between the US and Iraq, Iraqi officials circulate a note to all the embassies in Baghdad, directing them to register all of the civilians in their care with the authorities. Failure to comply can result in execution, the note implies. Such registration can only be done in person at Iraqi governmental offices; Deputy Chief of Mission Joseph Wilson, the ranking US diplomat in Baghdad, knows that bringing American citizens in for registration may well result in those Americans being taken hostage. He is housing some 60 Americans at the ambassador’s residence for their protection. He will later write: “It was clearly a way for the Iraqis to replenish their stock of hostages. The choice, theoretically, was either to turn over Americans or to defy the note and risk execution.” Instead of making the choice, Wilson uses the order to publicly defy the Iraqis. He schedules a press conference and has a Marine make him a hangman’s noose. Wearing the noose, he tells reporters that if Saddam Hussein “wants to execute me for keeping Americans from being taken hostage, I will bring my own f_cking rope.” The press conference, like all of the embassy press conferences, is off the record, but journalists release the story anyway. A garbled, erroneous version from a French news outlet has the Iraqis planning to hang Wilson by sundown. Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz, angered and embarrassed by the press coverage, attempts to dress down Wilson that evening, but Wilson refuses to back down. Instead, the Iraqis withdraw the request. Soon after, President Bush sends Wilson a cable lauding his courage and his outspokenness (see [November 29, 1990](#)). [[WILSON, 2004, PP. 153-154](#); [UNGER, 2007, PP. 311](#)] Conservative columnist Robert Novak co-writes a piece about Wilson that says, “He shows the stuff of heroism.” Novak will later reveal the covert CIA status of Wilson’s wife, Valerie Plame Wilson, as an act of political retaliation (see [July 14, 2003](#)). [[WILSON, 2004, PP. 153-154](#)]

Entity Tags: [Tariq Aziz](#), [Joseph C. Wilson](#), [Robert Novak](#), [Saddam Hussein](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#), [US-Iraq 1980s](#)



Late October 1990-October 1992: ‘Blind Sheikh’ Able to Repeatedly Leave and Reenter US Despite Being on Watch List



In July 1990, the “Blind Sheikh,” Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, was mysteriously able to enter the US and remain there despite being a well known public figure and being on a watch list for three years (see [July 1990](#)).

■ In late October 1990, he travels to London, so he is out of the US when one of his followers assassinates the Zionist rabbi Meir Kahane on November 5, 1990 (see [November 5, 1990](#)). He returns to the US in mid-November under the name “Omar Ahmed Rahman” and again has no trouble getting back in despite still being on the watch list. [WASHINGTON POST, 7/13/1993]

■ The State Department revokes his US visa on November 17 after the FBI informs it that he is in the US. [NEW YORK TIMES, 12/16/1990]

■ In December 1990, Abdul-Rahman leaves the US again to attend an Islamic conference in Copenhagen, Denmark. He returns nine days later and again has no trouble reentering, despite not even having a US visa at this point. [WASHINGTON POST, 7/13/1993]

■ On December 16, 1990, the New York Times publishes an article titled, “Islamic Leader on US Terrorist List Is in Brooklyn,” which makes his presence in the US publicly known. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) is said to be investigating why he has not been deported already. [NEW YORK TIMES, 12/16/1990]

■ Yet in April 1991, the INS approves his application for permanent residence.

■ He then leaves the US again in June 1991 to go on the religious hajj to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, and returns on July 31, 1991. INS officials identify him coming in, but let him in anyway. [NEW YORK TIMES, 4/24/1993; WASHINGTON POST, 7/13/1993]

■ In June 1992, his application for political asylum will be turned down and his permanent residence visa revoked. But INS hearings on his asylum bid are repeatedly delayed and still have not taken place when the WTC is bombed in February 1993 (see [February 26, 1993](#)). [LANCE, 2003, PP. 105-106]

■ Abdul-Rahman then goes to Canada around October 1992 and returns to the US yet again. The US and Canada claim to have no documentation on his travel there, but numerous witnesses in Canada see him pray and lecture there. Representative Charles Schumer (D-NY) says, “Here they spent all this time trying to get him out. He goes to Canada and gives them the perfect reason to exclude him and they don’t.”

■ After the WTC bombing, the US could detain him pending his deportation hearing but chooses not to, saying it would be too costly to pay for his medical bills. [NEW YORK TIMES, 4/24/1993] Abdul-Rahman will be involved in the follow up “Landmarks” plot (see [June 24, 1993](#)) before finally being arrested later in 1993. It will later be alleged that he was protected by the CIA. In 1995, the New York Times will comment that the link between Abdul-Rahman and the CIA “is a tie that remains muddy.” [NEW YORK TIMES, 10/2/1995]

Entity Tags: [US Department of State](#), [Meir Kahane](#), [US Immigration and Naturalization Service](#), [Omar Abdul-Rahman](#), [Charles Schumer](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



November 5, 1990 and After: US Promotes Lone Gunman Theory in Kahane Assassination, Hiding Evidence of Al-Qaeda Links



Investigators remove boxes of evidence from El Sayyid Nosair's residence hours after the assassination. [Source: *National Geographic*] US government agencies cover up evidence of a conspiracy in the wake of El Sayyid Nosair's assassination of controversial right-wing Zionist leader Rabbi Meir Kahane (see [November 5, 1990](#)). Nosair is captured a few blocks from the murder site after a police shoot-out. An FBI informant says he saw Nosair meeting with Muslim leader Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman a few days before the attack, and evidence indicating a wider plot with additional targets is quickly found. [VILLAGE VOICE, 3/30/1993] Later that night, police arrive at Nosair's house and find a pair of Middle Eastern men named Mahmud Abouhalima and Mohammed Salameh there. They are taken in for questioning. Additionally, police collect a total of 47 boxes of evidence from Nosair's house, including: [LANCE, 2003, PP. 34-35]

- Thousands of rounds of ammunition.
- Maps and drawings of New York City landmarks, including the World Trade Center.
- Documents in Arabic containing bomb making formulas, details of an Islamic militant cell, and mentions of the term "al-Qaeda."
- Recorded sermons by Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman in which he encourages his followers to "destroy the edifices of capitalism" and destroy "the enemies of Allah" by "destroying their... high world buildings."
- Tape-recorded phone conversations of Nosair reporting to Abdul-Rahman about paramilitary training, and even discussing bomb-making manuals.
- Videotaped talks that Ali Mohamed delivered at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center

at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

■ Top secret manuals also from Fort Bragg. There are even classified documents belonging to the US Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Commander in Chief of the Army's Central Command. These manuals and documents had clearly come from Mohamed, who completed military service at Fort Bragg the year before and frequently stayed in Nosair's house.

■ A detailed and top secret plan for Operation Bright Star, a special operations training exercise simulating an attack on Baluchistan, a part of Pakistan between Afghanistan and the Arabian Sea. [[RALEIGH NEWS AND OBSERVER, 10/21/2001](#); [RALEIGH NEWS AND OBSERVER, 11/13/2001](#); WALL STREET JOURNAL, 11/26/2001; ABC NEWS, 8/16/2002; [LANCE, 2003, PP. 34-35](#)]

■ Also within hours, two investigators will connect Nosair with surveillance photographs of Mohamed giving weapons training to Nosair, Abouhalima, Salameh, and others at a shooting range the year before (see [July 1989](#)). [[LANCE, 2003, PP. 34-35](#)] But, ignoring all of this evidence, still later that evening, Joseph Borelli, the New York police department's chief detective, will publicly declare the assassination the work of a "lone deranged gunman." He will further state, "I'm strongly convinced that he acted alone.... He didn't seem to be part of a conspiracy or any terrorist organization." The 9/11 Congressional Inquiry will later conclude, "The [New York Police Department] and the District Attorney's office... reportedly wanted the appearance of speedy justice and a quick resolution to a volatile situation. By arresting Nosair, they felt they had accomplished both." [[VILLAGE VOICE, 3/30/1993](#); [LANCE, 2003, PP. 34-36](#)] Abouhalima and Salameh are released, only to be later convicted for participating in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center. Investigators will later find in Nosair's possessions a formula for a bomb almost identical to one used in the WTC bombing. [[NEW YORKER, 3/17/1995](#)] As one FBI agent will later put it, "The fact is that in 1990, myself and my detectives, we had in our office in handcuffs, the people who blew up the World Trade Center in '93. We were told to release them." The 47 boxes of evidence collected at Nosair's house that evening are stored away, inaccessible to prosecutors and investigators. The documents found will not be translated until after the World Trade Center bombing. Nosair will later be acquitted of Kahane's murder (though he will be convicted of lesser charges), as investigators will continue to ignore all evidence that could suggest Nosair did not act alone (see [December 7, 1991](#)). [[ABC NEWS, 8/16/2002](#); [LANCE, 2003, PP. 34-37](#)] District Attorney Robert Morgenthau, who prosecuted the case, will later speculate the CIA may have encouraged the FBI not to pursue any other leads. Nosair worked at the Al-Kifah Refugee Center which was closely tied to covert CIA operations in Afghanistan (see [Late 1980s and After](#)). [[NEW YORKER, 3/17/1995](#)]

Entity Tags: [Joseph Borelli](#), [Mahmud Abouhalima](#), [Meir Kahane](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [EL Sayyid Nosair](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Ali Mohamed](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Robert Morgenthau](#), [Mohammed Salameh](#), [Al-Kifah Refugee Center](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



November 13, 1990: Defense Department Official Cannot Recall Details of North Meetings in Testimony



Interviewed by investigators for Iran-Contra special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh (see [December 19, 1986](#)), Defense Department official Lieutenant General John Moellering testifies to his participation in Oliver North's Restricted Interagency Group (RIG) meetings. In several RIG meetings, North asserted his control over the Nicaraguan Contra activities, discussed the private funding of the Contras, and demanded line-by-line approval of each specific activity (see [July 1986 and After](#)). Though he was present for at least one of those meetings, Moellering testifies that he has no recollection of any such behaviors or assertions from North. The later discovery of notes taken during Moellering's "debriefing" for one such meeting by Moellering's aide, Colonel Stephen Croker, will prove that Moellering either suffers from systemic memory loss or is lying. [FINAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL FOR IRAN/CONTRA MATTERS: CHAPTER 25: UNITED STATES V. ELLIOTT ABRAMS: NOVEMBER 1986, 8/4/1993] It is not until RIG member Alan Fiers, a former CIA official, testifies in 1991 about North's behaviors that verification of North's discussion of such specifics about Contra activities and funding will be made public (see [July 17, 1991](#)).

Entity Tags: [John Moellering](#), [Alan Fiers](#), [Contras](#), [Restricted Interagency Group](#), [Stephen Croker](#), [Oliver North](#), [Lawrence E. Walsh](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



Mid-November 1990: CIA Allegedly Blocks FBI Investigation of 'Blind Sheikh' in Kahane Assassination



The FBI is apparently under pressure to back off from investigating Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman. One week after the murder of Zionist rabbi Meir Kahane, a long-time FBI counterterrorism expert meets with one of his top undercover operatives. According to the FBI agent, the undercover operative asks, "Why aren't we going after the Sheikh [Abdul-Rahman]?" The FBI agent replies, "It's hands-off." He further explains, "It was no accident that the Sheikh got a visa and that he's still in the country. He's here under the banner of national security, the State Department, the NSA, and the CIA." The agent concludes that Abdul-Rahman is untouchable. Noting how the government is already firmly suggesting that El Sayyid Nosair was the only one involved in Kahane's murder, he says, "I haven't seen the lone-gunner theory advocated [so forcefully] since John F. Kennedy." [VILLAGE VOICE, 3/30/1993] The FBI will also fail to look at a wealth of evidence suggesting others were involved in the assassination (see [November 5, 1990 and After](#)).

Entity Tags: [El Sayyid Nosair](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Meir Kahane](#), [Omar Abdul-Rahman](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



December 11, 1990: CIA Says It Does Not Have PROMIS Application; Retired CIA Official Disputes Claim



The CIA says that it does not have the PROMIS database and search application (see [Mid-1970s](#)). The statement is made in response to a letter sent to CIA Director William Webster by the House Judiciary Committee on November 20 asking him to help them “by determining whether the CIA has the PROMIS software.” In response the CIA states, “We have checked with Agency components that track data processing procurement or that would be likely users of PROMIS, and we have been unable to find any indication that the [CIA] ever obtained PROMIS software.” However, information contradicting this will subsequently emerge. For example, a retired CIA official whose job it is to investigate the Inslaw allegations internally will tell Wired magazine that the Justice Department gave PROMIS to the CIA: “Well, the Congressional committees were after us to look into allegations that somehow the agency had been culpable of what would have been, in essence, taking advantage of, like stealing, the technology [PROMIS]. We looked into it and there was enough to it, the agency had been involved.” However, the official will say that when the CIA accepted PROMIS, it did not know that there was a serious dispute about the Justice Department’s ownership of the software.

[WIRED NEWS, 3/1993]

Entity Tags: [William H. Webster](#), [House Judiciary Committee](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [US Department of Justice](#)

Timeline Tags: [Inslaw and PROMIS](#)



1991-1992: CIA Penetrates Bank Frequently Used by Bin Laden



The CIA, which is conducting a surveillance operation against Osama bin Laden in Sudan (see [February 1991- July 1992](#)), penetrates a bank he uses. Billy Waugh, one of the CIA contractors performing the surveillance, will say: “[Bin Laden] went to the bank every day, and you might figure that if the [CIA] knew which bank he used, it would recruit someone within that bank to provide information. Well, by God they did.” Waugh will also say that the CIA “knew about [bin Laden’s] personal bank account.” However, details of what the CIA knew about bin Laden based on this penetration are not known. Although the bank most closely associated with bin Laden at this time is the Al-Shamal Islamic Bank (see [August 14, 1996](#)), in his autobiography Waugh calls the bank the “Arab Bank.” [WAUGH AND KEOWN, 2004, PP. 203] It is unclear exactly what bank Waugh is referring to. There is a bank called the Arab Bank that is alleged to be involved

in terrorism finance. [\[MSNBC, 4/19/2005\]](#) However, the bank's website states that its Sudan branch was nationalized in 1970. [\[ARAB BANK, 3/23/2008\]](#) The Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa is also based in Khartoum at this time. [\[INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND, 3/23/2008\]](#) However, there are no known connections between this bank and bin Laden.

Entity Tags: [Al-Shamal Islamic Bank](#), [Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa](#), [Billy Vaughn](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Arab Bank](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



January 19-24, 1991: Multiple Reports of Chemical Toxin Releases in Saudi Arabia; None Verified



A NASA satellite photo of King Khalid Military City. *[Source: NASA / Public domain]* Czech and French units stationed near the Iraq-Saudi border report seven detections of chemical weapons—nerve and blister agents—in the vicinities of Hafar al Batin and King Khalid Military City (KKMC) in Saudi Arabia. [\[ILLNESSES, 7/29/1998\]](#) (KKMC is more of a military base than a city, built by the US Army Corps of Engineers in the 1970s and 1980s to house US and Saudi troops. It is one of the central hubs of US air strikes into Iraq.) [\[NATIONMASTER, 2005\]](#) None of the detections are reported as life-threatening, and none can be independently verified, though both the US Defense Department and CIA will later find the reports to be valid. [\[ILLNESSES, 7/29/1998; OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR GULF WAR ILLNESSES, 1/20/2008\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [US Department of Defense](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



January 26, 1991: Alleged Former Mossad Agent Makes Claims about Distribution of PROMIS, Refuses to Provide Sworn Statement



Juval Aviv, an Israeli businessman resident in the US, makes allegations to the House Judiciary Committee about the distribution of PROMIS software. Aviv, who claims to be a former member of Mossad, says he can provide information that a businessman named Earl Brian sold the enhanced version of the PROMIS software to US government agencies outside the Justice Department, including the CIA, NSA, NASA, and the National Security Council. Aviv also claims Brian sold the software to Interpol in France, the Israeli Air Force, and the Egyptian government, the latter through the foreign military assistance program. He also says the software was converted for use by both the United States and British Navy nuclear submarine intelligence data base. Aviv says there are witnesses and documents to corroborate his allegations, but refuses to repeat these claims under oath or provide any further information. These charges will be mentioned in the committee's final report on the Inslaw affair, but the committee will not endorse them. [\[US CONGRESS, 9/10/1992\]](#) Aviv previously collaborated on the book *Vengeance*, which purports to describe Mossad's assassination campaign after a terrorist attack at the 1972 Munich Olympics. The book will later be made into a film, *Munich*, by Steven Spielberg. However, intelligence writers Yossi Melman and Steven Hartov will call the book a "Walter Mitty fabrication," adding: "[O]ur investigations show that Aviv never served in Mossad, or any Israeli intelligence organisation. He had failed basic training as an Israeli Defence Force commando, and his nearest approximation to spy work was as a lowly gate guard for the airline El Al in New York in the early '70s." [\[GUARDIAN, 1/17/2006\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Yossi Melman](#), [Juval Aviv](#), [Earl Brian](#), [House Judiciary Committee](#), [Steven Hartov](#)

Timeline Tags: [Inslaw and PROMIS](#)



February 1991: CIA Already Aware of 'Al-Qaeda'



The CIA is aware of the term al-Qaeda at least by this time. Billy Waugh is a CIA contractor assigned to follow bin Laden and other suspected criminals in Sudan starting at this time (see [February 1991- July 1992](#)). He will later recall in a book that when he arrived in Sudan, the CIA station chief there said to him about bin Laden, "We don't know what he's up to, but we know he's a wealthy financier and we think he's harboring some of these outfits called al-Qaeda. See what you can find out." Waugh will note, "I was familiar with bin Laden from [CIA] traffic, but this was the first time I had heard the term al-Qaeda." [\[WAUGH AND KEOWN, 2004, PP. 121\]](#) According to most other media accounts, US intelligence does not learn about the existence of al-Qaeda until several years later, not long before the State Department publicly uses the term in 1996 (see [August 14, 1996](#)). For instance, US News and World Report will even assert in 2003, "So limited was the CIA's knowledge that it began using al-Qaeda's real

name only [in 1998]—10 years after bin Laden founded the organization.” [US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT, 12/15/2003]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Billy Waugh](#), [Osama bin Laden](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



(February 28, 1991): Head of Al-Kifah Charity Front Murdered, Increasing Al-Qaeda's Strength in US



Around February 28, 1991, Mustafa Shalabi, head of the Al-Kifah Refugee Center's main US office in Brooklyn, is murdered. Al-Kifah is a charity front with ties to both the CIA and al-Qaeda (see [1986-1993](#)). Shalabi's body is found in his house on March 1. He had been shot and stabbed multiple times and \$100,000 was stolen. Shalabi is found with two red hairs in his hand, and the FBI soon suspects Mahmud Abouhalima, who is red-headed, for the murder. Abouhalima identified Shalabi's body for the police, falsely claiming to be Shalabi's brother. He will later be one of the 1993 WTC bombers. Shalabi had been having a growing public dispute with the "Blind Sheikh," Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, over where to send the roughly one million dollars Al-Kifah was raising annually. Abdul-Rahman wanted some of the money to be used to overthrow the Egyptian government while Shalabi wanted to send all of it to Afghanistan. Shalabi had given up the fight and had already booked a flight to leave the US when he was killed. The murder is never solved. [[LANCE, 2003, PP. 49-52](#); [LANCE, 2006, PP. 65-66](#)] Abdul Wali Zindani takes over as head of Al-Kifah and apparently will run the office until it closes shortly after the 1993 WTC bombing. He is nephew of Sheikh Abdul Majeed al-Zindani, a radical imam in Yemen with ties to bin Laden. Abdul-Rahman, also linked to bin Laden, increases his effective control over Al-Kifah and its money. [[MILLER, STONE, AND MITCHELL, 2002, PP. 82](#)] Al-Kifah's links to al-Qaeda were already strong before Shalabi's death. But author Peter Lance will later comment that after his death, "Osama bin Laden had an effective al-Qaeda cell right in the middle of Brooklyn, New York. A tough look at the Shalabi murder might have ripped the lid off al-Qaeda years before the FBI ever heard of the network." [[LANCE, 2003, PP. 52](#)]

Entity Tags: [Mahmud Abouhalima](#), [Al-Kifah Refugee Center](#), [Omar Abdul-Rahman](#), [Abdul Wali Zindani](#), [Mustafa Shalabi](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



March 1991-December 1992: CIA Hides Its Relationship to Criminal BCCI



In March 1991, Sen. John Kerry's Senate investigation of the criminal Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) investigation hears about a secret CIA report on BCCI that was given to the Customs Service. Kerry's office asks the CIA for a copy, but is told the report does not exist. After months of wrangling, more and more information about the CIA's ties to BCCI comes out, and the CIA eventually gives Kerry that report and many other reports relating to BCCI. But crucially, the CIA does not share documents on CIA operations using the bank. Kerry's public report will conclude, "Key questions about the relationship between US intelligence and BCCI cannot be answered at this time, and may never be." [NATION, 10/26/1992; US CONGRESS, SENATE, COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, 12/1992]

Entity Tags: [Bank of Credit and Commerce International](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [John Kerry](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



April 1991-Late 2000: Hambali Lives Openly with Other Key Southeast Asian Militant Leaders and Indonesian Government Mole



Hambali, an important future al-Qaeda leader, moves to the village of Sungai Manggis, Malaysia, about an hour north of the capital of Kuala Lumpur. Hambali is from nearby Indonesia and fought in Afghanistan with Osama bin Laden in the late 1980s. He starts off poor, working at odd jobs, but soon is frequently traveling and has many overseas visitors. Intriguingly, Hambali's landlord will later say of Hambali's visitors, "Some looked Arab and others white." Hambali plays a major role in the 1995 Bojinka plot in the Philippines (see [January 6, 1995](#)), and after that plot is foiled he continues to live in his simple Sungai Manggis house. [TIME, 4/1/2002; LOS ANGELES TIMES, 9/1/2002] Living near Hambali in this village are other regional Islamist militant leaders such as Abdullah Sungkar, Imam Samudra (allegedly a key figure in the 2000 Christmas bombings (see [December 24-30, 2000](#)) and the 2002 Bali bombings (see [October 12, 2002](#))), Abu Bakar Bashir, the spiritual leader of the al-Qaeda affiliate Jemaah Islamiyah, and Abu Jibril. So many militants live in this village that it becomes known as "Terror HQ" to intelligence agencies. Sungkar and Bashir are considered the two most well-known militant leaders in Southeast Asia at the time (Sungkar dies of old age in 1999). Hambali's house is directly across from Bashir's and they are considered friends. [TEMPO, 10/29/2002; RESSA, 2003] Interestingly, Fauzi Hasbi, an Indonesian government mole posing as a militant leader, lives next door to Bashir as well. [SBS DATELINE, 10/12/2005] Despite his role in the Bojinka plot, Hambali continues to live there very openly. Beginning in March 1995, just two months after the plot was foiled, Hambali throws his first feast for several hundred guests to mark a Muslim holiday. This becomes an annual party. He also sometimes travels to Indonesia. [TIME, 4/1/2002] By May 1999, if not earlier, the FBI connects Hambali to the Bojinka plot (see [May 23, 1999](#)). In January 2000, he attends a key al-Qaeda summit in nearby Kuala Lumpur. The CIA gets pictures and video footage of him at the meeting and already has pictures of him from a computer linked to the Bojinka plot (see [January 5-8, 2000](#) and

[January 5, 2000](#)). However, there is no apparent effort to apprehend him, extradite him, or even put him on a public wanted list. He continues to live in Sungai Manggis until at least late 2000. [[CONBOY, 2003](#)]

Entity Tags: [Fauzi Hasbi](#), [Abu Bakar Bashir](#), [Hambali](#), [Abdullah Sungkar](#), [Jemaah Islamiyah](#), [Abu Jibril](#), [Imam Samudra](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



After May 1991: CIA Contacts Ahmed Chalabi



CIA Agent Whitley Bruner contacts Ahmed Chalabi in London as part of an effort to organize Iraqi exiles into a unified opposition movement against Saddam Hussein (see [May 1991](#)).

[[NEWSWEEK, 4/5/2004](#); [NEW YORKER, 6/7/2004](#)]

Entity Tags: [Ahmed Chalabi](#), [Whitley Bruner](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



May 8, 1991: *Silent Coup* Authors Challenged by CBS Interviewer



The authors of the upcoming book *Silent Coup*, Leonard Colodny and Robert Gettlin, are interviewed on CBS's *Good Morning America*. The book alleges that former White House counsel John Dean masterminded the Watergate burglary (see [2:30 a.m. June 17, 1972](#)) to prove that Democrats were operating a prostitution ring, and that Dean's wife Maureen had inside knowledge of the prostitution ring (see [May 6, 1991](#)). Dean has already convinced CBS's flagship news program, *60 Minutes*, not to air a segment on the book, and convinced Time magazine not to excerpt the book in its upcoming issue (see [May 7, 1991](#)). Dean says the book is false to the point of libel (see [May 6, 1991](#)). Dean has informed the *Good Morning America* producers of his intention to sue both the authors and the publisher of the book. Reflecting on the affair in his 2006 book *Conservatives Without Conscience*, Dean writes: “[W]e had mortally wounded the book and destroyed the carefully planned launch, which might have given the story credibility. Now it would be difficult to treat *Silent Coup* as legitimate news.” Dean recalls being less than impressed with the authors as they discuss their book with *Good Morning America*'s anchor, Charles Gibson. Colodny, whom Dean will describe as “a retired liquor salesman and conspiracy buff,” and Gettlin, “a journalist,” appear “tense.” Gibson does not believe their story, Dean observes. Gibson skims past the material concerning Dean and his wife, and focuses on the equally specious allegations about Washington Post reporter

Bob Woodward (supposedly a CIA agent) and then-White House chief of staff Alexander Haig (who supposedly planned the “coup” of the title that forced Richard Nixon out of office).

[[DEAN, 2006, PP. XIX-XX](#)]

Entity Tags: [CBS News](#), [Robert Gettlin](#), [Bob Woodward](#), [Richard M. Nixon](#), [Alexander M. Haig, Jr.](#), [Charles Gibson](#), [Maureen Dean](#), [Leonard Colodny](#), [John Dean](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



May 9, 1991 and After: Watergate Burglar Liddy behind *Silent Coup*



Former White House counsel John Dean helps destroy the credibility of the sensationalistic new book *Silent Coup*, which alleges that Dean masterminded the Watergate burglary (see [2:30 a.m. June 17, 1972](#)), that his wife was involved in a Democratic Party-operated prostitution ring (see [May 6, 1991](#)), that Washington Post reporter Bob Woodward, one of the reporters instrumental in exposing the Watergate conspiracy, was a CIA plant, and former White House chief of staff Alexander Haig orchestrated the “silent coup” that removed Richard Nixon from office (see [May 8, 1991](#)). Dean learns that convicted Watergate burglar G. Gordon Liddy (see [January 30, 1973](#)) worked behind the scenes with the book’s authors, Leonard Colodny and Robert Gettlin, on developing, sourcing, and writing the book. Although Dean has played a key role in destroying the book’s credibility, the publisher, St. Martin’s Press, intends on publishing the book anyway, now marketing it to what Dean will later call “Nixon apologists and right-wingers, giving them a new history of Nixon’s downfall in which Bob Woodward, Al Haig, and John Dean were the villains, and randy Democrats had all but invited surveillance. Who better to peddle this tale than uber-conservative Gordon Liddy?” Preparing for an onslaught of negative publicity and legal actions, St. Martin’s Press doubles its defamation insurance and reissues Liddy’s Watergate biography, *Will*, with a new postscript that endorses *Silent Coup*. Dean notes that for years, Liddy has attempted to restore Nixon’s tarnished reputation at the expense of others, particularly Dean and Liddy’s fellow burglar, E. Howard Hunt. The book comes at a perfect time for Liddy, Dean will later note: “Since the first publication of *Will* in 1980 he had made a living by putting his dysfunctional personality on display. By the early nineties speaking engagements were becoming less frequent for him, and his business ventures, including several novels, were unsuccessful. *Silent Coup* put him back in the spotlight, where he loved to be—publicly misbehaving.” Dean is disturbed when another convicted Watergate figure, former White House counsel Charles Colson, joins Liddy in backing the book. Dean believed that he and Colson had forged a friendship during their incarceration in federal prison (see [September 3, 1974](#)), and questions Colson’s integrity and his public reinvention as a Christian minister because of Colson’s endorsement. [[DEAN, 2006, PP. XX-XXII](#)]

Entity Tags: [St. Martin's Press](#), [Leonard Colodny](#), [Robert Gettlin](#), [G. Gordon Liddy](#), [Alexander M. Haig, Jr.](#), [Bob Woodward](#), [John Dean](#), [Charles Colson](#)

Timeline Tags: [Nixon and Watergate](#)



July 5, 1991: Criminal BCCI Bank Is Shut Down



A Time magazine cover story on BCCI. [Source: Time Magazine] The Bank of England shuts down Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), the largest Islamic bank in the world. Based in Pakistan, this bank financed numerous militant organizations and laundered money generated by illicit drug trafficking and other illegal activities, including arms trafficking. Bin Laden and many other militants had accounts there (see [July 1991](#)). [DETROIT NEWS, 9/30/2001] One money-laundering expert later claims, “BCCI did dirty work for every major terrorist service in the world.” [LOS ANGELES TIMES, 1/20/2002] Regulators shut down BCCI offices in dozens of countries and seize about \$2 billion of the bank’s \$20 billion in assets. BCCI is the seventh largest bank in the world. Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), owns 77% of the bank at the time of its closing. He and the UAE government will end up losing about \$8 billion. About 1.4 million people had deposits in the bank and will end up losing most of their money. [LEVY AND SCOTT-CLARK, 2007, PP. 98-99] American and British governments were aware of its activities yet allowed the bank to operate for years. The Pakistani ISI had major connections to the bank. [DETROIT NEWS, 9/30/2001] The Bank of England is forced to close BCCI largely because of outside pressure. Beginning in February 1991, the mainstream media began reporting on BCCI’s criminal activities as more and more whistleblowers came forward. [LEVY AND SCOTT-CLARK, 2007, PP. 95] However, as later State Department reports indicate, Pakistan remains a major drug trafficking and money-

laundering center despite the bank's closing. [DETROIT NEWS, 9/30/2001] Most of the bank's top officials will escape prosecution, and remnants of the bank will continue operating in some countries under new names (see [August 1991](#)). A French intelligence report in 2001 will suggest that Osama bin Laden will later build his financial network on the ruins of the BCCI network, oftentimes using former BCCI officials (see [October 10, 2001](#)). [WASHINGTON POST, 2/17/2002]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#), [Bank of Credit and Commerce International](#), [Bank of England](#), [Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



July 11, 1991: Arrest Reveals Links between Pakistani Government, A. Q. Khan Network, and BCCI



On July 11, 1991, retired Pakistani Brigadier General Inam ul-Haq is arrested by German authorities in Frankfurt. His arrest sheds light on the links between the criminal BCCI bank, the Pakistani government, and the A. Q. Khan nuclear network. In 1987, US intelligence attempted to arrest ul-Haq in the US for buying nuclear components there meant for Pakistan's nuclear program, but some US officials tipped off the Pakistani government about the sting and only a low-level associate of ul-Haq's was caught (see [Before July 1987](#)). [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 8/5/1991] The CIA had long known that ul-Haq was one of A. Q. Khan's key procurement agents, in addition to being close to the Pakistani ISI. [LEVY AND SCOTT-CLARK, 2007, PP. 161] Ul-Haq's arrest comes just one week after BCCI was shut down worldwide, and he seems linked to that bank as well. In the sting four years before, the Luxembourg and London branches of BCCI helped finance a shipment of nuclear materials out of the US. Shortly after his arrest, Senator John Glenn (D-OH) says that BCCI involvement in his could be a "smoking gun" for US investigators to learn how Pakistan's nuclear program was financed. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 8/5/1991] Ul-Haq is extradited to the US and convicted in 1992 of attempting to export nuclear related materials to Pakistan. He could have been sentenced to 10 years in prison and a \$500,000 fine, but the judge merely sentences him to time served (several months in prison) and a \$10,000 fine. [LEVY AND SCOTT-CLARK, 2007, PP. 228]

Entity Tags: [Inam ul-Haq](#), [Bank of Credit and Commerce International](#), [Abdul Qadeer Khan](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)



July 17, 1991: Former CIA Official Pleads Guilty to Lying to Congress during Investigation



Former CIA agent Alan Fiers. [Source: Terry Ashe / Time Life Pictures / Getty

Images]The former head of the CIA’s Central America task force, Alan Fiers, pleads guilty to two counts of lying to Congress. Fiers has admitted to lying about when high-ranking agency officials first learned of the illegal diversion of US funds to the Nicaraguan Contras (see [December 6, 1985](#) and [April 4, 1986](#)). Fiers now says that when he learned of the diversions in the summer of 1986, he informed his superior, then-Deputy Director for Operations Clair George, who ordered him to lie about his knowledge (see [Summer 1986](#)). In return for his guilty pleas to two misdemeanor counts instead of far harsher felony charges, Fiers is cooperating with the Iran-Contra investigation headed by Lawrence Walsh (see [December 19, 1986](#)). Time reports: “The Iran-Contra affair has been characterized by US officials as a rogue operation managed by overzealous members of the National Security Council. But if Fiers is correct, top-ranking CIA officials not only knew about the operation and did nothing to stop it; they also participated in an illegal cover-up.... Suddenly a number of unanswered questions assume a new urgency. Just what did Ronald Reagan—and George Bush—know? And when did they know it?” [TIME, 7/22/1991]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Alan Fiers](#), [Contras](#), [Ronald Reagan](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Clair George](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



July 20, 1991: Iran-Contra Prosecutor Has Tapes, Transcripts of CIA Conversations



The New York Times reports that Iran-Contra special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh (see [December 19, 1986](#)) is in possession of tapes and transcripts documenting hundreds of hours of telephone conversations between CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, and CIA agents in Central America. The time period of the taped conversations corresponds to the period in which NSC officer Oliver North, retired Air Force General Richard Secord, and arms dealer Albert Hakim were running their secret arms pipeline informally known as either “Airlift Project” or “The Enterprise” (see [November 19, 1985](#) and [February 2, 1987](#)). Former Deputy

Director for Operations Clair George (see [Summer 1986](#)) installed the taping system in the early- to mid-1980s. The contents of the conversations are not known, though it is known that Walsh is using the tapes to force accurate testimony from North and others either standing trial or serving as witnesses in Iran-Contra prosecutions (see [March 16, 1988](#)). [TIME, 7/22/1991]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Albert Hakim](#), [Oliver North](#), [Richard Secord](#), [Lawrence E. Walsh](#), [Clair George](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



July 22, 1991: Iran-Contra Related to BCCI Scandal



According to investigators working with Iran-Contra special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh (see [December 19, 1986](#)), the Iran-Contra affair is closely linked to the burgeoning scandal surrounding the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI—see [1976](#), [1978-1982](#), [1981-1991](#), [1981-1983](#), [1984-1986](#), [January 1985](#), [December 12, 1985](#), [February 1988-December 1992](#), [March 1991-December 1992](#), and [July 5, 1991](#).) Former government officials add that the CIA kept secret funds hidden in BCCI accounts, and used the monies to fund covert operations in Nicaragua and elsewhere. Investigators confirm that a US defense intelligence organization used BCCI to maintain a secret “slush fund” for financing covert operations. And, months before National Security Council (NSC) official Oliver North set up his network for diverting funds to the Contras (see [December 6, 1985](#) and [April 4, 1986](#)), the NSC used BCCI to divert funds to the Contras (see [Early 1986](#)). [TIME, 7/22/1991]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Bank of Credit and Commerce International](#), [Oliver North](#), [National Security Council](#), [Lawrence E. Walsh](#), [Contras](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



October 7, 1991: Former State Department Official Pleads Guilty to Lying to Congress



Former Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, facing multiple counts of lying under oath to Congress about, among other things, his knowledge of the US government’s involvement in the resupply operation to the Nicaraguan Contras (see [October 10-15, 1986](#)), his knowledge of the role played by former CIA agent Felix Rodriguez in the resupply (see [December 17, 1986](#)), and his knowledge of third-party funding of the Nicaraguan Contras (see [November 25, 1986](#)), agrees to plead guilty to two misdemeanor charges of withholding evidence from Congress. Abrams agrees to the plea after being confronted with reams of evidence about his duplicity

by investigators for special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh as well as from testimony elicited during the House-Senate investigation of 1987 (see [July 7-10, 1987](#)) and the guilty plea and subsequent testimony of former CIA agent Alan Fiers (see [July 17, 1991](#)). Abrams pleads guilty to two counts of withholding information from Congress, to unlawfully withholding information from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Intelligence Committee, and admits lying when he claimed that he knew nothing of former National Security Council official Oliver North's illegal diversion of government funds to the Contras (see [December 6, 1985](#), [April 4, 1986](#), and [November 25-28, 1986](#)). Abrams says that he lied because he believed "that disclosure of Lt. Col. [Oliver] North's activities in the resupply of the Contras would jeopardize final enactment" of a \$100 million appropriation pending in Congress at the time of his testimony, a request that was narrowly defeated (see [March 1986](#)). Abrams also admits to soliciting \$10 million in aid for the Contras from the Sultan of Brunei (see [June 11, 1986](#)). [[FINAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNSEL FOR IRAN/CONTRA MATTERS: CHAPTER 25: UNITED STATES V. ELLIOTT ABRAMS: NOVEMBER 1986, 8/4/1993](#)]

Entity Tags: [Elliott Abrams](#), [Alan Fiers](#), [Contras](#), [Felix Rodriguez](#), [House Intelligence Committee](#), [Senate Foreign Relations Committee](#), [Lawrence E. Walsh](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



October 31, 1991: Aristide Overthrown While Outside Haiti, Chief Coup Plotter Has CIA Links



In Haiti, the Front for the Advancement of Progress of the Haitian People (FRAPH) overthrows the government while Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide is on a visit to the UN in New York. The group rules as a repressive military regime until 1994 when a US-led UN intervention puts Aristide back in power (see [September 19, 1994-October 15, 1994](#)) [[ROGOZINSKI, 1992](#); [OBSERVER, 3/2/2004](#)] The junta is responsible for the massacre of hundreds—or by some estimates, thousands—of dissidents. [[TURCK, 2/24/2004](#); [OBSERVER, 3/2/2004](#); [JAMAICA OBSERVER, 3/7/2004](#)] The leader of the group is Emmanuel "Toto" Constant, who later acknowledges he had support from the CIA. "Emmanuel Constant is widely alleged, and himself claims, to have been in the pay of, and under the orders of, the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) during the coup period," Amnesty International will later report. The amount paid to Constant by the CIA during this period is \$500/month. [[AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, 2/7/1996](#); [CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS, 2/18/2004](#); [OBSERVER, 3/2/2004](#); [LONDON REVIEW OF BOOKS, 4/15/2004](#)] Second in command is Louis-Jodel Chamblain, who had led death squads during the years of Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier's dictatorship and who is later convicted and implicated in multiple crimes committed during this period. [[OBSERVER, 3/2/2004](#); [JAMAICA OBSERVER, 3/7/2004](#)]

Entity Tags: [Louis-Jodel Chamblain](#), [Jean-Bertrand Aristide](#), [Emmanuel "Toto" Constant](#)

Timeline Tags: [Haiti Coup](#), [US-Haiti \(1804-2005\)](#)

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December 7, 1991: US Still Refuses to Investigate Possible Conspiracy in Murder of Jewish Rabbi



El Sayyid Nosair. [Source: FBI] El-Sayyid Nosair is acquitted of killing Meir Kahane (see [November 5, 1990](#)), leader of the Jewish Defense League, but convicted of firearms offenses connected with his shooting of two witnesses during his attempt to flee. The judge will declare that the acquittal verdict “defie[s] reason” and sentence Nosair to 22 years by applying maximum sentences to his convictions on the other charges. [VILLAGE VOICE, 3/30/1993; INDEPENDENT, 11/1/1998; LANCE, 2003, PP. 65] The prosecution of Nosair was hobbled by the US government’s absolute refusal to acknowledge the possibility that the murder was anything other than the work of a “lone deranged gunman” despite information gained during the course of the investigation provided by an FBI operative that he had “very close” ties to the radical imam Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman. Many boxes of evidence that could have sealed Nosair’s guilt on the murder charge and also shown evidence of a larger conspiracy were not allowed as evidence. [VILLAGE VOICE, 3/30/1993; MILLER, STONE, AND MITCHELL, 2002, PP. 44-46] A portion of Nosair’s defense fund is paid for by bin Laden, but this will not be discovered until some time later. [ABC NEWS, 8/16/2002] District Attorney Robert Morgenthau, who prosecuted the case, will later speculate the CIA may have encouraged the FBI not to pursue any other leads. Nosair worked at the Al-Kifah Refugee Center which was closely tied to covert CIA operations in Afghanistan (see [Late 1980s and After](#)). [NEW YORKER, 3/17/1995]

Entity Tags: [El Sayyid Nosair](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Omar Abdul-Rahman](#), [Meir Kahane](#), [Robert Morgenthau](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)

 SHARE

Early 1990s: US Intelligence Monitoring Bin Laden in Sudan





Bin Laden's house in Khartoum, Sudan. [Source: PBS]It

has not been revealed when US intelligence begins monitoring bin Laden exactly, though the CIA was tailing him in Sudan by the end of 1991 (see [February 1991- July 1992](#)). But in late 1995 the FBI is given forty thick files on bin Laden from the CIA and NSA, mostly communications intercepts (see [October 1995](#)). The sheer amount of material suggests the surveillance had been going on for several years. Dan Coleman, an FBI agent working with the CIA's bin Laden unit, will begin examining these files and finds that many of them are transcripts from wiretapped phones tied to bin Laden's businesses in Khartoum, Sudan, where bin Laden lives from 1991 to 1996. [MILLER, STONE, AND MITCHELL, 2002, PP. 148-149; WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 242-244] CIA Director George Tenet will later comment, "The then-obscure name 'Osama bin Laden' kept cropping up in the intelligence traffic.... [The CIA] spotted bin Laden's tracts in the early 1990s in connection with funding other terrorist movements. They didn't know exactly what this Saudi exile living in Sudan was up to, but they knew it was not good." [TENET, 2007, PP. 100] The London Times will later report that in Sudan, "bin Laden used an \$80,000 satellite phone and al-Qaeda members used radios to avoid being bugged..." [LONDON TIMES, 10/7/2001] Bin Laden is mistaken in his belief that satellite phones cannot be monitored; a satellite phone he buys in 1996 will be monitored as well (see [November 1996-Late August 1998](#)).

Entity Tags: [Wadih El-Hage](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Dan Coleman](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Alec Station](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [National Security Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



[February 1992: Soviet Puppet Government Ousted in Afghanistan](#)



Afghan President Mohammad Najibullah, a Soviet puppet in power since 1988, is finally ousted by Ahmed Shah Massoud in February 1992. US aid to the mujaheddin continues during this

period, but at a lower level. There are disagreements about which leaders should be receiving support. The CIA favors Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, an extreme Islamist closely associated with bin Laden (see [1983](#)), while the State Department favors the much more Westernized and well educated Massoud. [[COLL, 2004, PP. 205-207, 225](#)]

Entity Tags: [Ahmed Shah Massoud](#), [Gulbuddin Hekmatyar](#), [Mohammad Najibullah](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)



February 1992-February 7, 1995: Ramzi Yousef's Stay at Pakistani Guesthouse Links Him to Bin Laden



Apparently the bin Laden guest house where Yousef lived. [*Source: National Geographic*] According to Pakistani investigators, Ramzi Yousef spends most of this time at the Beit Ashuhada guesthouse (translated as House of Martyrs) in Peshawar, Pakistan, which is funded by Osama bin Laden. Pakistani investigators reveal this bin Laden-Yousef connection to US intelligence in March 1995. The CIA will publicly reveal this in 1996. [[CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 1996](#) ; [TENET, 2007, PP. 100](#)] While living there, Yousef receives help and financing from two unnamed senior al-Qaeda representatives. [[REEVE, 1999, PP. 47](#)] Yousef will be arrested at another nearby bin Laden safe house in February 1995 (see [February 7, 1995](#)) with bin Laden's address found in his pocket. [[LONDON TIMES, 10/18/1997](#)] During these years, Yousef takes long trips to the US in preparation of the WTC bombing (see [February 26, 1993](#)) and the Philippines, where several plots are developed (see [January 6, 1995](#)). He also uses an al-Qaeda influenced mosque in Milan, Italy, as a logistical base (see [1995-1997](#)).

Entity Tags: [Osama bin Laden](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Ramzi Yousef](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



After April 6, 1992: CIA Paramilitary Fights in Bosnia



CIA paramilitary contractor Billy Waugh fights in Bosnia. Details of his actions, the other members of his team, and the actual operations are unknown, but in his 2004 autobiography Waugh will say, “I saw combat in Bosnia and Kosovo, conducting operations I cannot discuss.” [\[WAUGH AND KEOWN, 2004, PP. 307\]](#) This may occur during the Bosnian Civil War, at which time no US troops are officially involved in combat in Bosnia. [\[NATO REVIEW, 9/2005\]](#) Alternatively, according to Time magazine, during the mid and late 1990s CIA paramilitaries hunt Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, so Waugh may be part of this operation. [\[TIME, 2/3/2003\]](#) Waugh is a covert operations legend—his career began in Vietnam and will end in Afghanistan in 2002, by which time he is in his 70s. [\[WAUGH AND KEOWN, 2004\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Billy Waugh](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



April 24-September 1, 1992: WTC Bombers Have Numerous Links to Al-Kifah Charity Front



On April 24, 1992, Houston pizza deliveryman Ahmad Ajaj and San Antonio cabdriver Ibrahim Ahmad Suleiman fly together from Texas to Pakistan. Suleiman is a Texas contact of the al-Kifah Refugee Center, the Brooklyn-based Islamist militant organization linked to both the CIA and al-Qaeda (see [1986-1993](#)). Suleiman had begun raising funds for the Afghan war in Texas in the late 1980s, and acquaintances said he traveled to Pakistan several times, carrying a briefcase full of cash to fund the mujaheddin fighting in Afghanistan. When they arrive in Pakistan, they stay at a hostel in Peshawar, near the Afghanistan border, known as the Abdullah Azzam House. Named after Osama bin Laden’s mentor Abdullah Azzam, this hostel is owned by al-Kifah and also houses its Pakistan headquarters. Ajaj and Suleiman stay there off and on over the next several months. Al-Qaeda bomber Ramzi Yousef also sometimes stays there during the same months. Ajaj also allegedly receives explosives training at an Afghanistan training camp with Yousef. His letter of introduction to the camp is signed by an Azzam House official. On September 1, 1992, Ajaj and Yousef arrive together in New York City on a flight from Pakistan. Ajaj is carrying some bomb manuals; investigators will later find the fingerprints of Ajaj, Yousef, and Suleiman on them. Both men are carrying identification cards that give the PO box number in Tucson, Arizona, that matches an al-Kifah branch there. Ajaj is briefly detained at the airport, but Yousef is allowed to go. [\[DALLAS MORNING NEWS, 6/8/1997\]](#) He gets into a taxi and tells the taxi driver to drive him to the building that houses the al-Qaeda headquarters in Brooklyn as well as the closely associated Al Farooq mosque, led at the time by the “Blind Shiekh,” Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman. [\[LANCE, 2003\]](#) Ajaj and Yousef will later be sentenced to life in prison for their roles in the 1993 WTC bombing (see [February 26, 1993](#)). Suleiman will only be sentenced to 10 months in prison for lying to a grand jury about his

travels with Ajaj. [NEW YORK TIMES, 11/25/1998] A CIA internal report will conclude the agency is “partly culpable” for the WTC bombing, mainly due to its support for al-Kifah (see [January 24, 1994](#)).

Entity Tags: [Ahmad Ajaj](#), [Abdullah Azzam](#), [Ramzi Yousef](#), [Ibrahim Ahmad Suleiman](#), [Al-Kifah Refugee Center](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



May 1992: CIA Analysis Ignored by US Officials Opposed to Intervening in Bosnia War



At the outset of the war in Bosnia, a small three- or four-man team from the CIA and National Security Agency determine from satellite images that the Serb’s artillery guns are in vulnerable positions and can be easily “eliminated in one single day of air strikes-right at the start of the siege.” When a diplomat who is working with the team sends word of this to Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Tom Niles, the intelligence is ignored by US officials who do not want to US to get militarily involved. Two months later, officials from the Pentagon and CIA will incorrectly tell the Senate foreign relations committee that striking Serbian artillery positions would be impossible because of the dense forests and mountainous terrain. The diplomat will later take his story to the Guardian, suggesting that claims the Bosnian War was unexpected by US intelligence were without merit and that the Senate Committee was deliberately misled. [GUARDIAN, 5/20/1995]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Tom Niles](#), [National Security Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



June 1992: Iraqi National Congress Formed



The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), headed by Masud Barzani, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), headed by Jalal Talabani, meet in Vienna along with nearly 200 delegates from dozens of Iraqi opposition groups to form an umbrella organization for Iraqi dissident groups. [FEDERATION OF AMERICAN SCIENTISTS, 8/8/1998; NEW YORKER, 6/7/2004] The event is organized by the Rendon Group, which has been contracted by the CIA to organize the wide spectrum of Iraqi dissidents into a unified movement against Saddam Hussein. Rendon names the group the “Iraqi National Congress” (INC). The CIA pays the Rendon Group \$326,000 per month for the work, funneled to the company and the INC through various front organizations. [ABC, 2/7/1998; COUNTERPUNCH, 5/20/2004; ROLLING STONE, 11/17/2005 SOURCES: UNNAMED FORMER CIA OPERATIVE]

Thomas Twetten, the CIA's deputy directorate of operations, will later recall: "The INC was clueless. They needed a lot of help and didn't know where to start." [[NEW REPUBLIC, 5/20/2002](#); [BAMFORD, 2004, PP. 296-297](#)] Rendon hires freelance journalist Paul Moran and Zaab Sethna as contract employees to do public relations and "anti-Saddam propaganda" for the new organization. [[SBS DATELINE, 7/23/2003](#)]

Entity Tags: [Paul Moran](#), [Zaab Sethna](#), [Iraqi National Congress](#), [Rendon Group](#), [Jalal Talabani](#), [Masud Barzani](#), [Patriotic Union of Kurdistan](#), [Kurdistan Democratic Party](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Thomas Twetten](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



Between August 1992 and 1993: Bin Laden Sends Quarter of Million Dollars to US; CIA Is Monitoring His Banking Operations



Osama bin Laden sends about \$250,000 to an associate named Essam al Ridi in the US. The money is moved in more than one transfer from the Al-Shamal Islamic Bank in Sudan and is for the purchase of a plane by al Ridi for bin Laden (see [Early 1993](#)). The CIA has been monitoring bin Laden's banking operations for some time (see [1991-1992](#)). Al Ridi will be asked about this transfer at the US trial of al-Qaeda operatives involved in the 1998 embassy bombings, where he is a witness for the prosecution. Under cross examination, he will say that he was not concerned about such large transfers from Sudan to Texas because receiving such monies was not a problem for him in the US, although it might have been a problem for him if he was still in Egypt. [[UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, 1/14/2001](#)] Al Ridi previously purchased assassination rifles for the anti-Soviet Afghan Arabs, apparently with the CIA's knowledge (see [Early 1989](#)).

Entity Tags: [Al-Shamal Islamic Bank](#), [Essam al Ridi](#), [Osama bin Laden](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Autumn 1992: UN Inspectors Discover Advanced Nuclear Weapons Program in Iraq



In the aftermath of the US invasion of Iraq, UN inspectors uncover evidence of an Iraqi nuclear weapons program far more advanced than the US intelligence community had predicted. Disgusted by this and other intelligence failures (see [Mid-1990](#) and [Late December 1990](#)), Defense Secretary Dick Cheney and his cadre of neoconservatives and hardliners in the Pentagon (see [Late March 1989 and After](#)) come to consider the intelligence community, and

particularly the CIA, as, in the words of reporters Franklin Foer and Spencer Ackerman, “not only inept but lazy, unimaginative, and arrogant—‘a high priesthood’ in their derisive terminology.” [[NEW REPUBLIC, 11/20/2003](#)]

Entity Tags: [Spencer Ackerman](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Richard \(“Dick”\) Cheney](#), [Franklin Foer](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



October 1992: Shiite Groups Join INC; Individuals Chosen to Lead Group



Prominent Shiite Iraqi opposition groups join the Iraqi National Congress, a creation of the CIA (see [June 1992](#)), and hold a meeting in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq where they select a three-man leadership council and a 26-member executive council. The three leaders include moderate Shiite Muslim cleric Muhammad Bahr al-Ulum; ex-Iraqi general Hasan Naqib; and Masud Barzani. Ahmed Chalabi, who is reportedly not at all popular among the exiles present, is somehow selected to chair the executive council. This event represents the first major attempt to bring together the many different groups in Iraq opposed to Saddam Hussein.

[[FEDERATION OF AMERICAN SCIENTISTS, 8/8/1998](#); [NEW YORKER, 6/7/2004](#)]

Entity Tags: [Iraqi National Congress](#), [Kurdistan Democratic Party](#), [Ahmed Chalabi](#), [Hasan Naqib](#), [Muhammad Bahr al-Ulum](#), [Masud Barzani](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



October 3, 1992: FBI Learns Al-Kifah Charity Front Is Forming an Elite Armed Militia



Garrett Wilson is a burly ex-US Army Ranger and military police officer at a naval base in Philadelphia who also runs his own security business. He is also a trusted FBI informant, helping to monitor militant black Muslims who come to him to for paramilitary training and to buy surplus military equipment. On October 3, 1992, Wilson gets a call from Abdul Wali Zindani, head of the Al-Kifah Refugee Center in Brooklyn. Al-Kifah is a charity front linked to both al-Qaeda and the CIA (see [1986-1993](#)). Zindani wants Wilson to help train and supply an elite group of about ten men. Wilson then speaks to Abu Ubaidah Yahya, security chief for Al-Kifah, and Yahya further explains that they are especially interested in hostage rescue training. Wilson contacts his FBI handlers John Liguori and Tommy Corrigan, who are intrigued. They are aware that friends of El Sayyid Nosair have been plotting to break Nosair from prison and worry the hostage rescue training could be related to that, since Nosair has

been closely linked to Al-Kifah. They tell Wilson to remain in contact with the people at Al-Kifah and see what develops. [MILLER, STONE, AND MITCHELL, 2002, PP. 81-83]

Entity Tags: [El Sayyid Nosair](#), [Abdul Wali Zindani](#), [Al-Kifah Refugee Center](#), [Garrett Wilson](#), [Abu Ubaidah Yahya](#), [John Liguori](#), [Tommy Corrigan](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Mid-November-December 20, 1992: FBI Informant Learns of Plot to Train and Arm Group with Automatic Weapons and Bombs



In mid-November 1992, Garrett Wilson, an FBI informant who sells military equipment and conducts paramilitary training, is contacted by someone named “Dr. Rashid.” Wilson had previously been contacted by Abu Ubaidah Yahya, the security chief at the Al-Kifah Refugee Center in Brooklyn, a charity front tied to both al-Qaeda and the CIA (see [1986-1993](#)). Wilson’s FBI handlers are excited to learn about this because in June 1992, a “Dr. Rashid” had met with FBI informant Emad Salem and offered to supply bombs and guns (see [Early July 1992](#)). The FBI runs a background check and determines “Dr. Rashid” is really Clement Rodney Hampton-El, who works at a hospital in Long Island. The also learn from phone records that he has recently made calls to the “Blind Sheikh,” Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman. On December 20, 1992, Wilson meets with Yahya and Hampton-El. They tell him that they want him to train eight to ten men for an international jihad battalion separate from another small group Al-Kifah wants Wilson to help train (see [October 3, 1992](#)). Hampton-El says he will provide AK-47s for the training sessions, but is looking for detonator caps, which are needed to make bombs. He also says the group will be sent to fight in Bosnia, but they are asking to be instructed in sniper firing and frontal assaults on buildings. Wilson tells FBI agent Tommy Corrigan, “It sounds to me like they either want to kidnap or kill someone.” Corrigan and other FBI agents are alarmed. [MILLER, STONE, AND MITCHELL, 2002, PP. 83-84]

Entity Tags: [Tommy Corrigan](#), [Omar Abdul-Rahman](#), [Clement Rodney Hampton-El](#), [Abu Ubaidah Yahya](#), [Al-Kifah Refugee Center](#), [Garrett Wilson](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Emad Salem](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



December 1992: US Army Allegedly Tries to Get Radical Militants in New York to Fight in Bosnia



The Independent will report in 1998, “In December 1992, a US army official met one of the Afghan veterans from Al-Kifah [Refugee Center] and offered help with a covert operation to

support the Muslims in Bosnia, funded with Saudi money, according to one of those jailed for assisting with the New York bombings. But that effort quickly disintegrated, leaving a great deal of bad feeling.” [INDEPENDENT, 11/1/1998] More details about this are not known. However, the plan may not have necessarily failed because it will later be reported that that very same month, double agent Ali Mohamed, an-ex US Special Forces soldier, is part of a 14-man al-Qaeda team made up of retired US military personnel that enters Bosnia through Croatia to train and arm mujaheddin fighters there in 1992 (see [December 1992-June 1993](#)). Mohamed is also closely tied to the Al-Kifah Refugee Center, which is located in Brooklyn, New York (see [1987-1989](#)). Al-Kifah is closely tied to both al-Qaeda and the CIA (see [1986-1993](#)). Also that same month, a Bosnian charity front largely funded by Saudi money begins paying for a militant training camp in Pennsylvania that trains some of those later arrested for roles in the New York bombing (see [December 1992-Early February 1993](#)).

Entity Tags: [Al-Kifah Refugee Center](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



December 25, 1992: Bush Pardons Six Iran-Contra Figures; May Have Concealed Own Involvement



The outgoing President Bush pardons six former Reagan officials for any crimes they may have committed as part of their involvement in the Iran-Contra affair. One of the six, former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, was slated to go on trial in January 1993 on charges that he lied to Congress about his knowledge of arms sales to Iran and funding from other countries for the Nicaraguan Contras (see [July 24, 1992](#)). Weinberger’s case was expected to reveal details of then-Vice President Bush’s involvement in the affair. Bush has refused to turn over a 1986 campaign diary he kept that may contain evidence of his involvement. Special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh says of the pardons, “[T]he Iran-Contra cover-up, which has continued for more than six years, has now been completed.” The pardons “undermine... the principle that no man is above the law. It demonstrates that powerful people with powerful allies can commit serious crimes in high office—deliberately abusing the public trust without consequence.” Walsh says that he believes Bush may have pardoned Weinberger to conceal his own complicity and possibly criminal actions in Iran-Contra. Bush also pardons former National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane and former Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams, both of whom have already pled guilty to misdemeanor charges of withholding information from Congress. Bush also pardons Clair George, the former head of the CIA’s clandestine services, convicted earlier in December of two felony charges of perjury and misleading Congress. Finally, he pardons two other CIA officials, Duane Clarridge, who is awaiting trial, and Alan Fiers, who pled guilty to withholding information from Congress, and who testified against George. For his part, Bush says he is merely trying to “put bitterness behind us” in pardoning the six, many of whom he said have already paid a heavy price for their involvement. Senator George Mitchell (D-ME) is sharply critical of the pardons, saying,

“If members of the executive branch lie to the Congress, obstruct justice and otherwise break the law, how can policy differences be fairly and legally resolved in a democracy?” [[NEW YORK TIMES, 12/25/1992](#)]

Entity Tags: [Robert C. McFarlane](#), [Caspar Weinberger](#), [Alan Fiers](#), [Clair George](#), [Lawrence E. Walsh](#), [Contras](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Duane Clarridge](#), [Elliott Abrams](#), [George Mitchell](#)

Timeline Tags: [Iran-Contra Affair](#)



(Between 1993 and 1995): Energy Department, CIA and Pentagon Begin Biodefense Programs



The US Energy Department, Defense Department, and the CIA begin conducting classified biodefense programs. [[BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC SCIENTISTS, 1/2003](#)]

Timeline Tags: [US Military](#)



January 7-13, 1993: FBI Cancels Monitored Meetings that Could Expose WTC Bomb Plot



Carson Dunbar. [*Source: Brian Price/ Associated Press*] Garrett Wilson, a paramilitary trainer and gun seller working as an FBI informant, meets with Clement Rodney Hampton-El and Abu Ubaidah Yahya at a Brooklyn restaurant on January 7, 1993. Yahya is the security chief of the Al-Kifah Refugee Center, a charity front tied to both al-Qaeda and the CIA (see [1986-1993](#)), and Hampton-El is also tied to Al-Kifah. They had already met Wilson and discussed hiring him to give weapons training to a small group (see [Mid-November-December 20, 1992](#)). They agree that, starting on January 13, Wilson will train the group for five days at a New Jersey shooting range and will get paid \$5,000 for doing so. (This is not to be confused with other training going on the same month taught by Yahya in Pennsylvania (see [December 1992-Early February 1993](#)).) The FBI plans to monitor the training and follow all of the

participants. But FBI superior Carson Dunbar learns of the plan just before the training is to begin and expresses concern that the FBI could be training potential terrorists. He dramatically cuts down what Wilson is allowed to teach, so much so that his FBI handlers are worried Wilson will be immediately exposed as a US agent and killed. Then, as Wilson is getting in his car to drive to the training site, Carson cancels the operation altogether. Luckily for Wilson, he has a good alibi for not attending, so his cover is not blown. But other FBI agents are furious at Dunbar's behavior. It is not known who would have attended, but Hampton-El and Yahya are loosely connected to many of the 1993 WTC bombers. The authors of the 2002 book *The Cell* will later comment that the FBI "was just a whisper away from the World Trade Center plot." [MILLER, STONE, AND MITCHELL, 2002, PP. 87-90]

Entity Tags: [Garrett Wilson](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Carson Dunbar](#), [Al-Kifah Refugee Center](#), [Abu Ubaidah Yahya](#), [Clement Rodney Hampton-El](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



January 15, 1993: FBI Informant Connects Plotters to 'Blind Sheikh'



Garrett Wilson, a paramilitary trainer and gun seller working as an FBI informant, had made an agreement to give weapons training to a group of radical militants, but the FBI canceled the plan at the last minute after FBI superior Carson Dunbar worried the FBI could be training future terrorists. Wilson had made the arrangement with Clement Rodney Hampton-El and Abu Ubaidah Yahya, both of whom are connected to the Al-Kifah Refugee Center, which is linked to al-Qaeda and the CIA (see [1986-1993](#)). But while the training has been canceled, Wilson's cover as an informant has not been blown yet and his FBI handlers realize that Wilson would still have to give Hampton-El some equipment he'd bought for him. His FBI handlers Tommy Corrigan and John Liguori proposes that Wilson meet Hampton-El so the FBI can monitor the meeting and see where the trail leads. This time, they avoid Dunbar and get permission from a different supervisor, Neil Herman. Wilson goes to meet Hampton-El at a New Jersey hotel on January 15, 1993. Hampton-El isn't there, but Yahya is, along with two others that Wilson does not know. Wilson hands off the equipment (weapons and military manuals) and quickly leaves, and then the FBI tails the others as they leave. Yahya returns in one car to the Al-Kifah office, where he is the security chief. The others go in another car to the apartment where the Blind Shiekh, Shiekh Omar Abdul-Rahman, lives. The FBI quickly determines the other two men at the meeting are Abdo Mohammed Haggag, Abdul-Rahman's speechwriter, and Siddig Siddig Ali, Abdul-Rahman's Sudanese translator. Corrigan, Liguori, and other FBI agents are stunned by the connections to Abdul-Rahman, who is a well-known public figure. But they will only be allowed to follow up for several days before the surveillance operation is canceled. [MILLER, STONE, AND MITCHELL, 2002, PP. 87-90]

Entity Tags: [Carson Dunbar](#), [Tommy Corrigan](#), [Abdo Mohammed Haggag](#), [Al-Kifah Refugee Center](#), [Omar Abdul-Rahman](#), [Siddig Siddig Ali](#), [John Liguori](#), [Clement Rodney Hampton-El](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Garrett Wilson](#), [Abu Ubaidah Yahya](#), [Neil Herman](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



January 16-17, 1993: FBI Discovers Islamic Militant Training Camp in Pennsylvania but Immediately Cuts Off Surveillance



On January 15, 1993, FBI informant Garrett Wilson had led the FBI to a meeting attended by Abu Ubaidah Yahya, Abdo Mohammed Haggag, and Siddig Siddig Ali (see [January 15, 1993](#)). Yahya is security chief for the Al-Kifah Refugee Center, a charity front tied to both al-Qaeda and the CIA (see [1986-1993](#)), and Haggag and Siddig Ali both work with the “Blind Sheikh,” Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, who is also closely linked to Al-Kifah. Suspecting a violent plot, FBI agents have a plan to continuously monitor Yahya, Haggag, and Ali from when they leave the meeting, and for the next couple of days that is what they do. On January 16, Yahya leads the FBI to Jersey City, New Jersey, where he is holding exercises for a group of Sudanese and Middle Eastern men. Then the FBI follows Yahya and this group he is leading to a militant training camp on a farm in New Bloomfield, Pennsylvania. A squad of investigators watch them practicing martial arts, sniper firing, and rappelling. The agents think that they recognize one of the trainees as Mahmud Abouhalima, who they already strongly suspect was involved in the 1990 assassination of a Jewish leader (see [November 5, 1990](#)). (In fact, the trainee is his brother Mohammed - both of them are tall and red-headed.) However, on January 17, FBI supervisor Carson Dunbar calls the squad away from the training camp, preventing them from following the suspects as they return to their homes that evening. The FBI squad is upset, as they are sure following the suspects to their homes would lead to many new identifications and leads. Dunbar claims the surveillance is costing too much money and effectively shuts down further surveillance of everyone but Yahya and Clement Rodney Hampton-El, who has been working with Yahya, and only when they’re in close range of the FBI New York office. [[MILLER, STONE, AND MITCHELL, 2002, PP. 90-91](#)] Yahya will continue to train his group at the Pennsylvania camp through early February (see [December 1992-Early February 1993](#)), but apparently without further FBI surveillance of them.

Entity Tags: [Mohammed Abouhalima](#), [Siddig Siddig Ali](#), [Omar Abdul-Rahman](#), [Mahmud Abouhalima](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Clement Rodney Hampton-El](#), [Abdo Mohammed Haggag](#), [Al-Kifah Refugee Center](#), [Carson Dunbar](#), [Garrett Wilson](#), [Abu Ubaidah Yahya](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



January 25, 1993: Militant Kills Two at CIA Headquarters



Mir Aimal Kasi. [Source: FBI]

A Pakistani militant named Mir Aimal Kasi walks up to the main headquarters of CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, and opens fire with an AK-47. He shoots five CIA personnel as they sit in their cars, killing two of them. Remarkably, Kasi simply walks off and then flies back to Pakistan. A massive international manhunt ensues, and a joint FBI-CIA team will capture him in a central Pakistan town in 1997. He is then rendered to the US instead of going through the less controversial but lengthier extradition process (see [June 15, 1997](#)). [TENET, 2007, PP. 41-42] While Kasi apparently acted alone, he will be treated as a hero and sheltered by radical Islamists in Afghanistan until his capture. Kasi will be convicted of murder later in 1997. Four US oil workers will be killed in Pakistan one day later in apparent retaliation. [WASHINGTON POST, 11/13/1997] Kasi will later say that he was upset with US policy in the Middle East and was hoping to assassinate the CIA director. He will be convicted of murder and executed in 2002. [TENET, 2007, PP. 41-42]

Entity Tags: [Mir Aimal Kasi](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



[Around February 1993: Three WTC Bombers Travel on Saudi Passports with Indicator of Islamist Extremism, Presumably Tracked by Saudi Authorities](#)



The 9/11 Commission, relying on a CIA report, will later say that three of the men involved in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing travel on Saudi passports containing an indicator of possible Islamist extremism. [9/11 COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP. 46-47, 61] Author James Bamford will say that it is a “secret coded indicator, placed there by the Saudi government, warning of a possible terrorist affiliation.” [BAMFORD, 2008, PP. 58-59] It is unclear what the indicator looks like precisely and who the men are. However, Ahmad Ajaj, an associate of lead bomber Ramzi Yousef, does have a Saudi passport. Some of the 9/11 hijackers will later use Saudi passports

with the same indicator (see [October 28, 2000](#), [June 1, 2001](#), and [June 13, 2001](#), and [November 2, 2007](#)). [9/11 COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP. 46-47, 61]

Entity Tags: [Ahmad Ajaj](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



February 26, 1993: WTC Is Bombed but Does Not Collapse, as Bombers Had Hoped



Bomb damage in underground levels of the WTC in 1993.

[Source: [Najlah Feanny/ Corbis](#)]An attempt to topple the World Trade Center fails, but six people are killed and over 1000 are injured in the misfired blast. An FBI explosives expert later states that, “If they had found the exact architectural Achilles’ heel or if the bomb had been a little bit bigger, not much more, 500 pounds more, I think it would have brought her down.” Ramzi Yousef, who has close ties to bin Laden, organizes the attempt. [VILLAGE VOICE, 3/30/1993; [US CONGRESS, 2/24/1998](#)] The New York Times later reports on Emad Salem, an undercover agent who will be the key government witness in the trial against Yousef. Salem testifies that the FBI knew about the attack beforehand and told him they would thwart it by substituting a harmless powder for the explosives. However, an FBI supervisor called off this plan, and the bombing was not stopped. [NEW YORK TIMES, 10/28/1993] Other suspects were ineptly investigated before the bombing as early as 1990. Several of the bombers were trained by the CIA to fight in the Afghan war, and the CIA later concludes, in internal documents, that it was “partly culpable” for this bombing (see [January 24, 1994](#)). [INDEPENDENT, 11/1/1998] 9/11 mastermind Khalid Shaikh Mohammed is an uncle of Yousef and also has a role in the WTC bombing (see [March 20, 1993](#)). [INDEPENDENT, 6/6/2002; [LOS ANGELES TIMES, 9/1/2002](#)] One of the attackers even leaves a message which will later be found by investigators, stating, “Next time, it will be very precise.” [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 9/30/2001]

Entity Tags: [World Trade Center](#), [Ramzi Yousef](#), [Khalid Shaikh Mohammed](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Emad Salem](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



Shortly After February 26, 1993-1994: FBI Fails to Close Branches of Al-Qaeda's 'Operational Headquarters' in US



Neil Herman. *[Source: Paul Schneck Photography]* The Al-Kifah Refugee Center is bin Laden's largest fundraising group in the US and has offices in many cities (see [1986-1993](#) and [1985-1989](#)). Counterterrorism expert Steven Emerson will later call it "al-Qaeda's operational headquarters in the United States." *[EMERSON, 2006, PP. 436]* Nearly every figure involved in the 1993 WTC bombing has a connection to the Al-Kifah branch in Brooklyn, New York. *[NEWSWEEK, 3/29/1993]* Bob Blitzer, a former FBI terrorism chief who heads the FBI's first Islamic terrorism squad, is stunned to discover the number of militants connected to Al-Kifah who have left the US to fight for Muslim causes overseas. He will later remember thinking, "What the hell's going on?" Neil Herman, head of the FBI's WTC bombing investigation, will comment, "It was like a modern underground railroad." But no effort is made to keep track of who has gone overseas to fight, even though many of the WTC bombers had gone overseas to fight then came back to use their training to plan an attack in the US. Furthermore, the Al-Kifah office in Brooklyn shuts itself down, but all the other branch offices remain open. US News and World Report will later note that the offices "were left largely intact [and] helped form the nucleus of bin Laden's al-Qaeda network." Herman will say, "They certainly continued on, but were somewhat fragmented." Over time, the other branches generally go underground. Soon their functions are largely replaced by a network of Islamic charities. For instance, the functions of the Brooklyn branch, including its newsletter and website, are directly taken over by a new Boston-based charity called Care International (see [April 1993-Mid-2003](#)). Another charity is the Benevolence International Foundation (BIF), run by Enaam Arnaout, who is a veteran of the Al-Kifah Brooklyn office. *[US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT, 6/2/2002]* The US will not freeze the assets of Al-Kifah until shortly after 9/11, long after all the US branches have dissolved (see [September 24, 2001](#)). There is evidence to suggest that the CIA had ties to Al-Kifah and blocked FBI investigations of it (see [Late 1980s and After](#)).

Entity Tags: [Enaam Arnaout](#), [Al-Kifah Refugee Center](#), [Benevolence International Foundation](#), [Care International \(Boston\)](#), [Neil Herman](#), [Bob Blitzer](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



After February 26, 1993: CIA Obstructs FBI Investigation of ‘Blind Sheikh’ in 1993 WTC Bombing



After the 1993 WTC bombing (see [February 26, 1993](#)), New York District Attorney Robert Morgenthau’s investigators search El Sayyid Nosair’s belongings (see [November 5, 1990 and After](#)) and find a bomb formula which was quite similar to the bomb used to attack the WTC. This discovery would link Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman’s group to the bombing. The belongings also include a taped plea from Abdul-Rahman to destroy “the towers that constitute the pillars” of the civilization of “enemies of God.” Some suspect this is a reference to the WTC. But the FBI refuses to acknowledge and follow up on the bomb formula or other leads from Nosair. Morgenthau later concludes that the CIA may have pressured the FBI to back off from evidence which led to Abdul-Rahman, as well as blocking other investigative leads (see [Late 1980s and After](#)). [NEW YORK TIMES, 11/21/1994; NEW YORKER, 3/17/1995]

Entity Tags: [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [El Sayyid Nosair](#), [Robert Morgenthau](#), [Omar Abdul-Rahman](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



April 1993-Mid-2003: FBI Slow to Act as Main Branch of Al-Qaeda’s ‘Operational Headquarters’ in US Reforms in Boston



Aafia Siddiqui. [Source: Public domain]The Al-Kifah Refugee Center is bin Laden’s largest fundraising group in the US and has offices in many cities (see [1986-1993](#) and [1985-1989](#)). Counterterrorism expert Steven Emerson will later call it “al-

Qaeda's operational headquarters in the United States." [EMERSON, 2006, PP. 436] In late March 1993, Newsweek will report that "virtually every principal figure implicated in the World Trade Center bombing" that took place the month before (see [February 26, 1993](#)) has a connection to the Al-Kifah branch in Brooklyn, New York. [NEWSWEEK, 3/29/1993] The Brooklyn branch quietly shuts itself down. But other branches stay open (see [Shortly After February 26, 1993-1994](#)) and the Boston branch appears to take over for the Brooklyn branch. In April 1993, it reincorporates under the new name Care International (which is not connected with a large US charity based in Atlanta with the same name). Emerson will later comment, "The continuity between the two organizations was obvious to anyone who scratched the surface." For instance, Care takes over the publication of Al-Kifah's pro-jihad newsletter, *Al Hussam*. [EMERSON, 2006, PP. 437] It also shares the same website and street address as the Al-Kifah Boston branch it took over. [WALL STREET JOURNAL, 11/21/2001] By the time of the WTC bombing, Al-Kifah is doing most of its fund raising for the mujaheddin fighting in Bosnia. For instance, one month after the bombing, a member of Al-Kifah/Care in Boston named Aafia Siddiqui sends Muslims newsgroups an e-mail pledge form asking for support for Bosnian widows and orphans. Siddiqui, a university student in Boston for most of the 1990s, is well known to Boston's Muslim community as a dedicated Islamic activist. One imam will later recall, "She attended many conferences. Whenever there was an event, she would come." But it appears Siddiqui is also a prominent al-Qaeda operative, working as a "fixer" for Khalid Shaikh Mohammed. Despite considerable suspicious evidence against her discovered shortly after 9/11, she will disappear in Pakistan in 2003 (see [Late September 2001-March 2003](#)). [VANITY FAIR, 3/2005] Two long-time Care employees are also be long-time employees of Ptech, a Boston-based computer firm formed in 1994 that will be raided in 2002 by the FBI for suspected radical militant ties. One of them writes many articles advocating Islamic jihad (see [1994](#)). Emerson and his Investigative Project on Terrorism research team begins researching Care International in 1993, targeting it and several employees for suspected radical militant ties. The team discovers some checks made out to Care have notations on the back such as, "For jihad only." [TELEGRAM AND GAZETTE, 9/11/2006] Presumably Emerson's team shares what they learn with US intelligence, as his research on other matters lead to US government investigations around the same time (see for instance [October 1994-2001](#)). Al-Kifah branches in the US are connected to the charity Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK) overseas, which is also sometimes called Al-Kifah. In 1996, a secret CIA report will assert that the main MAK office in Pakistan funds at least nine militant training camps in Afghanistan and has ties to bin Laden and other militant groups and leaders. Furthermore, it connects this office to the Al-Kifah office in Brooklyn and the 1993 WTC bomber Ramzi Yousef (see [January 1996](#)). But the FBI takes no action against any of the remaining Al-Kifah branches in the US before 9/11. The US will officially declare Al-Kifah and/or Maktab al-Khidamat a terrorist financier shortly after 9/11, but by then all the US branches have closed or changed their names (see [September 24, 2001](#)). One day after the declaration, a Boston Globe article will make the connection between Care and Al-Kifah, pointing out that Care and the old Al-Kifah branch in Boston share the exact same address. [BOSTON GLOBE, 9/26/2001] But the FBI will wait until 2003 before raiding the Care offices and shutting it down. The FBI will later state that Care raised about \$1.7 million from 1993 to 2003. [TELEGRAM AND GAZETTE, 9/11/2006] Al-Kifah has had a murky connection with the CIA, at least in its early days. Shortly after 9/11, Newsweek will comment that Al-

Kifah’s Brooklyn office “doubled as a recruiting post for the CIA seeking to steer fresh troops to the mujahedin.” [NEWSWEEK, 10/1/2001]

Entity Tags: [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Steven Emerson](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Aafia Siddiqui](#), [Al-Kifah Refugee Center](#), [Care International \(Boston\)](#), [Maktab al-Khidamat](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



May 1993: Egyptian President Says ‘Blind Sheikh’ Worked with CIA



Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak is quoted in an Egyptian newspaper saying Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman had worked with the CIA. Under pressure from the US State Department, the newspaper’s editor retracts the story a few days later. [BOSTON GLOBE, 2/3/1995; [LANCE, 2006, PP. 127](#)]

Entity Tags: [US Department of State](#), [Omar Abdul-Rahman](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Hosni Mubarak](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



July-August 1993: US Intelligence Realizes Bin Laden Is Important Financier of Islamist Militants



In a July 1993 intelligence report, the CIA notes that Osama bin Laden has been paying to train members of the Egyptian militant group Al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya in Sudan, where he lives. The CIA privately concludes he is an important terrorist financier (see [1993](#)). In August 1993, the State Department sees links between bin Laden and the “Blind Sheikh,” Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman (see [August 1993](#)), who leads Al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya and was recently arrested in the US (see [July 3, 1993](#)). A State Department report comments that bin Laden seems “committed to financing ‘Jihads’ against ‘anti-Islamic’ regimes worldwide.” [[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 109, 479](#)] In August 1993, the State Department also puts bin Laden on its no-fly watch list (see [August 12, 1993 and Shortly Thereafter](#)). However, US intelligence will be slow to realize he is more directly involved than just giving money. Some intelligence reports into 1997 will continue to refer to him only as a militant financier. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 109, 479](#)]

Entity Tags: [Omar Abdul-Rahman](#), [Al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [US Department of State](#), [Osama bin Laden](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Before September 1993: Inspectors General Clear Nuclear Analyst of All Charges, but Report Is Rewritten



A combined inquiry by the inspectors general of the Defense Department, CIA, and State Department finds that numerous charges made against Richard Barlow (see [1981-1982](#) and [August 4, 1989](#)), a former analyst of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program for all three agencies, are without merit. However, the report is re-written before it is published. Lead inspector Sherman Funk finds that the accusation that Barlow is a traitor is “an error not supported by a scintilla of evidence,” adding, “The truth about Barlow’s termination is, simply put, that it was unfair and unwarranted.” Funk calls the whole affair “Kafka-like” and says Barlow was fired for “refusing to accede to policies which he knew to be wrong.” Despite this, the report is rewritten before it is published. The new version exonerates the Pentagon and says that Pakistan does not have nuclear weapons, although the US is well aware it does (see [July 1987 or Shortly After](#)). [[NEW YORKER, 3/29/1993](#); [GUARDIAN, 10/13/2007](#)] Funk will comment: “Yesterday, I received a copy of the Barlow report I had co-signed. Reviewing it I was startled and dismayed to realize that the summary of conclusions had not been revised to reflect the changes we had made.” [[LEVY AND SCOTT-CLARK, 2007, PP. 233, 507](#)]

Fabricated Evidence - Commenting on an earlier version of the Pentagon inspector general's report, one of Barlow's former bosses, Gerald Oplinger, said that it contained evidence fabricated by the inspector general's office. The report alleges that Oplinger deliberately inflated his annual evaluation of Barlow in order to avoid “an unpleasant personnel situation.” However, in a sworn affidavit Oplinger says this charge is “devoid of merit,” and also denies ever having spoken to anyone from the inspector general's office, even though an interview with him is listed as one of the sources for the report.

'Many' Colleagues Support Barlow - Journalist Seymour Hersh previously interviewed “many” of Barlow's former CIA and State Department colleagues and they confirmed Barlow's essential allegation—that the full story of the Pakistani purchases was deliberately withheld from Congress, for fear of provoking a cut-off in military and economic aid that would adversely affect the Soviet-Afghan War. [[NEW YORKER, 3/29/1993](#)]

Entity Tags: [Office of the Inspector General \(DoD\)](#), [Office of the Inspector General \(CIA\)](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [US Department of State](#), [Sherman Funk](#), [Richard Barlow](#), [US Department of Defense](#), [Office of the Inspector General \(State Department\)](#)

Timeline Tags: [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)



Before October 1993: Al-Qaeda Leaders Travel to Somalia from Monitored Base in Sudan



Al-Qaeda leaders travel from Khartoum, Sudan, to Mogadishu, Somalia, while US forces are present there. These forces will be attacked shortly afterwards in the infamous “Black Hawk Down” incident (see [October 3-4, 1993](#)). This is only one of several trips to Somalia at this time (see [Late 1992-October 1993](#)).

Details of Trip - The names of all five operatives who travel are not known, but one of them is Mohammed Atef (a.k.a. Abu Hafs), who will later become al-Qaeda’s military commander. According to Essam al Ridi, the pilot who flies them on the first leg of the journey to Nairobi, Kenya, they are dressed in Saudi, Western, and Yemeni outfits. The trip from Khartoum to Nairobi is arranged by an associate of Osama bin Laden’s named Wadih El-Hage, and the five men continue from Nairobi to Mogadishu in a different aircraft. [[UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, 1/14/2001](#); [UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, 5/8/2001](#)] Al Ridi will later say that at some time after the flight he heard the men had gone to Somalia to stir up tribal leaders against American peacekeeping forces. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 6/3/2002](#)]

Surveillance - Bin Laden and his associates are under surveillance in Sudan at this time, by the CIA and Egyptian intelligence (see [February 1991- July 1992](#) and [Early 1990s](#)), and the plane used to make the trip to Nairobi is well-known at Khartoum airport and is associated with bin Laden (see [\(1994-1995\)](#)), so the CIA and Egyptians may learn of this trip. However, what action they take, if any, is not known. [[UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, 1/14/2001](#); [UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, 5/8/2001](#)] In addition, Sudanese intelligence will later say that only a handful of al-Qaeda operatives travel to Somalia at this time, although it is not known when and how the Sudanese obtain this information. [[WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 188](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Mohammed Atef](#), [Essam al Ridi](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



October 14, 1993: Haitian Minister Killed; CIA Informer Implicated in Slaying



Haitian Justice Minister Guy Malary and his bodyguard are killed in an ambush. According to a CIA memorandum, dated October 28, 1993, which will later be obtained by the Center for Constitutional Rights, “FRAPH members Jodel Chamblain, Emmanuel Constant, and Gabriel Douzable met with an unidentified military officer on the morning of 14 October to discuss plans to kill Malary.” According to the Center, “Constant at the time was a paid CIA informant, earning \$500 a month.” [[CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS, 2/18/2004](#); [HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, 2/27/2004](#)]

Entity Tags: [Emmanuel “Toto” Constant](#), [Louis-Jodel Chamblain](#)

Timeline Tags: [Haiti Coup](#)



October 20, 1993: Future Oklahoma City Bomber Writes Letter to Sister Expressing Wish to 'Tell It All' Regarding 'Anti-Gov't Attitude'



Future Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh (see November 1991 - Summer 1992, [May-September 1993](#), [October 12, 1993 - January 1994](#) and [8:35 a.m. - 9:02 a.m. April 19, 1995](#)) writes a letter to his younger sister Jennifer that outlines his difficulties in not being able to “tell it all.” McVeigh writes that he is talking about his “‘lawless’ behavior and anti-gov’t attitude,” but does not elaborate. He tells his sister that at one point he went to their grandfather’s house and considered committing suicide there. “I have an urgent need for someone in the family to understand me,” he writes. “I will tell you, and only you.” McVeigh also gives a very different reason for his decision to quit during the first few days of Special Forces tryouts (see [January - March 1991 and After](#)). Instead of the reason he publicly states—he could not meet the physical requirements—he says he actually dropped out because he and nine other soldiers were taken to a private intelligence briefing at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where the training took place. In that briefing, he writes, they were told they could be required to take part in government-sanctioned assassinations and drug trafficking operations. Referring to himself, he writes: “Why would Tim, (characteristically non-drinker), super-successful in the Army (Private to Sergeant in 2 yrs.) (Top Gun) (Bronze Star) (accepted into Special Forces), all of a sudden come home, party HARD, and, just like that, announce he was not only ‘disillusioned’ by SF, but was, in fact, leaving the service?” The answer, he writes, is because as a Green Beret, he says he was told, he and the others might be ordered to help the CIA “fly drugs into the U.S. to fund many covert operations” and to “work hand-in-hand with civilian police agencies” as “government-paid assassins.” He adds, “Do not spread this info, Jennifer, as you could (very honestly, seriously) endanger my life.” The New York Times will later note that government spokespersons have always denied these kinds of allegations. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 7/1/1998](#); [NEW YORK TIMES, 7/1/1998](#)]

Entity Tags: [US Department of the Army](#), [Jennifer McVeigh](#), [Timothy James McVeigh](#), [New York Times](#)

Timeline Tags: [US Domestic Terrorism](#)



November 1993: Iraqi Exile Plans to Overthrow Hussein, with Approval of Clinton Administration



Iraqi exile Ahmed Chalabi (see [1992-1996](#)) approaches the Clinton administration with a plan to overthrow Saddam Hussein. Defense Intelligence Agency agent Patrick Lang will later recall

that the plan, dubbed “End Game,” starts with a revolt by Iraq’s Kurdish and Shi’a insurgents that will, theoretically, trigger an insurrection by Iraqi military commanders. The military will replace Hussein with a regime friendly to both Israel and the US. Clinton officials give the plan tentative approval, though as Lang will later write: “The plan was based on a belief that Iraq was ripe for revolt and that there were no units in the armed forces that would fight to preserve Saddam’s government. Since the same units had fought to keep Saddam in power during the Kurdish and Shi’a revolts of a few years before, it is difficult to see why the sponsors of End Game would have thought that.” Meanwhile, Saddam Hussein learns of the plan and prepares his own response. When Chalabi puts the plan into action, the Iraqi military, instead of revolting against Hussein, kills over 100 INC-backed insurgents (see [March 1995](#)). After the debacle, neither the CIA nor the White House will have anything more than superficial contact with Chalabi until 2001. [[MIDDLE EAST POLICY COUNCIL, 6/2004](#); [UNGER, 2007, PP. 126](#)]

Entity Tags: [Saddam Hussein](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Clinton administration](#), [Patrick Lang](#), [Ahmed Chalabi](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



Mid-1990s: CIA Sets Up Fronts to Penetrate Nuclear Smuggling Ring Using Unconventional Tactics



The CIA sets up a number of front companies with the intention of penetrating the nuclear proliferation ring founded by Pakistani scientist A. Q. Khan. One of the companies is Brewster Jennings & Associates (see [Before May 22, 1994](#)), which will be used as cover by Valerie Plame Wilson, a CIA officer outed in 2003. The precise way in which the CIA attempts to penetrate the network is not known. [[SUNDAY TIMES \(LONDON\), 1/27/2008](#)] Former CIA Director George Tenet will hint at the methods used in a 2007 book: “The small unit working this effort recognized that it would be impossible to penetrate proliferation networks using conventional intelligence gathering tactics. Security considerations do not permit me to describe the techniques we used. Patiently, we put ourselves in a position to come in contact with individuals and organizations that we believed were part of the overall proliferation problem.” [[TENET, 2007, PP. 283](#)]

Entity Tags: [Valerie Plame Wilson](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Brewster Jennings & Associates](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Abdul Qadeer Khan](#)

Timeline Tags: [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#), [Niger Uranium and Plame Outing](#)



January 24, 1994: CIA Concludes It Is ‘Partly Culpable’ for WTC Bombing



The Boston Herald reports that an internal CIA report has concluded that the agency is “partially culpable” for the 1993 World Trade Center bombing (see [February 26, 1993](#)) because it helped train and support some of the bombers. One source with knowledge of the report says, “It was determined that a significant amount of blowback appeared to have occurred.” A US intelligence source claims the CIA gave at least \$1 billion to forces in Afghanistan connected to Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. More than a half-dozen of the WTC bombers belonged to this faction, and some of the CIA money paid for their training. The source says, “By giving these people the funding that we did, a situation was created in which it could be safely argued that we bombed the World Trade Center.” Those connected to the bombing who went to Afghanistan include Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, Clement Rodney Hampton-el, Siddig Siddig Ali, Ahmed Ajaj, and Mahmud Abouhalima. [BOSTON HERALD, 1/24/1994] Additionally, Ramzi Yousef trained in Afghanistan near the end of the Afghan war, and there are claims he was recruited by the CIA (see [Late 1980s](#)). “Intelligence sources say the CIA used the Al-Kifah Refugee Center in Brooklyn—founded to support the Afghani rebels fighting Soviet occupation—to funnel aid to Hekmatyar, setting the stage for terrorists here to acquire the money, guns and training needed to later attack the Trade Center. CIA support also made it easier for alleged terrorist leaders to enter the country.” [BOSTON HERALD, 1/24/1994] It will later be alleged that the CIA repeatedly blocked investigations relating to Al-Kifah, which was al-Qaeda’s operational base in the US (see [Late 1980s and After](#)).

Entity Tags: [Siddig Siddig Ali](#), [Ramzi Yousef](#), [Omar Abdul-Rahman](#), [Clement Rodney Hampton-El](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Al-Kifah Refugee Center](#), [Mahmud Abouhalima](#), [Ahmad Ajaj](#), [Gulbuddin Hekmatyar](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



February 1994-Late 1995: US Spy Planes and Predator Drone Help Croats and Muslims Fight Serbs in Bosnia



The US begins flying spy planes over Serbia and Bosnia. In March 1994, the CIA begins flying Gnat-750 drone aircraft from Glader, a remote Albanian air force base in north-central Albania. [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 5/7/1994] In December 1994, the CIA begins flying more drone aircraft from the Croatian island of Brac. [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 2/3/1995] In July 1995, the US begins using the Predator remote spy drone over Bosnia, from the Glader base. [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 7/21/1995] Such surveillance information is allegedly shared with Croat and Muslim forces, allowing them to bypass Serb defensive positions in battle. The US officially denies the existence of all these flights since the US is supposed to be neutral in the war. [OBSERVER, 11/5/1995]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [US Military](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



February 4-5, 1994 and Shortly Afterwards: Bin Laden Almost Assassinated; Ali Mohamed Trains His Bodyguards



On February 4, 1994, a Libyan named Mohammed Abdullah al-Khulayfi attempts to assassinate Osama bin Laden in Sudan. He and two associates steal automatic weapons from two police stations in Sudan, killing two policemen in the process. Then they fire on worshippers at the mosque bin Laden usually attends, killing 16 and wounding 20 others, but bin Laden is not there. The next day, they shoot at police and one of bin Laden's offices. That afternoon, the three men go to bin Laden's house and fire on it. Bin Laden is there, but not in his usual spot which the attackers are targeting. Some of bin Laden's guests and guards are shot, but none of them dies. Al-Khulayfi is shot and captured by Sudanese police, while his two associates are killed. The three men belonged to a rival Islamist group who apparently believed bin Laden was not fanatical enough. Bin Laden later tells a friend that he believes Egyptian intelligence was behind the attack. The CIA suspect Saudi intelligence was responsible. Within days of the attack, double agent Ali Mohamed flies from California to Sudan and begins training bin Laden's bodyguards to better protect him. Mohamed also leads an investigation into al-Khulayfi's past and learns that he had fought with bin Laden and the mujaheddin in Afghanistan in the 1980s. [[GUNARATNA, 2003, PP. 45-46](#); [WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 192-193](#)]

Entity Tags: [Osama bin Laden](#), [Ali Mohamed](#), [Mohammed Abdullah al-Khulayfi](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



April 1994: CIA Suspects US Ambassador May Be Involved in Arms Smuggling



US ambassador Peter Galbraith speaks with Iman Sefko Omerbasic, the religious leader of the small Muslim community in Zagreb, Croatia. Sefko later informs the Iranian ambassador that American diplomats want him to purchase arms for the Bosnian army. The CIA keeps tabs on Galbraith, concerned that he might be engaged in a secret operation. [[WIEBES, 2003, PP. 166](#)] The CIA fears that another Iran-Contra scandal is brewing. [[APF REPORTER, 1997](#)]

Entity Tags: [Iman Sefko Omerbasic](#), [Peter Galbraith](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)

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Shortly After April 9, 1994: Bin Laden Family Publicly Disowns Osama



Salem bin Laden, left, and Bakr bin Laden, right.

Salem is killed in a plane crash in 1988. [Source: Public domain via Steve Coll] Shortly after the Saudi government publicly disowns bin Laden (while privately continuing to support him) (see [April 9, 1994](#)), the bin Laden family follows suits and publicly disowns him as well. Bakr bin Laden, the chairman of the Saudi Binladin Group, the main bin Laden family company, signs a two-sentence statement. Osama bin Laden has 25 brothers, 29 sisters, and more in-laws, aunts, uncles, and so forth. Der Spiegel will later report that in the years bin Laden lives in Sudan, Saudi intelligence minister “Prince Turki [al-Faisal] sent Osama’s mother, Hamida, and his brother Bakr to the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, several times to convince Osama to abandon his terrorist activities. The visits were so frequent that Israel’s intelligence agency, the Mossad, believed at the time that Osama was a Saudi spy.” Vincent Cannistraro, former head of the CIA’s Counter Terrorism Center, will say, “I tracked the bin Ladens for years. Many family members claimed that Osama was no longer one of them. It’s an easy thing to say, but blood is usually thicker than water.” Michael Scheuer, former head of the CIA unit specializing in hunting bin Laden, doubts that the entire bin Laden family has severed ties with Osama. In a 2005 interview he will say, “I haven’t seen anything in the last 10 years that’s convinced me that would be the case.” [DER SPIEGEL (HAMBURG), 6/6/2005; DER SPIEGEL (HAMBURG), 6/6/2005]

Entity Tags: [Vincent Cannistraro](#), [Turki al-Faisal](#), [Michael Scheuer](#), [Bakr Mohammed bin Laden](#), [Bin Laden Family](#), [Hamida al-Attas](#), [Israel Institute for Intelligence and Special Tasks \(Mossad\)](#), [Osama bin Laden](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)

EVENTS

Page 4 of 19 (1807 events (use filters to narrow search))

[previous](#) | [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#), [12](#), [13](#), [14](#), [15](#), [16](#), [17](#), [18](#), [19](#) | [next](#)

April 27, 1994: US Gives Bosnians Green Light To Smuggle Arms



Peter Galbraith. [Source: CBC] US President Bill Clinton and National Security Adviser Anthony Lake decide that they will give the Bosnians a “green light” for the arms supply pipeline from Iran to Croatia. The CIA is not consulted. Lake passes the word on to US ambassador to Croatia Peter Galbraith by “cleverly” telling him that they have “no instructions” for him with regard to the Iranian arms shipments. [WIEBES, 2003, PP. 167- 168] Two days later, Galbraith passes the “no instructions” message on to Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, making it clear that the US government is giving him a green light for Croatia to conduct arms deals with Iran. [APF REPORTER, 1997]

Entity Tags: [Anthony Lake](#), [Franjo Tudjman](#), [Military Professional Resources Inc.](#), [William Jefferson \(“Bill”\) Clinton](#), [Peter Galbraith](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



May 21-July 7, 1994: North Yemen, Backed by US and Bin Laden, Wins Yemen Civil War



The southern part of Yemen attempts to cede from the rest of the country, but loses the ensuing war and north Yemeni forces take the south’s capital, Aden, reuniting the country. Yemen first united in 1990, but tensions between the two former independent halves of the

country resulted in the civil war. As the south is regarded as communist, the north is backed by both the US and Osama bin Laden. [GUARDIAN, 5/6/1994; COUNTERPUNCH, 5/20/2002; WALL STREET JOURNAL, 12/20/2002; TERRORISM MONITOR, 4/8/2004] The New York Times will say that the north Yemeni president uses “large numbers of Arab Afghans formed into Islamic terrorist units as his shock troops.” [NEW YORK TIMES, 11/26/2000] CIA officer Michael Scheuer will comment, “In 1993 and 1994, bin Laden sent al-Qaeda fighters from Pakistan to Afghanistan—via Sudan—to fight the Yemeni Communists in the civil war that yielded a reunified Yemen.” [SCHEUER, 2006, PP. 151] According to Western intelligence, before the war Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, a brother of north Yemen’s President Ali Abdallah Saleh, received US\$ 20 million from bin Laden to help settle Arab Afghan fighters in the country. When war breaks out, as military commander he deploys these fighters in the war’s final battle for the south’s capital of Aden. Despite its socialist tendencies, the south is backed by Saudi Arabia, as it thinks a divided Yemen is less of a threat to it. [COUNTERPUNCH, 5/20/2002; WALL STREET JOURNAL, 12/20/2002; TERRORISM MONITOR, 4/8/2004] Veteran Middle Eastern journalist Brian Whittaker will comment, “The Saudis invested hugely in the war on behalf of the South, and the outcome is a defeat for them as much as anyone.” [MIDDLE EAST INTERNATIONAL, 7/22/1994] After the war, the government will allow the radical fighters to settle in Yemen and use it as a base (see [After July 1994](#)).

Entity Tags: [Yemen](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), [Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar](#), [United States](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Before May 22, 1994: CIA Front Company Brewster Jennings Established



The company Brewster Jennings & Associates is established by this time at the latest, as it is registered with Dunn & Bradstreet on this day. [BOSTON GLOBE, 10/10/2003] It is one of a number of CIA front companies apparently attempting to penetrate the nuclear technology smuggling ring associated with Pakistani scientist A. Q. Khan (see [Mid-1990s](#)). It is based in Boston and consists of little more than a name, a telephone number, and a post office box address. Brewster Jennings will later become famous when Valerie Plame Wilson, one of the operatives that used it as cover, is outed in the press as a CIA officer. [SUNDAY TIMES (LONDON), 1/27/2008] Dunn & Bradstreet records say it is a “legal services office” with annual sales of \$60,000, one employee, and a chief executive identified as “Victor Brewster, Partner.” However, later investigation suggests there is no such person as Victor Brewster. [BOSTON GLOBE, 10/10/2003]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Brewster Jennings & Associates](#)

Timeline Tags: [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#), [Niger Uranium and Plame Outing](#)



June 24, 1994: Pentagon Report Predicts New Age of Religiously Inspired ‘Superterrorism’



Peter Probst. [Source: Publicity photo]

The Pentagon privately publishes a report called *Terror 2000*. It is designed to help US intelligence prepare for new terrorism threats. Peter Probst in the Pentagon's Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict supervises the report. The panel consults with 40 experts, including a top Russian intelligence official and a senior Israeli intelligence official. The report concludes that the world is witnessing the dawn of a new age of "superterrorism." It predicts chemical and biological attacks and says that terrorists will soon try to conduct simultaneous bombings and attacks. [REEVE, 1999, PP. 259-260] Also, in contrast to the state-sponsored terrorism familiar to most Americans at the time, the report says tomorrow's "most dangerous" terrorists would be "motivated not by political ideology but by fierce ethnic and religious hatreds.... Their goal will not be political control but utter destruction of their chosen enemies." [WASHINGTON POST, 10/2/2001] The report further states: "We appear to be entering an era in which few, if any, restraints will remain.... Unlike politically motivated terrorists, [religiously motivated terrorists] do not shrink from mass murder.... Mass casualties are not to be shunned... but sought because they demonstrate to unbelievers the cataclysmic nature of divine retribution." [UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL, 5/17/2002] It also postulates the use of planes as weapons, but this is not put in the report, partly for fear of giving potential terrorists ideas (see 1993-1994). The study is presented to officials in Congress, FEMA, the CIA, FBI, NSA, DIA, Justice Department, State Department, and senior executives from the telecommunications, banking and computer industries. State Department officials consider publicly releasing the report but ultimately decide not to. "That was a mistake," Probst will later say. [WASHINGTON POST, 10/2/2001; UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL, 5/17/2002] Marvin Cetron, an expert who wrote the report, will later say, "Some of the people thought it was right on—but most of them thought it was too far out." [REEVE, 1999, PP. 259-260]

Entity Tags: [US Department of Defense](#), [Peter Probst](#), [Marvin Cetron](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Early September 1994: US Military Begins Advising and Assisting Bosnian Muslim Army



Brigadier Gen. Michael Hayden (left, with glasses), US Marine Corps Gen. David Mize (front and center), and US Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Edward Hanlon Jr. (behind Mize) in Gornji Vakuf, Bosnia, on September 4, 1994. [Source: Paul Harris] (click image to enlarge) US ambassador Charles Thomas; Assistant Secretary of State for Europe Richard Holbrooke, his deputy Robert Frasure, head of intelligence for US European Command Brigadier Gen. Michael Hayden, US Air Force Gen. Charles Boyd, US Marine Corps Gen. David Mize, and US Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Edward Hanlon Jr., meet with the Muslim Bosnian army commander for Central Bosnia, Mehmet Alagic, in the town of Gornji Vakuf. The US group also visits Mostar, which is also controlled by the Bosnian Muslims. The Pentagon claims the US diplomats are there to familiarize themselves with the situation on the ground and the generals “just happened to be along,” but in appears in fact these meetings are part of a US effort to help the Croats and Muslims work together in upcoming offensives. Following this visit, US “logistics advisers” move into key locations throughout Bosnia, including the UN-controlled Tuzla airport. US Special Forces help build a secret airstrip in Visoko, central Bosnia, to land heavy transport aircraft (see [Late 1994-Late 1995](#)), and mysterious flights begin arriving at the Tuzla airports a few months later (see [February-March 1995](#)). [OBSERVER, 11/20/1994; SCOTSMAN, 12/3/1995] Hayden will later become head of the NSA and then head of the CIA.

Entity Tags: [David Mize](#), [Edward Hanlon Jr.](#), [Robert Frasure](#), [Michael Hayden](#), [Charles Boyd](#), [Charles Thomas](#), [Richard Holbrooke](#), [Mehmet Alagic](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



[September 11, 1994: Suicidal Man Attempts to Crash Small Airplane into White House](#)





Frank Corder piloted this Cessna, which crashed into the White House lawn and skidded up to the side of the building. [Source: Getty Images] A suicidal and apparently apolitical pilot named Frank Corder steals a single-engine plane from an airport north of Baltimore, Maryland, and attempts to crash it into the White House. He crashes into a wall two stories below the presidential bedroom (President Clinton is not there at the time). Corder is killed on impact. [TIME, 9/26/1994; NEW YORK TIMES, 10/3/2001] A Time magazine story shortly after the incident notes, “The unlikely incident confirmed all too publicly what security officials have long feared in private: the White House is vulnerable to sneak attack from the air. ‘For years I have thought a terrorist suicide pilot could readily divert his flight from an approach to Washington to blow up the White House,’ said Richard Helms, CIA director from 1966 to 1972.” The article further notes that an attack of this type had been a concern since 1974, when a disgruntled US Army private staged an unauthorized helicopter landing on the South Lawn. Special communications lines were established between the Secret Service and Washington’s National Airport control tower to the Secret Service operations center, but the line is ineffective in this case because no flight controller pays attention to the flight in time. [TIME, 9/26/1994]

Entity Tags: [Richard Helms](#), [Frank Corder](#), [US Secret Service](#), [William Jefferson \(“Bill”\) Clinton](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



September 19, 1994-October 15, 1994: Aristide Restored as President of Haiti by US and UN



US and UN military forces enter Haiti and restore Jean-Bertrand Aristide to the presidency. [TURCK, 2/24/2004] US conservatives, such as Senator Jesse Helms, are against the intervention and criticize President Bill Clinton for engaging in unnecessary “nation building” in Haiti. Helms falsely makes the claim on the Senate floor that Aristide is “psychotic,” based on a CIA document later revealed to be a forgery. [NEWSDAY, 3/1/2004; TAIPEI TIMES, 3/1/2004; OBSERVER, 3/2/2004]

Entity Tags: [Jesse Helms](#), [William Jefferson \(“Bill”\) Clinton](#), [Jean-Bertrand Aristide](#)

Timeline Tags: [Haiti Coup](#), [US-Haiti \(1804-2005\)](#)



September 22-27, 1994: Bin Laden's Brother-in-Law Khalifa Works with Radical Militant Groups



Mohammed Jamal Khalifa, bin Laden's brother-in-law, is in the Netherlands at this time. He meets with representatives of:

- The Muwafaq Foundation, a Saudi funded charity operating from the town of Breda, Netherlands.
- The Egyptian militant group Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (the Islamic Group), led by Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman.
- The Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), an outlawed Islamist political party in Algeria.

What happens in Khalifa's meetings is unknown, but the next month he opens a branch of the Muwafaq Foundation in the Philippines. [GUNARATNA, 2003, PP. 168, 194, 342] Saudi multimillionaire Yassin al-Qadi is believed to be the chief funder of Muwafaq; the US will pronounce him a terrorist financier shortly after 9/11 (see [October 12, 2001](#)). The US will later claim Muwafaq funded the Abu Sayyaf militant group in the Philippines (see [1995-1998](#)). A secret 1996 CIA report will claim that Muwafaq has ties to Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya and helps fund mujaheddin fighting in Bosnia (see [1991-1995](#)) and at least one training camp in Afghanistan (see [January 1996](#)).

Entity Tags: [Mohammed Jamal Khalifa](#), [Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya](#), [Islamic Salvation Front](#), [Muwafaq Foundation](#), [Yassin al-Qadi](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



October 1994: CIA and ISI Allegedly Give Help and Secret Cache of Weapons to Taliban



The CIA supposedly backs the Taliban around the same time the Pakistani ISI starts strongly backing them (see [Spring-Autumn 1994](#) and [1994-1997](#)). According to a senior Pakistani intelligence source interviewed by British journalist Simon Reeves, the CIA provides Pakistan satellite information giving the secret locations of scores of Soviet trucks that contain vast amounts of arms and ammunition. The trucks were hidden in caves at the end of the Afghan war. Pakistan then gives this information to the Taliban. "The astonishing speed with which the Taliban conquered Afghanistan is explained by the tens of thousands of weapons found in these trucks...." [REEVE, 1999, PP. 191] Journalist Steve Coll will later similarly note that at this

time, the Taliban gain access to “an enormous ISI-supplied weapons dump” in caves near the border town of Spin Boldak. It has enough weapons left over from the Soviet-Afghan war to supply tens of thousands of soldiers. [COLL, 2004, PP. 291] Another account will point out that by early 1995, the Taliban was equipped with armored tanks, ten combat airplanes, and other heavy weapons. They are thus able to conquer about a third of the country by February 1995. “According to the files at one European intelligence agency, these military advances can be explained mainly by ‘strong military training, not only by the Pakistani services, but also by American military advisers working under humanitarian cover.’” Later in 1995, a Turkish newsweekly will claim to have learned from a classified report given to the Turkish government that the CIA, ISI, and Saudi Arabia were all collaborating to build up the Taliban so they could quickly unite Afghanistan. [LABEVIERE, 1999, PP. 262-263]

Entity Tags: [Taliban](#), [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



December 1, 1994: CIA Helps Bin Laden’s Brother-in-Law Come to US after Being Forced Out of Philippines



A suspected terrorism financier enters the US with apparent CIA help. Philippines investigators had begun monitoring and investigating Mohammed Jamal Khalifa, bin Laden’s brother-in-law, earlier in 1994 (see [1994](#)). [RESSA, 2003] According to a 1999 book by Richard Labeviere, near the conclusion of this investigation, the Philippine government expedites an order expelling Khalifa from the country. Khalifa gets a visa to the US through the US consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, with the help of the CIA. The CIA had a history of using that consulate to give US visas to radical Muslim militants dating back to the 1980s (see [September 1987-March 1989](#)). [LABEVIERE, 1999, PP. 365; TIME, 10/27/2003] Another account claims his visa “was issued, despite his notoriety, because of a computer error.” When he applied for the visa in August 1994, the address he gave was that of the bin Laden family company. [US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT, 5/15/1995] He enters the US on December 1. The report detailing his terrorist connections is released on December 15 (see [December 15, 1994](#)). The next day, Khalifa is arrested in the US (see [December 16, 1994-May 1995](#)). [US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT, 5/15/1995]

Entity Tags: [Saudi Binladin Group](#), [Rodolfo Mendoza](#), [Mohammed Jamal Khalifa](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Abu Sayyaf](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



December 16, 1994-May 1995: Osama’s Brother-in-Law Khalifa Is Arrested in US



Mohammed Jamal Khalifa. [Source: CBS News]

Mohammed Jamal Khalifa, a brother-in-law to bin Laden, is arrested in the US. He is held for visa fraud, but he is believed to be a major terrorist. His arrest takes place at a Holiday Inn in Morgan Hill, California. [SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, 10/24/2001] That is only about 20 miles from Santa Clara, where double agent Ali Mohamed is running an al-Qaeda cell (see [1987-1998](#)). Counterterrorism expert Steven Emerson will later say of Khalifa and Mohamed, “It seems to me that they were probably in contact. I’m basing that only intuitively on the fact that they were in the same area, they were close to bin Laden, and they would’ve had an incentive to stay together.” [LANCE, 2006, PP. 167] According to one account, Khalifa is arrested on behalf of the government of Jordan, because he is on trial there. [SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, 10/24/2001] Another account claims that Philippine authorities “tipped off Federal authorities on Khalifa’s movements.” [FILIPINO REPORTER, 4/27/1995] He is traveling on a Saudi passport. He’d flown into the US from London on December 1 and has papers indicating he would be heading back to the Philippines. [LANCE, 2006, PP. 158-159] It has been claimed that the CIA helped him get his US visa (see [December 1, 1994](#)). There are many reasons for US authorities to suspect Khalifa is a major terrorist figure:

- He is arrested with Mohammed Loay Bayazid, one of the dozen or so original members of al-Qaeda. Bayazid had attempted to purchase nuclear material for bin Laden the year before (see [December 16, 1994](#)).
- Philippine investigators had recently completed a secret report on terrorist funding. The report focuses on Khalifa, and says his activities in the Philippines strongly link with Muslim extremist movements in Iraq, Jordan, Turkey, Russia, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates, Romania, Lebanon, Syria, Pakistan, Albania, the Netherlands, and Morocco. It calls a charity which Khalifa runs a “pipeline through which funding for the local extremists is being coursed.” Perhaps not coincidentally, the report was released just one day before Khalifa’s arrest in the US (see [December 15, 1994](#)).
- His possessions, which are quickly examined and translated, include a handwritten manual in Arabic detailing how to set up a terrorist curriculum at a school in the Philippines, giving lessons in bomb-making and assassination. [SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, 10/24/2001]

- Khalifa's business card was discovered in a search of the New York City residence of Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman in 1993 (see [August 1993](#)).
- He is an unindicted coconspirator in the "Landmarks" bombings plot, which would have killed thousands in New York City. The trial is getting underway at this time. Abdul-Rahman will be convicted and sentenced to over 300 years in prison (see [June 24, 1993](#)).
- A State Department cable from days after his arrest states Khalifa is a "known financier of terrorist operations and an officer of an Islamic NGO in the Philippines that is a known Hamas front."
- An alias is found in his personal organizer that was also used in a bomb-making manual brought into the US by Ahmad Ajaj, Ramzi Yousef's travel partner, when the two of them came to the US to implement the 1993 World Trade Center bombing (see [September 1, 1992](#)).
- Bojinka plotter Wali Khan Amin Shah's phone number is found in Khalifa's possessions. The Bojinka plot, if successful, also would have killed thousands (see [January 6, 1995](#)). [[LANCE, 2006, PP. 158-159](#)]
- A number in Pakistan that Ramzi Yousef had used to call the Philippines is found as well. Author Peter Lance will later note that such numbers "should have led the FBI directly to Ramzi Yousef, the world's most wanted man" at the time. [[LANCE, 2006, PP. 160](#)]
However, despite this wealth of highly incriminating material, within weeks of his arrest the US will decide to deport him to Jordan (see [January 5, 1995](#)). Over the next four months, even more of his links to terrorist activity will be discovered (see [Late December 1994-April 1995](#)). But Khalifa will be deported anyway (see [April 26-May 3, 1995](#)), and then soon freed in Jordan (see [July 19, 1995](#)).

Entity Tags: [Ramzi Yousef](#), [Steven Emerson](#), [US Department of State](#), [Wali Khan Amin Shah](#), [Philippines](#), [Ahmad Ajaj](#), [Peter Lance](#), [Mohammed Loay Bayazid](#), [Ali Mohamed](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Mohammed Jamal Khalifa](#), [Jordan](#), [Omar Abdul-Rahman](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



[Late December 1994-April 1995: Evidence against Bin Laden's Brother-in-Law Continues to Grow](#)



Bin Laden's brother-in-law Mohammed Jamal Khalifa was arrested in the US in mid-December 1994 (see [December 16, 1994-May 1995](#)), and as he is held the evidence tying him to terrorism continues to grow:

- One week after his arrest, the State Department tells the immigration judge handling Khalifa's case that he had "engaged in serious terrorist offenses" and that his release "would endanger US national security." [[LANCE, 2006, PP. 158-159](#)]

■ In early January, police in the Philippines uncover the Bojinka plot, involving associates of Khalifa. A Philippine investigator makes a chart connecting the Bojinka figures and places Khalifa in the middle of it (see [Spring 1995](#)). The plot, if successful, would have killed thousands while also assassinating the Pope (see [January 6, 1995](#)). Meanwhile, The FBI translates literature in Khalifa's luggage advocating training in assassination, explosives, and weapons, including discussions of the "wisdom of bombing churches and murdering Catholic priests." [[NEW YORK TIMES, 5/2/2002](#); [LANCE, 2003, PP. 233-35](#)]

■ Phone numbers to Khalifa's Philippine charity fronts are found on bomber Ramzi Yousef's laptop seized in early January 1995 as the Bojinka plot is exposed. Khalifa's business card is found in the apartment Yousef was staying in as well. [[LANCE, 2006, PP. 158-159, 203](#)]

■ Bojinka plotter Wali Khan Amin Shah is arrested in early January 1995. He is found with multiple phone numbers for Khalifa. [[STEPHEN HANDELMAN, 7/31/1996](#); [LANCE, 2006, PP. 158-159](#)]

■ When Yousef is arrested in February 1995 (see [February 7, 1995](#)), he will be asked about Khalifa's business card found in his apartment. According to an FBI report issued at the time, Yousef claims that he did not personally know Khalifa, but had been given the card by fellow Bojinka plotter Wali Khan Amin Shah as a contact in case he needed help. He also says that he is aware that Khalifa is a relative of Osama bin Laden. [[LANCE, 2006, PP. 203](#)]

■ In February and March, Philippine interrogation of one Bojinka plotter uncovers a planned second wave of attacks that would involve flying airplanes into US buildings, including the World Trade Center, CIA headquarters, and the Pentagon (see [February-Early May 1995](#)). This will eventually evolve into the 9/11 attacks. US investigators are notified about this sometime in the spring of 1995 (see [Spring 1995](#)).

■ On April 1, Philippine authorities arrest six men and announce they are connected to Khalifa and Bojinka plotters such as Ramzi Yousef (see [April 1, 1995-Early 1996](#)). The Philippine Interior Secretary calls Khalifa a key figure in Islamic extremist efforts. [[ASSOCIATED PRESS, 4/16/1995](#)]

■ The Associated Press reports that Khalifa is believed to be "a key figure in efforts to recruit new members of the Abu Sayyaf group." On April 4, the Abu Sayyaf raid a Christian town called Ipil and kill over fifty people in what is the group's largest and most brutal terrorist attack (see [April 4, 1995](#)). This increases the importance of Khalifa's ties with them.

[[ASSOCIATED PRESS, 4/16/1995](#)]

■ Khalifa is accused by Yemen, Egypt, and Algeria of financing subversion in those countries.

[[ASSOCIATED PRESS, 4/16/1995](#)]

Despite all this evidence, Khalifa will soon be deported to Jordan for retrial there (see [May 3, 1995-August 31, 1995](#)), even though the key witness against him has already recanted. He will be found innocent and set free (see [July 19, 1995](#)).

Entity Tags: [Mohammed Jamal Khalifa](#), [Abu Sayyaf](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [US Department of State](#), [Wali Khan Amin Shah](#), [Philippines](#), [Mohammed Loay Bayazid](#), [Ramzi Yousef](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



January 1995 and After: Alleged CIA Agent Ships Weapons to Hussein's Forces



CIA agent Richard Hirschfeld sends large amounts of weapons to Iraqi government officials, apparently at the behest of his CIA superiors. Hirschfeld, already a convicted criminal, is facing federal charges of wire fraud, arms peddling, drug running, and more. While he is trying to prove that everything he did was authorized by the CIA, he also works to leave the impression that he is a man of money and influence. He drives around Richmond and Norfolk, Virginia, and Fort Lauderdale, Florida, his bases of operations, in a yellow Rolls-Royce, spends a lot of time on the phone with Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT), and tells people he is boxer Muhammad Ali's lawyer. Hirschfeld has been exchanging Colombian cocaine and marijuana for arms in Panama—Soviet-made small arms, automatic weapons, and hand grenades captured by Israel in the 1967 and 1973 wars with Syria and cached since then. According to investigative reporter Nat Bynum: “the drugs went to the US and the bills of lading said the arms were going to General [Augusto] Pinochet in Chile, but they weren't. A guy from Chile was shipping them straight to Iraq, to Saddam Hussein's army.... Richard said he'd done it all for the CIA.” It is unclear whether Hirschfeld is telling the truth about working under CIA orders with the arms shipments. [[KOLB, 2007, PP. 163](#)]

Entity Tags: [Saddam Hussein](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Nat Bynum](#), [Orrin Hatch](#), [Richard Hirschfeld](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#), [US International Relations](#)



January 20, 1995: First Hints of Bojinka Second Wave Revealed





Abdul Hakim Murad. [Source: Justice Department] Philippine and US investigators learn that Ramzi Yousef, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, and their fellow plotters were actually planning three different attacks when they were foiled in early January. In addition to the planned assassination of the Pope, and the first phase of Operation Bojinka previously discovered, they also planned to crash about a dozen passenger planes into prominent US buildings. It is often mistakenly believed that there is one Bojinka plan to blow up some planes and crash others into buildings, but in fact these different forms of attack are to take place in two separate phases. [LANCE, 2003, PP. 259] Philippine investigator Colonel Rodolfo Mendoza learns about this second phase through the examination of recently captured Bojinka plotter Abdul Hakim Murad. On January 20, Mendoza writes a memo about Murad's latest confession, saying, "With regards to their plan to dive-crash a commercial aircraft at the CIA headquarters, subject alleged that the idea of doing same came out during his casual conversation with [Yousef] and there is no specific plan yet for its execution. What the subject [has] in his mind is that he will board any American commercial aircraft pretending to be an ordinary passenger. Then he will hijack said aircraft, control its cockpit, and dive it at the CIA headquarters. He will use no bomb or explosives. It is simply a suicidal mission that he is very much willing to execute." [INSIGHT, 5/27/2002; LANCE, 2003, PP. 277-78]

Entity Tags: [Abdul Hakim Murad](#), [Operation Bojinka](#), [Rodolfo Mendoza](#), [Khalid Shaikh Mohammed](#), [Ramzi Yousef](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



February-March 1995: Frequent Secret Flights Supplying Arms to Bosnian Muslims





Apparent footage of one of the mysterious Tuzla flights, from a BBC documentary on the subject. [Source: BBC] UN observers and others report that frequent flights entering Bosnia are supplying weapons to the Bosnian Muslims in violation of the UN arms embargo. The flights clearly have the support of the US. [WIEBES, 2003, PP. 177- 198] A UN official who witnesses the flights is physically threatened by three American officers and warned to keep silent. [WIEBES, 2003, PP. 192] Journalists are also pressured and threatened by the US embassy, which is later said to have been acting on instructions from the State Department. [WIEBES, 2003, PP. 192] A subsequent investigation conducted with the support of the Netherlands government will conclude that the operation was conducted by a third party, probably Turkey, with “the assent of parts of the US government.” [WIEBES, 2003, PP. 195-198] Tim Ripley, who covers the military conflicts in Yugoslavia for Jane’s Intelligence Review, blames the Tuzla flights and similar operations on “‘covert warriors’ of the NSC [National Security Council] and State Department.” [RIPLEY, 1999, PP. 93] Prof. Cees Wiebes, who conducts the Netherlands investigation, agrees saying that “the State Department and National Security Council (NSC) were involved, but not the CIA or the DIA.” According to a confidential source, “the operation was... paid for from a Pentagon Special Operations budget, with the complete assent of the White House. Probably the most important members of Congress were informed in the deepest of secrecy, and they were therefore ‘in the loop’ concerning the events.” [WIEBES, 2003, PP. 193] Ripley says that US NATO officers were not involved, but points out that NATO Commander Admiral Leighton Smith was careful to only deny “uniformed” US military involvement. Ripley suggests that American “freelance operatives” were brought in by “senior members of the Clinton Administration.” [RIPLEY, 1999, PP. 62-63] According to Ripley, “Senior US military commanders and CIA officials were just staggered by the ‘duplicity’ and ‘deceit’ at the heart of the Clinton Administration’s policies.” [RIPLEY, 1999, PP. 91]

Entity Tags: [Clinton administration](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [National Security Council](#), [US Department of State](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



[February 3, 1995: Article Exposes Ali Mohamed’s Militant and US Intelligence Connections](#)



A Boston Globe article publicly exposes Ali Mohamed, calling him “a shadowy individual described by defense attorneys as a key figure in the largest terrorism trial in US history.” The trial is the prosecution of Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman and others for the 1993 “Landmarks” bombing plot (see [June 24, 1993](#)). The Globe article notes that Mohamed was in the US Special Forces and connects him to both Abdul-Rahman’s radical militant group and the CIA. A senior US official claims that Mohamed’s “presence in the country is the result of an action initiated by [the CIA].” The article further states, “Senior officials say Mohamed, who is of Egyptian origin, benefited from a little known visa-waiver program that allows the CIA and other security agencies to bring valuable agents into the country, bypassing the usual immigration formalities. Intelligence sources say that waivers are controlled by the CIA’s Department of Operations, the clandestine side of the agency, and have been used ‘sparingly’ in recent years. Waivers are generally used to bring into the country people who have served the agency in sensitive positions overseas. They come here, an intelligence officer said, because they fear for their lives, have been promised asylum in return for cooperation, or need to be debriefed after an operation.” According to the article, “Mohamed dropped out of sight several years ago, and his whereabouts remain unknown.” But in fact, the FBI interviewed him three months earlier and remains aware of his whereabouts (see [December 9, 1994](#)). Mohamed will continue to work with al-Qaeda despite this exposure. [BOSTON GLOBE, 2/3/1995]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Omar Abdul-Rahman](#), [Ali Mohamed](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



February 7, 1995: Ramzi Yousef Is Arrested in Pakistan



Ramzi Yousef apprehended. [Source: Public domain] Ramzi Yousef is arrested in Pakistan, in a safe house owned by bin Laden (see [February 1992-February 7,](#)

1995). At the time, his uncle Khalid Shaikh Mohammed is staying in the same building, and brazenly gives an interview to Time magazine as “Khalid Sheikh,” describing Yousef’s capture. [LANCE, 2003, PP. 328] Yousef had recruited Istaique Parker to implement a limited version of Operation Bojinka, but Parker got cold feet and instead turned in Yousef (see February 3-7, 1995). [LANCE, 2003, PP. 284-85] The New Yorker will later report that the CIA “fought with the FBI over arresting Yousef in Pakistan - the CIA reportedly wanted to continue tracking him - and President Clinton was forced to intervene.” [NEW YORKER, 3/17/1995] Yousef is rendered to the US the next day and makes a partial confession while flying there (see February 8, 1995).

Entity Tags: [Operation Bojinka](#), [Khalid Shaikh Mohammed](#), [Ramzi Yousef](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Istaique Parker](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Clinton administration](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



February 21, 1995: Mysterious US Militant Arrested on Minor Charges, Disappears from View



Abu Ubaidah Yahya, an ex-US marine tied to many of the “Landmarks” bombers, is arrested and charged with gun running. According to charges, Yahya bought at least six assault weapons at a Virginia gun show in November 1992 and then later distributed them to a group of militants he was training a training camp near New Bloomfield, Pennsylvania (see [Late 1992-Early 1993](#)). A number of the “Landmarks” bombers trained there and prosecutors claim the training was part of the overall “Landmarks” conspiracy, but strangely, Yahya is only charged with the gun running and not the training, even though the FBI actually briefly monitored him running the training camp (see [January 16-17, 1993](#)). Yahya, a US citizen who changed his name from Karl Dexter Taylor, runs a martial arts school in Brooklyn. [UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL, 2/21/1995; NEW YORK TIMES, 2/22/1995] Yahya apparently fought in Bosnia for the Bosnian Muslims while the US government was secretly supporting the Bosnian Muslim cause (see [Spring 1993](#)). He was security chief for the Al-Kifah Refugee Center, a charity front linked to both al-Qaeda and the CIA (see [1986-1993](#)). He also transported money for the Third World Relief Agency (TWRA) charity front (see [Early April 1993](#)) while the US government was deliberately turning a blind eye to the actions of the TWRA (see [1993](#)). What happens next to Yahya is unclear. While the Lexis Nexus database reveals a number of articles about his arrest, there are no articles mentioning any subsequent trial or imprisonment.

Entity Tags: [Al-Kifah Refugee Center](#), [Abu Ubaidah Yahya](#), [Third World Relief Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



March 1995: US Slow to Show Interest in Al-Qaeda Training Manual



Belgian investigators find a CD-ROM of a recently published al-Qaeda training manual and begin translating it a few months later. Versions of the manual will later circulate widely amongst radical militants. [\[NEW YORK TIMES, 1/14/2001\]](#) The Arabic manual is called the *Encyclopedia of the Afghan Jihad* and it is over 7,000 pages long. It explains in simple terms how to build bombs, shoot down aircraft, conduct surveillance, and so on. Much of the material is culled from US and British military manuals. [\[GUNARATNA, 2003, PP. 93-94\]](#) A former CIA official will later claim the CIA did not obtain a copy of the manual until the end of 1999. “The truth is, they missed for years the largest terrorist guide ever written.” He blames CIA reluctance to scrutinize its support for the anti-Soviet jihad in the 1980s. [\[NEW YORK TIMES, 1/14/2001\]](#) ABC News, which was first to report on the manual, also claims the CIA did not get a copy until December 1999 from a suspect in Jordan (see [1998-December 11, 1999](#) and [December 11, 1999](#)). [\[ABC NEWS, 9/18/2000\]](#) The CIA, however, claims that the manual is not that important, and that in any case it had copies for years. [\[NEW YORK TIMES, 1/14/2001\]](#) According to another account, the CIA first received a copy from Jordan in 1997. [\[GUNARATNA, 2003, PP. 94\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Al-Qaeda](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



March 9, 1995: CIA Report Claims Serbs Responsible for 90% of War Crimes in Bosnia, but Report Is Later Disputed



On March 9, 1995, it is revealed in the New York Times that a CIA report completed earlier in the year has concluded that 90 percent of the “ethnic cleansing” in Bosnia has been carried out by the Bosnian Serbs and that leading politicians in Bosnian Serbia and possibly Serbia itself almost certainly played a role in these war crimes. One anonymous US official says, “To those who think the parties are equally guilty, this report is pretty devastating. The scale of what the Serbs did is so different.” [\[NEW YORK TIMES, 3/9/1995\]](#) However, three months later, the Telegraph reports that “authoritative diplomatic sources in Europe” believe that pro-Bosnian Muslim factions in Washington, including parts of the CIA, are “blatantly distorting” intelligence summaries to push for US intervention on the Bosnian Muslim side. [\[DAILY TELEGRAPH, 6/2/1995\]](#) Peter Viggers, a senior Conservative British Member of Parliament, claims the report was leaked at a diplomatically important moment to influence policy. Viggers is a member of the British House of Commons Defence Committee and says the report conflicted with the committee’s own experience in visits to Bosnia, where it was clear that ethnic cleansing had been carried out by all sides. [\[DAILY TELEGRAPH, 6/3/1995\]](#) The 1999 documentary “Yugoslavia: the Avoidable War” later shown on the History Channel will claim that the CIA report only looked at areas held by the Bosnian Serbs and that international agencies later

determined that 40 percent of the war refugees were Serbian, suggesting that Serbians were the target of a similar percentage of “ethnic cleansing” war crimes. [GEORGE BOGDANICH, 4/14/2001]

Entity Tags: [Peter Viggers](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



April 1, 1995: Osama’s Bin Laden’s Brother Khaled Said to Be Supporting Him in Financing Militants



Khaled bin Laden. [Source: *Straightegyptians(.com)*]An article in the respected Jane’s Intelligence Review discusses the growing radical Islamist militant movement around the world and says that “Among the financiers is Osama bin Laden and his brother Khaled...” [JANE’S INTELLIGENCE REVIEW, 4/1/1995] Khaled bin Laden is known as a horse breeder in Saudi Arabia. There apparently have been no further mentions of him in the media regarding financing militants.

Entity Tags: [Khaled bin Laden](#), [Osama bin Laden](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



April 16, 1995: Philippine Government and CIA Keep Data on Bojinka Plotters in US and Overseas from the FBI



Newsday reports, “Some crucial computer evidence against notorious terrorist suspect Ramzi Yousef has been destroyed, and the FBI has begun an investigation into whether the CIA is responsible...” After the Bojinka plot was foiled in the Philippines (see [January 6, 1995](#)), a computer hard drive and several floppy discs were discovered in Yousef’s Manila apartment and found to contain a great deal of useful evidence. Pictures and phone numbers recovered

from the hard drive led to the arrest of another Bojinka plotter just days later (see [January 7-11, 1995](#)). The computer files were copied by Philippine authorities and then turned over to the CIA. The CIA then “provided the FBI with a summary of the files, indicating they contained detailed information about Yousef’s coconspirators in the United States and overseas, including their names, addresses and in some cases, even phone numbers.... But when the CIA turned over the actual computer and disks, Justice Department experts determined that at least three separate computer deletion programs had been used to erase some of the data, law-enforcement sources said.” One US law-enforcement official complains, “We had teams of investigators frothing at the mouth to get at Yousef’s network. And we get handed an empty computer. It’s as if we’d been tracking a serial killer and someone intentionally shredded the investigative file.” Officials believe it is not likely the files will ever be recovered. Newsday reports that “The FBI is investigating whether CIA agents or their operatives intentionally destroyed the evidence.” Since Philippine authorities made copies of the files, the FBI has tried to get copies directly from them, but without success. [NEWSDAY, 4/16/1995] A search of the Lexis Nexus database shows no follow up to this story. But only three Bojinka plotters—Ramzi Yousef, Abdul Hakim Murad, and Wali Khan Amin Shah—are arrested in the years before 9/11, and the rest of the network goes free.

Entity Tags: [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Philippines](#), [Ramzi Yousef](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



April 26-May 3, 1995: Bin Laden’s Brother-in-Law Deported from US



An immigration judge approves the deportation of Mohammed Jamal Khalifa, bin Laden’s brother-in-law, saying “his presence in the United States would have potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences.” Khalifa reportedly leaves the US for Jordan on May 3, although there is some evidence he remains in US custody until August (see [May 3, 1995-August 31, 1995](#)). [UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL, 5/5/1995] He will quickly be retried in Jordan, pronounced not guilty of all charges, and set free (see [July 19, 1995](#)). Jacob Boesen, an analyst at the CIA’s Counter Terrorism Center, will later recall, “I remember people at the CIA who were ripsh_t at the time. Not even speaking in retrospect, but contemporaneous with what the intelligence community knew about bin Laden, Khalifa’s deportation was unreal.” [SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, 4/18/1995; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 4/26/1995; NEW YORK TIMES, 5/2/2002; LANCE, 2003, PP. 233-35] Author Peter Lance will later comment, “If this arrest had been properly followed up by the FBI and the Justice Department, it could have led to the seizure of both Ramzi Yousef and his uncle Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, and stopped the 9/11 plot dead in its tracks.” [LANCE, 2006, PP. 158]

Entity Tags: [Mohammed Jamal Khalifa](#), [Jacob Boesen](#), [Peter Lance](#), [Jordan](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Before Summer 1995: CIA Begins Tracking Islamist Militants in Europe



The CIA begins a program to track Islamist militants in Europe. The program is operated by local stations in Europe and CIA manager Michael Scheuer, who will go on to found the agency's bin Laden unit in early 1996 (see [February 1996](#)). The program is primarily focused on militants who oppose the Egyptian government. It traces the support network that supplies money and recruits to them and that organizes their propaganda. US Ambassador to Egypt Edward Walker will later say that the operation involves intercepting telephone calls and opening mail. Suspects are identified in Egypt and in European cities such as Milan (see [1993 and After](#)), Oslo, and London (see [\(Late 1995\)](#)). [GREY, 2007, PP. 125] The intelligence gathered as a part of this operation will be used for the CIA's nascent rendition program (see [Summer 1995](#)).

Entity Tags: [Michael Scheuer](#), [Edward Walker](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Summer 1995: CIA Designs Program to Abduct Islamist Militants and Send them to Egypt



The CIA proposes a policy of abducting Islamic Jihad militants and sending them to Egypt which will soon be approved by President Bill Clinton (see [June 21, 1995](#)). The Clinton administration began a policy of allowing abductions, known as "renditions," in 1993 (see [1993](#)). At first, renditions were rarely used because few countries wanted the suspects. Michael Scheuer, head of the CIA's bin Laden unit, is one of the architects of a 1995 agreement with Egypt to send rendered militants there. He will later recall: "It was begun in desperation.... We were turning into voyeurs. We knew where these people were, but we couldn't capture them because we had nowhere to take them," due to legal and diplomatic complications. The CIA realized that "we had to come up with a third party." Egypt was the obvious choice because the Islamic Jihad is the prime political enemy of the Egyptian government, and many Islamic Jihad militants also work for al-Qaeda, an enemy of the US. [Turning a Blind Eye](#) - However, the Egyptian secret police force, the Mukhabarat, is notorious for its torture of prisoners. As part of the program, the US helps track, capture, and transport suspects to Egypt (see [Before Summer 1995](#)) and then turns a blind eye while the Egyptians torture them. Scheuer claims the US could give the Egyptian interrogators questions they wanted put to the detainees in the morning and get answers by the evening. Because torture is illegal in the US, US officials are never present when the torture is done. Further, the CIA

only abducts suspects who have already been convicted in absentia. Talaat Fouad Qassem is the first known person the CIA renders to Egypt (see [September 13, 1995](#)). But the number of renditions greatly increases in 1998, when the CIA gets a list of Islamic Jihad operatives around the world (see [Late August 1998](#)). These renditions result in a big trial in Egypt in 1999 that effectively destroys Islamic Jihad as a major force in that country (see [1999](#)). [[NEW YORKER, 2/8/2005](#)]

[CIA, NSC, Justice Department Lawyers Consulted](#) - Scheuer will say that lawyers inside and outside the CIA are intensively consulted about the program: “There is a large legal department within the Central Intelligence Agency, and there is a section of the Department of Justice that is involved in legal interpretations for intelligence work, and there is a team of lawyers at the National Security Council, and on all of these things those lawyers are involved in one way or another and have signed off on the procedure. The idea that somehow this is a rogue operation that someone has dreamed up is just absurd.” [[GREY, 2007, PP. 140-141](#)]

[Leadership of Program](#) - The rendition program does not focus solely on al-Qaeda-linked extremists, and other suspected terrorists are also abducted. Scheuer will later tell Congress, “I authored it and then ran and managed it against al-Qaeda leaders and other Sunni Islamists

from August 1995, until June 1999.” [[US CONGRESS, 4/17/2007](#)] A dedicated Renditions Branch will be established at CIA headquarters in 1997 (see [1997](#)), but the relationship between Scheuer and its manager is not known—it is unclear whether this manager is a subordinate, superior, or equal of Scheuer, or whether Scheuer takes on this responsibility as well. After Scheuer is fired as unit chief in May 1999 (see [June 1999](#)), his role in the rendition program will presumably be passed on to his successor, Richard Blee, who will go on to be involved in rendition after 9/11 (see [Shortly After December 19, 2001](#)). In a piece apparently about Blee, journalist Ken Silverstein will say that he “oversaw... the [Counterterrorist Center] branch that directed renditions.” [[HARPER'S, 1/28/2007](#)]

Entity Tags: [Mukhabarat \(Egypt\)](#), [Richard Blee](#), [Islamic Jihad](#), [Alec Station](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Egypt](#), [Michael Scheuer](#)

Timeline Tags: [Torture of US Captives](#), [Complete 911 Timeline](#)

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[June 3, 1995: Plot to Crash Plane in CIA Headquarters First Mentioned in Media](#)





A 1998 CNN map of likely flights to be hijacked in one version of Operation Bojinka. [Source: CNN] A search of the Lexis-Nexus database indicates that the first media mention of the Bojinka plot to crash an airplane into CIA headquarters occurs on this day. An article in the Advertiser, an Australian newspaper, will first mention the Bojinka plots to assassinate the Pope and then blow up about a dozen airplanes over the Pacific. Then the article states, “Then the ultimate assault on the so-called ‘infidels’: a plane flown by a suicide bomber was to nose-dive and crash into the American headquarters of the CIA, creating carnage.” [ADVERTISER, 6/3/1995] While this first mention may be obscure from a United States point of view, the Bojinka planes as weapons plot will be mentioned in other media outlets in the years to come. In fact, in 2002 CNN correspondent David Ensor will comment about CNN coverage, “[E]veryone, all your viewers who wanted to, could have known that at one point Ramzi Yousef and some others were allegedly plotting to fly an airliner into the CIA headquarters in the United States, that, in fact, the idea of using an airliner as a weapon, that idea at least, had already been aired.... We talked about it. We’ve done stories about it for years, frankly.” [CNN, 6/5/2002]

Entity Tags: [Operation Bojinka](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



[June 21, 1995: President Clinton Approves CIA's Rendition Program](#)



President Bill Clinton signs Presidential Decision Directive 39 (PDD-39) approving a rendition program recently proposed by the CIA (see [Summer 1995](#)). This program is the development of an earlier idea also approved by Clinton (see [1993](#)) and comes two months after the bombing of a government building in Oklahoma City (see [8:35 a.m. - 9:02 a.m. April 19, 1995](#)). The rendition program as approved by Clinton explicitly covers renditions of fugitives to the US to face trial: “When terrorists wanted for violation of US law are at large overseas, their return for prosecution shall be a matter of the highest priority and shall be a continuing central issue in bilateral relations with any state that harbors or assists them.” The directive does not require the foreign government’s consent: “Return of suspects by force may be effected

without the cooperation of the host government.”

Third Countries - The 9/11 Commission will later point out that this directive also expressly approves transferring suspects to other countries: “If extradition procedures were unavailable or put aside, the United States could seek the local country’s assistance in a rendition, secretly putting the fugitive in a plane back to America or some third country for trial.”

Implications - In 2007, journalist Stephen Grey will comment on the policy’s implications: “In essence, the US government chose to outsource its handling of terrorists because neither Clinton nor his Republican opponents were prepared to establish a proper legal framework for the US to capture, interrogate, and imprison terrorists itself; nor to take the more direct military or diplomatic action required to eliminate the leadership of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan; nor to confront countries like Saudi Arabia or Pakistan whose policies helped encourage the growth of terrorism; nor to strengthen adequately the CIA’s own key capabilities.” [GREY, 2007, PP. 121, 123]

Entity Tags: [Stephen Grey](#), [William Jefferson \(“Bill”\) Clinton](#)

Timeline Tags: [Torture of US Captives](#)



June 23, 1995: CIA Reports China Has Shipped Nuclear Missile Parts to Pakistan in Last Three Months



The CIA reports that in the last three months China has delivered missile parts to Pakistan that can be used in the M-11 missile. China has been shipping missiles to Pakistan for some time (see [1989](#) and [1991](#)). [LEVY AND SCOTT-CLARK, 2007, PP. 512]

Entity Tags: [Pakistan](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [China](#)

Timeline Tags: [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)



Shortly After June 26, 1995: US Considers Bombing Bin Laden for Sponsoring Assassination Attempt on Egyptian President





Hassan al-Turabi. [Source: CNN] On June 26, 1995, there is a failed

assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak as he visits Ethiopia (see [June 26, 1995](#)). The CIA soon concludes Osama bin Laden authorized the operation, and they plan a retaliation attack. [US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003] Evidence suggests that the government of Sudan and Hassan al-Turabi, Sudan's leader, know where bin Laden is living in Sudan and helped support the plot. The United Nations Security Council places sanctions on Sudan as a result. The US examines options for attacking bin Laden and/or al-Turabi's facilities in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum. The options developed by the US military are rejected for being unstealthy and a de facto war on Sudan. In the ensuing months, there are reports of Egyptian covert operations against bin Laden and an Egyptian military build-up on the Sudanese border. These factors influence bin Laden's decision to move to Afghanistan in 1996 (see [May 18, 1996](#)). [CLARKE, 2004, PP. 140-41] One suspect in the assassination, Anas al-Liby, moves to Britain. The British government not only refuses to extradite him to Egypt, but secretly hires him to assassinate the leader of Libya (see [\(Late 1995\)](#) and [1996](#)).

Entity Tags: [United Nations Security Council](#), [Hosni Mubarak](#), [Hassan al-Turabi](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Anas al-Liby](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Sudan](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



[July 4, 1995: Kashmir Kidnapping Leads to US Charity, but US Takes No Action Against It](#)



On July 4, 1995, six Western tourists are kidnapped in Kashmir, India. A Norwegian is soon found beheaded while an American manages to escape. The remaining hostages, two British, one German, and one American, are never found and are apparently killed in December 1995. The kidnapping is executed by an alias of the Pakistani militant group later known as Harkat ul-Mujahedeen. The kidnappers demand the release of a number of jailed Islamists, including Saeed Sheikh and Maulana Masood Azhar, both imprisoned in India (see [November 1994-December 1999](#)). Counterterrorism expert Rohan Gunaratna claims the leaders of the operation were trained by al-Qaeda. [GUNARATNA, 2003, PP. 284-285] In January 1996, a secret CIA report will say that, according to a foreign intelligence agency, Enaam Arnaout, the US director of the Benevolence International Foundation (BIF), was in Pakistan and matches the

description of a man involved in the kidnapping who then left Pakistan in early October for Bosnia via the US. [CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 1/1996] Yet despite this information, the US will take no action against Arnaout or BIF. The US will not even designate Harkat ul-Mujahedeen until over two years after the kidnapping. [GUNARATNA, 2003, PP. 284-285] An airplane hijacking in 1999 will free Azhar and Sheikh (see [December 24-31, 1999](#)).

Entity Tags: [Harkat ul-Mujahedeen](#), [Enaam Arnaout](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Benevolence International Foundation](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Maulana Masood Azhar](#), [Saeed Sheikh](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



July 19, 1995: Bin Laden's Brother-in-Law Khalifa Set Free in Jordan



Bin Laden's brother-in-law Mohammed Jamal Khalifa is pronounced not guilty of all charges and set free in a retrial in Jordan. Khalifa had been convicted and sentenced to death in a December 1994 Jordanian trial, but then a key witness recanted and the verdict was overturned in April 1995 (see [Early April 1995](#)). The US then deported him to Jordan to face retrial anyway (see [April 26-May 3, 1995](#)). [AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 7/19/1995] He quickly returns to Saudi Arabia, where he has citizenship. Michael Scheuer, the first head of the CIA's bin Laden unit, will later claim that that "day he flew back to Saudi Arabia, he was greeted by a limo and a high-ranking official of the government embraced him." [LANCE, 2006, PP. 164] One later article similarly claims, "Returning to Saudi Arabia, Khalifa was allegedly welcomed like a hero by Prince Sultan, Saudi's second deputy premier." [PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, 8/11/2000] Khalifa will go on to help found a militant group in Yemen that will take credit for the USS *Cole* bombing in 2000 (see [1996-1997 and After](#)), while his Philippine front companies will continue to fund militant groups with few obstacles long after 9/11 (see [1995 and After](#)).

Entity Tags: [Michael Scheuer](#), [Jordan](#), [Mohammed Jamal Khalifa](#), [Sultan bin Faisal](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



August 1995 and After: US Diplomats at Egyptian Embassy Not Informed of CIA Rendition Program



Diplomats at the US embassy in Egypt are not informed of the CIA's rendition program. At this time the program is primarily aimed at locating enemies of the Egyptian regime and bringing them back to Egypt, where they are tortured (see [Summer 1995](#) and [Before Summer 1995](#)). The only exception to this is US ambassador to Egypt Edward Walker, who is read into the CIA program although he is actually a State Department employee. One of the diplomats' jobs is

to report on Egypt's extremely poor human rights record, including its torture methods. Walker will later comment, "It wasn't a question of mincing words... I think the human rights reports were correct." He will add that there are Chinese walls at the embassy to keep the CIA program secret from the diplomats: "The walls were huge and they only come together at the ambassador level... [The diplomats working on human rights] might have been a little upset if they knew what was going on." [GREY, 2007, PP. 126]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Edward Walker](#)


Timeline Tags: [Torture of US Captives](#)



August 22, 1995: High Level Defector Secretly Reveals Iraq's WMD Program Has Ended



Hussein Kamel. [Source: Associated Press] Hussein Kamel, Iraq's former minister of military industry—who was Saddam Hussein's son-in-law and who had overseen Iraq's nuclear, chemical, biological and missile weapons programs for almost a decade—is interviewed shortly after defecting by UNMOVIC Executive Chairman Rolf Ekeus, Professor Maurizio Zifferero, deputy director of the Internal Atomic Energy Agency, and Nikita Smidovick of UNSCOM. During the interview, Kamel says that Iraq had destroyed all of its banned weapons after the First Gulf War. "I ordered destruction of all chemical weapons. All weapons—biological, chemical, missile, nuclear were destroyed," he tells his interviewers. With regard to Anthrax, which Kamel says had been the "main focus" of Iraq's biological program, Kamel says, "nothing remained." Regarding the nerve gas, VX, Kamel says, "they put it in bombs during last days of the Iran-Iraq war. They were not used and the program was terminated." When asked if the program had been reconstituted, Kamel replies, "We changed the factory into pesticide production. Part of the establishment started to produce medicine... We gave instructions not to produce chemical weapons." On the issue of prohibited missiles, Kamel states: "[N]ot a single missile left but they had blueprints and molds for production. All missiles were destroyed." Kamel also says that inspections worked in Iraq. "You have important role in Iraq with this. You should not underestimate yourself. You are very effective in Iraq," he reveals.

 [KAMAL, 8/22/1995] But this information is not made public. Newsweek reports in March 2003

that according to its sources, “Kamel’s revelations about the destruction of Iraq’s WMD stocks were hushed up by the UN inspectors... for two reasons. Saddam did not know how much Kamel had revealed, and the inspectors hoped to bluff Saddam into disclosing still more.” [SCOTSMAN, 2/24/2003; NEWSWEEK, 3/3/2003] Kamel also says that Khidir Hamza, an Iraqi nuclear scientist who defected in 1994 and who will be a source for claims regarding Iraq’s alleged nuclear weapons program in the lead-up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, is “a professional liar.” He tells his interviewers, “He worked with us, but he was useless and always looking for promotions.... He consulted with me but could not deliver anything.... He was even interrogated by a team before he left and was allowed to go.” [NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS, 2/26/2004] At around the same time, Kamel is also interviewed by the CIA and Britain’s MI6. According to sources interviewed by Newsweek, Kamel provides them with the same information. [SCOTSMAN, 2/24/2003; NEWSWEEK, 3/3/2003 SOURCES: UNNAMED SOURCES] But after this is revealed on February 24, 2003 by Newsweek’s John Barry, the CIA issues a strong denial. “It is incorrect, bogus, wrong, untrue,” CIA spokesman Bill Harlow will say. [REUTERS, 2/24/2003]

Entity Tags: [Nikita Smidovick](#), [John Barry](#), [Bill Harlow](#), [Rolf Ekeus](#), [Maurizio Zifferero](#), [Hussein Kamel](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



August 27, 1995 and Shortly After: CIA and Albanian Intelligence Recruit Knowledgeable Informer



The CIA and Albanian intelligence recruit an informer knowledgeable about al-Qaeda in the Balkans. The informer, whose name is Hassan Mustafa Osama Nasr, but is known as Abu Omar, is recruited by a special unit of the Albanian National Intelligence Service (ShIK) created at the behest of the CIA. An officer in the unit, Astrit Nasufi, will say that the unit is actually run by a CIA agent known as “Mike” who is based on the US embassy in Tirana, Albania, and who teaches them intelligence techniques. The CIA and ShIK are worried about a possible assassination attempt against the Egyptian foreign minister, who is to visit Albania soon, so about twelve radical Egyptians, members of Al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya and Islamic Jihad, are detained beforehand. Nasr is not on the list, but is detained because of a link to a suspect charity, the Human Relief and Construction Agency (HRCA). He is held for about 10 days and, although he initially refuses to talk, ShIK has a “full file” on him after a week. He provides information about around ten fellow Al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya members working for HRCA and two other charities, the Al-Haramain Islamic Foundation and the Revival of Islamic Heritage Society, both of which will be declared designated supporters of terrorism after 9/11. However, he says there are no plans to kill the Egyptian foreign minister, as this would mean Albania would no longer be a safe haven for fundamentalist Muslims. The intelligence Nasr goes on to provide is regarded as good quality and includes the identities of operatives monitoring the US embassy and entering and leaving Albania. The CIA is most interested in monitoring former mujaheddin joining the Bosnian Muslims, and Nasr also provides intelligence on Al-Gama’a al-Islamiyya branches in Britain, Germany, and Italy, in particular

the Islamic Cultural Institute in Milan, which is a base for mujaheddin operations in the Balkans and is raided by the Italian government around this time (see [Late 1993-December 14, 1995](#)). Even though cooperation appears to be good, after a few weeks Nasr suddenly disappears and the CIA tells SHK that Nasr has moved to Germany. [[CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 7/2/2005](#)] Nasr will later surface in Italy and will become close to Islamic militants in Milan (see [Summer 2000](#)), but will be kidnapped by the CIA after 9/11 (see [Noon February 17, 2003](#)).

Entity Tags: [Revival of Islamic Heritage Society](#), [Islamic Jihad](#), [State Intelligence Service \(Albania\)](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Astrit Nasufi](#), [Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya](#), [Al Haramain Islamic Foundation](#), [Islamic Cultural Institute](#), [Human Relief and Construction Agency](#), [Hassan Mustafa Osama Nasr](#)

Timeline Tags: [Torture of US Captives](#), [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [Kosovar Albanian Struggle](#)



September 1, 1995: Judge's Ruling Ensures that Ali Mohamed Does Not Have to Testify in Trial, Even Though Prosecution Knows Where He Is



Defense counsel for El Sayyid Nosair, one of the militants accused in the “Landmarks” bomb plot (see [June 24, 1993](#)) along with the “Blind Sheikh,” Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, applies for a missing witness instruction for double agent Ali Mohamed. The counsel, Roger Stavis, believes that it would benefit his client to have Mohamed testify, because Mohamed worked for militants connected to Abdul-Rahman as well as the FBI (see [1990](#)), CIA (see [1984](#)), and US army (see [1986](#)). Therefore, Stavis might be able to use Nosair’s connection with Mohamed to convince the jury that Nosair was acting on the instructions of an agent of the US government. Stavis has been attempting to contact Mohamed with no success for some time, although the prosecution is in contact with him where he lives in California (see [December 1994-January 1995](#)). Under federal law, a trial judge can give a missing witness instruction if one party at a trial wants a witness to testify but cannot find him, whereas the other party can find him but does not seem to want him to testify. Based on such an instruction, the jury can then decide that the party that could find him, but did not get him to testify, did so deliberately because it thought the testimony would be damaging to it. Author Peter Lance will later comment that, given the circumstances, “Stavis had every right to expect that jury charge,” but Judge Michael Mukasey merely responds, “I don’t think a missing witness charge on that gentleman is warranted and I am not going to give one.” Lance will comment that by failing to grant the missing witness instruction, Mukasey helps “bury the significance” of Mohamed, and conceal his role in Islamic militancy from the public. [[LANCE, 2006, PP. 208; RAW STORY, 9/25/2007](#)] President Bush will later appoint Mukasey to be the US attorney general (see [November 8, 2007](#)).

Entity Tags: [Michael Mukasey](#), [El Sayyid Nosair](#), [Peter Lance](#), [Roger Stavis](#), [Ali Mohamed](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



September 13, 1995: Muslim Militant Rendered by CIA in Croatia, Then Killed in Egypt



Talaat Fouad Qassem, 38, a known leader of the Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (the Islamic Group), an Egyptian extremist organization, is arrested and detained in Croatia as he travels to Bosnia from Denmark, where he has been living after being granted political asylum. He is suspected of clandestine support of terrorist operations, including the 1993 World Trade Center bombing (see [February 26, 1993](#)). He also allegedly led mujaheddin efforts in Bosnia since 1990 (see [1990](#)). In a joint operation, he is arrested by Croatian intelligence agents and handed over to the CIA. Qassem is then interrogated by US officials aboard a US ship off the Croatian coast in the Adriatic Sea and sent to Egypt, which has a rendition agreement with the US (see [Summer 1995](#)). An Egyptian military tribunal has already sentenced him to death in absentia, and he is executed soon after he arrives. [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 10/31/1995; WASHINGTON POST, 3/11/2002, PP. A01; MAHLE, 2005, PP. 204-205; NEW YORKER, 2/8/2005] According to the 1999 book *Dollars for Terror*, two weeks before his abduction, Qassem was in Switzerland negotiating against Muslim Brotherhood leaders. Some Muslim Brotherhood exiles were negotiating with the Egyptian government to be allowed to return to Egypt if they agreed not to use Muslim Brotherhood Swiss bank accounts to fund Egyptian militant groups like Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya, but Qassem and other radicals oppose this deal. So the removal of Qassem helps the Muslim Brotherhood in their conflict with more militant groups. [LABEVIERE, 1999, PP. 70-71]

Entity Tags: [Croatia](#), [Egypt](#), [Talaat Fouad Qassem](#), [Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya](#), [Ayman al-Zawahiri](#), [Muslim Brotherhood](#)

Timeline Tags: [Torture of US Captives](#), [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



October 1995: FBI Begins Investigating Bin Laden; CIA Already Monitoring Him



The FBI opens a case on Osama bin Laden. Dan Coleman and John Ligouri, members of the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), are sent to the CIA Counterterrorist Center (CTC) to see what the CIA knows about bin Laden. "They were amazed by the amount of material - some forty thick files' worth - that they found.... Most of the information consisted of raw, unfocused data: itineraries, phone records, associates lists, investment holdings, bank transfers." The vast majority of the data comes from NSA electronic eavesdropping and most of it has not been properly analyzed (see [Early 1990s](#)). They find that the CTC has been conducting a vigorous investigation on Wadih El-Hage, bin Laden's personal secretary. [MILLER, STONE, AND MITCHELL, 2002, PP. 148-149] Coleman will go on to become the FBI's biggest expert on

bin Laden and will help start the bureau's bin Laden unit. [SUSKIND, 2006, PP. 90] It is not known when the CIA or NSA began monitoring bin Laden or El-Hage.

Entity Tags: [Wadih El-Hage](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [John Ligouri](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Counterterrorist Center](#), [Joint Terrorism Task Force](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Dan Coleman](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



October 20, 1995: KSM Possibly Helps with Revenge Bombing in Croatia



A suicide bombing destroys the police station in the town of Rijeka, Croatia, wounding 29 people. The Egyptian militant group Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya takes credit for the bombing, saying it is revenge for the abduction of Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya leader Talaat Fouad Qassem in Croatia the month before (see [September 13, 1995](#)). The Croatians will later determine that the mastermind, Hassan al-Sharif Mahmud Saad, and the suicide bomber were both tied to Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya. They also were tied to the Islamic Cultural Institute in Milan, Italy, which in turn has ties to many militant attacks, some committed Ramzi Yousef (see [1995-1997](#)). CIA soon discovers that the suicide bomber also worked for the Third World Refugee Center charity front (see [January 1996](#)). [KOHLMANN, 2004, PP. 153-155] In 1999, the FBI's Bojinka investigation will notice that Khalid Shaikh Mohammed (KSM) was believed to be in neighboring Bosnia at the time and that the timing device of the bomb (a modified Casio watch) closely resembled those used by KSM and his nephew Yousef in the Bojinka plot (see [January 6, 1995](#)). Presumably, this would have increased the importance of catching KSM. [9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 489]

Entity Tags: [Third World Relief Agency](#), [Ramzi Yousef](#), [Khalid Shaikh Mohammed](#), [Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Hassan al-Sharif Mahmud Saad](#), [Talaat Fouad Qassem](#), [Islamic Cultural Institute](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



October 21, 1995: Clinton Launches Interagency Effort to Track Bin Laden's Money; Effort Fizzles



President Clinton signs a classified presidential order "directing the Departments of Justice, State and Treasury, the National Security Council, the CIA, and other intelligence agencies to increase and integrate their efforts against international money laundering by terrorists and criminals." The New York Times will later call this the first serious effort by the US government to track bin Laden's businesses. However, according to the Times, "They failed."

William Wechsler, a National Security Council staff member during the Clinton administration, will say that the government agencies given the task suffered from “a lack of institutional knowledge, a lack of expertise... We could have been doing much more earlier. It didn’t happen.” [[NEW YORK TIMES, 9/20/2001](#)]

Entity Tags: [National Security Council](#), [William Wechsler](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [US Department of Justice](#), [US Department of the Treasury](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [William Jefferson \(“Bill”\) Clinton](#), [US Department of State](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



November 13, 1995: Al-Qaeda Bombing in Saudi Arabia, US Realizes Bin Laden Is More than Financier



Destruction at the Saudi National Guard training center, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. [*Source: CNN*] Two truck bombs kill five Americans and two Indians in the US-operated Saudi National Guard training center in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Al-Qaeda is blamed for the attacks. [[ASSOCIATED PRESS, 8/19/2002](#)] The attack changes US investigators’ views of the role of bin Laden, from al-Qaeda financier to its leader. [[MILLER, STONE, AND MITCHELL, 2002, PP. 150](#)] The Vinnell Corporation, thought by some experts to be a CIA front, owns the facility that has been attacked. [[LONDON TIMES, 5/14/2003](#)]

Entity Tags: [Osama bin Laden](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Vinnell Corporation](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



January 1996: CIA Ends Its Relationship with Chalabi



The CIA—concerned about Chalabi’s contacts with Iran and convinced that he is not capable of delivering on his promises—severs its ties with him and the Iraqi National Congress. [[ABC, 2/7/1998](#); [NEW YORKER, 6/7/2004](#); [CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, 6/15/2004](#)] Former CIA base chief Robert Baer recalls in 2006 that “[t]he quality” of the INC’s intelligence “was very bad. There was a feeling that Chalabi was prepping defectors. We had no systematic way to vet the information, but it was obvious most of it was cooked.” [[MOTHER JONES, 4/2006](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Ahmed Chalabi](#), [Iraqi National Congress](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



January 10, 1996: Seven Men Arrested in Lithuania Trying to Sell 100 kg of Uranium on Black Market



Six Lithuanians and one Georgian are arrested in the town of Visaginas, Lithuania, for attempting to sell 100 kilograms of uranium on the black market. The uranium had been smuggled there from another post-Soviet republic, Kazakhstan. Following their arrest, the men tell the authorities that the uranium was for an anonymous buyer in Pakistan. The CIA comes to believe that Sunni extremists, possibly linked to Osama bin Laden, are behind the purchase. [[LEVY AND SCOTT-CLARK, 2007, PP. 261](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)



Shortly After February 1996: Saudis Fail to Give CIA Bin Laden Documents before 9/11





Bin Laden's Saudi passport photograph. [Source: Public domain] Shortly after the CIA's Alec Station is created to go after bin Laden (see [February 1996](#)), the CIA asks the Saudi government to provide copies of bin Laden's records such as his birth certificate, passports, bank accounts, and so forth. But the Saudis fail to turn over any of the documents. By 9/11, the CIA will still not even be given a copy of bin Laden's birth certificate. [RISEN, 2006, PP. 185]

Entity Tags: [Saudi Arabia](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Alec Station](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



March 1996-December 1998: US Intelligence Uses UN Weapons Inspectors to Spy on Iraq Military



Rolf Ekeus. [Source: United Nations] US intelligence services use United Nations arms controls teams to spy on the Iraqi military, without the knowledge of the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) that oversees the teams. US intelligence infiltrates agents and espionage equipment into the UN inspection teams. Clinton administration officials have previously admitted inserting eavesdropping equipment into Iraq with the inspectors, but said that they did so in cooperation with UNSCOM to penetrate Iraqi concealment of its illegal weapons. However, US intelligence agents rig UNSCOM equipment and office space, without

UNSCOM permission or knowledge, to intercept Iraqi military communications. Most of these communications have nothing to do with UNSCOM's special weapons mandate. US government officials admit that they considered the risk that discovery of their infiltrations would discredit the UNSCOM teams, but they dismissed the risk as being quite low, and the intelligence gathered on the Iraqi military as critically needed.

US Installs Surveillance Equipment During Upgrade - The surveillance begins in March 1996, when UNSCOM upgrades a widespread video surveillance system to transmit signals from the camera to the inspectors' offices in Baghdad, and terminates no later than December 1998, when the Iraqis ask all UNSCOM inspectors to leave the country. While the new system gives UNSCOM inspectors views of distant facilities in "near real time," unknown to UNSCOM officials, the US signals and sensor technicians who install and maintain the system have covert transmission systems built into the UNSCOM transmitters that capture the Iraqi communications. The designer of the new system is a military intelligence operative and engineer; two of the technicians who install the system are CIA agents.

UNSCOM Says Surveillance Destroyed Its Ability to Function inside Iraq - UNSCOM officials now claim that the covert surveillance undertaken by the US has helped to destroy the agency's ability to function inside Iraq, and have given credibility to Iraqi claims—previously dismissed—that the US was using UNSCOM to spy on their military facilities. (UNSCOM is aware of another, simultaneous surveillance operation called "Shake the Tree," that used commercial scanners to intercept Iraqi radio transmissions; US officials now say that they chose to pursue the surreptitious eavesdropping because they wanted to preserve their "independence of access" to Iraqi military communications, according to a US official. "We did not want to rely on a multinational body that might or might not continue to operate as it was operating." The US government decides not to inform either Rolf Ekeus, the Swedish diplomat who is UNSCOM's executive chairman, or his Australian successor, Richard Butler, about the second eavesdropping operation. However, the CIA does inform the American deputy to both men, Charles Duelfer, to ensure that UNSCOM staff members do not interfere with the operation. 'Played for Suckers' - Ekeus will later say that while he has difficulty believing the US could have built covert antennas into the video relay system without the Iraqis' knowledge, if the US did so, "We have always stood against that." Though Butler refuses to comment publicly on the issue, a source reports that privately he is angered by the operation. "If all this stuff turns out to be true, then Rolf Ekeus and I have been played for suckers, haven't we?" he is reported as saying. "I've spent a lifetime of helping build and defend the nonproliferation regimes. Piggybacking in this manner [by US intelligence] can only serve the interests of those who reject meaningful efforts at arms control." In May 1997, British officials in the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) ask their counterparts, the American National Security Agency (NSA), if such an operation exists, and the NSA does not respond. A US official will explain: "We don't tell the British everything, even if they are our closest intelligence ally. They don't tell us everything they're doing either." [[WASHINGTON POST, 3/2/1999](#)]

Entity Tags: [National Security Agency](#), [United Nations Special Commission](#), [Richard Butler](#), [Charles Duelfer](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Rolf Ekeus](#), [Government Communications Headquarters](#), [Clinton administration](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



Between May and December 1996: NSA Discovers Al-Qaeda Communications Hub



The NSA discovers a communications hub al-Qaeda uses to coordinate its global operations. The hub was set up in May 1996 by Ahmed al-Hada, a close associate of Osama bin Laden (see [May 1996](#)), and is discovered at some time in the next six months. [\[BAMFORD, 2008, PP. 16\]](#) According to a PBS documentary, the NSA discovers the hub by monitoring bin Laden's calls from his satellite phone in Afghanistan (see [November 1996-Late August 1998](#)): "Once he starts dialing from Afghanistan, NSA's listening posts quickly tap into his conversations.... By tracking all calls in and out of Afghanistan, the NSA quickly determines bin Laden's number: 873-682505331." According to CIA manager Michael Scheuer, bin Laden's satellite phone is a "godsend," because "[i]t gave us an idea, not only of where he was in Afghanistan, but where al-Qaeda, as an organization, was established, because there were calls to various places in the world." As bin Laden's phone calls are not encrypted, there is no code for the NSA to break. Instead, NSA voice interceptors and linguists translate, transcribe, and write summaries of the calls. In addition, human analysts plot out which numbers are being called from bin Laden's phone and how frequently. [\[PBS, 2/3/2009\]](#)

Entity Tags: [National Security Agency](#), [Michael Scheuer](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



May 21, 1996: Boat Accident Helps Alert CIA to Al-Qaeda Cell in Kenya



A passenger ferry capsizes on Lake Victoria in East Africa and one of the more than 800 who drown is Abu Ubaidah al-Banshiri, al-Qaeda's military commander (his job will be taken over by Mohammed Atef). Al-Qaeda operatives Wadih El-Hage and Fazul Abdullah Mohammed (a.k.a. Haroun Fazul) show up at the disaster scene to find out if al-Banshiri is still alive. There are many journalists covering the disaster and a Western investigator recognizes Fazul and El-Hage when they happen to appear in some of the widely broadcast footage. [\[WASHINGTON POST, 11/23/1998\]](#) El-Hage sends a computer file about the drowning to double agent Ali Mohamed in California. Mohamed's computer hard drive will be copied by US intelligence in 1997 (see [October 1997-September 10, 1998](#)). The CIA already has much of El-Hage's biography on file by this time. It appears this event, along with the defection of Jamal al-Fadl (see [June 1996-April 1997](#)), only strengthen knowledge of the Kenya cell gained earlier in the year (see [April 1996](#)). By August 1996, if not earlier, the phones of El-Hage and Fazul in Nairobi are bugged and closely monitored by the CIA and NSA. Apparently, not much is

learned from these phone calls because the callers speak in code, but the CIA does learn about other al-Qaeda operatives from the numbers and locations that are being called. This information is shared with the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), and the JTTF becomes "convinced that flipping El-Hage [is] the best way to get to bin Laden." [MILLER, STONE, AND MITCHELL, 2002, PP. 200]

Entity Tags: [Fazul Abdullah Mohammed](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Ali Mohamed](#), [Abu Ubaidah al-Banshiri](#), [Joint Terrorism Task Force](#), [Wadih El-Hage](#), [National Security Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Summer 1996: British and American Intelligence Agencies Warn of Pakistan Arming North Korea and Iran



British and American intelligence agencies warn their governments of Pakistan's nuclear proliferation activities, according to senior sources at the British Foreign Office and the CIA. One of the warnings states that Pakistan is "readying itself to sell or [is] selling already" to North Korea and possibly Iran. [LEVY AND SCOTT-CLARK, 2007, PP. 260, 512]

Entity Tags: [Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)



After June 25, 1996: CIA Agents Told Not to Track Militants in Saudi Arabia



In the wake of the Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia (see [June 25, 1996](#)), the Saudi government continues to stonewall about their knowledge of radical militants in the country. Official inquiries about bin Laden go unanswered and the Saudis give no help to a US probe about the bombing. But often the US does not even ask the Saudis questions for fear of upsetting the Saudi government. Former US officials will later claim that even after the bombing, the CIA instructed officials at its Saudi station not to collect information on Islamic extremists in Saudi Arabia. [US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT, 12/15/2003] It is not known how long this policy will continue, but there is evidence it continues until 9/11. In August 2001, former CIA agent Robert Baer will attempt to give the CIA a list of hundreds of al-Qaeda operatives in Saudi Arabia and Yemen, but the CIA will show no interest in it (see [August 2001](#)). Fifteen of the nineteen 9/11 hijackers will reportedly come from Saudi Arabia.

Entity Tags: [Saudi Arabia](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



June 27, 1996: US Monitors Bin Laden Taking Credit for Khobar Towers Bombing



In 1999, a retired CIA official will claim that two days after the Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia (see [June 25, 1996](#)), bin Laden is congratulated by colleagues about the bombing. Both Ayman al-Zawahiri, head of Islamic Jihad and al-Qaeda's number two leader, and Ashra Hadi, head of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, are monitored by the NSA as they call bin Laden. This helps confirm that bin Laden was being monitored while using his first satellite phone (see [Early 1990s](#)). It will be widely reported that he was monitored after he started using his second satellite phone later in 1996 (see [November 1996-Late August 1998](#)). Bin Laden does not exactly publicly take credit for the bombing, but later in the year he will say, "When I got the news about these blasts, I was very happy. This was a noble act. This was a great honor but, unfortunately, I did not conduct these explosions personally." [[REEVE, 1999, PP. 187; NEW YORKER, 9/9/2002](#)]

Entity Tags: [Ayman al-Zawahiri](#), [National Security Agency](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Ashra Hadi](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



July 18, 1996: State Department Calls Afghanistan an 'Ideal Haven' for Bin Laden



State Department analysts warn the Clinton administration in a top secret assessment that bin Laden's move from Sudan to Afghanistan will offer him an "ideal haven." The warning comes exactly one month after he made the move (see [May 18, 1996](#)). Analysts say that "his prolonged stay in Afghanistan - where hundreds of 'Arab mujaheddin' receive terrorist training and key extremist leaders often congregate - could prove more dangerous to US interests in the long run than his three-year liaison with Khartoum," in Sudan. Further, bin Laden's public statements suggest an "emboldened" man capable of "increased terrorism." Michael Scheuer, head of the CIA's bin Laden unit at the time, will later comment, "The thinking was that he was in Afghanistan, and he was dangerous, but because he was there, we had a better chance to kill him. But at the end of the day, we settled for the worst possibility - he was there and we didn't do anything." [[NEW YORK TIMES, 8/17/2005](#)]

Entity Tags: [Osama bin Laden](#), [US Department of State](#), [Clinton administration](#), [Michael Scheuer](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)

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July 31, 1996: Saudi Charity Said to Be Funding Hamas



The New York Daily News reports, “At least \$20 million a year flows out of Saudi Arabia to Hamas, the Palestinian terror group that claimed responsibility for the recent slew of suicide bombings in Israel. Intelligence officials are convinced that the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) is a major funnel for this Saudi support.... Western intelligence services have traced IIRO money transfers to bank accounts in London and Amman, Jordan, and from there to front organizations that transferred the money to Hamas-backed groups in the West Bank and Gaza.” But the article suggests that little is being done to stop this flow of money.

[NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, 7/31/1996] Earlier in the year, a secret CIA report claimed the IIRO is funding Hamas, bin Laden, and other militant groups (see [January 1996](#)).

Entity Tags: [International Islamic Relief Organization](#), [Hamas](#)


Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)

 SHARE

August 1996: CIA Aware ISI Is Funding Radical Militant Group with Bin Laden and Taliban Links; No Action Taken



A secret CIA report indicates the Pakistani ISI is giving “at least \$30,000 - and possibly as much as \$60,000 - per month” to the Harkat ul-Ansar, a Pakistani radical militant group that will be renamed Harkat ul-Mujahedeen (HUM) one year later. By this time, US intelligence is aware this group kidnapped and killed Americans and other Westerners in 1995 (see [July 4, 1995](#)). The CIA reports that Pakistan says it is reducing some of its monetary support to the group, presumably in an effort to avoid being placed on the US list of state sponsors of terrorism. But apparently this is just posturing, because in 2001 the State Department will report that the ISI is continuing to fund HUM (see [April 30, 2001](#)). The CIA also notes that HUM “might undertake terrorist actions against civilian airliners.” Saeed Sheikh, an alleged 9/11 paymaster, is a leader of the group (see [April 1993](#)), and in 1999 an airplane hijacking will free him and another HUM leader from prison (see [December 24-31, 1999](#)). [CENTRAL

 [INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 8/1996](#)] Several months later, another secret US report will note the growing ties between HUM, Osama bin Laden, and the Taliban. But the US will not take any

serious action against HUM or Pakistan. [US EMBASSY (ISLAMABAD), 2/6/1997] HUM deputy chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman Khalil will be one of the cosigners to bin Laden’s 1998 fatwa declaring it a Muslim duty to kill Americans and Jews (see [February 22, 1998](#)). [SCOTT, 2007, PP. 172]

Entity Tags: [Saeed Sheikh](#), [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Harkat ul-Mujahedeen](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Taliban](#), [Maulana Fazlur Rehman Khalil](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



August 14, 1996: State Department Calls Bin Laden One of Most Significant Terrorism Sponsors in the World



The State Department issues a fact sheet on bin Laden, calling him “one of the most significant financial sponsors of Islamic extremist activities in the world today.” The text ties bin Laden to funding specific attacks, such as the attempt to kill dozens of US soldiers in Yemen in 1992 (see [December 29, 1992](#)). The fact sheet also mentions the term “al-Qaeda,” leading to the first media reports using that term the next day (see [August 14, 1996](#)). The fact sheet also contains details about bin Laden’s finances, such as the allegation that he co-founded the Al-Shamal Islamic Bank in Sudan in 1990 with a group of wealthy Sudanese and capitalized it with \$50 million of his fortune. [[US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 8/14/1996](#); NEW YORK TIMES, 8/14/1996] Much of this information appears to come from al-Qaeda defector Jamal al-Fadl. The CIA had just finished debriefing him weeks before (see [June 1996-April 1997](#)).

Entity Tags: [US Department of State](#), [Al-Shamal Islamic Bank](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Jamal al-Fadl](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



After September 1996: Journalist Sees US and Taliban Combating Russia over Central Asian Pipeline Issue



Ahmed Rashid. [Source: Jane Scherr/ University of California, Berkeley] Ahmed Rashid, correspondent for the Far Eastern Economic Review and The Daily Telegraph, conducts

extensive investigative research in Afghanistan after the Taliban conquest of Kabul. As he will later write in his 2000 book, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, he sees a “massive regional polarization between the USA, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the Taliban on one side and Iran, Russia, the Central Asian states and the anti-Taliban alliance on the other. While some focused on whether there was a revival of the old CIA-ISI connection from the Afghan jihad era, it became apparent to me that the strategy over pipelines had become the driving force behind Washington’s interest in the Taliban, which in turn was prompting a counter-reaction from Russia and Iran. But exploring this was like entering a labyrinth, where nobody spoke the truth or divulged their real motives or interests. It was the job of a detective rather than a journalist because there were few clues. Even gaining access to the real players in the game was difficult, because policy was not being driven by politicians and diplomats, but by the secretive oil companies and intelligence services of the regional states.” [RASHID, 2001, PP. 163]

Entity Tags: [Pakistan](#), [Iran](#), [Russia](#), [Ahmed Rashid](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), [Taliban](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



September 5, 1996: Bojinka Defendants Convicted; Trial Ignores 9/11 Blueprint Plot



Ramzi Yousef and two other defendants, Abdul Hakim Murad and Wali Khan Amin Shah, are convicted of crimes relating to Operation Bojinka (see [January 6, 1995](#)). [CNN, 9/5/1996] In the nearly 6,000-page transcript of the three-month Bojinka trial, there is not a single mention of the “second wave” of Bojinka that closely paralleled the 9/11 plot. Interrogations by Philippine investigator Colonel Rodolfo Mendoza had exposed the details of this plot quite clearly (see [January 20, 1995](#) and [February-Early May 1995](#)). However, not only does the FBI not call Mendoza to testify, but his name is not even mentioned in the trial, not even by his assistant, who does testify. “The FBI seemed to be going out of its way to avoid even a hint of the plot that was ultimately carried out on 9/11,” author Peter Lance will later note. [LANCE, 2003, PP. 350-51] Murad was extensively tortured during his imprisonment in the Philippines (see [After January 6, 1995](#)), and some observers such as law professor Alan Dershowitz will assert that Murad’s case proves the reliability of torture, claiming that Murad’s torture prevented a major disaster. However, others disagree. Law professor Stephanie Athey, in her examination of the case, will write in 2007 that Murad’s torture actually produced little useful information. A computer found in Murad’s apartment held key details of the plot (see [January 7-11, 1995](#) and [Spring 1995](#)). CIA agent Michael Scheuer will later say that the information collected from Murad’s apartment, not the information gleaned from Murad’s torture, provided actual useful intelligence. [VANITY FAIR, 12/16/2008]

Entity Tags: [Rodolfo Mendoza](#), [Ramzi Yousef](#), [Abdul Hakim Murad](#), [Alan M. Dershowitz](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Michael Scheuer](#), [Operation Bojinka](#), [Stephanie Athey](#), [Wali Khan Amin Shah](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



September 30, 1996: CIA Reports Taliban Are Keeping Bin Laden's Training Camps Open, Closing Some Other Camps



Four days after the Taliban conquers Kabul (see [September 27, 1996](#)), a classified CIA report notes that as the Taliban advance, they are closing some militant training camps but not others. They have closed the camps controlled by militant leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, militant leader Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, and Jamaat-i-Islami (a religious political party in Pakistan). They have kept open camps controlled by Osama bin Laden, militant leader Yunas Khalis, the Pakistan-based militant group Harkat ul-Mujahedeen, and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (another religious political party in Pakistan). [\[CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 9/30/1996\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Harkat ul-Mujahedeen](#), [Abdul Rasul Sayyaf](#), [Gulbuddin Hekmatyar](#), [Yunas Khalis](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Jamaat-i-Islami](#), [Taliban](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



October 1996-Late 2001: Arms Dealer Aligns with Taliban and ISI



Victor Bout. *[Source: New York Times]* Russian arms merchant Victor Bout, who has been selling weapons to Afghanistan's Northern Alliance since 1992, switches sides, and begins selling weapons to the Taliban and al-Qaeda instead. [\[LOS ANGELES TIMES, 1/20/2002; GUARDIAN, 4/17/2002; LOS ANGELES TIMES, 5/19/2002\]](#) The deal comes immediately after the Taliban captures Kabul in late October 1996 and gains the upper hand in Afghanistan's civil war. In

one trade in 1996, Bout's company delivers at least 40 tons of Russian weapons to the Taliban, earning about \$50 million. [GUARDIAN, 2/16/2002] Two intelligence agencies later confirm that Bout trades with the Taliban "on behalf of the Pakistan government." In late 2000, several Ukrainians sell 150 to 200 T-55 and T-62 tanks to the Taliban in a deal conducted by the ISI, and Bout helps fly the tanks to Afghanistan. [GAZETTE (MONTREAL), 2/5/2002] Bout formerly worked for the Russian KGB, and now operates the world's largest private weapons transport network. Based in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bout operates freely there until well after 9/11. The US becomes aware of Bout's widespread illegal weapons trading in Africa in 1995, and of his ties to the Taliban in 1996, but they fail to take effective action against him for years. [LOS ANGELES TIMES, 5/19/2002] US pressure on the UAE in November 2000 to close down Bout's operations there is ignored. Press reports calling him "the merchant of death" also fail to pressure the UAE. [FINANCIAL TIMES, 6/10/2000; GUARDIAN, 12/23/2000] After President Bush is elected, it appears the US gives up trying to get Bout, until after 9/11. [WASHINGTON POST, 2/26/2002; GUARDIAN, 4/17/2002] Bout moves to Russia in 2002. He is seemingly protected from prosecution by the Russian government, which in early 2002 will claim, "There are no grounds for believing that this Russian citizen has committed illegal acts." [GUARDIAN, 4/17/2002] The Guardian suggests that Bout may have worked with the CIA when he traded with the Northern Alliance, and this fact may be hampering current international efforts to catch him. [GUARDIAN, 4/17/2002]

Entity Tags: [United Arab Emirates](#), [Russia](#), [Taliban](#), [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [George W. Bush](#), [Northern Alliance](#), [Victor Bout](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



November 1996-Late August 1998: US Tracks Bin Laden's Satellite Phone Calls



An Inmarsat Compact M satellite phone, the type used by bin Laden. [Source: *Inmarsat*] During this period, Osama bin Laden uses a satellite phone to direct al-Qaeda's operations. The phone—a Compact M satellite phone, about the size of a laptop computer—was purchased by a student in Virginia named Ziyad Khaleel for \$7,500 using the credit card of a British man named Saad al-Fagih. After purchasing the phone, Khaleel sent it to Khalid al-

Fawwaz, al-Qaeda's unofficial press secretary in London (see [Early 1994-September 23, 1998](#)). Al-Fawwaz then shipped it to bin Laden in Afghanistan. [[CNN, 4/16/2001](#)] It appears US intelligence actually tracks the purchase as it occurs (see [November 1996-Late December 1999](#)), probably because an older model satellite phone bin Laden has is already being monitored (see [Early 1990s](#)). Bin Laden's phone (873682505331) is believed to be used by other top al-Qaeda leaders as well, including Ayman al-Zawahiri and Mohammad Atef. Al-Fawwaz also buys satellite phones for other top al-Qaeda leaders around the same time. Though the calls made on these phones are encrypted, the NSA is able to intercept and decrypt them. As one US official will put it in early 2001, "codes were broken." [[UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL, 2/13/2001](#); [NEWSWEEK, 2/18/2002](#)] The Los Angeles Times will report that the monitoring of these phones "produced tens of thousands of pages of transcripts over two years." [[LOS ANGELES TIMES, 10/14/2001](#)] Bin Laden's satellite phone replaces an older model he used in Sudan that apparently was also monitored by the NSA (see [Early 1990s](#)). Billing records for his new phone are eventually released to the media in early 2002. Newsweek will note, "A country-by-country analysis of the bills provided US authorities with a virtual road map to important al-Qaeda cells around the world." [[SUNDAY TIMES \(LONDON\), 3/24/2002](#)] The countries called are:

- Britain (238 or 260). Twenty-seven different phone numbers are called in Britain. Accounts differ on the exact number of calls. Khalid al-Fawwaz, who helps publish statements by bin Laden, receives 143 of the calls, including the very first one bin Laden makes with this phone. Apparently most of the remaining calls are made to pay phones near him or to his associates. He also frequently calls Ibrahim Eidarous, who works with al-Fawwaz and lives near him. [[CNN, 4/16/2001](#); [NEWSWEEK, 2/18/2002](#); [SUNDAY TIMES \(LONDON\), 3/24/2002](#); [O'NEILL AND MCGRORY, 2006, PP. 111](#)]

- Yemen (221). Dozens of calls go to an al-Qaeda communications hub in Sana'a, Yemen, which is run by the father-in-law of 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar (see [Late August 1998](#)). [[NEWSWEEK, 2/18/2002](#); [LOS ANGELES TIMES, 9/1/2002](#); [BAMFORD, 2008, PP. 8](#)]

- Sudan (131). Bin Laden lived in Sudan until 1996 (see [May 18, 1996](#)), and some important al-Qaeda operatives remained there after he left (see [February 5, 1998](#)). [[SUNDAY TIMES \(LONDON\), 3/24/2002](#)]

- Iran (106). Newsweek will later report: "US officials had little explanation for the calls to Iran. A Bush administration official said that US intelligence has believed for years that hard-line anti-American factions inside Iran helped bin Laden's organization operate an 'underground railroad' smuggling Islamic militants to al-Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan." [[NEWSWEEK, 2/18/2002](#); [SUNDAY TIMES \(LONDON\), 3/24/2002](#)]

- Azerbaijan (67). An important al-Qaeda operative appears to be based in Baku, Azerbaijan. [[WASHINGTON POST, 5/2/2001](#)] This is most likely Ahmad Salama Mabruk, who is very close to al-Qaeda number two Ayman al-Zawahiri and is said to be the head of the al-Qaeda cell there. He kidnapped by the CIA in Baku in late August 1998 (see [Late August 1998](#)).

- Kenya (at least 56). In the embassy bombings trial, prosecutors introduce evidence showing 16 calls are made on this phone to some of the embassy bombers in Kenya (see [10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998](#)), apparently all before a raid in August 1997 (see [August 21, 1997](#)). The

defense introduces evidence showing at least 40 more calls are made after that time (see [Late 1996-August 1998](#)). [CNN, 4/16/2001]

- Pakistan (59).
- Saudi Arabia (57).
- A ship in the Indian Ocean (13).
- The US (6).
- Italy (6).
- Malaysia (4).
- Senegal (2). [SUNDAY TIMES (LONDON), 3/24/2002]
- Egypt (unknown). Newsweek reports that calls are made to Egypt but doesn't say how many. [NEWSWEEK, 2/18/2002]

■ Iraq (0). Press reports note that the records indicate zero calls were made to Iraq. [NEWSWEEK, 2/18/2002; SUNDAY TIMES (LONDON), 3/24/2002] 1,100 total calls are made on this phone. Adding up the above numbers means that the destination of over 100 calls is still unaccounted for. [NEWSWEEK, 2/18/2002] The use of this phone stops two months after the August 1998 embassy bombings in Africa. However, it appears bin Laden and other al-Qaeda leaders continue to use other satellite phones occasionally after this time. Shortly after 9/11, James Bamford, an expert authority on the agency, says "About a year or so ago the NSA lost all track of him.... He may still use [satellite phones] occasionally to talk about something mundane, but he discovered that the transmitters can be used for honing." [CNN, 9/21/2001] According to a different account, bin Laden will attempt to use a different phone communication method, but US intelligence will soon discover it and continue monitoring his calls (see [Late 1998 and After](#)).

Entity Tags: [Ziyad Khaleel](#), [Saad al-Fagih](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Ibrahim Eidarous](#), [Khalid al-Fawwaz](#), [Mohammed Atef](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Ayman al-Zawahiri](#), [Ahmad Salama Mabruk](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



December 1996: CIA Discovers Al-Qaeda Communications Hub, NSA Fights to Cut off Its Access



Alec Station, the CIA's bin Laden unit, discovers that al-Qaeda has established a communications hub and operations center in Sana'a, Yemen, and that there are frequent calls between it and Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan (see [May 1996](#) and [November 1996-Late August 1998](#)). [ANTIWAR, 10/22/2008; PBS, 2/3/2009] According to Alec Station chief Michael Scheuer, the CIA learns of this "communications conduit" through a CIA officer detailed to the NSA and stationed overseas. According to Scheuer, the NSA "refuse[s] to exploit the conduit and

threaten[s] legal action against the agency officer who advised of its existence.” Despite the threat, the officer continues to supply the information. Scheuer asks senior CIA officials to intervene with the NSA, but this only leads to “a desultory interagency discussion without resolution.” [ATLANTIC MONTHLY, 12/2004] Author James Bamford will say: “Scheuer knew how important the house [the operations center in Yemen] was, he knew NSA was eavesdropping on the house. He went to NSA, went to the head of operations for NSA,... Barbara McNamara, and asked for transcripts of the conversations coming into and going out of the house. And the best the NSA would do would be to give them brief summaries every... once a week or something like that, you know, just a report, not the actual transcripts or anything. And so he got very frustrated, he went back there and they still refused.” [ANTIWAR, 10/22/2008] Because of the lack of information, the CIA will actually build its own listening post to get some of the information the NSA is concealing from it (see [After December 1996](#)).

Entity Tags: [National Security Agency](#), [Alec Station](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Michael Scheuer](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



[December 23, 1996: NIE Findings that Rogue States Pose No Nuclear Threat Supported by Independent Panel](#)



An independent panel issues its report on recently released National Intelligence Estimate NIE 59-19, “Emerging Missile Threats to North America During the Next 15 Years.” The panel, chaired by former CIA Director Robert Gates, was commissioned by Congressional conservatives as a “Team B” (see [November 1976](#)) to challenge and disprove the NIE’s finding that no rogue state such as North Korea or Iraq would be able to develop a nuclear-tipped ballistic missile capable of striking the continental US or Canada until at least 2011. Gates’s panel includes former ambassador Richard Armitage; nuclear scientist Sidney Drell; former State Department and National Security Council official Arnold Kanter; Brookings Institution fellow Janne Nolan; former Defense Department official and RAND Corporation president Henry Rowen; and Major General Jasper Welch, a retired Air Force flag officer and former National Security Council staffer. The panel’s findings enrage those conservatives who pushed for its creation; the panel not only agrees with the NIE’s conclusions about the capabilities of those rogue nations, but finds that the Congressional conservatives’ allegations that the NIE had been “politicized” and written to satisfy Clinton administration positions have no basis in fact. “The panel found no evidence of politicization,” it reports, and adds: “There was no breach of the integrity of the intelligence process. Beyond this, the panel believes that unsubstantiated allegations challenging the integrity of intelligence community analysts by those who simply disagree with their conclusions, including members of Congress, are irresponsible. Intelligence forecasts do not represent ‘revealed truth,’ and it should be possible to disagree with them without attacking the character and integrity of those who

prepared them—or the integrity of the intelligence process itself.” [CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 12/23/1996; SCOBLIC, 2008, PP. 172] Congressional conservatives will demand, and receive, another study of the NIE that will provide them with conclusions more to their liking (see [Bad link: a0798rumsfeldpanel](#)).

Entity Tags: [Jasper Welch](#), [Arnold Kanter](#), ['Team B'](#), [Clinton administration](#), [Janne Nolan](#), [Robert M. Gates](#), [Henry S. Rowen](#), [Richard Armitage](#), [Sidney Drell](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#)



1997: CIA Establishes Renditions Branch, Helps with Up to 70 Renditions Before 9/11



A Renditions Branch is established at the CIA's Counterterrorist Center. Its job is to find militant leaders and then assist their abduction. The US government has been rendering suspects for four years (see [1993](#)), and the CIA has had a dedicated program for this since the summer of 1995 (see [Summer 1995](#)). [9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 276] Although some specific rendition operations are known (see [Summer 1998](#), [July 1998-February 2000](#), and [Late August 1998](#)), the total before 9/11 is not. Estimates vary, but generally fall into a similar range:

- Citing a public statement by CIA Director George Tenet, 9/11 commission deputy executive director Chris Kojm will say “70 terrorists were rendered and brought to justice before 9/11;”

- Shortly after this, Tenet himself will confirm there were “over 70” renditions; [9/11 COMMISSION, 3/24/2004]

- Tenet will also say “many dozen” suspects were rendered before 9/11; [CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 3/24/2004]

- The 9/11 Congressional Inquiry will say that the Branch is involved in “several dozen” renditions before 9/11; [US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003, PP. 728]

- Michael Scheuer, a CIA manager responsible for operations against Osama bin Laden, will say that between 1995 and May 1999 “[t]he operations that I was in charge of concerned approximately 40 people...” [COUNTERPUNCH, 7/1/2006]

Entity Tags: [Michael Scheuer](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Renditions Branch \(CIA\)](#), [Chris Kojm](#), [Counterterrorist Center](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Torture of US Captives](#), [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



After December 1996: After CIA Obtains Half of Bin Laden's Calls Itself, NSA Still Refuses to Provide Other Half



The CIA again asks the NSA for part of the transcripts of calls between Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan and al-Qaeda's operations center in Yemen. The NSA has been intercepting the calls for some time (see [Between May and December 1996](#)), but refuses to share the intelligence with Alec Station, the CIA's bin Laden unit, in usable form (see [December 1996](#)). During the calls, the al-Qaeda operatives talk in a simplistic code, but the NSA apparently does not decrypt the conversations, and only gives Alec Station meaningless summaries of the calls (see [February 1996-May 1998](#)). Without the transcripts, Alec Station cannot crack the code and figure out what the operatives are really talking about. As a result, the CIA built a duplicate ground station in the Indian Ocean, and is replicating half of the NSA's intelligence take on the calls (see [After December 1996](#)). However, it cannot obtain the other end of the calls without a satellite. Alec Station chief Michael Scheuer will say, "We would collect it [one end of the calls], translate it, send it to NSA, and ask them for the other half of it, so we could better understand it, but we never got it." Author James Bamford will comment: "And so the CIA, Mike Scheuer, went back to NSA and said look,... we're able to get... half the conversations here, but we still need the other half, and NSA still wouldn't give them the other half. I mean this is absurd, but this is what was going on." [[ANTIWAR, 10/22/2008](#); [PBS, 2/3/2009](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Alec Station](#), [James Bamford](#), [Michael Scheuer](#), [National Security Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



March 1997-Early 2000: German Intelligence Investigates Hamburg Al-Qaeda Cell Member Zammar; CIA Is Involved





Apparently, this is news video of Mohammed Haydar Zammar taken shortly after 9/11. [Source: UE-TV] An investigation of al-Qaeda contacts in Hamburg by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV), Germany's domestic intelligence service, begins at least by this time (Germany refuses to disclose additional details). The investigation is called Operation Zartheit (Operation Tenderness), and it was started by a tip about Mohammed Haydar Zammar from Turkish intelligence (see [1996](#)). [[NEW YORK TIMES, 1/18/2003](#)]

Zammar Linked to Hamburg 9/11 Cell and Bin Laden - It is later believed that Zammar, a German of Syrian origin, is a part of the Hamburg al-Qaeda cell. [[LOS ANGELES TIMES, 1/14/2003](#)]

Zammar will later claim that he recruited 9/11 hijacker Mohamed Atta and others into the cell. [[WASHINGTON POST, 6/12/2002](#)]

German intelligence is aware that he was personally invited to Afghanistan by bin Laden. [[FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG \(FRANKFURT\), 2/2/2003](#)]

The investigation into Zammar allegedly stops in early 2000, after investigators conclude they don't have enough evidence to convict him of any crime. [[DER SPIEGEL \(HAMBURG\), 11/21/2005](#)]

CIA Involved with Zammar Operation - Vanity Fair will later claim that "A lone CIA agent, the Germans disclose, attempted to work alongside them" in Operation Zartheit, but German "requests for greater information and cooperation from the CIA, they claim, came to naught." [[VANITY FAIR, 11/2004](#)]

This CIA agent is probably Thomas Volz, who is the CIA's undercover agent in Hamburg at the time (see [December 1999](#)).

Entity Tags: [Mohammed Haydar Zammar](#), [Thomas Volz](#), [Mohamed Atta](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Ansaldo Energia](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Barakat Yarkas](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



(April 1997): Wilson and Plame Meet at American-Turkish Council Reception



Former US ambassador Joe Wilson and CIA officer Valerie Plame meet for the first time at a reception held at the Turkish ambassador's residence. Wilson is a political adviser to the Commander in Chief of the US Armed Forces in Europe. Plame describes herself as an "energy executive living in Brussels." Wilson and Plame will marry a year later and will become

involved in the “Plame Affair,” when Plame’s affiliation with the CIA is disclosed in the media (see [July 14, 2003](#)). After her marriage, Plame will generally be referred to by the name Plame Wilson. Wilson, who is accompanied by General James Jamerson, is there to receive an award from the American-Turkish Council. The reason for Plame’s presence there is not known. [[WILSON, 2004, PP. 239-242, 273](#)] However, the American-Turkish Council will later be said to be involved in the smuggling of nuclear weapons material to Turkey and other countries (see [Late 1990s-Early 2001](#) and [Mid-Late 1990s](#)), and Plame’s job at the CIA is in its non-proliferation section (see [Late February 1999](#)), so she may be there for operational reasons. [[SUNDAY TIMES \(LONDON\), 1/6/2008](#); [SUNDAY TIMES \(LONDON\), 1/27/2008](#)]

Entity Tags: [James Jamerson](#), [American-Turkish Council](#), [Valerie Plame Wilson](#), [Joseph C. Wilson](#)

Timeline Tags: [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#), [Niger Uranium and Plame Outing](#)



May 1997: David Edger Is New CIA Chief of Station in Germany



David Edger [*Source: Daily Oklahoma (2002)*] David Edger, a veteran CIA operative, is nominated chief of station at the US embassy in Berlin. [[WASHINGTON POST, 5/1/1997](#)] Previously, Edger had been associate deputy director for operations in the Directorate of Operations (DO) since July 1995. [[ASSOCIATED PRESS, 7/31/1995](#)] The DO is the clandestine operations arm of the CIA. [[TENET, 2007, PP. 18](#)] Many reports in the German and international press indicate that the CIA was monitoring members of the Hamburg cell in the years before 9/11 and tried to recruit informers (see [November 1, 1998-February 2001](#) and [December 1999](#)). Although press reports do not mention him by name, these efforts would have been overseen by Edger. He will later say that the CIA tracked some of the people responsible for the 9/11 attacks in Germany (see [February 12, 2002](#)). Edger will stay in this position until the summer of 2001, when he is appointed to the University of Oklahoma (see [August 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [David Edger](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



June 1997: Panel Finds US Unprepared for WMD Terrorism



A Department of Energy study group chaired by former CIA Director James Woolsey and Harvard professor Joseph Nye warns that the United States is unprepared for the rising threat of a nuclear, biological, or chemical terrorist attack on the homeland. [[SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY REVIEW, 1/1998](#)] Despite the urgency of the threat, Woolsey and Nye say they doubt that the US can really mobilize in time. In an essay published in the Los Angeles Times, they write: “The very nature of US society makes it difficult to prepare for this security problem. Within recent memory, we have not had to battle a foreign invading force on US soil. Because of our ‘Pearl Harbor’ mind-set, we are unlikely to mount an adequate defense until we suffer an attack. Because the threat of terrorism with weapons of mass destruction is amorphous (rogue states, transnational groups, ad hoc groups or individuals) and constantly changing, it is difficult to make predictions and preparations. However, given the current geopolitical state of the world, there is every indication that terrorism will be the most likely physical threat to the US homeland for at least the next decade. Only if we go beyond business as usual and respond in a broader and more systematic manner do we stand a chance of dealing with this problem before the horror of another Pearl Harbor.” [[LOS ANGELES TIMES, 6/1/1997](#); [WASHINGTON DIPLOMAT, 12/2001](#)]

Entity Tags: [James Woolsey](#), [Joseph Nye](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



June 15, 1997: Killer of CIA Officers Captured in Pakistan and Rendered to US



Mir Aimal Kasi, an Islamic militant who killed two CIA officers and wounded another three in 1993 (see [January 25, 1993](#)), is arrested in Pakistan by a joint US-Pakistani team. Betrayal - The capture is a result of reward money offered for information about him. After the shooting, Kasi hid in Pakistan, where he was protected by a local tribal leader. However, the leader decides he would like the reward money, and sends an emissary to the US consulate in Karachi, where he speaks to the FBI and provides evidence the leader can deliver Kasi. Pakistan’s ISI agrees to help and the three agencies send representatives to the town of Dera Ghazi Khan. [[COLL, 2004, PP. 374-5](#); ASSOCIATED PRESS, 12/27/2005] The town is in the Punjab, in

central Pakistan. [[COLUMBIA ENCYCLOPAEDIA, 2007](#)] The tribal leader lures Kasi there and he is captured by the joint team, then rendered to the US.

Tenet's Reaction - CIA Director George Tenet calls hundreds of the agency's staff together to celebrate the operation, declaring, "No terrorist should sleep soundly as long as this agency exists," and encouraging employees to "have a cocktail before noon." [[COLL, 2004, PP. 374-5](#);

ASSOCIATED PRESS, 12/27/2005]

Reason for Rendition - National Security Council official Daniel Benjamin will explain why Kasi and Bojinka plotter Ramzi Yousef (see [February 7, 1995](#)) are not extradited in the normal manner, but rendered: "Both were apprehended in Pakistan, whose leaders decided that the nation would rather not have those two—folk heroes to some—sitting in jail, awaiting extradition. Pakistan's leaders feared that cooperating with the United States would be dangerously unpopular, so they wanted the suspects out of the country quickly." [[WASHINGTON POST, 10/21/2007](#)]

Entity Tags: [Mir Aimal Kasi](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Torture of US Captives](#), [Complete 911 Timeline](#)

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July 11, 1997: George Tenet Becomes New Director of CIA



George J. Tenet becomes the new director of the CIA. He will remain in the position well after 9/11. Tenet was never a CIA field agent, but started his government career as a Congressional aide. From 1993 to 1995 he was a senior intelligence staffer on the National Security Council. He was a CIA deputy director from 1995. In December 1996, John Deutch abruptly resigned as CIA director and Tenet was made acting director until he is confirmed as the new director in July 1997. [[USA TODAY, 10/9/2002](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [John Deutch](#), [George J. Tenet](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)

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After July 11, 1997: CIA Significantly Expands Paramilitary Capacity under New Director Tenet



The CIA significantly expands its paramilitary capacity under new Director George Tenet (see [July 11, 1997](#)). The agency had a large paramilitary arm that had been used during the 1960s and 1970s, for example in Vietnam, but the capacity was wound down following scandals at the end of the 1970s implicating the CIA in assassinations and torture. However, at some

point in the late 1990s the CIA again begins to enlarge its paramilitary unit, known as the Special Operations Group (SOG). [TIME, 12/10/2001; TIME, 2/3/2003] The SOG becomes involved in the CIA's rendition program. [GREY, 2007, PP. 142]

Entity Tags: [CIA Special Operations Group](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Torture of US Captives](#), [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



August 1997: CIA Monitors Central Asia for Oil Reserves



The CIA creates a secret task force to monitor Central Asia's politics and gauge its wealth. Covert CIA officers, some well-trained petroleum engineers, travel through southern Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan to sniff out potential oil reserves. [TIME, 5/4/1998]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



August 21, 1997: US Raids Al-Qaeda Cell Member's House but Fails to Stop Embassy Bombing Plot



The outside and inside of El-Hage's house in Nairobi. These pictures were apparently taken during the 1997 raid and were used as evidence in El-Hage's trial. [Source: FBI] Dan Coleman, an

FBI agent working with Alec Station, the CIA's bin Laden unit, has been examining transcripts from wiretapped phones connected to bin Laden's businesses in Sudan (see [Early 1990s](#)). One frequently called number belongs to Wadih El-Hage, a US citizen who is later revealed to be bin Laden's personal secretary. El-Hage often makes obvious and clumsy attempts to speak in code. The CIA comes to believe that El-Hage might be recruited as an agent. On this day, Coleman, two CIA agents, and a Kenyan police officer enter El-Hage's house in Nairobi, Kenya, with a search warrant. The investigators interview El-Hage (who returned that day from visiting bin Laden in Afghanistan) and confiscate his computer. [[LOS ANGELES TIMES, 10/14/2001](#); [WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 242-244](#)] A large amount of incriminating evidence is discovered in El-Hage's documents and computer files (see [Shortly After August 21, 1997](#) and [Shortly After August 21, 1997](#)). El-Hage moves to the US, where he is interviewed by a grand jury, then let go (see [September 24, 1997](#)). He will be arrested shortly after al-Qaeda bombs the US embassy in Nairobi (see [September 15, 1998](#)). He will be sentenced to life in prison for his role in that attack. State Department officials will later strongly assert that while staffers at the US embassy in Kenya were told about the raid at the time, they were not told about any potential connection to al-Qaeda. However, US intelligence officials strongly assert that the embassy staff was frequently briefed about the bin Laden connection. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 1/9/1999](#)]

Entity Tags: [Wadih El-Hage](#), [US Department of State](#), [Fazul Abdullah Mohammed](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Dan Coleman](#), [Alec Station](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



[Shortly After August 21, 1997: Important Al-Qaeda Contacts Discovered through Seized Address Book](#)



Al Haramain Islamic Foundation's main office in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

[Source: [Bilal Qabalan / Agence France-Presse / Getty Images](#)] Wadih El-Hage has been bin Laden's personal secretary since the early 1990s. When US agents raid his house in Nairobi, Kenya, they seize his address book (see [August 21, 1997](#)), which contains the names and phone numbers for many other al-Qaeda operatives. [[CNN, 5/25/2001](#)] The names discovered in the book include:

- Ali Mohamed, the al-Qaeda double agent living in California. US investigators are already tapping his California phone and have been tapping calls between him and El-Hage since at least 1996 (see [April 1996](#)).
- Mamoun Darkazanli. He is a Syrian-born businessman living in Hamburg, Germany, who has contacts with Mohamed Atta's al-Qaeda cell in the same city. Darkazanli's name and phone number are listed, and El-Hage even has a business card listing El-Hage's address in Texas and Darkazanli's address in Hamburg (see [Late 1998](#)).
- Ghassan Dahduli. He works at two US non-profit organizations, the Islamic Association for Palestine and InfoCom. Both organizations will be shut down for supporting terrorist networks (see [September 16, 1998-September 5, 2001](#)).
- Salah al-Rajhi (see [Shortly After August 21, 1997](#)). He and his brother of Sulaiman Abdul Aziz al-Rajhi, are billionaires and jointly own the Al-Rajhi Banking & Investment Corp. Sulaiman started a network of organizations in Herndon, Virginia known as the SAAR network (named for the four initials in his name). This network will be raided by US officials in 2002 for suspected terrorist funding ties (see [March 20, 2002](#)). [NEWSWEEK, 12/9/2002]
- Ihab Ali Nawawi, an al-Qaeda operative living in Florida. He is referred to as "Ihab Ali" and his location in Tampa, Florida, is mentioned. He will not be arrested until May 1999 (see [May 18, 1999](#)). [UNITED STATES OF AMERICA V. USAMA BIN LADEN, ET AL., DAY 39, 5/3/2001]
- Essam Marzouk. He is linked to both al-Qaeda and Islamic Jihad and is living in Vancouver, Canada at the time. He will later train the 1998 embassy bombers. It is unclear if the link to Marzouk is shared with Canadian intelligence (see [Shortly After August 21, 1997](#)). [NATIONAL POST, 3/19/2002]
- Essam al Ridi. He is a US citizen and a pilot who helped bin Laden buy an airplane in the US in the early 1990s (see [Early 1993](#)). He appears to have no militant ties after that. In late 1999, US prosecutors will contact al Ridi where he is living in Bahrain and convince him to testify against El-Hage and others involved in the 1998 embassy bombings (see [10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998](#)). [CNN, 7/2/2002]
- Farid Adlouni. He is a civil engineer living in Lake Oswego, Oregon. In 1996 and 1997, El-Hage calls Adlouni in Oregon 72 times, sometimes just before or after meeting with bin Laden. Adlouni's home phone and fax numbers are be found in two personal phone directories and one notebook kept by El-Hage (see [Shortly After August 21, 1997](#)). Earlier in 1997, El-Hage also sent him a fax written by al-Qaeda leader Mohammed Atef (see [February 25, 1997](#)). Records show that El-Hage has extensive dealings with Adlouni, mostly by selling gems El-Hage bought in Africa for a better price in the US. The FBI interviews Adlouni twice in late 1997, but he is not arrested. As of 2002, it will be reported that he continues to live in Oregon and remains a "person of interest" and subject of investigation by the FBI. [OREGONIAN, 9/13/2002]
- Khalid al-Fawwaz. He is al-Qaeda's de facto press secretary in London. El-Hage gives al-Fawwaz's correct name, London phone number, and street address, but lists him as living in Texas. Presumably this is a slight attempt at subterfuge. [UNITED STATES OF AMERICA V. USAMA BIN

[LADEN, ET AL., DAY 38, 5/2/2001](#)]

■ A business card in the name Mamdouh M. Salim is found. This is a reference to Mamdouh Mahmud Salim, a known al-Qaeda leader. [[UNITED STATES OF AMERICA V. USAMA BIN LADEN, ET AL., DAY 37, 5/1/2001](#)]

■ A business card belonging to Mansour al-Kadi is found. [[NEW YORKER, 4/21/2008](#)] Al-Kadi is the Deputy General of the Al Haramain Islamic Foundation, a suspect Saudi charity closely linked to the Saudi government. Al-Kadi will be fired in early 2004 and the entire foundation will be shut down several months later (see [March 2002-September 2004](#)). The Treasury Department will later say that Al Haramain has a role in the 1998 African embassy bombings (see [Autumn 1997](#)). [[US TREASURY DEPARTMENT, 9/9/2004](#)]

■ Several business cards relating to the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO). A 1996 CIA report connected the IIRO to terrorist funding, but the IIRO will not be prosecuted due to its close ties to the Saudi government (see [January 1996](#) and [October 12, 2001](#)). [[NEWSWEEK, 12/9/2002](#)]

■ According to author Douglas Farah, the address book is “full of the names of diamond dealers and jewelers, often including the purchaser’s home phone number.” This suggests al-Qaeda could be profiting from the diamond trade in Africa. [[FARAH, 2004, PP. 64-65](#)]
But Farah also will note in 2004 that many of the leads from El-Hage’s address book and other documents discovered around the same time are not fully explored. In fact, he says that “Most of El-Hage’s notebooks, written in Arabic, have still not been translated into English.” [[FARAH, 2004, PP. 64-65](#)]

Entity Tags: [Ihab Ali Nawawi](#), [International Islamic Relief Organization](#), [Mamdouh Mahmud Salim](#), [Khalid al-Fawwaz](#), [Mamoun Darkazanli](#), [Ghassan Dahduli](#), [Farid Adlouni](#), [Ali Mohamed](#), [Essam Marzouk](#), [Essam al Ridi](#), [Wadih El-Hage](#), [Salah al-Rajhi](#), [Mansour al-Kadi](#), [Al Haramain Islamic Foundation](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)

 SHARE

Autumn 1997: CIA Ignores Tip Linking Saudi Charity to Al-Qaeda Plot on US Embassy in Kenya



Al Haramain Foundation’s Kenya office in 2004. [*Source: Associated Press*]An informant tells an intelligence agency allied to the US that the Nairobi,

Kenya, branch of a Saudi charity named the Al Haramain Islamic Foundation is plotting to blow up the US embassy in Nairobi. The chief of the CIA station in Kenya passes on this informant's warning to Ambassador Prudence Bushnell and others at the embassy. On October 31, 1997, the Kenyan government acts on the informants' tip, arresting nine Arabs connected to the charity and seizing their files.

Charity Already Linked to Al-Qaeda Cell in Kenya - A 1996 secret CIA report shows the CIA has already linked Al Haramain to militants, smuggling, drug running, and prostitution (see [January 1996](#)). In August 1997, US intelligence raids the Kenya house of Wadih el-Hage because they correctly believe he is heading an al-Qaeda cell there (see [August 21, 1997](#)). The raid uncovers a business card belonging to Mansour al-Kadi, the Deputy General of Al Haramain's worldwide operations (see [Shortly After August 21, 1997](#)).

CIA Fails to Take Warning Seriously - The CIA sends a special team to analyze the files and finds no evidence of a plot. This team wants to question the nine arrested Arabs, but the CIA station chief refuses to ask the Kenyan government for access to the suspects, saying he doesn't want to bother them any more about the issue. The CIA drops the investigation and the nine Arabs are deported. Ambassador Bushnell is told that the threat has been eliminated. But some members of the CIA team are furious and feel that their investigation was short-circuited. Some intelligence officials believe at the time that members of the charity have ties to bin Laden. [NEW YORK TIMES, 1/9/1999]

Charity Later Linked to Kenya Bombings - The Nairobi embassy will be bombed in August 1998 (see [10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998](#)). In 2004, it will be reported that according to US officials, "A wholesale fish business financed with Al Haramain funds... steered profits to the al-Qaeda cell behind the [embassy bombing]." One of the bombers confessed days after the bombing that this "business was for al-Qaeda." [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 6/7/2004] In 2004, the Treasury Department will say that two members of the Al Haramain branch in the nearby Comoros Islands helped some of the bombers escape from Kenya after the bombings. [US TREASURY DEPARTMENT, 9/9/2004]

Charity Stays Open, Linked to Later Kenya Bombing - A month later after the bombing, the Kenyan government will ban Al Haramain from the country, but its office nonetheless remains open. Some funds connected to it are believed to have helped support the al-Qaeda cell behind the 2002 bombings in Mombasa, Kenya (see [November 28, 2002](#)). Yet Al Haramain's Kenya office still remains open until late 2004, when Al Haramain is shut down worldwide (see [March 2002-September 2004](#)). [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 6/7/2004]

Entity Tags: [Wadih El-Hage](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Prudence Bushnell](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Mansour al-Kadi](#), [Al Haramain Islamic Foundation](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)

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September 18, 1997: CIA Gives Awards to 50 Former Officers to Mark Anniversary



The CIA celebrates its 50th anniversary with a ceremony at its headquarters in Langley, Virginia. Director George Tenet awards special medallions to 50 past and present staff for their outstanding contributions to postwar American intelligence. One of the 50 is David Blee, a former head of the agency's Soviet division (see [1971](#)) and counterintelligence (see [1978](#)), whose citation says the award is for "creating a professional counterintelligence discipline." [[GUARDIAN, 8/22/2000](#)] In total, Blee earns two CIA Distinguished Intelligence Medals, the National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal, and the National Security Medal for his work at the agency. [[LOS ANGELES TIMES, 8/18/2000](#)]

Entity Tags: [David Blee](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Misc Entries](#)



November 1997: No Action Taken After Precise Warning of Embassy Attack



Mustafa Mahmoud Said Ahmed. [*Source: PBS*]An Egyptian named Mustafa Mahmoud Said Ahmed walks into the US embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, and tells CIA officers that he knows of a group planning to blow up the embassy. He reveals that he is part of the group and has already taken surveillance photos of the embassy for the attack. The details he mentions, such as the use of several vehicles and stun grenades, accurately depicts how the attack will actually occur nine months later. He works for an al-Qaeda front company in Kenya. The CIA sends the State Department two intelligence reports on Ahmed's warning, but cautions that he may have fabricated his story. Ahmed is released and deported. He apparently is involved in the bombing of the US embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, on the same day the Nairobi embassy is bombed. Ahmed will contact the British embassy the day after the bombings and offer to help. He is overheard saying that, "I told them everything I knew" and that he had been cooperating with Western officials "since last year." He will reveal important information that leads to the arrest of some of the bombers (see [August 8-15, 1998](#)). [[NEW YORK TIMES, 10/23/1998](#); [NEW YORK TIMES, 1/9/1999](#); [MILLER, STONE, AND MITCHELL, 2002, PP. 205](#)] The State Department is in charge of embassy security, and the department steps up security at the Nairobi embassy for several weeks, but then security measures return to normal. Prudence

Bushnell, the US Ambassador to Kenya, will plead for improved embassy security, but her requests will go unheeded (see [December 1997-Spring 1998](#)). [NEW YORK TIMES, 1/9/1999]

Entity Tags: [Mustafa Mahmoud Said Ahmed](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Prudence Bushnell](#), [US Department of State](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



December 1997: Unocal Establishes Pipeline Training Facility Near Bin Laden's Compound



Thomas Gouttierre. [Source: University of Nebraska]Unocal pays University of Nebraska \$900,000 to set up a training facility near Osama bin Laden's Kandahar compound, to train 400 Afghan teachers, electricians, carpenters and pipe fitters in anticipation of using them for their pipeline in Afghanistan. One hundred and fifty students are already attending classes in southern Afghanistan. Unocal is playing University of Nebraska professor Thomas Gouttierre to develop the training program. Gouttierre travels to Afghanistan and meets with Taliban leaders, and also arranges for some Taliban leaders to visit the US around this time (see [December 4, 1997](#)). [DAILY TELEGRAPH, 12/14/1997; COLL, 2004, PP. 364] It will later be revealed that the CIA paid Gouttierre to head a program at the University of Nebraska that created textbooks for Afghanistan promoting violence and jihad (see [1984-1994](#)). Gouttierre will continue to work with the Taliban after Unocal officially cuts off ties with them. For instance, he will host some Taliban leaders visiting the US in 1999 (see [July-August 1999](#)).

Entity Tags: [Taliban](#), [Unocal](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [University of Nebraska](#), [Thomas Gouttierre](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



December 4, 1997: Taliban Representatives Visit Unocal in Texas



Taliban representatives in Texas, 1997. [Source: *Lions Gate*

Films] Representatives of the Taliban are invited guests to the Texas headquarters of Unocal to negotiate their support for the pipeline. Future President George W. Bush is Governor of Texas at the time. The Taliban appear to agree to a \$2 billion pipeline deal, but will do the deal only if the US officially recognizes the Taliban regime. The Taliban meet with US officials. According to the Daily Telegraph, “the US government, which in the past has branded the Taliban’s policies against women and children ‘despicable,’ appears anxious to please the fundamentalists to clinch the lucrative pipeline contract.” A BBC regional correspondent says that “the proposal to build a pipeline across Afghanistan is part of an international scramble to profit from developing the rich energy resources of the Caspian Sea.” [BBC, 12/4/1997; DAILY TELEGRAPH, 12/14/1997] It has been claimed that the Taliban meet with Enron officials while in Texas (see [1996-September 11, 2001](#)). Enron, headquartered in Texas, has a large financial interest in the pipeline at the time (see [June 24, 1996](#)). The Taliban also visit Thomas Gouttierre, an academic at the University of Nebraska, who is a consultant for Unocal and also has been paid by the CIA for his work in Afghanistan (see [1984-1994](#) and [December 1997](#)). Gouttierre takes them on a visit to Mt. Rushmore. [DREYFUSS, 2005, PP. 328-329]

Entity Tags: [Unocal](#), [Thomas Gouttierre](#), [Clinton administration](#), [Enron Corporation](#), [George W. Bush](#), [Taliban](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



1998 and After: CIA Instigates Co-operation with Uzbekistan against Taliban and Al-Qaeda



Beginning in 1998, if not before, Uzbekistan and the CIA secretly create a joint counterterrorist strike force, funded and trained by the CIA. This force conducts joint covert operations against the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. [TIMES OF INDIA, 10/14/2001; WASHINGTON POST, 10/14/2001; VANITY FAIR, 11/2004] In February 1999, radical Muslims fail in an attempt to assassinate Islam Karimov, the leader of Uzbekistan, leading to a crackdown on Uzbek militants. CIA counterterrorism head Cofer Black and bin Laden unit chief Richard Blee see this as an opportunity to increase co-operation with Uzbekistan, and fly to the Uzbek

capital of Tashkent to seal an agreement with Karimov. One hope is that a strike force will be established to snatch Osama bin Laden or one of his lieutenants. Karimov also allows CIA transit and helicopter operations at Uzbek air bases, as well as the installation of CIA and NSA monitoring equipment to intercept Taliban and al-Qaeda communications. The CIA is pleased with the new allies, thinking them better than Pakistan's ISI, but at the White House some National Security Council members are skeptical. One will comment, "Uzbek motivations were highly suspect to say the least." There are also worries about Uzbek corruption, human rights abuses, and scandal. [[COLL, 2004, PP. 456-460](#)]

Entity Tags: [Taliban](#), [Richard Blee](#), [Uzbekistan](#), [United States](#), [Cofer Black](#), [Islam Karimov](#), [Alec Station](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



February 1998: Western Intelligence Learns North Korean Diplomat Procuring Items for Nuclear Program in Russia



Western intelligence agencies learn that Kang Thae Yun, a North Korean diplomat who facilitates nuclear co-operation between his government and Pakistan, is involved in negotiations between the Pakistan-based Tabani Corporation and a Russian company that makes mass spectrometers, lasers, and carbon fiber. They also learn he is discussing a purchase of maraging steel, which can be used in a nuclear program, but this steel is for his own government. The knowledge spurs MI6 and the CIA to increase their efforts to find out whether the North Koreans have established a cascade to weaponize uranium using technology obtained from Pakistani nuclear scientist A. Q. Khan. [[LEVY AND SCOTT-CLARK, 2007, PP. 279-180](#)]

Entity Tags: [UK Secret Intelligence Service \(MI6\)](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Tabani Corporation](#), [Kang Thae Yun](#)

Timeline Tags: [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)



February 18, 1998: Former CIA Director Says First Gulf War Motivated by Oil



Former CIA director James Woolsey participates in an online discussion on Time's weekly forum on the topic of Iraq. At one point, he is asked if he thinks the US is capable of launching a successful military attack against Iraq given the lack of support from US allies. Woolsey responds: "It will be harder but perhaps not impossible. The key holdout is Saudi

Arabia—and it is indeed aggravating that even though we went to war in 1991 principally to protect its oil, they are unwilling to let us launch air strikes from their country.” [TIME, 2/18/1998]

Entity Tags: [James Woolsey](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#), [Neoconservative Influence](#)



Late Spring 1998: Kenyan Intelligence Tries to Warn CIA about Embassy Attack



“Just months before” the US embassy bombings (see [10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998](#)), Kenyan intelligence warns the CIA about an imminent plot to attack the US embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. Paul Muite, a prominent lawyer and legislator in Kenya, later says he was told the CIA showed the Kenyan warning to the Mossad, who was dismissive about its reliability. The CIA then chose to ignore it. [MILLER, STONE, AND MITCHELL, 2002, PP. 206]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Kenya](#), [Paul Muite](#), [Israel Institute for Intelligence and Special Tasks \(Mossad\)](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



April-May 1998: CIA’s Bin Laden Unit Almost Disbanded



The CIA’s bin Laden unit, first created in early 1996 (see [February 1996](#)), is ordered disbanded. It is unclear who gave the order. The unit appears to have been the most vocal section of the US government pushing for action against bin Laden. Apparently CIA Director George Tenet is unaware of the plans to disband the unit. He intervenes in mid-May and preserves the unit. Michael Scheuer, the head of the unit, later will comment that by doing so, Tenet “dodged the bullet of having to explain to the American people why the [CIA] thought bin Laden was so little of a threat that it had destroyed the bin Laden unit weeks before two US embassies were demolished.” Scheuer also will comment, “the on-again, off-again signals about the unit’s future status made for confusion, distraction, and much job-hunting in the last few weeks” before the embassy attacks. [ATLANTIC MONTHLY, 12/2004]

Entity Tags: [Michael Scheuer](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Alec Station](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Late April 1998 and Shortly After: Tenet Unhappy over Saudi Information Sharing, Suggests Al-Qaeda Leader Wants to Assassinate Vice President



When Saudi authorities foil a plot by al-Qaeda manager Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri to smuggle missiles into the kingdom (see [1997](#)), CIA director George Tenet becomes so concerned they are withholding information about the plot from the US that he flies to Saudi Arabia to meet Interior Minister Prince Nayef. Tenet is concerned because he believes that the four antitank missiles smuggled in from Yemen by al-Nashiri, head of al-Qaeda operations in the Arabian peninsula, may be intended for an assassination attempt on Vice President Albert Gore, who is to visit Saudi Arabia shortly. Tenet and another CIA manager are unhappy about the information being withheld and Tenet flies to Riyadh “to underscore the importance of sharing such information.” Tenet obtains “a comprehensive report on the entire Sagger missile episode” from Interior Minister Prince Nayef by making a not-so-veiled threat about negative publicity for Saudi Arabia in the US press. [TENET, 2007, PP. 105-6] It will later be reported that the militants’ plan is apparently to use the armor-piercing missiles to attack the armored limousines of members of the Saudi royal family. [NEW YORK TIMES, 12/23/2002] There are no reports of the planned attack being carried out, so it appears to fail due to the confiscation of the missiles. However, al-Nashiri will later be identified as a facilitator of the East African embassy bombings (see [August 22-25 1998](#)) and will attend a summit of al-Qaeda operatives in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, which is monitored by local authorities and the CIA (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)).

Entity Tags: [Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



May 1998: CIA Director Prefers Saudi Plan to Bribe Taliban over Direct Action against Bin Laden



According to author James Risen, CIA Director George Tenet and other top CIA officials travel to Saudi Arabia to meet with Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, the de facto ruler of the country. Tenet wants Abdullah to address the problem of bin Laden. He requests that bin Laden not be given to the US to be put on trial but that he be given to the Saudis instead. Abdullah agrees as long as it can be a secret arrangement. Tenet sends a memo to National Security Adviser Sandy Berger, recommending that the CIA allow the Saudis to essentially bribe the Taliban to turn him over. Around the same time, Tenet cancels the CIA’s own operation to get bin Laden

(see [1997-May 29, 1998](#)). [[RISEN, 2006, PP. 183-184](#)] That same month, Wyche Fowler, the US ambassador to Saudi Arabia, tells Berger to let the Saudis take the lead against bin Laden. [[SCHEUER, 2008, PP. 274](#)] Prince Turki al-Faisal, the head of Saudi intelligence, does go to Afghanistan in June and/or July of 1998 to make a secret deal, though with whom he meets and what is agreed upon is highly disputed (see [June 1998](#) and [July 1998](#)). But it becomes clear after the failed US missile attack on bin Laden in August 1998 (see [August 20, 1998](#)) that the Taliban has no intention of turning bin Laden over to anyone. Risen later comments, “By then, the CIA’s capture plan was dead, and the CIA had no other serious alternatives in the works.... It is possible that the crown prince’s offer of assistance simply provided Tenet and other top CIA officials an easy way out of a covert action plan that they had come to believe represented far too big of a gamble.” [[RISEN, 2006, PP. 183-184](#)]

Entity Tags: [Turki al-Faisal](#), [Wyche Fowler](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Sandy Berger](#), [Abdullah bin Abdulaziz al-Saud](#), [James Risen](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



May 22, 1998: Clinton Creates Counterterrorism ‘Tsar’ Post; Selects Richard Clarke



President Clinton creates the new post of National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure, Protection, and Counterterrorism. He names Richard Clarke for the job, and due to the length of the title, Clarke soon becomes known as the counterterrorism “tsar.” [[NEW YORK TIMES, 5/23/1998](#); [WASHINGTON POST, 4/2/2000](#)] This position is outlined in a new presidential directive on counterterrorism, Presidential Decision Directive 62 (PDD-62), which also outlines goals of fighting terrorism and attempts to strengthen interagency coordination of counterterrorism efforts. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 3/24/2004](#)] Clarke, who had been working on terrorism issues since the start of the Clinton administration, has more symbolic than actual power in the new position. For instance, he only has a staff of 12, compared to a staff of hundreds for the drug “tsar,” and by law he is not allowed to order law enforcement agents, soldiers, or spies to do anything. He does not have any control over budgets. But he is allowed to sit on Cabinet level meetings that involve terrorism. [[CLARKE, 2004, PP. 170](#); [9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 101](#)] Clarke has a long record of prior government service, beginning in 1973 as a nuclear weapons analyst in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. [[CBS NEWS, 3/30/2004](#)] He came to prominence in the Reagan administration as the deputy assistant secretary of state for intelligence from 1985 to 1989. Having left the State Department in 1992, he has spent the past six years on the National Security Council staff. [[WASHINGTON POST, 3/13/2003](#); [BBC, 3/22/2004](#); [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 3/27/2004](#)] After 9/11 Clarke will become well known for his criticisms of the George W. Bush administration (see [March 21, 2004](#) and [March 24, 2004](#)), but some who know him consider him to be politically conservative. [[BOSTON GLOBE, 3/29/2004](#)] According to the Washington Post, many within the Clinton administration view Clarke as a hawk. [[WASHINGTON POST, 3/23/2004](#)] Robert Gelbard, who worked with him at the State Department in the early 1990s, says he is

“no liberal. He is very hawkish.” [\[US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT, 4/5/2004\]](#) Vince Cannistraro, a former CIA official who worked with Clarke in the 1980s, says, “You can’t accuse him of being passive or too liberal on foreign policy.” [\[WASHINGTON POST, 3/23/2004\]](#) At the time of the 2000 election he will be a registered Republican, and he votes that year for John McCain in the Republican presidential primary. [\[NEW YORK TIMES, 3/23/2004\]](#); [SALON, 3/24/2004](#); [TIME, 4/5/2004](#) Larry DiCara, the former president of the Boston City Council who knew Clarke when he was younger, later recalls: “He was fiercely conservative at a time when just about everyone in Boston was a Democrat.... I’m amazed he worked for [President] Clinton.” Clarke, however, will later praise Clinton, and in an interview in 2002 will describe himself as “not a partisan figure.” [\[BOSTON GLOBE, 3/29/2004\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Vincent Cannistraro](#), [Larry DiCara](#), [Robert Gelbard](#), [Richard A. Clarke](#), [William Jefferson \(“Bill”\) Clinton](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



May 28, 1998: Bin Laden Wants to Use Missiles against US Aircraft; Possibly Given Doctored Phone Battery



During his interview with John Miller, bin Laden is positioned in front of East Africa on a map, and US embassies will be bombed in East Africa several months later. Bin Laden has considered it his religious duty to give warning before attacks and thus has left clues like this. *[Source: CNN]* In an interview with ABC News reporter John Miller, Osama bin Laden indicates he may attack a US military passenger aircraft using anti-aircraft missiles. Bin Laden says: “We are sure of our victory. Our battle with the Americans is larger than our battle with the Russians.... We predict a black day for America and the end of the United States as United States, and will be separate states, and will retreat from our land and collect the bodies of its sons back to America.” In the subsequent media coverage, Miller will repeatedly refer to bin Laden as “the world’s most dangerous terrorist,” and “the most dangerous man in the world.” [\[ABC NEWS, 5/28/1998\]](#); [ABC NEWS, 6/12/1998](#); [ESQUIRE, 2/1999](#); [US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003\]](#) The book *The Looming Tower* by Lawrence

Wright will later note, “Looming behind his head was a large map of Africa, an unremarked clue.” [WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 264] Bin Laden admits to knowing Wali Khan Amin Shah, one of the Bojinka plotters (see [June 1996](#)), but denies having met Bojinka plotter Ramzi Yousef or knowing about the plot itself. [PBS FRONTLINE, 10/3/2002] A Virginia man named Tarik Hamdi (see [March 20, 2002](#)) helped set up Miller’s interview. He goes with Miller to Afghanistan and gives bin Laden a new battery for his satellite phone (see [November 1996-Late August 1998](#)). Vincent Cannistraro, former head of the CIA’s Counterterrorist Center, will later claim that this battery was somehow bugged to help the US monitor bin Laden. [NEWSWEEK, 8/10/2005] In 2005, Miller will become the FBI’s assistant director of the Office of Public Affairs. [ALL HEADLINE NEWS, 8/24/2005]

Entity Tags: [John Miller](#), [Operation Bojinka](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Vincent Cannistraro](#), [Wali Khan Amin Shah](#), [Tarik Hamdi](#), [Ramzi Yousef](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



May 30, 1998: Pakistan Conducts Last of Six Nuclear Bomb Tests, Plutonium Possibly Used



Pakistan conducts the sixth and last of a series of nuclear bomb tests that started two days earlier (see [May 28, 1998](#)). Samples taken by US aircraft over the site indicate that the test may have involved plutonium, whereas uranium bombs were used for the other five. After the US learns that the tests are witnessed by Kang Thae Yun, a North Korean involved in that country’s proliferation network (see [Early June 1998](#)), and other North Korean officials, it will speculate that the final test was performed by Pakistan for North Korea, which is better known for its plutonium bomb program. Authors Adrian Levy and Catherine Scott-Clark will comment, “In terms of nuclear readiness, this placed North Korea far ahead of where the CIA had thought it was, since [North Korea] had yet to conduct any hot tests of its own.” [LEVY AND SCOTT-CLARK, 2007, PP. 278]

Entity Tags: [Kang Thae Yun](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#), [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)



Summer 1998: CIA Breaks up Islamic Jihad Cell in Albania



A joint surveillance operation conducted by the CIA and Albanian intelligence identifies an Islamic Jihad cell that is allegedly planning to bomb the US Embassy in Tirana, Albania’s capital. The cell was created in the early 1990s by Mohammed al-Zawahiri, brother of Islamic

Jihad and al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri. The operation intercepts lengthy discussions between the cell and Ayman. [NEW YORKER, 2/8/2005; WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 269] At the behest of the US government, Egypt, which is co-operating with the US over renditions (see [Summer 1995](#)), issues an arrest warrant for Shawki Salama Attiya, one of the militants in the cell. Albanian forces then arrest Attiya and four of the other suspected militants. A sixth suspect is killed, but two more escape. The men are taken to an abandoned airbase, where they are interrogated by the CIA, and then flown by a CIA-chartered plane to Cairo, Egypt, for further interrogation. The men are tortured after arriving in Egypt:

- Ahmed Saleh is suspended from the ceiling and given electric shocks; he is later hanged for a conviction resulting from a trial held in his absence;
- Mohamed Hassan Tita is hung from his wrists and given electric shocks to his feet and back;
- Attiya is given electric shocks to his genitals, suspended by his limbs and made to stand for hours in filthy water up to his knees;
- Ahmed al-Naggar is kept in a room for 35 days with water up to his knees, and has electric shocks to his nipples and penis; he is later hanged for an offence for which he was convicted in absentia;
- Essam Abdel-Tawwab will also describe more torture for which prosecutors later find “recovered wounds.”

On August 5, 1998, a letter by Ayman al-Zawahiri will be published that threatens retaliation for the Albanian abductions (see [August 5, 1998](#)). Two US embassies in Africa will be bombed two days later (see [10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998](#)). [WASHINGTON POST, 3/11/2002, PP. A01; NEW YORKER, 2/8/2005; GREY, 2007, PP. 128] The US State Department will later speculate that the timing of the embassy bombings was in fact in retaliation for these arrests. [OTTAWA CITIZEN, 12/15/2001]

Entity Tags: [Mohamed Hassan Tita](#), [Shawki Salama Attiya](#), [Mohammed al-Zawahiri](#), [Albania](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Ahmed Saleh](#), [Ahmed al-Naggar](#), [Ayman al-Zawahiri](#), [Essam Abdel-Tawwab](#), [Islamic Jihad](#)

Timeline Tags: [Torture of US Captives](#), [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [Kosovar Albanian Struggle](#)



July 1998-February 2000: CIA Renders Over Two Dozen Islamic Militant Operatives



In February 2000, CIA Director George Tenet testifies to Congress, “Since July 1998, working with foreign governments worldwide, we have helped to render more than two dozen terrorists to justice. More than half were associates of Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaeda organization.” Renditions are a policy of grabbing a suspect off the street of one country and taken the person to another where he was wanted for a crime or questioning without going through the normal legal and diplomatic procedures. [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 12/27/2005] The CIA had a policy of rendering Islamic Jihad suspects to Egypt since 1995 (see [Summer 1995](#)). In July

1998, the CIA discovered a laptop containing organizational charts and locations of al-Qaeda and Islamic Jihad operatives, so presumably these renditions are a direct result of that intelligence find (see [Late August 1998](#)).

Entity Tags: [George J. Tenet](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Islamic Jihad](#)

Timeline Tags: [Torture of US Captives](#), [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



August 1998: CIA Warns That Arab Militants Plan to Fly Bomb-Laden Plane From Libya into WTC



A foreign intelligence agency warns the FBI's New York office that Arab militants plan to fly a bomb-laden aircraft from Libya into the World Trade Center. The FBI and the FAA do not take the threat seriously because of the state of aviation in Libya. Later, other intelligence information will connect this group to al-Qaeda. The CIA will include the same information in an intelligence report. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 9/18/2002](#); [US CONGRESS, 9/18/2002](#); [US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,](#)

[11/2004, PP. 97-98](#)] An FBI spokesperson later says the report "was not ignored, it was thoroughly investigated by numerous agencies" and found to be unrelated to al-Qaeda. [[WASHINGTON POST, 9/19/2002](#)] However, the 9/11 Congressional Inquiry will come to the conclusion that the group in fact did have ties to al-Qaeda. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 9/18/2002](#); [US](#)

[CONGRESS, 7/24/2003](#)]

Entity Tags: [Federal Aviation Administration](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [World Trade Center](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



August 6, 1998: Al-Qaeda Evacuates Afghanistan Training Camps in Anticipation of Immediate US Retaliation after Embassy Bombings





Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah. This picture appears to be a colorized version of his more common black and white passport picture. [Source: FBI] After the African embassy bombings, a bomber named Mohammed Saddiq Odeh confesses his role to the FBI. In doing so, he describes a conversation he had with Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah, one of the leaders of the bomb plot. According to the later court testimony of an FBI agent, Abdullah tells Odeh on August 6, 1998, one day before the bombings: “I just got news from Kandahar, which is an area in Afghanistan, that all the people have been evacuated. And Odeh says, what do you mean? And he says, well, we’re expecting a retaliation by the United States Navy, we’re expecting their warplanes to start hitting us and we’re expecting missile attacks.” [UNITED STATES OF AMERICA V. USAMA BIN LADEN, ET AL., DAY 12, 2/28/2001] Presumably, US intelligence would notice such evacuations, as they are closely monitoring al-Qaeda’s training camps in Afghanistan at the time. For instance, Michael Scheuer, head of the CIA’s bin Laden unit at the time, will later say that since the 1980s, “the CIA and the US intelligence community kept a steady, inquisitive, and increasingly knowledgeable eye on these facilities.” [SCHEUER, 2008, PP. 32]

Entity Tags: [Michael Scheuer](#), [Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah](#), [Mohammed Saddiq Odeh](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Before August 7, 1998: CIA Has Multiple Informants in Al-Qaeda Cell Planning African Embassy Bombings



In his 1999 book *The New Jackals*, journalist Simon Reeve will claim, “The CIA... had informants working within the East Africa cell, but they apparently failed to warn of bin Laden’s plans” to bomb the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania (see [10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998](#)). Reeve says this information comes from a current unnamed CIA official. [REEVE, 1999, PP. 199, 220] Reeve is referring to the cell led by Wadih El-Hage and Fazul Abdullah Mohammed (a.k.a. Haroun Fazul). US intelligence had been aware of the cell and monitoring it since at least April 1996 (see [April 1996](#)). One of the informants mentioned above might be Mustafa Mahmoud Said Ahmed (see [November 1997](#)), but it is unknown who the other or

others could be. Reeve will also claim that US moles within al-Qaeda provide information leading to multiple arrests after the bombings (see [Late 1998](#)).

Entity Tags: [Simon Reeve](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



5:30 a.m., August 7, 1998: Bomber Arrested in Pakistan Four Hours before Embassy Bombings; US Officials Keep His Immediate Confession Secret for Over a Week



At approximately 5:30 in the morning, Kenya time, Mohammed Saddiq Odeh is arrested at the airport in Karachi, Pakistan. Odeh is one of the bombers in the embassy bombings which take place four hours later in Kenya and Tanzania (see [10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998](#)). [[UNITED STATES OF AMERICA V. USAMA BIN LADEN, ET AL., DAY 38, 5/2/2001](#)]

Odeh Stopped Because of Alert Inspector or CIA? - He had flown out of Nairobi, Kenya, the night before, with his plane stopping in Dubai on the way to Pakistan (see [August 6-7, 1998](#)). According to some accounts, an inspector notices that Odeh's passport picture has a beard, while Odeh does not have a beard and looks different. Furthermore, Odeh is unable to look the inspector in the eyes. But according to UPI, he is stopped because he had been identified by the CIA. In any case, over the next hours, he is handed over to intelligence officers and makes a full confession. He admits that he is a member of al-Qaeda, led by bin Laden, and that he is the head of the al-Qaeda cell in Kenya. He even gives the address of the villa where the bomb was built and the names of the other bombers. [[BERGEN, 2001, PP. 116](#); [UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL, 1/2/2001](#); [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 4/3/2001](#); [MILLER, STONE, AND MITCHELL, 2002, PP. 213](#)]

False or Mistaken Account by CIA Officer - CIA officer Gary Berntsen heads the CIA's emergency deployment team to Tanzania in the immediate wake of the bombings. He will improbably claim in a 2005 book that the US at first primarily suspects Hezbollah. According to him, it is only on August 15 when a CIA officer in Karachi happens to notice an article saying that an Arab traveling on a false passport was arrested in Karachi near the time of the bombings. This is discovered to be Odeh, who is transferred to US custody. Only then does al-Qaeda's involvement become clear. Perhaps to support this timeline, Berntsen also falsely claims that another bomber, Mohamed al-Owhali, is arrested on August 15 when in fact he is arrested three days earlier. [[UNITED STATES OF AMERICA V. USAMA BIN LADEN, ET AL., DAY 38, 5/2/2001](#); [BERNTSEN AND PEZZULLO, 2005](#)]

Odeh's Confession and Other Al-Qaeda Evidence Kept Secret for Days - Publicly, the US does not link any evidence from the bombing to al-Qaeda until August 17, when Odeh's confession is finally mentioned in front page news stories. Even then, the story is based on accounts from Pakistani officials and US officials say they cannot confirm it. [[WASHINGTON POST, 8/17/1998](#)] In fact, there is a wealth of information immediately tying al-Qaeda to the bombings that is kept secret, including wiretaps of many of the bombers (see [April 1996](#) and [May 1998](#)), informants

in the cell (see [Before August 7, 1998](#)), and even a statement of responsibility that was intercepted hours before the bombings had occurred (see [August 5-7, 1998](#)).

Entity Tags: [Mohammed Sadiq Odeh](#), [Mohamed al-Owhali](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Gary Berntsen](#), [Al-Qaeda](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998: Al-Qaeda Bombs US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, Killing Over 200



Bombings of the Nairobi, Kenya, US embassy

(left), and the Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, US embassy (right). [Source: *Associated Press*] (click image to enlarge) Two US embassies in Africa are bombed within minutes of each other. At 10:35, local time, a suicide car bomb attack in Nairobi, Kenya, kills 213 people, including 12 US nationals, and injures more than 4,500. Mohamed al-Owhali and someone known only as Azzam are the suicide bombers, but al-Owhali runs away at the last minute and survives. Four minutes later, a suicide car bomb attack in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, kills 11 and injures 85. The attacks are blamed on al-Qaeda. Hamden Khalif Allah Awad is the suicide bomber there. [PBS FRONTLINE, 2001; UNITED STATES OF AMERICA V. USAMA BIN LADEN, ET AL., DAY 38, 5/2/2001] The Tanzania death toll is low because, remarkably, the attack takes place on a national holiday so the US embassy there is closed. [MILLER, STONE, AND MITCHELL, 2002, PP. 195] The attack shows al-Qaeda has a capability for simultaneous attacks. The Tanzania bombing appears to have been a late addition, as one of the arrested bombers allegedly told US agents that it was added to the plot only about 10 days in advance. [UNITED STATE OF AMERICA V. USAMA BIN LADEN, ET AL., DAY 14, 3/7/2001] A third attack against the US embassy in Uganda does not take place due to a last minute delay (see [August 7, 1998](#)). [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 9/25/1998] August 7, 1998, is the eighth anniversary of the arrival of US troops in Saudi Arabia, and some speculate that is the reason for the date of the bombings. [GUNARATNA, 2003, PP. 46] In the 2002 book *The Cell*, reporters John Miller, Michael Stone, and Chris Miller will write, “What has become clear with time is that facets of the East Africa plot had been known beforehand to the FBI, the CIA, the State Department, and to Israeli and Kenyan intelligence services.... [N]o one can seriously argue that the horrors of August 7, 1998, couldn’t have been prevented.” They will also comment, “Inexplicable as the intelligence failure was, more baffling still was that al-Qaeda correctly

presumed that a major attack could be carried out by a cell that US agents had already uncovered.” [MILLER, STONE, AND MITCHELL, 2002, PP. 195, 206] After 9/11, it will come to light that three of the alleged hijackers, Khalid Almihdhar, Nawaf Alhazmi, and Salem Alhazmi, had some involvement in the bombings (see [October 4, 2001](#), [Late 1999](#), and [1993-1999](#)) and that the US intelligence community was aware of this involvement by late 1999 (see [December 15-31, 1999](#)), if not before.

Entity Tags: [Hamden Khalif Allah Awad](#), [Mohamed al-Owhali](#), [Salem Alhazmi](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Azzam](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



After August 7, 1998: CIA Focuses on Yemeni Terror Group, London Connection Found to Be 'Crucial'



Following al-Qaeda's bombing of two US embassies in East Africa, the CIA notices that the Islamic Army of Aden (IAA), an al-Qaeda affiliate, has praised the attack on its website. Also noting Yemeni links to the bombing itself, the CIA turns its attention to the IAA and its leader Zein al-Abidine Almihdhar. The CIA is assisted in this by the local Yemeni authorities. Officials in the Yemeni capital of Sana'a begin to compile a dossier on Almihdhar and his links to the West, including his fundraisers and supporters in Britain. They identify Finsbury Park mosque, run by British intelligence informer Abu Hamza al-Masri, as "crucial" to the IAA's operations. Almihdhar has a co-operation agreement with Abu Hamza (see [June 1998](#)) that provides him with money and recruits, and an IAA emissary will allegedly visit London in September (see [September 1998](#)). [ONEILL AND MCGRORY, 2006, PP. 163-164]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Abu Hamza al-Masri](#), [Islamic Army of Aden](#), [Finsbury Park Mosque](#), [Zein al-Abidine Almihdhar](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



August 1998-September 11, 2001: Spanish and CIA Fail to Share Spanish Surveillance with Germany





Barakat Yarkas (a.k.a. Abu Dahdah). [Source: Associated Press]

A German newspaper will later note, “For much of the 1990s, the Spanish ran an impressive operation against a Madrid al-Qaeda cell, led by Barakat Yarkas, also known as Abu Dahdah. Wiretaps on Yarkas’s phone had revealed that he was in regular contact with [Mohammed Haydar] Zammar and [Mamoun] Darkazanli.” Spanish intelligence began monitoring Yarkas’ cell in 1997, if not earlier (see [1995 and After](#)). It shares this information with the CIA, but not with German intelligence. The CIA also fails to share the information with Germany. A top German intelligence official will later complain, “We simply don’t understand why they didn’t give it to us.” [STERN, 8/13/2003] Spanish intelligence monitors dozens of telephone calls between Darkazanli in Hamburg and suspected al-Qaeda operatives in Spain starting at least by August 1998. On at least four occasions, Darkazanli is monitored as he travels to Spain and visits Yarkas and Mohammed Galeb Kalaje Zouaydi (who will be arrested in Spain in 2002 on charges of being a key al-Qaeda financier (see [April 23, 2002](#))). [CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 10/19/2003] For instance, at the end of January 2000, Darkazanli is monitored by Spanish intelligence as he meets with Yarkas and some other some suspected al-Qaeda figures. Because the CIA and Spanish intelligence fail to share any of this surveillance information with German intelligence, the Germans are unable to see clear links between Hamburg al-Qaeda operatives and the rest of the al-Qaeda network in Europe. [CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 11/17/2002] The Spanish will continue to monitor Yarkas and those he communicates with until 9/11, and in fact, in late August 2001 one of his associates will apparently make an oblique reference to the 9/11 attacks (see [August 27, 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [Centro Nacional de Inteligencia](#), [Mamoun Darkazanli](#), [Germany](#), [Mohammed Galeb Kalaje Zouaydi](#), [Barakat Yarkas](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Mohammed Haydar Zammar](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Mid-August 1998: Clinton Authorizes Assassination of bin Laden



President Clinton signs a Memorandum of Notification, which authorizes the CIA to plan the capture of bin Laden using force. The CIA draws up detailed profiles of bin Laden’s daily routines, where he sleeps, and his travel arrangements. The assassination never happens, supposedly because of inadequate intelligence. However, as one officer later says, “you can keep setting the bar higher and higher, so that nothing ever gets done.” An officer who helped draw up the plans says, “We were ready to move” but “we were not allowed to do it because of this stubborn policy of risk avoidance... It is a disgrace.” [PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, 9/16/2001] Additional memoranda quickly follow that authorize the assassination of up to ten other al-Qaeda leaders, and authorize the shooting down of private aircraft containing bin Laden. [WASHINGTON POST, 12/19/2001] However, “These directives [lead] to nothing.” [NEW YORKER, 7/28/2003]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [William Jefferson \(“Bill”\) Clinton](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



August 19, 1998: CIA Learns Bin Laden’s Travel Plans before Missile Strike



Through its own monitoring of Osama bin Laden’s satellite phone, the CIA determines that he intends to travel to a training camp in Khost, in eastern Afghanistan. The CIA has to use its own equipment to do this because of a dispute with the NSA, which refused to provide it with full details of its intercepts of bin Laden’s calls (see [December 1996](#)). Although the CIA can only get half of what the NSA gets, shortly after the attacks on US embassies in East Africa (see [10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998](#)), it determines that bin Laden will travel to Khost the next day. On that day, the US launches several missile strikes, one of which is against Khost (see [August 20, 1998](#)), but bin Laden does not travel there, evading the missiles. Some will later claim that bin Laden changes his mind on the way there for no particular reason, but there will also be allegations that the Pakistani ISI warned him of the upcoming attack (see [July 1999](#)). [WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 283]

Entity Tags: [National Security Agency](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



August 20, 1998: ISI Alerts Bin Laden and Taliban to US Missile Strike





A US surface ship firing a missile. The date and time

is unknown. [Source: PBS] Hours before the US missile strike meant to assassinate bin Laden, he is warned that his satellite phone is being used to track his location and he turns it off. A former CIA official later alleges the warning came from supporters working for Pakistani intelligence, the ISI. [REEVE, 1999, PP. 201-202] It has been claimed that a tracking beacon was placed in bin Laden's phone when a replacement battery was brought to him in May 1998 (see [May 28, 1998](#)). The US military only gave Pakistan about ten minutes' advance notice that cruise missiles were entering their air space on their way to Afghanistan. This was done to make sure the missiles wouldn't be misidentified and shot down. [NEW YORKER, 1/24/2000] But Pakistan was apparently aware several hours earlier, as soon as the missiles were launched. Counterterrorism "tsar" Richard Clarke later claims he was promised by the Navy that it would fire their missiles from below the ocean surface. However, in fact, many destroyers fired their missiles from the surface. [CLARKE, 2004, PP. 188-89] He adds, "not only did they use surface ships—they brought additional ones in, because every captain wants to be able to say he fired the cruise missile." [NEW YORKER, 7/28/2003] As a result, the ISI had many hours to alert bin Laden. Furthermore, Clarke later says, "I have reason to believe that a retired head of the ISI was able to pass information along to al-Qaeda that an attack was coming." This is a likely reference to Hamid Gul, director of the ISI in the early 1990's. [NEW YORKER, 7/28/2003] In 1999 the US will intercept communications suggesting that Gul played a role in forewarning the Taliban about the missile strike which may even had predated the firing of the cruise missiles (see [July 1999](#)). Clarke says he believes that "if the [ISI] wanted to capture bin Laden or tell us where he was, they could have done so with little effort. They did not cooperate with us because ISI saw al-Qaeda as helpful in pressuring India, particularly in Kashmir." [CLARKE, 2004, PP. 188-89] Furthermore, bin Laden cancels a meeting with other al-Qaeda leaders after finding out that 180 US diplomats were being immediately withdrawn from Pakistan on a chartered plane. Thanks to these warnings, he is hundreds of miles away from his training camps when the missiles hit some hours later (see [August 20, 1998](#)). [REEVE, 1999, PP. 202]

Entity Tags: [Osama bin Laden](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Hamid Gul](#), [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#), [Taliban](#), [Richard A. Clarke](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



August 24, 1998: Bombed Training Camps Were Built by US and Allies



A satellite image of the Zhawar Kili training camp in Afghanistan, taken shortly before it was hit by a US missile strike in August, 1998. [Source: Corbis] (click image to enlarge) The New York Times reports that the training camps recently attacked by the US in Afghanistan were built by the US and its allies, years before. The US and Saudi Arabia gave the Afghans between \$6 billion and \$40 billion to fight the Soviets in the 1980s (see [December 8, 1979](#)). Many of the people targeted by the missile attacks were trained and equipped by the CIA years before. [NEW YORK TIMES, 8/24/1998]

Entity Tags: [United States](#), [Soviet Union](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Saudi Arabia](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)

EVENTS

Page 5 of 19 (1807 events (use filters to narrow search))

[previous](#) | [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#), [12](#), [13](#), [14](#), [15](#), [16](#), [17](#), [18](#), [19](#) | [next](#)

Late August 1998: US Intelligence Community Begins Joint Surveillance of Al-Qaeda Communications Hub



Al-Qaeda's communications hub in Sana'a, Yemen.

[Source: PBS NOVA] The investigation of the East Africa embassy bombings (see [10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998](#)) led to the discovery of the phone number of an al-Qaeda communications hub in Sana'a, Yemen (see [August 4-25, 1998](#)). The hub is run by an al-Qaeda veteran named Ahmed al-Hada, who is helped by his son Samir and is related to many other al-Qaeda operatives in Yemen and elsewhere. He is also the father in law of 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar, whose wife, Hoda al-Hada, lives at the hub with their children. [NEWSWEEK, 6/2/2002; DIE ZEIT (HAMBURG), 10/1/2002; MSNBC, 7/21/2004; SUSKIND, 2006, PP. 94; WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 277, 309, 343, 378] Several of Ahmed al-Hada's relatives die fighting for al-Qaeda before 9/11, a fact known to US intelligence. [LOS ANGELES TIMES, 12/21/2005; GUARDIAN, 2/15/2006] The NSA may already be aware of the phone number, as they have been intercepting Osama bin Laden's communications for some time (see [November 1996-Late August 1998](#)) and, according to Newsweek, "some" of bin Laden's 221 calls to Yemen are to this phone number. [NEWSWEEK, 2/18/2002; SUNDAY TIMES (LONDON), 3/24/2002; MEDIA CHANNEL, 9/5/2006] The US intelligence community now begins a joint effort to monitor the number. The NSA and CIA jointly plant bugs inside the house, tap the phones, and monitor visitors with spy satellites. [MIRROR, 6/9/2002; WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 343; NEW YORKER, 7/10/2006] US intelligence also learns that the communications hub is an al-Qaeda "logistics center," used by agents around the world to communicate with each other and plan attacks. [NEWSWEEK, 6/2/2002] The joint effort enables the FBI to map al-Qaeda's global organization (see [Late 1998-Early 2002](#)) and at least three of the hijackers use the number, enabling the NSA to intercept their communications and find out about an important al-Qaeda meeting in Malaysia

(see [December 29, 1999](#) and [January 5-8, 2000](#) and [Early 2000-Summer 2001](#)). It appears al-Qaeda continues to use this phone line until Samir al-Hada dies resisting arrest in early 2002 (see [February 13, 2002](#)).

Entity Tags: [National Security Agency](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Samir al-Hada](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Hoda al-Hada](#), [Ahmed al-Hada](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



Late August 1998: CIA Learns KSM Involved in Embassy Bombings



KSM's name is not included in this US wanted poster of embassy bombing suspects. The names included are: Mustafa Mohammed Fadhil, Khalfan Khamis Mohamed, Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani, Fahid Mohammed Ally Msalam, and Sheikh Ahmed Salim Swedan. [Source: *US State Department*] According to the 9/11 Congressional Inquiry, shortly after the bombing of the US embassy in Nairobi, Kenya (see [10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998](#)), a foreign government sends the CIA a list of individuals who flew into Nairobi before the attack. The CIA recognizes that one of the names is an alias for Khalid Shaikh Mohammed (KSM). The report that identified this alias also describes KSM as being close to bin Laden. [US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003] Yet the 9/11 Commission will fail to mention KSM's role in the embassy bombings and instead will suggest that KSM is not yet a member of al-Qaeda at this time and only joined al-Qaeda after being impressed by the results of the embassy bombings. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 149-150](#)]

Entity Tags: [9/11 Commission](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Khalid Shaikh Mohammed](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)

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September-October 1998: CIA's Afghan Allies Allegedly Attempt to Capture Bin Laden



Afghan tribal allies of the US apparently make some failed attempts to capture Osama bin Laden around this time. The 9/11 Commission will later report that during these two months: “[T]he tribals claimed to have tried at least four times to ambush bin Laden. Senior CIA officials doubted whether any of these ambush attempts actually occurred. But the tribals did seem to have success in reporting where bin Laden was.” [\[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 127\]](#) Michael Scheuer, head of the CIA's bin Laden unit at the time, will later list a September 1998 attempt by the tribals to capture bin Laden north of Kandahar as one of the ten missed opportunities to capture him in 1998 and 1999. [\[SCHEUER, 2008, PP. 284\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Michael Scheuer](#), [9/11 Commission](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)

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September 16, 1998: Important Al-Qaeda Leader Arrested in Germany



Mamdouh Mahmud Salim. *[Source: FBI]* Mamdouh Mahmud Salim (a.k.a. Abu Hajer), an al-Qaeda operative from the United Arab Emirates connected to the 1998 East African embassy bombings (see [10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998](#)), is arrested at a used car dealership near Munich, Germany. He is arrested by a special commando unit of German police, with CIA agents directing them nearby. The German government has no idea who Salim is, and the US only notified Germany about the planned arrest five hours in advance. [\[PBS, 9/30/1998; DER SPIEGEL \(HAMBURG\), 12/12/2005\]](#) The 9/11 Congressional Inquiry will later say that Salim was Osama bin Laden's “right hand man,” and “head of bin Laden's computer

operations and weapons procurement.” He is also “the most senior-level bin Laden operative arrested” up until this time. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 9/29/2001](#); [US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003, PP. 51](#)] Author Lawrence Wright will later note that bin Laden and Salim worked together in Afghanistan in the 1980s, “forging such powerful bonds that no one could get between them.” Salim was also one of the founding members of al-Qaeda (see [August 11-20, 1988](#)) and bin Laden’s personal imam (i.e., preacher). [[WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 131, 170](#)] Starting in 1995, Salim had been making frequent visits to Germany. Mamoun Darkazanli, who lives in Hamburg and associates with Mohamed Atta’s al-Qaeda cell, had signing powers over Salim’s bank account. Both men attended Al-Quds mosque, the same Hamburg mosque as future 9/11 hijackers Atta and Marwan al-Shehhi attend. [[VANITY FAIR, 1/2002](#)] The FBI learns much from Salim about al-Qaeda, and this information could be useful to the US embassy bombings investigation. However, the FBI is unwilling to brief its German counterparts on what it knows about Salim and al-Qaeda. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 9/29/2001](#)]

Entity Tags: [Osama bin Laden](#), [Mamdouh Mahmud Salim](#), [Al-Qaeda](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



October 1998: Military Analyst Goes Where Spies Fail to Go, but Her Efforts Are Rejected



Julie Sirrs. [*Source: Julie Sirrs*] Julie Sirrs, a military analyst for the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), travels to Afghanistan. Fluent in local languages and knowledgeable about the culture, she had made a previous undercover trip there in October 1997. She is surprised that the CIA was not interested in sending in agents after the failed missile attack on bin Laden in August 1998, so she returns at this time. Traveling undercover, she meets with Northern Alliance leader Ahmed Shah Massoud. She sees a terrorist training center in Taliban-controlled territory. Sirrs claims: “The Taliban’s brutal regime was being

kept in power significantly by bin Laden's money, plus the narcotics trade, while [Massoud's] resistance was surviving on a shoestring. With even a little aid to the Afghan resistance, we could have pushed the Taliban out of power. But there was great reluctance by the State Department and the CIA to undertake that." She partly blames the interest of the US government and the oil company Unocal to see the Taliban achieve political stability to enable a trans-Afghanistan pipeline (see [May 1996](#) and [September 27, 1996](#)). She claims, "Massoud told me he had proof that Unocal had provided money that helped the Taliban take Kabul." She also states, "The State Department didn't want to have anything to do with Afghan resistance, or even, politically, to reveal that there was any viable option to the Taliban." After two weeks, she returns with a treasure trove of maps, photographs, and interviews. [[ABC NEWS, 2/18/2002](#); [NEW YORK OBSERVER, 3/11/2004](#)] By interviewing captured al-Qaeda operatives, she learns that the official Afghanistan airline, Ariana Airlines, is being used to ferry weapons and drugs, and learns that bin Laden goes hunting with "rich Saudis and top Taliban officials" (see [Mid-1996-October 2001](#) and [1995-2001](#)). [[LOS ANGELES TIMES, 11/18/2001](#)] When she returns from Afghanistan, her material is confiscated and she is accused of being a spy. Says one senior colleague, "She had gotten the proper clearances to go, and she came back with valuable information," but high level officials "were so intent on getting rid of her, the last thing they wanted to pay attention to was any information she had." She is cleared of wrongdoing, but her security clearance is pulled. She eventually quits the DIA in frustration in 1999. [[ABC NEWS, 2/18/2002](#); [NEW YORK OBSERVER, 3/11/2004](#)] Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) will later claim that the main DIA official behind the punishment of Sirrs is Lieutenant General Patrick Hughes, who later becomes "one of the top officials running the Department of Homeland Security." [[DANA ROHRABACHER, 6/21/2004](#)]

Entity Tags: [Unocal](#), [Taliban](#), [Dana Rohrabacher](#), [Patrick Hughes](#), [Northern Alliance](#), [Julie Sirrs](#), [Ahmed Shah Massoud](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Ariana Airlines](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Defense Intelligence Agency](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [US Department of State](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



November 1, 1998-February 2001: 9/11 Hijacker Atta and Associates Are Monitored Some by US and Germany in Their Hamburg Apartment





The Marienstrasse building. [Source: Associated Press] Future 9/11 hijacker Mohamed

Atta, al-Qaeda operatives Said Bahaji and Ramzi Bin al-Shibh, and others in the al-Qaeda Hamburg cell move into a four bedroom apartment at 54 Marienstrasse, in Hamburg, Germany, and some of them stay there until February 2001. Investigators will later believe this move marks the formation of the Hamburg al-Qaeda cell. [LOS ANGELES TIMES, 1/27/2002; NEW YORK TIMES, 9/10/2002] Up to six men at a time live at the apartment, including, at times, 9/11 hijacker Marwan Alshehhi and cell member Zakariya Essabar. Alshehhi moves out after the first month; it is unclear why. [NEW YORK TIMES, 9/15/2001] During the 28 months Atta's name is on the apartment lease, 29 Middle Eastern or North African men register the apartment as their home address.

Surveillance of Bahaji - From the very beginning, the apartment is under surveillance by German intelligence, because of investigations into businessman Mamoun Darkazanli that connect to Bahaji. [WASHINGTON POST, 10/23/2001] The Germans also suspect connections between Bahaji and al-Qaeda operative Mohammed Haydar Zammar. [LOS ANGELES TIMES, 9/1/2002] Bahaji is directly monitored for at least part of 1998, but German officials will not disclose when the probe began or ends. This investigation is dropped for lack of evidence (see [Late 1998](#)).

[ASSOCIATED PRESS, 6/22/2002; LOS ANGELES TIMES, 9/1/2002] Bahaji moves out in July 1999 and gets married a few months later (see [October 9, 1999](#)). [DER SPIEGEL (HAMBURG), 8/29/2011]

Surveillance of El Motassadeq - German intelligence monitors the apartment off and on for months, and wiretaps Mounir El Motassadeq, an associate of the apartment-mates who will later be convicted for assisting the 9/11 plot, but apparently it does not find any indication of suspicious activity (see [August 29, 1998](#)). [CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 9/5/2002]

Surveillance of Zammar - Zammar, a talkative man who has trouble keeping secrets, does not live at the apartment, but he is a frequent visitor to the many late night meetings there.

[MILLER, STONE, AND MITCHELL, 2002, PP. 259-60; LOS ANGELES TIMES, 9/1/2002; CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 9/5/2002] He even lives in the apartment for a time in February 1999 (see [February 1999](#)). Zammar is the focus of an investigation that began in 1997 and continues until early 2000 (see [March 1997-Early 2000](#)). Interest in monitoring him increases in late 1998 (see [October 2, 1998](#)).

Surveillance of Atta - The CIA also allegedly starts monitoring Atta in early 2000 while he is living at the apartment, and does not tell Germany of the surveillance (see [January-May 2000](#)). Atta leaves Germany to live in the US in June 2000 (see [June 3, 2000](#)).

No Direct German Surveillance of the Apartment? - Yet, even though people like Zammar who frequently phone and visit the apartment are monitored, German officials will later claim that the apartment itself is never bugged. An unnamed senior German security official will

later say that some surveillance of associated people gives “the impression that the people living there were fanatical believers. At the BfV [Germany’s domestic intelligence agency], we had to decide whether to ask permission to place a wiretap on the line at 54 Marienstrasse itself. We discussed this every day.” But he will claim that they ultimately decide they will not be able to get legal permission for a wiretap because there is no evidence that the apartment’s occupants are breaking any laws. [VANITY FAIR, 11/2004] This claim that the apartment was not directly monitored seems contradicted by reports that Bahaji was the target of a surveillance investigation when he was living in the Marienstrasse apartment in late 1998 (see [\(Late 1998\)](#)).

What Would More Surveillance Have Uncovered? - It will later be clear that investigators could have found evidence if they looked more thoroughly. For instance, one visitor will recall Atta and others discussing attacking the US. [KNIGHT RIDDER, 9/9/2002] 9/11 mastermind Khalid Shaikh Mohammed is in Hamburg several times in 1999 and comes to the apartment. However, although there is a \$2 million reward for Mohammed since 1998, the US apparently fails to tell Germany what it knows about him (see [1999](#)). [NEWSWEEK, 9/4/2002; NEW YORK TIMES, 11/4/2002] 9/11 Hijacker Waleed Alshehri also apparently stays at the apartment “at times.” [WASHINGTON POST, 9/14/2001; WASHINGTON POST, 9/16/2001] Remarkably, shortly after 9/11, the German government will claim it knew little about the Hamburg al-Qaeda cell before 9/11, and nothing directed it towards the Marienstrasse apartment. [DAILY TELEGRAPH, 11/24/2001]

Entity Tags: [Mamoun Darkazanli](#), [Khalid Shaikh Mohammed](#), [Said Bahaji](#), [Marwan Alshehhi](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Mohamed Atta](#), [Mounir El Motassadeq](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Mohammed Haydar Zammar](#), [Zakariya Essabar](#), [Ramzi bin al-Shibh](#), [Bundesamt fur Verfassungsschutz](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



November 4, 1998: US Issues Public Indictment of Bin Laden, Others for Embassy Bombings



US Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald announcing the indictment of Osama bin Laden.

[Source: Henny Ray Abrams/ Agence France-Presse/ Getty Images]The US publicly indicts bin Laden,

Mohammed Atef, and others for the US embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. Bin Laden had been secretly indicted on different charges earlier in the year in June (see [June 8, 1998](#)). Record \$5 million rewards are announced for information leading to his arrest and the arrest of Mohammed Atef. [[PBS FRONTLINE, 2001](#)] Shortly thereafter, bin Laden allocates \$9 million in reward money for the assassinations of four US government officials in response to the reward on him. A year later, it is learned that the secretary of state, defense secretary, FBI director, and CIA director are the targets. [[US CONGRESS, 9/18/2002](#); [MSNBC, 9/18/2002](#); [US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003](#)]

Entity Tags: [William S. Cohen](#), [United States](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Mohammed Atef](#), [Louis J. Freeh](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Madeleine Albright](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Late 1998: Al-Qaeda Leader Located in Sudan, but US Does Not Try to Capture Him



Intelligence agents learn Mahfouz Walad Al-Walid (a.k.a. Abu Hafs the Mauritanian), an important al-Qaeda leader, is staying in a particular hotel room in Khartoum, Sudan. White House officials ask that he be killed or captured and interrogated. International capture operations of wanted militants, a practice known as “rendition,” have become routine by the mid-1990s (see [1993](#)). In fact, over a dozen al-Qaeda operatives are rendered between July 1998 and February 2000 (see [July 1998-February 2000](#)). But in this case, both the Defense Department and the CIA are against it, although Al-Walid does not even have bodyguards. The CIA puts the operation in the “too hard to do box,” according to one former official. The CIA says it is incapable of conducting such an operation in Sudan, but in the same year, it conducts another spy mission in the same city. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 12/30/2001](#); [CLARKE, 2004, PP. 143-46](#)] A plan is eventually made to seize Al-Walid, but by then he has left the country. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 12/30/2001](#)]

Entity Tags: [US Department of Defense](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Mahfouz Walad Al-Walid](#), [Clinton administration](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



December 2, 1998: Clinton Meets Pakistani Leader but Bin Laden Not Top Priority





Nawaz Sharif meeting with US Defense Secretary William

Cohen at the Pentagon on December 3, 1998. [Source: US Department of Defense] Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif comes to Washington to meet with President Clinton and other top Clinton administration officials. The number one issue for Clinton is Pakistan's nuclear program, since Pakistan had recently illegally developed and exploded a nuclear weapon (see [May 28, 1998](#)). The second most important issue is Pakistan's economy; the US wants Pakistan to support free trade agreements. The third most important issue is terrorism and Pakistan's support for bin Laden. Author Steve Coll will later note, "When Clinton himself met with Pakistani leaders, his agenda list always had several items, and bin Laden never was at the top. Afghanistan's war fell even further down." Sharif proposes to Clinton that the CIA train a secret Pakistani commando team to capture bin Laden. The US and Pakistan go ahead with this plan, even though most US officials involved in the decision believe it has almost no chance for success. They figure there is also little risk or cost involved, and it can help build ties between American and Pakistani intelligence. The plan will later come to nothing (see [October 1999](#)). [COLL, 2004, PP. 441-444]

Entity Tags: [Nawaz Sharif](#), [Clinton administration](#), [William Jefferson \("Bill"\) Clinton](#), [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



December 4, 1998: CIA Director Issues Ineffective Declaration of War on Al-Qaeda



CIA Director George Tenet issues a "declaration of war" on al-Qaeda, in a memorandum circulated in the intelligence community. This is ten months after bin Laden's fatwa on the US (see [February 22, 1998](#)), which is called a "de facto declaration of war" by a senior US official in 1999. Tenet says, "We must now enter a new phase in our effort against bin Laden. ... each day we all acknowledge that retaliation is inevitable and that its scope may be far larger than we have previously experienced.... We are at war.... I want no resources or people

spared in this efforts [sic], either inside CIA or the [larger intelligence] community.” Yet a Congressional joint committee later finds that few FBI agents ever hear of the declaration. Tenet’s fervor does not “reach the level in the field that is critical so [FBI agents] know what their priorities are.” In addition, even as the counterterrorism budget continues to grow generally, there is no massive shift in budget or personnel until after 9/11. For example, the number of CIA personnel assigned to the Counterterrorist Center (CTC) stays roughly constant until 9/11, then nearly doubles from approximately 400 to approximately 800 in the wake of 9/11. The number of CTC analysts focusing on al-Qaeda rises from three in 1999 to five by 9/11. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 9/18/2002](#); [US CONGRESS, 9/18/2002](#)] Perhaps not coincidentally, on the same day Tenet issues his declaration, President Clinton is given a briefing entitled “Bin Laden Preparing to Hijack US Aircraft and Other Attacks” and US intelligence scrambles to respond to this threat (see [December 4, 1998](#)).

Entity Tags: [Osama bin Laden](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Counterterrorist Center](#), [George J. Tenet](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



After December 4, 1998: Following CIA Director Tenet’s Declaration of War, His Deputy Chairs Single Meeting; No Strategic Plan Drafted



Following a declaration of war on al-Qaeda issued by CIA Director George Tenet (see [December 4, 1998](#)), little happens at the CIA. The CIA’s inspector general will later find that “neither [Tenet] nor [his deputy John McLaughlin] followed up these warnings and admonitions by creating a documented, comprehensive plan to guide the counterterrorism effort at the Intelligence Community level.” However, McLaughlin does chair a single meeting in response to the declaration of war. Although the meetings continue, McLaughlin stops attending, leaving them to the CIA’s No. 3. The meetings are attended by “few if any officers” from other agencies and soon stop discussing strategic aspects of the fight against al-Qaeda. There is no other effort, at the CIA or elsewhere in the intelligence community, to create a strategic plan to combat al-Qaeda at this time or at any other time before 9/11.



[[CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 6/2005, PP. VIII](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [John E. McLaughlin](#), [George J. Tenet](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



December 18-20, 1998: US Locates Bin Laden but Declines to Strike



The governor's mansion in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

[Source: CBC] On December 18, 2000, CIA receives a tip that bin Laden will be staying overnight on December 20 at the governor's mansion in Kandahar, Afghanistan. Missile strikes are readied against him. [9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 130-131] Gary Schroen, head of the CIA's Pakistan office, e-mails CIA headquarters with the message, "Hit him tonight—we may not get another chance." However, principal advisers to President Clinton agree not to recommend a strike because of doubts about the intelligence and worries about collateral damage. The military estimates the attacks will kill about 200 people, presumably most of them innocent bystanders. Schroen will later recall, "It struck me as rather insane, frankly. They decided not to attack bin Laden because he was in a building in fairly close proximity to a mosque. And they were afraid that some of the shrapnel was going to hit the mosque and somehow offend the Muslim world, and so they decided not to shoot on that occasion. That's the kind of reason for not shooting that the policy maker, anyway, came up with endlessly." [9/11 COMMISSION, 3/24/2004; CBC, 9/12/2006] Later intelligence appears to show that bin Laden left before the strike could be readied, but some aware of the intelligence felt it was a chance that should have been taken anyway. [9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 130-131] In the wake of this incident, officials attempt to find alternatives to cruise missiles, such as a precision strike aircraft. However, US Central Command Chief General Anthony Zinni is apparently opposed to deployment of these aircraft near Afghanistan, and they are not deployed. [9/11 COMMISSION, 3/24/2004]

Entity Tags: [Clinton administration](#), [Anthony Zinni](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Gary C. Schroen](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



[December 24, 1998: President Clinton Signs Order Authorizing the Assassination of Bin Laden](#)



President Bill Clinton signs a memorandum of notification authorizing the CIA to kill Osama bin Laden. The memo is sent to Clinton by National Security Adviser Sandy Berger, apparently at the request of CIA Director George Tenet, who has discussed the memo with Berger and seems to have given it his blessing. The highly classified memo concerns operations by a group of CIA tribal assets in Afghanistan who are monitoring bin Laden. Their task had previously been to capture bin Laden and they had been banned from assassinating him, but these rules are now changed and a kill operation is authorized. The memo makes it very clear that “the president [is] telling the tribal leaders they could kill bin Laden.” 9/11 Commission Executive Director Philip Zelikow will later recall the memo tells the tribal leaders: “you may conduct an operation to kill him,” adding, “There were no euphemisms in the language.” Although the CIA is still legally prevented from assassinating people, Clinton administration lawyers now say that bin Laden is an imminent danger to the US, so he can be killed as a part of pre-emptive self-defense. Despite his role in drafting the memo, Tenet and his deputies will later claim to the 9/11 Commission that Clinton never issued such clear authorization (see [Before January 14, 2004](#)). However, the order to assassinate bin Laden is garbled within the CIA and the CIA’s bin Laden unit appears not to receive it (see [December 26, 1998 and After](#)).

[[WASHINGTON POST, 2/22/2004](#); [SHENON, 2008, PP. 357-8](#)]

Entity Tags: [Philip Zelikow](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [William Jefferson \(“Bill”\) Clinton](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



December 26, 1998 and After: CIA Apparently Does Not Understand It Is Authorized to Assassinate Bin Laden; Bin Laden Unit Not Informed



The CIA seems not to understand permission given by President Bill Clinton to assassinate Osama bin Laden (see [December 24, 1998](#)). The instruction was contained in a memorandum of notification signed by Clinton authorizing the agency to use a group of tribal fighters to kill bin Laden. Previously, the tribal leaders had only been authorized to capture bin Laden, and this new memo marks an important shift in policy. According to author Philip Shenon, the memo is “written in stark language” and it makes it very clear “that the president was telling the tribal leaders they could kill bin Laden.” However, the actual memo is closely held within the CIA, and the 9/11 Commission will comment, “This intent [to have bin Laden killed] was never well communicated or understood within the agency.” Apparently, it is never even communicated to Michael Scheuer, head of Alec Station, the CIA’s bin Laden unit. Scheuer will later express his frustration at not being allowed to try to kill bin Laden, “We always talked about how much easier it would have been to kill him.” [[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 133](#); [SHENON, 2008, PP. 358](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Alec Station](#), [Michael Scheuer](#), [9/11 Commission](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Late 1998: El Hage Points to Darkazanli and Hamburg Cell



On top is El-Hage's business card for his fake charity, Help Africa People. Below is his card for his business Anhar Trading. On the lower left is a US address and on the lower right is Darkazanli's address in Germany. [Source: CNN] The CIA first became interested in Mamoun Darkazanli in 1993 (see [1993](#)). The FBI shows interest in Darkazanli after al-Qaeda operatives Wadih El Hage and Mamdouh Mahmud Salim (a.k.a. Abu Hajer) are arrested in late 1998 (see [September 16, 1998-September 5, 2001](#) and [September 16, 1998](#)). According to FBI documents, Darkazanli's fax and telephone numbers are discovered in El Hage's address book. Darkazanli's Deutsche Bank account number is found in the book as well. [CNN, [10/16/2001](#)] El-Hage had created a number of shell companies as fronts for al-Qaeda activities, and one of these uses the address of Darkazanli's apartment. [CHICAGO TRIBUNE, [11/17/2002](#)] Further, El-Hage's business card shows Darkazanli's Hamburg address. The FBI also discovers that Darkazanli has power of attorney over a bank account belonging to Salim, a high-ranking al-Qaeda member. El Hage will later be convicted for his role in the 1998 US embassy bombings, and Salim will remain in US custody. [NEW YORK TIMES, [6/20/2002](#); US CONGRESS, [7/24/2003, PP. 157](#)] By this time, Darkazanli is associating with members of the Hamburg al-Qaeda cell, and may be a member of the cell himself.

Entity Tags: [Wadih El-Hage](#), [Mamoun Darkazanli](#), [Mamdouh Mahmud Salim](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



1999: Joe T. Begins in WINPAC Unit of CIA



CIA analyst “Joe T.,” later identified as Joe Turner, begins working in the WINPAC unit of the CIA, which analyzes intelligence related to dual-use technology and export controls.

[[WASHINGTON POST, 8/10/2003](#); [WORLDNETDAILY, 8/12/2003](#); [NEW YORK TIMES, 10/3/2004](#)]

Entity Tags: [Weapons Intelligence, Nonproliferation, and Arms Control](#), [Joe Turner](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



January 31, 1999: Germany Monitors Call to 9/11 Hijacker Alshehhi, Shares Information with CIA



Marwan Alshehhi. This picture is taken from his US visa. [Source: [FBI](#)] German intelligence is tapping the telephone of al-Qaeda operative Mohammed Haydar Zammar, and on this date, Zammar gets a call from a “Marwan.” This is later found to be future 9/11 hijacker Marwan Alshehhi. Marwan talks about mundane things, like his studies in Bonn, Germany, and promises to come to Hamburg in a few months. German investigators trace the telephone number and determine the call came from a mobile phone registered in the United

Arab Emirates (UAE). [[US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003](#) ; [DEUTSCHE PRESSE-AGENTUR \(HAMBURG\), 8/13/2003](#); [NEW YORK TIMES, 2/24/2004](#)] Although the call is short and seemingly innocuous, according to Vanity Fair, some “parts of the conversation seemed redolent of some kind of conspiratorial code.” For instance, at one point, Alshehhi says, “I’ve heard your mother died.” Zammar replies: “Yes, she passed on. She left me alone.” Alshehhi then asks: “But your father didn’t travel with you? I’ve seen him here.” Zammar answers, “No, my father is here.” Regarding whether or not it actually is code, a senior German official will later say: “Our desk officer had a certain feeling about that call.... You can say it was his nose—not that there was any single statement, but he had a feeling that there could be more behind it.” The desk officer writes a report about the call. Then, about a month later, the BfV (German domestic intelligence) will contact the CIA and ask for more information about men from the UAE named Marwan, and for help in tracing the phone number (see [March 1999](#)). [[VANITY FAIR, 11/2004](#)]

Entity Tags: [Mohammed Haydar Zammar](#), [Marwan Alshehhi](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Bundesamt fur Verfassungsschutz](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



February 1999: CIA Apparently Confused over Authority to Assassinate Bin Laden



Following the issue of another directive governing a set of operations against Osama bin Laden, the CIA is said to become confused over whether it can mount an operation to assassinate him. In December, President Bill Clinton authorized the CIA to kill bin Laden using a group of tribal leaders in Afghanistan (see [December 24, 1998](#)), but a few weeks later he issued another memo governing relations between the CIA and the Northern Alliance that did not contain authorization to kill bin Laden (see [February 1999](#)). The CIA will later say that the reason it does not take advantage of the authorization to kill him using the tribal leaders is because it is confused by the second memo. The CIA's inspector general will comment: "Given the law, executive order, and past problems with covert action programs, CIA managers refused to take advantage of the ambiguities that did exist." The 9/11 Commission will also say that "the limits of the available authority were not tested." [\[9/11 COMMISSION,](#)

[7/24/2004, PP. 133; CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 6/2005, PP. XXI](#)]

Entity Tags: [9/11 Commission](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Office of the Inspector General \(CIA\)](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



February 1999-September 10, 2001: FBI Agents Investigating Al-Qaeda-Linked US Charity Get Little Help



The FBI's Chicago office opens a full field investigation into the Illinois based Benevolence International Foundation (BIF), after one of its agents stumbled across links between BIF and radical militants while attending a conference. The CIA and FBI already have extensive evidence linking BIF to al-Qaeda from a variety of sources but how much of that is shared with the Chicago office after they start their investigation is unclear (see [1998](#)). Chicago FBI agents begin looking through BIF's trash and learn much, since BIF officials throw out their phone records and detailed reports without shredding them. They also cultivate a source who gives them some useful information about BIF, but apparently no smoking guns. But they run into many difficulties:

- In the summer of 1999, the FBI sends a request to the Saudi government asking for information about Adel Batterjee, the founder of BIF, but they get no reply before 9/11.
 - In April 2000, they apply for a FISA warrant so they can conduct electronic surveillance, but it is not approved until after 9/11. It has not been explained why there was such a long delay.
 - They discover the bank account numbers of the BIF's overseas offices and ask for help from other US intelligence agencies to trace the money, but they never hear back about this before 9/11.
 - They submit a request to an allied European country for information about European intelligence reports linking BIF executive director Enaam Arnaout to the kidnapping and murders of Americans in Kashmir in 1995. But they never even receive an acknowledgment that the request was received (see [July 4, 1995](#)).
 - A European intelligence agency invites the Chicago agents to a meeting to share information about BIF, but the agents are not allowed to go as their superiors say they cannot afford to send them. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP. 96-98](#)]
- BIF will not be shut down until shortly after 9/11 (see [December 14, 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [Adel Abdul Jalil Batterjee](#), [Benevolence International Foundation](#), [Enaam Arnaout](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [FBI Chicago field office](#), [Al-Qaeda](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



February 11, 1999: Bin Laden Missile Strike Called off for Fear of Hitting Persian Gulf Royalty



Apparently, this surveillance photo of a C-130 transport plane from the United Arab Emirates plays a key role in the decision not to strike at bin Laden. [Source: [CBC](#)] Intelligence reports foresee the presence of Osama bin Laden at a desert hunting camp in Afghanistan for about a week. Information on his presence appears reliable, so preparations are made to target his location with cruise missiles. However, intelligence also puts an official

aircraft of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and members of the royal family from that country in the same location. Bin Laden is hunting with the Emirati royals, as he does with leaders from the UAE and Saudi Arabia on other occasions (see [1995-2001](#)). [[9/11 COMMISSION, 3/24/2004](#); [VANITY FAIR, 11/2004](#)] According to Michael Scheuer, the chief of the CIA's bin Laden unit, the hunting party has "huge fancy tents, with tractor trailers with generators on them to run the air-conditioning." Surveillance after the camp is established shows the "pattern of bin Laden's visits—he would come for evening prayers or he would come for dinner and stay for evening prayers." [[SHENON, 2008, PP. 192](#)] Local informants confirm exactly where bin Laden will be in the camp on February 11, and a strike is prepared. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 3/24/2004](#); [VANITY FAIR, 11/2004](#)] But policy makers are concerned that a strike might kill a prince or other senior officials, and that this would damage relations with the UAE and other Persian gulf countries. Therefore, the strike is called off. Bin Laden will leave the camp on February 12. A top UAE official at the time denies that high-level officials are there, but evidence subsequently confirms their presence. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 3/24/2004](#); [VANITY FAIR, 11/2004](#); [SHENON, 2008, PP. 192](#)] Scheuer will claim in 2004 that "the truth has not been fully told" about this incident. He will claim that the strike is cancelled because senior officials at the CIA, White House, and other agencies, decide to accept assurances from an unnamed Islamic country that it can acquire bin Laden from the Taliban. "US officials accepted these assurances despite the well-documented record of that country withholding help—indeed, it was a record of deceit and obstruction—regarding all issues pertaining to bin Laden" in previous years. [[ATLANTIC MONTHLY, 12/2004](#)] This may be a reference to Saudi Arabia. In mid-1998, the CIA called off a plan to capture bin Laden in favor of an ultimately unfulfilled Saudi promise to bribe the Taliban to hand bin Laden over (see [May 1998](#)). Many in US intelligence will be resentful over this missed opportunity and blame a conflict of interest with the Emirati royals (see [Shortly After February 11, 1999](#)).

Entity Tags: [Michael Scheuer](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Alec Station](#), [United Arab Emirates](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



[Shortly After February 11, 1999: Persian Gulf Politics Causes Resentment after Missed Chance at Bin Laden](#)



The failure to strike at bin Laden in February 1999, despite having unusually good intelligence about his location (see [February 11, 1999](#)), causes strong resentment in the US intelligence community. It is believed that the US held its fire because of the presence of royalty from the United Arab Emirates(UAE), but some felt those royals were legitimate targets as well since they were associating with bin Laden there. Further, intelligence at the time suggests the planes carrying these royals to Afghanistan were also bringing weapons to the Taliban in defiance of United Nations bans. Michael Scheuer, head of the CIA's bin Laden unit at the time, is particularly upset. He reportedly sends a series of e-mails to others in the CIA that

are, in the opinion of one person who read them, “angry, unusual, and widely circulated.” His anger at this decision not to strike at bin Laden will apparently contribute to him losing his position leading the bin Laden unit a few months later (see [June 1999](#)). Some resentment is directed at counterterrorism “tsar” Richard Clarke, who voted against the missile strike. Clarke was known to be close to the UAE’s royal family. He’d negotiated many arms deals and other arrangements with them, including an \$8 billion deal in May 1998 to buy F-16 fighters from the US (see [Early February 1999](#)). [COLL, 2004, PP. 447-450] In March 1999, Clarke calls Emirati royals and asks them to stop visiting bin Laden. However, he apparently did not have permission from the CIA to make this call. Within one week, the camp where the Emiratis and bin Laden met is abandoned. CIA officers are irate, feeling that this ruined a chance to strike at bin Laden if he made a return visit to the location. [9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 138]

Entity Tags: [Taliban](#), [Richard A. Clarke](#), [Michael Scheuer](#), [Alec Station](#), [United Arab Emirates](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



February 18, 1999: Novel by CIA Official Features Plane-as-Missile Terror Plot



Bill Harlow. [Source: 15-seconds (.com)] *Circle William*, a Tom Clancy-style military thriller by CIA spokesman Bill Harlow, is released, and centers on a terrorist plot involving a kamikaze air attack with a commercial airliner. In the book, a US submarine off the coast of Libya intercepts a cryptic phone conversation that suggests Libyan leader Mu’ammarr al-Qadhafi is planing to attack the Israeli Knesset with a nerve gas-laden plane. The Pentagon quickly surmises that the plot probably requires “a terrorist willing to sacrifice himself and make the delivery using a commercial airliner.” When the CIA uncovers that Libya is keeping an unused Airbus 300 in a hangar at Tripoli airport, it infers that the plan is to first fly the plane west along the coast toward Benghazi, Libya’s second largest city, then to drop below radar coverage somewhere along the route. “We [figure] they would plan [to] remain at low altitude until they could get [to] the Cairo air traffic control region. Then they would pop up, mix in with the heavy traffic along that corridor, and try [to] sneak in to somewhere in Israel.” [HARLOW, 1999, PP. 116, 166] Harlow joined the CIA in 1997 after a long Navy career,

mainly as a public affairs officer. He will later co-author George Tenet's memoirs, *At the Center of the Storm*. [\[TENET, 2007, PP. 19\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Bill Harlow](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)

 SHARE

Late February 1999: Valerie Plame Wilson Uncovers A. Q. Khan Visit to Africa; US Suspects Links between Khan and Bin Laden



Yellowcake. *[Source: CBC]* Pakistani nuclear scientist A. Q.

Khan takes a trip to West Africa. Ostensibly, he is going to oversee the construction of the Hendrina Khan Hotel in Timbuktu, Mali, which he bought the year before and is named after his wife, but it is believed that is just a cover for nuclear-related business. He spends several days in Khartoum, Sudan, where he is spotted touring the al-Shifa factory, bombed by the US the year before in response to al-Qaeda bombings in Africa (see [August 20, 1998](#)). In 2006, intelligence sources in India and Israel will claim that Khan actually partly owns the factory. Khan then travels to N'Djamena, the capital of Chad, Timbuktu in Mali, and Niamey, the capital of Niger. Niger has considerable uranium deposits and had been a major supplier of yellowcake uranium to Pakistan in the 1970s. Khan returns to Sudan, where he meets with the Sudanese president, and then returns to Pakistan. He is accompanied by his top nuclear aides and a number of Pakistani generals, and all expenses on the trip are paid for by the Pakistani government.

CIA Investigates Khan Trip - CIA undercover agent Valerie Plame Wilson learns about the trip, and the CIA is so concerned that it launches an investigation, especially to find out if Khan could be buying yellowcake from Niger. Plame Wilson's husband Joseph Wilson, a former National Security Council official and US ambassador to the nearby country of Gabon who has

close ties to important politicians in Niger, and who who has just set up a private consulting firm with a focus on advising clients who want to do business in Africa, is approached by officials from the CIA's National Resources Division (NR) to visit Niger. The agency asks Wilson, who already has a business trip planned to West Africa, to find out what he can about Khan's trip.

Illicit Uranium Sales Highly Unlikely - Wilson concludes that illicit uranium sales are very unlikely since the French government tightly controls Niger's uranium mines and uranium sales. However, Khan's trip does raise concern that he could be working with Osama bin Laden, because of his interest in the al-Shifa factory in Sudan, and because of intelligence that the hotel he owns in Timbuktu was paid for by bin Laden as part of a cooperative deal between them. The CIA writes and distributes a report on the trip. (In 2004, the Senate Intelligence Committee will erroneously conclude that the CIA did not distribute the Wilson-Niger report—see [July 9, 2004](#).) Wilson will keep this trip secret, even refusing to mention it in his 2004 memoir *The Politics of Truth*, presumably because he signed a confidentiality agreement with the CIA. In 2002, he will return to Niger to investigate if Saddam Hussein could be buying uranium in Niger (see [February 21, 2002-March 4, 2002](#)). That will lead to the eventual outing of his wife Plame Wilson's status as a CIA agent. [[LEVY AND SCOTT-CLARK, 2007, PP. 283-285, 516](#); [WILSON, 2007, PP. 358-360](#)]

Entity Tags: [Valerie Plame Wilson](#), [Abdul Qadeer Khan](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Joseph C. Wilson](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#), [Niger Uranium and Plame Outing](#)



March 1999: Germany Provides CIA the First Name and Phone Number of 9/11 Hijacker Marwan Alshehhi; CIA Takes No Action



German intelligence gives the CIA the first name of 9/11 hijacker Marwan Alshehhi and his telephone number of a phone registered in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Germans learned the information from the surveillance of al-Qaeda Hamburg cell member Mohammed Haydar Zammar (see [March 1997-Early 2000](#)). They tell the CIA that Alshehhi, who is living in Bonn, Germany, at the time, may be connected to al-Qaeda. He is described as a UAE student who has spent some time studying in Germany. The conversation is short, but a known alias of Mamoun Darkazanli is mentioned. The CIA is very interested in Darkazanli and will try to recruit him as an informant later in the year (see [Late 1998](#) and [December 1999](#)). [[US CONGRESS,](#)

[7/24/2003](#) ; [DEUTSCHE PRESSE-AGENTUR \(HAMBURG\), 8/13/2003](#); [NEW YORK TIMES, 2/24/2004](#); [MCDERMOTT, 2005, PP. 73, 278-279](#)]

No Response from CIA - The Germans consider this information “particularly valuable” and ask the CIA to track Alshehhi, but the CIA never responds until after the 9/11 attacks. The CIA decides at the time that this “Marwan” is probably an associate of bin Laden but never track him down. It is not clear why the CIA fails to act, or if they learn his last name before 9/11.

[[NEW YORK TIMES, 2/24/2004](#)] The Germans monitor other calls between Alshehhi and Zammar, but it isn't clear if the CIA is also told of these or not (see [September 21, 1999](#)).

Could the Number Be Traced? - CIA Director George Tenet will later dismiss the importance of this information in a statement to the 9/11 Congressional Inquiry. He will say that all the CIA had to go on was a first name and an impossible to trace unlisted number. But author Terry McDermott will later comment, "At least a portion of that statement is preposterous. The UAE mobile telephone business was, until 2004, a state monopoly. The UAE number could have been traced in five minutes, according to senior security officials there. The United States never asked." McDermott will add, "Further, the CIA told the [9/11 Congressional Inquiry] it had a long-standing interest in Zammar that pre-dated these recordings. In other words, the CIA appears to have been investigating the man who recruited the hijackers at the time he was recruiting them." [[MCDERMOTT, 2005, PP. 73, 278-279](#)]

Entity Tags: [Osama bin Laden](#), [Terry McDermott](#), [Mohammed Haydar Zammar](#), [Germany](#), [Mamoun Darkazanli](#), [Marwan Alshehhi](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [George J. Tenet](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



April 1999: CIA Rejects Working with High-Level Taliban Leader Opposed to Bin Laden



Mullah Mohammed Khaksar. [*Source: Amir Shah / Associated Press*] High-level Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Khaksar secretly meets with CIA officials to explore cooperating with them, but the CIA is not interested. Khaksar had been the Taliban's intelligence minister, but he recently switched posts to deputy interior minister. He is friends with top Taliban leader Mullah Omar, has thousands of policemen under his command, and has solid links to intelligence sources within the Taliban. He secretly meets with US diplomats Gregory Marchese and Peter McIlwain in Peshawar, Pakistan. Marchese will later confirm the meeting took place. Khaksar says he fears the Taliban has been hijacked by the Pakistani ISI and al-Qaeda. He believes Mullah Omar has fallen under the influence of bin Laden and wants to oust him. Khaksar later claims he told them that he was worried about al-Qaeda because "one day they would do something in the world, but everything would be on the head of Afghanistan."

The diplomats pass his offer to Washington (though it is unknown if it was relayed to high-level officials or not). Khaksar soon receives a letter back rejecting his offer. The letter is later shown to the Associated Press, and states, in part, “We don’t want to make mistakes like we made in the holy war [in the 1980s]. We gave much help and it later went against us.” [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 6/9/2002; GUARDIAN, 6/11/2002] Khaksar later says he did provide the CIA with information on two or three other occasions before 9/11, but it is not known if this takes place before or after this meeting. Starting in 1997, he also keeps a regular secret dialogue with Ahmed Shah Massoud, leader of the Northern Alliance fighting the Taliban. The Northern Alliance’s foreign minister will note after 9/11 that Khaksar was in “constant contact” with Massoud until 9/11, giving him a steady stream of valuable information. [KNIGHT RIDDER, 11/29/2001; WASHINGTON POST, 11/30/2001] After 9/11, the US will show no interest in Khaksar’s intelligence about the Taliban (see [Between September 12 and Late November 2001](#) and [February 25, 2002](#)).

Entity Tags: [Ahmed Shah Massoud](#), [Mullah Mohammed Khaksar](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



April 3-7, 1999: Three 9/11 Hijackers Obtain US Visas



Nawaf Alhazmi and Khalid Almihdhar’s US visas.

[Source: FBI] (click image to enlarge) 9/11 hijackers Nawaf Alhazmi, Salem Alhazmi, and Khalid Almihdhar obtain US visas through the US Consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. [US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003] Almihdhar and Nawaf Alhazmi are already “al-Qaeda veterans” and battle-hardened killers. Almihdhar’s visa is issued on April 7, and he can thereafter leave and return to the US multiple times until April 6, 2000. [STERN, 8/13/2003] Nawaf Alhazmi gets the same kind of visa; details about Salem are unknown. All three men have indicators in their passports marking them as Islamist radicals (see [March 21, 1999](#), [April 4, 1999](#), and [April 6, 1999](#)). These indicators are used to track them by the Saudi authorities, but are apparently not noticed by

US officials. [9/11 COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP. 9, 33] The CIA claims the hijackers then travel to Afghanistan to participate in “special training” with at least one other suicide bomber on a

different mission. The training is led by Khallad bin Attash, who applies for a US visa on April 3 from Yemen, but fails to get one (see [April 3, 1999](#)). The CIA will learn about Almihdhar's visa in January 2000 (see [January 2-5, 2000](#)). The Jeddah Consulate records the fact that Nawaf and Salem Alhazmi obtain US visas a couple of days before Almihdhar, but apparently these records are never searched before 9/11. [[US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003, PP. 135](#)]

Entity Tags: [US Consulate, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia Office](#), [Khallad bin Attash](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Salem Alhazmi](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



April 22, 1999: Plame Wilson Lists CIA Front Company as Employer on Donation Form



Valerie Plame Wilson, a covert CIA agent (see [Fall 1992 - 1996](#)) posing as an energy executive, lists “Brewster-Jennings & Assoc.” as her employer when making a \$1,000 donation to the presidential campaign of Al Gore (D-TN). “Brewster Jennings” will later be revealed to be a CIA front company (see [October 3, 2003](#)). [[FACTCHECK \(.ORG\), 7/22/2005](#); [CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 3/11/2006](#)]

Entity Tags: [Valerie Plame Wilson](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Brewster Jennings](#)

Timeline Tags: [Niger Uranium and Plame Outing](#)



April 26, 1999: Former President Bush: Those Who Leak CIA Identities Are ‘The Most Insidious of Traitors’



Former President George H. W. Bush, a former director of the CIA, speaks at the dedication ceremony of the new intelligence center bearing his name. In the course of his speech, Bush says: “We need more human intelligence. That means we need more protection for the methods we use to gather intelligence and more protection for our sources, particularly our human sources, people that are risking their lives for their country.... I have nothing but contempt and anger for those who betray the trust by exposing the name of our sources. They are, in my view, the most insidious, of traitors.” [[CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 4/26/1999](#)] These remarks will later be unearthed in conjunction with the White House's leaking of the identity of covert CIA agent Valerie Plame Wilson (see [June 23, 2003](#), [July 7, 2003, 8:30 a.m. July 8, 2003](#), [July 8, 2003, 11:00 a.m. July 11, 2003](#), [Late Afternoon, July 12, 2003](#), and [Before July 14, 2003](#)), and the publication of her name and status by conservative columnist Robert Novak (see [July 14, 2003](#)).

Entity Tags: [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Bush administration](#), [Robert Novak](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Valerie Plame Wilson](#)

Timeline Tags: [Niger Uranium and Plame Outing](#)



Late April 1999: CIA Secretly Works with KLA During Kosovo War



The US-led NATO alliance begins bombing Serbia in March, pressuring it to withdraw from Kosovo, which is part of Serbia but ethnically dominated by Albanians (see [March 24, 1999](#)). During the war, the US publicly denies working with the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), the dominant political group in Kosovo. However, it will later be revealed that the CIA works closely with the KLA, starting at least from late April 1999. At that time, the CIA and US Special Forces troops begin working with the KLA to defeat the Serbians. The KLA passes on useful information about Serbian positions, allowing NATO forces to bomb them. But since the KLA has a reputation for drug running, civilian atrocities, and links to al-Qaeda, the US military generally uses the Albanian army as an intermediary. KLA representatives meet daily with Albanian military officers in Albania, but CIA and US Army officers are usually present as well. In addition, there is a secret NATO operations center in the town of Kukes, Albania, near the border with Kosovo. Most of the KLA liaison work takes place there. US officials begin considering using the KLA as a light-infantry force if NATO needs to invade Kosovo with ground troops. But the war ends in June 1999 before that becomes necessary (see [June 9, 1999](#)). [[WASHINGTON POST, 9/19/1999](#)] The same month that the CIA begins working closely with the KLA, a European intelligence report indicates the KLA is being funded by al-Qaeda and drugs from Afghanistan (see [April 1999](#)).

Entity Tags: [Kosovo Liberation Army](#), [North Atlantic Treaty Organization](#), [US Special Forces](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [Kosovar Albanian Struggle](#)



May 1999: US Intelligence Provides bin Laden's Location; CIA Fails to Strike



US intelligence obtains detailed reporting on where bin Laden is located for five consecutive nights. CIA Director Tenet decides against acting three times, because of concerns about collateral damage and worries about the veracity of the single source of information. Frustration mounts. Michael Scheuer, head of the CIA's Bin Laden Unit, writes to a colleague in the field, "having a chance to get [bin Laden] three times in 36 hours and foregoing the

chance each time has made me a bit angry...” [COLL, 2004, PP. 450; 9/11 COMMISSION, 3/24/2004; 9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 140] An unnamed senior military officer later complains, “This was in our strike zone. It was a fat pitch, a home run.” However, that month, the US mistakenly bombed the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, due to outdated intelligence. It is speculated Tenet was wary of making another mistake. [ATLANTIC MONTHLY, 12/2004] There is one more opportunity to strike bin Laden in July 1999, but after that there is apparently no intelligence good enough to justify considering a strike. [9/11 COMMISSION, 3/24/2004]

Entity Tags: [Michael Scheuer](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Alec Station](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



June-July 1999: CIA Reports that Bin Laden Plans Attack in US



In testimony before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and in a briefing to House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence staffers one month later, the chief of the CIA’s Counter Terrorism Center describes reports that bin Laden and his associates are planning attacks in the US. [US CONGRESS, 9/18/2002]

Entity Tags: [Osama bin Laden](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Counterterrorist Center](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



June 7, 1999: Bin Laden Finally Makes FBI’s 10 Most Wanted





A portion of a US wanted poster for bin Laden, highlighting the African embassy bombings and a \$5 million reward. [Source: US State Department] The FBI puts bin Laden on its “10 Most Wanted List.” This is almost a year and a half after bin Laden’s “declaration of war” against the US on February 22, 1998 (see [February 22, 1998](#)), and about six months after the CIA’s “declaration of war against al-Qaeda” in December 1998 (see [December 4, 1998](#)). It is also three years after an internal State Department document connected bin Laden to financing and planning numerous terrorist attacks. [PBS FRONTLINE, 10/3/2002; US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003]

Entity Tags: [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Osama bin Laden](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



June 24, 1999: CIA Director Gives Congress Secret Warning Bin Laden Planning Attacks in US



CIA Director George Tenet tells a closed session of Congress, “We have seen numerous reports that bin Laden and his associates are planning terrorist attacks against US officials and facilities in a variety of locations, including in the US.” [COLL, 2004, PP. 454] However, six months later and after a well-publicized attempted al-Qaeda attack on the Los Angeles airport (see [December 14, 1999](#)), he will not mention in an open session that bin Laden has the capability to stage attacks inside the US (see [February 2, 2000](#)).

Entity Tags: [Osama bin Laden](#), [US Congress](#), [George J. Tenet](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)

 SHARE

July 1999-Summer 2001: Friction Continues between New CIA Bin Laden Unit Chief and FBI Official John O'Neill



Following the replacement of Michael Scheuer by Richard Blee as chief of Alec Station, the CIA's bin Laden unit (see [June 1999](#) and [June 1999](#)), the relationship between Alec Station and its FBI counterpart headed by John O'Neill does not improve. The relationship between Scheuer and O'Neill was extremely stormy, but Blee's arrival does nothing to calm matters. As O'Neill is the FBI manager most knowledgeable about al-Qaeda, the combative nature of the relationship may hamper interagency counterterrorism efforts. Author James Bamford will write, "The epicenter of the clash between the two cultures [of the FBI and CIA] was the relationship between [Blee] and John P. O'Neill, the flashy, outspoken chief of the FBI's National Security Division in New York." An associate of O'Neill's will say of Alec Station staff, "They despised the FBI and they despised John O'Neill." A CIA officer will add, "The working relationships were very difficult at times." [[BAMFORD, 2004, PP. 217-8](#)]

Entity Tags: [Richard Blee](#), [John O'Neill](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Alec Station](#), [James Bamford](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)

 SHARE

July 4, 1999: During Regional Crisis, Clinton Threatens to Publicly Expose Pakistan's Support for Bin Laden



Nawaz Sharif [*Source: Publicity photo*] In early May 1999, the Pakistani army, at the instigation of Gen. Pervez Musharraf, seizes a strategic height called Kargil in the Indian province of Kashmir. This creates a grave crisis between Pakistan in India. By early July, the

CIA picks up intelligence that Pakistan is preparing to launch nuclear missiles against India if necessary. Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif comes to the US on July 4 to meet with President Clinton about this. Clinton is livid and yells at Sharif for breaking promises, not only about Kashmir but also about failing to help with bin Laden. According to notes taken at the meeting, Clinton says he had “asked repeatedly for Pakistani help to bring Osama bin Laden to justice... [Sharif] promised often to do so but had done nothing. Instead, the ISI worked with bin Laden and the Taliban to foment terrorists.” Clinton threatens to release a statement calling worldwide attention to Pakistan’s support for terrorists. He adds, “You’ve put me in the middle today, set the US up to fail, and I won’t let it happen. Pakistani is messing with nuclear war.” Sharif backs down and immediately withdraws his troops from Kargil, ending the crisis. But as a result, Sharif becomes deeply unpopular in Pakistan. A few months later he will be ousted in a coup by Musharraf (see [October 12, 1999](#)), the general who started the crisis in the first place. [[COLL. 2004, PP. 476-478](#)]

Entity Tags: [Pakistan](#), [Pervez Musharraf](#), [William Jefferson \(“Bill”\) Clinton](#), [Nawaz Sharif](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)



August 28, 1999: Former CIA Officer Alleges Delta Force Involvement in Waco Siege Planning



The media learns that members of the US Army’s elite Delta Force were involved in a March 1993 meeting to discuss the management of the Branch Davidian siege near Waco, Texas (see [5:00 A.M. - 9:30 A.M. February 28, 1993](#) and [April 19, 1993](#)). Former CIA officer Gene Cullen, who was a senior officer in the CIA’s Office of Security, says that he attended that meeting, which took place at CIA headquarters. Federal law prohibits military involvement in law enforcement matters and precludes CIA operations on domestic soil. The Delta Force members were “mostly observers,” Cullen recalls, but he says that they offered to lend more overt assistance if any more federal agents were killed. “Their biggest fear was that more agents would be killed,” says Cullen. Participants at the meeting also discussed the use of “sleeping gas” which could be used to peacefully end the siege. Cullen tells reporters: “My charter at the agency was facilities personnel and operations worldwide. So we called this meeting [at CIA] during the Waco crisis... to see how the [FBI’s Hostage Rescue Team] would respond if it was one of our buildings in this country, and if it were overseas, how Delta would respond. So we’re all sitting around the room talking about scenarios. The FBI gave us a briefing on what had transpired. The Delta guys didn’t say much. They were playing second fiddle to the FBI.” Pentagon officials deny any military involvement in the Waco siege. [[SALON. 8/28/1999](#)] In late October, Army officials will confirm they were asked to assist in the BATF assault that precipitated the crisis (see [5:00 A.M. - 9:30 A.M. February 28, 1993](#)), and say they questioned the legality of military involvement, which would require a presidential order to allow their involvement in domestic law enforcement matters. A Pentagon official says no consideration was ever given to making a request of President Clinton to allow Army

involvement in the situation. Pentagon officials will also admit that three Delta Force members were present at the April assault that destroyed the Davidians and killed almost all of the members, but say that they participated only as observers. They also admit that Delta Force officers did meet with Reno to discuss strategies of forcing the Davidians out of their compound. [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 10/31/1999]

Entity Tags: [Janet Reno](#), [Branch Davidians](#), [FBI Hostage Rescue Team](#), [Gene Cullen](#), [US Special Forces](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [US Department of the Army](#)

Timeline Tags: [1993 Branch Davidian Crisis](#)



Fall 1999: Former Ambassador Visits Niger at CIA's Behest, Perhaps to Find Information about Iraq-Niger Uranium Deals



Former ambassador Joseph Wilson, who has spent much of his political career representing the US in West Africa, visits Niger at the behest of the CIA to investigate what a Senate investigation (see [July 9, 2004](#)) will later call “uranium-related matters.” Wilson is chosen in part because his wife, covert CIA official Valerie Plame Wilson, suggested that since he was going to Niger on business in the near future, he “might be willing to use his contacts in the region” to obtain information. The CIA is interested in a meeting between Niger’s former prime minister, Ibrahim Mayaki, and a delegation from Iraq to discuss “expanding commercial relations” between the two nations. Wilson will later say that the subject of uranium never comes up in a meeting he has with Mayaki (see [May 2, 2004](#)). However, CIA analysts will interpret Wilson’s information to mean that Mayaki “interpreted ‘expanding commercial relations’ to mean that the [Iraqi] delegation wanted to discuss uranium yellowcake sales.” The CIA will believe that Wilson’s report bolsters its own suspicions that Iraq is attempting to buy yellowcake uranium from Niger. An intelligence officer will later report that Mayaki indicated that the Iraqis had expressed an interest in buying uranium from Niger. [FACTCHECK (.ORG), 7/26/2004; FACTCHECK (.ORG), 7/22/2005]

Entity Tags: [Ibrahim Mayaki](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Valerie Plame Wilson](#), [Joseph C. Wilson](#)

Timeline Tags: [Niger Uranium and Plame Outing](#)



September 9, 1999: Former Davidian Disputes Official Version of Events at Waco Siege



One of the few survivors of the April 1993 conflagration that killed over 70 members of the Branch Davidian sect near Waco, Texas (see [April 19, 1993](#)), writes of the events of that day

and their aftermath. David Thibodeau was in the Mt. Carmel compound when the FBI tanks and armored vehicles began crashing through the walls. He recalls walls collapsing, CS gas billowing in, and a cacophony of noise assaulting his ears, from exploding rockets (ferret rounds containing CS gas) and tank-tread squeals to the shrieks of terrified children. The idea of trying to leave the building, he writes, “seemed insane; with tanks smashing through your walls and rockets smashing through the windows, our very human reaction was not to walk out but to find a safe corner and pray.” He and his fellow Davidians found the FBI’s reassurances, delivered over loudspeakers, of “This is not an assault!” confusing, conjoined as they were with tanks smashing down walls and gas being sprayed all over the building.

No Compulsion to Stay - Thibodeau insists that Davidian leader David Koresh had no intentions of ending the siege with a mass suicide; Koresh allowed those who wanted to leave the compound, even during the siege itself. “But many of us stayed, too, not because we had to, but because we wanted to,” Thibodeau explains. “The FBI and [B]ATF (see [5:00 A.M. - 9:30 A.M. February 28, 1993](#)) had been confrontational from the start, they had lied to us and they continued lying up through the siege.”

FBI, Not Davidians, Set Fires? - He accuses the BATF of “fabricating” the charges that led that agency to raid the compound in February, writing that false allegations of drug use prompted the raid (the raid was actually prompted by charges of illegal firearms possession and child abuse—see [November 1992 - January 1993](#) and [May 26, 1993](#)). He notes that a CIA agent has alleged that Delta Force commandos took part in the siege (see [August 28, 1999](#)), and says that FBI audiotapes prove federal agents, not the Davidians, caused the fire that destroyed the compound, largely through the use of incendiary devices (see [Late September - October 1993](#), [August 4, 1995](#), and [August 25, 1999 and After](#)). Thibodeau says that other videotapes show FBI agents firing into the compound during the final assault, and BATF agents firing into the compound from helicopters during the February raid. He writes: “The FBI has not come close to revealing the full government complicity in the Waco massacre. In the years since the fire, I’ve tried desperately to find out what really happened. What I’ve discovered is disturbing.” Thibodeau finds the allegations of child abuse particularly disturbing. He says while children were spanked for disciplinary purposes, “the strict rule was they could never be paddled in anger,” and “wild allegations” that children were scheduled to be sacrificed on Yom Kippur came from a single disgruntled former resident, Marc Breault, and were not true.

Intentions to Peacefully End Siege - Thibodeau writes that Koresh intended to settle the siege peacefully, by allowing himself to be taken into custody. He intended to stay long enough to finish his treatise on the “Seven Seals” of Biblical prophecy (see [April 14-15, 1993](#)). “The FBI thought the Seven Seals issue was just a ploy, and dismissed it,” Thibodeau writes. “But it was legitimate, and in the ashes of Mount Carmel they found that Koresh had completed the first two commentaries and was hard at work on the third when the tanks rolled in.”

'No Affinity with the Right' - Thibodeau writes of the heavy irony in the fact that many right-wing separatists and supremacists such as Timothy McVeigh (see [8:35 a.m. - 9:02 a.m. April 19, 1995](#)) have embraced the Davidians as part of their movement. “[W]e had no affinity with the right,” he notes, and says, “One irony of the Waco disaster is that right-wing extremists and racists look to Mount Carmel as a beacon; if they realized that so many of us were black, Asian, and Latino, and that we despised their hateful politics and anger, they would probably feel bitterly betrayed.” While not all of the Davidians “leaned to the left,” he writes, “we

also had a ‘live and let live’ attitude that had allowed the community to co-exist with its Texas neighbors for all those decades. We certainly weren’t as isolated as people seem to think.” [[SALON, 9/9/1999](#)]

Entity Tags: [US Special Forces](#), [David Thibodeau](#), [David Koresh](#), [Branch Davidians](#), [Marc Breault](#), [US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#)

Timeline Tags: [1993 Branch Davidian Crisis](#)



September 21, 1999: German Intelligence Records Calls Between 9/11 Hijacker Alshehhi and Others Linked to Al-Qaeda



German intelligence is periodically tapping suspected al-Qaeda operative Mohammed Haydar Zammar’s telephone, and on this day investigators hear Zammar call 9/11 hijacker Marwan Alshehhi. Officials initially claim that the call also mentions hijacker Mohamed Atta, but only his first name. [[DAILY TELEGRAPH, 11/24/2001](#); [NEW YORK TIMES, 1/18/2003](#)] However, his full name, “Mohamed Atta Al Amir,” is mentioned in this call and in another recorded call. [[FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG \(FRANKFURT\), 2/2/2003](#)] Alshehhi makes veiled references to plans to travel to Afghanistan. He also hands the phone over to Said Bahaji (another member of the Hamburg cell under investigation at the time), so he can talk to Zammar. [[STERN, 8/13/2003](#)] German investigators still do not know Alshehhi’s full name, but they recognize this “Marwan” also called Zammar in January, and they told the CIA about that call. Alshehhi, living in the United Arab Emirates at the time, calls Zammar frequently. German intelligence asks the United Arab Emirates to identify the number and the caller, but the request is not answered. [[DER SPIEGEL \(HAMBURG\), 2/3/2003](#)]

Entity Tags: [Mohammed Haydar Zammar](#), [Marwan Alshehhi](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Said Bahaji](#), [Mohamed Atta](#), [United Arab Emirates](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



October 1999: CIA Does Not Share Information with Able Danger Program





Lt. Col. Anthony Shaffer. *[Source: Sandy Schaeffer]* Capt. Scott Phillpott, head of the

Able Danger program, asks Lt. Col. Anthony Shaffer to talk to a representative of CIA Director George Tenet and attempt to convince him that the new Able Danger program is not competing with the CIA. Shaffer later recalls the CIA representative replying, “I clearly understand the difference. I clearly understand. We’re going after the leadership. You guys are going after the body. But, it doesn’t matter. The bottom line is, CIA will never give you the best information from ‘Alex Base’ [the CIA’s covert action element targeting bin Laden] or anywhere else. CIA will never provide that to you because if you were successful in your effort to target al-Qaeda, you will steal our thunder. Therefore, we will not support this.” Shaffer claims that for the duration of Able Danger’s existence, “To my knowledge, and my other colleagues’ knowledge, there was no information ever released to us because CIA chose not to participate in Able Danger.” [\[GOVERNMENT SECURITY NEWS, 9/2005\]](#)

Entity Tags: [George J. Tenet](#), [Scott Phillpott](#), [Anthony Shaffer](#), [Able Danger](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



November 1999: Curveball Seeks Asylum in Germany; Tells Germans that Iraq is Developing Biological Weapons Laboratories





Iraqi defector "Curveball." [Source: ABC News]

"Curveball," an Iraqi in his late 20s later identified as Rafid Ahmed Alwan (see [November 4, 2007](#)), travels to Germany on a tourist visa and applies for political asylum, telling German immigration officials that he embezzled money from the Iraqi government and fears prison or worse if he returns home. The Germans send him to Zirndorf, a refugee center near Nuremberg, where other Iraqi exiles seeking German visas are being held. There, he changes his story, telling German intelligence (BND) officers that he was a chemical engineer (see [1994](#)) who had been promoted to direct a secret mobile biological weapons plant at Djerf al Nadaf, just outside of Baghdad. The plant masqueraded as a "seed purification plant," he claims. Curveball tells the Germans that in Iraq, he designed laboratory equipment to convert trucks into biological weapons laboratories. He offers the names of six sites where Iraq might be hiding them, three of which, he says, are already in operation. He also says that a farm program to boost crop yields is a front for Hussein's new biological weapons production program. He tells the Germans of a warehouse at the plant that housed trucks; the trucks had been equipped to create and transport biological weapons. His story dovetails with the long-held fears by Western intelligence agencies that Saddam Hussein was cooking up biological and chemical weapons; the Germans stash him away, nickname him "Curveball," and interrogate him every few days for the next eighteen months (see [January 2000-September 2001](#)). Curveball refuses to meet with Americans; therefore, only summaries of his debriefings will be sent to Washington. CIA analysts will be mesmerized by Alwan's information. Former senior CIA official Tyler Drumheller recalls in late 2007, "Curveball was the one piece of evidence where they could say, 'Look at this. If they have this capability, where they can transport biological weapons, anthrax, all these horrible weapons, they can attack our troops with them. They can give them to terrorist groups.'" Most arresting is Curveball's story that in 1998 he saw an accidental release of a biological weapon that killed 12 people. His story is almost entirely false. [[LOS ANGELES TIMES, 11/20/2005](#); [CBS NEWS, 11/4/2007](#)] Vincent Cannistraro, former head of the CIA's Counter Terrorism Center, will tell the New Yorker in 2004 that the CIA believes that Aras Habib, the INC intelligence chief later accused of providing US intelligence to Iran, played a part in Curveball's going to Germany. "The CIA is positive of it," he says. [[NEW YORKER, 6/7/2004](#)]

■ Bob Drogin, author of the 2007 book *Curveball: Spies, Lies and the Con Man Who Caused a War*, will write that Curveball gives the Germans detailed diagrams of germ-making equipment, fermenters, mixing vats, controllers, and other items, which appear "plausible," even though they can't be reverse-engineered to "brew anthrax" or "build a bio-lab in a

garage.” Instead, he will write, Curveball’s inconsistent information will be “interpreted, summarized, reformatted and analyzed at every stage,” but will never be verified. Drogin will call the entire affair “the dark side of intelligence,” and will write that, to the CIA’s top officials, the risk of going so far on uncorroborated evidence would take care of itself once US forces found the fabled Iraqi WMDs. Once the weapons were in hand, Drogin will write, they will figure “no one would remember a bogus defector.” As a CIA supervisor will later e-mail to a frustrated agency whistleblower, “Let’s keep in mind the fact that this war’s going to happen regardless of what Curveball said or didn’t say, and that the Powers That Be probably aren’t terribly interested in whether Curveball knows what he’s talking about.” [[LOS ANGELES TIMES, 10/21/2007](#)]

Entity Tags: [Tyler Drumheller](#), [Bob Drogin](#), [Vincent Cannistraro](#), [Iraqi National Congress](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Aras Habib](#), [Bundesnachrichtendienst](#), ['Curveball'](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



November 4, 1999: CIA Rejects Proposal for Center to Share Data on Terrorist Threats



Rep. Curt Weldon later claims that while he never learns about Able Danger prior to 9/11, he does become aware of the Land Information Warfare Activity’s (LIWA) similar data mining efforts in 1999 and is very impressed. He says that on this day, he is part of a meeting with the deputy directors of the FBI and the CIA and others. Using LIWA as a model, Weldon proposes a national collaborative center that would use open source data as well as classified information from 33 government agencies “to basically assess emerging transnational terrorists threats. The CIA, two years before 9/11, said, we don’t need that. We’ve put language in three successive defense bills, in spite of that, calling for a national collaborative capability. Prior to 9/11, we didn’t have that capability, and we were hit.” [[US CONGRESS, 2/15/2006](#)]

Entity Tags: [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Land Information Warfare Activity](#), [Curt Weldon](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



November 30, 1999: Jordan Thwarts Al-Qaeda Connected Millennium Plot





On December 5, 1999, a Jordanian raid discovers 71 vats of bomb making chemicals in this residence. [Source: *Judith Miller*] Jordanian officials successfully uncover an al-Qaeda plot to blow up the Radisson Hotel in Amman, Jordan, and other sites on January 1, 2000. [PBS FRONTLINE, 10/3/2002] The Jordanian government intercepts a call between al-Qaeda leader Abu Zubaida and a suspected Jordanian terrorist named Abu Hoshar. Zubaida says, “The training is over.” [NEW YORK TIMES, 1/15/2001] Zubaida also says, “The grooms are ready for the big wedding.” [SEATTLE TIMES, 6/23/2002] This call reflects an extremely poor code system, because the FBI had already determined in the wake of the 1998 US embassy bombings that “wedding” was the al-Qaeda code word for bomb. [MILLER, STONE, AND MITCHELL, 2002, PP. 214] Furthermore, it appears al-Qaeda fails to later change the system, because the code-name for the 9/11 attack is also “The Big Wedding.” [CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 9/5/2002] Jordan arrests Hoshar while he’s still on the phone talking to Zubaida. In the next few days, 27 other suspects are charged. A Jordanian military court will initially convict 22 of them for participating in planned attacks, sentencing six of them to death, although there will be numerous appeals (see [April 2000 and After](#)). In addition to bombing the Radisson Hotel around the start of the millennium, the plan calls for suicide bombings on two border crossings with Israel and a Christian baptism site. Further attacks in Jordan are planned for later. The plotters had already stockpiled the equivalent of 16 tons of TNT, enough to flatten “entire neighborhoods.” [NEW YORK TIMES, 1/15/2001] Key alleged plotters include:

- Raed Hijazi, a US citizen who is part of a Boston al-Qaeda cell (see [June 1995-Early 1999](#)). He will be arrested and convicted in late 2000 (see [September 2000](#) and [October 2000](#)). [NEW YORK TIMES, 1/15/2001]

- Khalid Deek, who is also a US citizen and part of an Anaheim, California al-Qaeda cell. He will be arrested in Pakistan and deported to Jordan, but strangely he will be released without going to trial.

- Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. He will later be a notorious figure in the Iraq war starting in 2003. [WASHINGTON POST, 10/3/2004]

- Luai Sakra. The Washington Post will later say he “played a role” in the plot, though he is never charged for it. Sakra apparently is a CIA informant before 9/11, perhaps starting in

2000 (see [2000](#)). [[WASHINGTON POST, 2/20/2006](#)]

The Jordanian government will also later claim that the Al Taqwa Bank in Switzerland helped finance the network of operatives who planned the attack. The bank will be shut down shortly after 9/11 (see [November 7, 2001](#)). [[NEWSWEEK, 4/12/2004](#)]

Entity Tags: [Raed Hijazi](#), [Abu Zubaida](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Al Taqwa Bank](#), [Abu Musab al-Zarqawi](#), [Khalil Deek](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Abu Hoshar](#), [Jordan](#), [Luai Sakra](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



December 1999: Clinton Administration Issues Wider Memo about Bin Laden without Assassination Authorization



The Clinton administration issues more instructions to the CIA governing operations against Osama bin Laden, but these instructions do not include wording allowing the CIA to assassinate him. Following the 1998 embassy bombings, Clinton allowed the CIA to mount an operation aimed at killing bin Laden with one group of assets (see [December 24, 1998](#)), but not another (see [February 1999](#)). These new instructions, drafted by administration lawyers, do not cover the ground of the two previous sets of instructions, but deal with “a wider set of contingencies,” and they authorize the use of force only within the context of a capture operation, not an assassination attempt. The CIA is therefore allowed to try to kill bin Laden only using one specific group of assets—tribal leaders tracking bin Laden in Afghanistan, still based on the earlier instructions. But the CIA does not test “the limits of available legal authority,” apparently because the CIA’s bin Laden unit is not told of the kill authorization (see [December 26, 1998 and After](#)) and due to confusion (see [February 1999](#)). [[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 133](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



December 3, 1999: CIA Tells Top Administration Officials It Will Continue Renditions against Al-Qaeda



A presentation by the CIA’s Counterterrorist Center to the National Security Council’s Small Group emphasizes the importance of rendition operations in the CIA’s fight against al-Qaeda. The briefing says: “We will continue with disruptions of operations and renditions... but with an increased emphasis on recruiting sources; at this time, we have no penetrations inside

[Osama bin Laden]’s leadership.” [\[US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003, PP. 388\]](#)] The Small Group was formed by National Security Adviser Sandy Berger and includes members of Clinton’s cabinet cleared to know about the most sensitive counterterrorism issues. [\[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 120\]](#)

Entity Tags: [National Security Council](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Counterterrorist Center](#)

Timeline Tags: [Torture of US Captives](#), [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



December 4, 1999: Saudi Ambassador’s Wife Gives Funds that Are Possibly Passed to 9/11 Hijackers



Prince Bandar (pictures of his wife are not available). *[Source: Publicity photo]* Princess Haifa bint Faisal, the wife of Prince Bandar, the Saudi ambassador to the US, begins sending monthly cashier’s checks of between \$2,000 and \$3,500 (accounts differ) to Majeda Dweikat, the Jordanian wife of Osama Basnan, a Saudi living in San Diego. Accounts also differ over when the checks are first sent (between November 1999 and about March 2000; a Saudi government representative will state December 4, 1999). [\[FOX NEWS, 11/23/2002\]](#) Basnan’s wife signs many of the checks over to her friend Manal Bajadr, the wife of Omar al-Bayoumi. The payments are made through Riggs Bank, a bank which appears to have turned a blind eye to Saudi embassy transaction and also has longstanding ties to covert CIA operations (see [July 2003](#)). [\[NEWSWEEK, 11/22/2002; NEWSWEEK, 11/24/2002; GUARDIAN, 11/25/2002; WASHINGTON TIMES, 11/26/2002\]](#) Did the Money Go to the Hijackers? - Some will later suggest that the money from the wife of the Saudi ambassador passes through the al-Bayoumi and Basnan families as intermediaries and ends up in the hands of future 9/11 hijackers Nawaf Alhazmi and Khalid Almihdhar. The payments from Princess Haifa continue until May 2002 and may total \$51,000, or as much as \$73,000. [\[NEWSWEEK, 11/22/2002; MSNBC, 11/27/2002\]](#) While living in the San Diego area, al-Bayoumi and Basnan are heavily involved in helping with the relocation of, and offering financial support to, Saudi immigrants in the community. [\[LOS ANGELES TIMES, 11/24/2002\]](#) In late 2002, al-Bayoumi will claim he does not pass any money along to the hijackers. [\[WASHINGTON TIMES, 12/4/2002\]](#)

Basnan and Al-Bayoumi Are Close Friends - Basnan will variously claim to know al-Bayoumi, not to know him at all, or to know him only vaguely. [\[ABC NEWS, 11/25/2002; ARAB NEWS, 11/26/2002;](#)

[ABC NEWS, 11/26/2002](#); [MSNBC, 11/27/2002](#)] However, early reports will say Basnan and his wife are “very good friends” of al-Bayoumi and his wife. Both couples live at the Parkwood Apartments at the same time as the two hijackers; prior to that, the couples lived together in a different apartment complex. In addition, the two wives will be arrested together in April 2001 for shoplifting. [[SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE, 10/22/2002](#)] According to an FBI agent who investigates Basnan after 9/11, Basnan and al-Bayoumi are close friends. For instance, phone call records will show that there are about 700 calls from various phone numbers between Basnan and al-Bayoumi in a one year period. The agent will add that even if one discounted some of the calls given that their wives are friends, the calls between the cell phones are most likely between Basnan and al-Bayoumi. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 11/17/2003](#)]

Entity Tags: [Haifa bint Faisal](#), [Majeda Dweikat](#), [Osama Basnan](#), [Omar al-Bayoumi](#), [Manal Bajadr](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



December 8, 1999: CIA Concludes that Bin Laden Plans Many Imminent Attacks, Including Some inside US



The CIA’s Counter Terrorism Center concludes in a classified report that bin Laden wants to inflict maximum casualties, cause massive panic, and score a psychological victory. He may be seeking to attack between five and 15 targets on the Millennium. “Because the US is bin Laden’s ultimate goal... we must assume that several of these targets will be in the US.” [[TIME, 8/4/2002](#); [US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003](#)] CIA Director George Tenet delivers this warning to President Clinton. Author Steve Coll later comments that Tenet also “grabbed the National Security Council’s attention with that prediction.” [[COLL, 2004, PP. 482](#)] The US takes action in a variety of ways (see [Early December 1999](#)). It will turn out that bin Laden did plan many attacks to be timed for the millennium celebrations, including ones inside the US, but all failed (see [December 31, 1999-January 1, 2000](#)).

Entity Tags: [William Jefferson \(“Bill”\) Clinton](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Counterterrorist Center](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Steve Coll](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



December 11, 1999: Watch List Importance Is Stressed but Procedures Are Not Followed



The CIA's Counterterrorism Center sends a cable reminding all its personnel about various reporting obligations. The cable clearly states that it is important to share information so suspected members of US-designated terrorist groups can be placed on watch lists. The US keeps a number of watch lists; the most important one, TIPOFF, contains about 61,000 names of suspected terrorists by 9/11. [LOS ANGELES TIMES, 9/22/2002; KNIGHT RIDDER, 1/27/2004] The list is checked whenever someone enters or leaves the US. "The threshold for adding a name to TIPOFF is low," and even a "reasonable suspicion" that a person is connected with a US-designated terrorist group warrants being added to the database. [US CONGRESS, 9/20/2002] Within a month, two future hijackers, Nawaf Alhazmi and Khalid Almihdhar, will be identified as al-Qaeda operatives (see [December 29, 1999](#)), but the cable's instructions will not be followed for them. The CIA will initially tell the 9/11 Congressional Inquiry that no such guidelines existed, and CIA Director Tenet will fail to mention the cable in his testimony to the Inquiry.

[NEW YORK TIMES, 5/15/2003; US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003, PP. 157]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [9/11 Congressional Inquiry](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Counterterrorist Center](#), [TIPOFF](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



December 14-25, 1999: Private Investigators Discover Al-Qaeda Sleeper Cell in California



Rita Katz. [Source: Publicity photo /]Counterterrorism "tsar" Richard Clarke, hearing about Ahmed Ressam's arrest earlier in the day (see [December 14, 1999](#)), hires a team of private terrorism analysts to complete a report on militant Islamic cells in North America. The Investigative Project on Terrorism, led by Steven Emerson, finishes the report just prior to the end of the year, hoping to help stop any millennium plots. [NEW YORKER, 5/29/2006] Investigator Rita Katz discovers that a man named Khalil Deek who has just been arrested in Jordan for a role in a millennium plot is a US citizen (see [December 11, 1999](#)). Using only public records, she begins looking into Deek's activities in the US. She believes that she discovers a sleeper cell consisting of: [KATZ, 2003, PP. 161-162]

■ Khalil Deek. He is an al-Qaeda operative who has lived in Anaheim, California, for most of the 1990s. A former senior CIA official will later claim that Deek’s extremist connections were already “well established in the classified intelligence” by this time, and in fact, it will later be reported that Deek’s connections with al-Qaeda leader Abu Zubaida had been investigated since the late 1980s (see [Late 1980s](#)). Katz learns from intelligence reports that Deek has connections to a militant cell based in Montreal, Canada that includes Ressay. She suspects that Deek is coordinating al-Qaeda groups in North America. [[LA WEEKLY, 9/15/2005](#); [NEW YORKER, 1/22/2007](#)] Deek regularly wires tens of thousands of dollars to overseas destinations. Business records show Deek was still in Anaheim as late as August 1998. The research team discovers Deek may have been visiting the US as late as September 1999. [[US CONGRESS, 1/25/2000](#); [ORANGE COUNTY WEEKLY, 6/15/2006](#)]

■ Hisham Diab. Katz learns that Diab is Deek’s next door neighbor in Anaheim and she suspects the two of them have been operating a sleeper cell there (in fact, Diab’s wife had already repeatedly tried to warn the FBI about her husband, to no avail (see [March 1993-1996](#)). [[LA WEEKLY, 9/15/2005](#)]

■ She discovers that Deek and Diab have formed a charity front called Charity Without Borders (this group received a \$75,000 state grant in 1997 to distribute fliers encouraging the recycling of used motor oil). [[LA WEEKLY, 9/15/2005](#); [ORANGE COUNTY WEEKLY, 6/15/2006](#)]

■ Tawfiq Deek, Khalil Deek’s brother. Katz discovers that Tawfiq has presented himself as the Islamic Association for Palestine (IAP) spokesman in California. Katz calls the IAP the “ Hamas front in America.” [[KATZ, 2003, PP. 167](#)] Khalid Ashour, a Palestinian. He had lived in the same apartment building as the Deek brothers and Diab, and also worked with the IAP. But what most interests Katz is that he had been heavily involved in the Islamic Center of Tuscon in the early 1990s. The Islamic Center is important for the IAP but is also believed to be the focal point for al-Qaeda’s first base in the US (see [1994](#)). Katz discovers that he had been arrested in 1991 trying to enter the US with a fake ID and border guards found handbooks of explosives and bombs in his car. In 1999, he had moved nearly half a million dollars out of the US despite holding a job that only paid \$600 a week. [[KATZ, 2003, PP. 167-168](#)]

■ Although Katz does not discover it at the time, another associate of the Deeks and Diab in Anaheim named Adam Gadahn will later emerge as a prominent al-Qaeda spokesman in Afghanistan (see [Spring 2004](#)).

Katz, Emerson, and other members of the Investigative Project on Terrorism will brief members of the National Security Council about what they learned on December 25, 1999, but no action will be taken against the suspects they have uncovered (see [December 25, 1999](#)).

Entity Tags: [Tawfiq Deek](#), [National Security Council](#), [Richard A. Clarke](#), [Khalil Deek](#), [Khalid Ashour](#), [Adam Gadahn](#), [Hisham Diab](#), [Investigative Project on Terrorism](#), [Steven Emerson](#), [Rita Katz](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



December 21, 1999: FBI Misses Chance to Discover Moussaoui’s Al-Qaeda Connections



The FBI misses a chance to learn about Zacarias Moussaoui after a raid in Dublin, Ireland. On December 14, 1999, Ahmed Ressay was arrested trying to smuggle explosives into the US (see [December 14, 1999](#)). On December 21, Irish police arrest Hamid Aich and several other North African immigrants living in Dublin. [NEW YORK TIMES, 1/22/2000] During the arrests, police seize a large amount of documents relating to citizenship applications, identities, credit cards, and airplane tickets. A diagram of an electrical switch that could be used for a bomb is found that is identical to a diagram found in Ressay's apartment in Vancouver, Canada. [IRISH TIMES, 7/31/2002] The suspects are released about a day later, but, "Within days, authorities in Ireland and the United States began to realize that they might have missed a chance to learn more about a terrorist network." [NEW YORK TIMES, 1/22/2000] It is discovered that Aich lived with Ressay in Montreal, and then later lived with him in Vancouver. Investigators conclude there has been an al-Qaeda cell in Dublin since the early 1990s, when the charity Mercy International opened an office there (this charity has several known al-Qaeda connections by this time (see [1988-Spring 1995](#) and [Late 1996-August 20, 1998](#)) and also an alleged CIA connection (see [1989 and After](#))). The cell is mainly involved in providing travel and identity documents for other cells committing violent acts. Investigators also connect Aich to the Islamic Jihad. But the US and Canada do not seek Aich's extradition, and instead have the Irish police keep him under surveillance. He will escape from Ireland shortly before 9/11 (see [June 3, 2001-July 24, 2001](#)). [NEW YORK TIMES, 1/22/2000; IRISH TIMES, 7/31/2002] Apparently, many of the documents seized in the raid will only be closely examined after 9/11. Documents will show that in 1999 and 2000, Mustafa Ahmed al-Hawsawi, a top al-Qaeda financier, worked with the Dublin cell to finance Moussaoui's international travel. Aich made travel arrangements and possibly provided fake identification for Moussaoui. [FOX NEWS, 7/30/2002; IRISH TIMES, 7/31/2002] Presumably, had these links been discovered after the 1999 raid instead of after 9/11, events could have gone very differently when Moussaoui was arrested in the US in August 2001 (see [August 16, 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [Zacarias Moussaoui](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Mercy International](#), [Islamic Jihad](#), [Hamid Aich](#), [Ahmed Ressay](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Mustafa Ahmed al-Hawsawi](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



December 29, 1999: NSA Tells CIA about Planned Al-Qaeda Summit Involving Future Hijackers



The NSA, monitoring a telephone in an al-Qaeda communications hub in Yemen (see [Late August 1998](#) and [Late 1998-Early 2002](#)), has listened in on phone calls revealing that hijackers Khalid Almihdhar, Nawaf Alhazmi, and Salem Alhazmi are to attend an important al-Qaeda summit in Malaysia in January 2000 (see [Shortly Before December 29, 1999](#)). Almihdhar's full

name was mentioned, as well as the first names of hijackers Nawaf Alhazmi and Salem Alhazmi. On this day, the NSA shares this information with the CIA's Alec Station bin Laden unit. Other US intelligence agencies, including FBI headquarters and the FBI's New York field office, are told as well. Although Khalid Almihdhar's full name was mentioned in one call, the NSA only passes on his first name. Also, the NSA has already learned from monitoring the Yemen hub that Nawaf's last name is Alhazmi and that he is long-time friends with Almihdhar (see [Early 1999](#)). However, they either don't look this up in their records or don't pass it on to any other agency. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 1/26/2004, PP. 6](#) ; [US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 239](#) ; [WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 310](#)] An NSA analyst makes a comment that is shared between US intelligence agencies, "Salem may be Nawaf's younger brother." This turns out to be correct. [[US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003, PP. 135](#) ; [9/11 COMMISSION, 1/26/2004, PP. 6](#)] A CIA officer will later tell the 9/11 Congressional Inquiry that information from the Africa embassy bombings (see [10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998](#)) was reviewed in late 1999 during a worldwide effort to disrupt millennium attack plots (see [December 15-31, 1999](#)) and "a kind of tuning fork... buzzed when two [of the hijackers] reportedly planning a trip to [Malaysia] were linked indirectly to what appeared to be a support element... involved with the Africa bombers." [[US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003, PP. 135](#)] The fact that they are connected to the Yemen communication hub already indicates some importance within al-Qaeda. It is learned they are connected to the embassy bombings in some way (see [October 4, 2001](#) and [Late 1999](#)). [[US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003, PP. 135](#) ; [9/11 COMMISSION, 1/26/2004, PP. 6](#)] The NSA report about them on this day is entitled, "Activities of Bin Laden Associates," showing the clear knowledge of their ties to bin Laden. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 502](#); [VANITY FAIR, 11/2004](#)] The CIA will track Almihdhar and Nawaf Alhazmi to the Malaysia summit (see [January 2-5, 2000](#) and [January 5-8, 2000](#)).

Entity Tags: [Salem Alhazmi](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [FBI New York Field Office](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [FBI Headquarters](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Alec Station](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Ahmed al-Hada](#), [National Security Agency](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



Late December 1999: FBI Exposes Errors in CIA Reporting on Millennium Plots, Finds Key Evidence CIA Ignored



During the investigation of the Millennium plots to attack targets in Jordan (see [November 30, 1999](#)), the local intelligence service gives the chief of the CIA station in Amman a box of evidence to examine. However, the station chief, apparently called "Hendrik V.," ignores the box; he dumps it in a corner of his office and fails to inform his FBI colleagues of it. A few days later, FBI agent Ali Souofan is in Hendrik V.'s office and asks what is in the box. Hendrik

V. replies that it is just “junk” the Jordanians gave him. Soufan starts to go through the box and finds key evidence, such as a map of the proposed bomb sites. The evidence is then returned to the Jordanians, so they can start following the leads. Author Lawrence Wright will comment, “Soufan’s success embarrassed the CIA.” [\[NEW YORKER, 7/10/2006\]](#) ; [SOUFAN, 2011, PP. 139-140](#)] Hendrik V. will later be promoted to run the Sunni Extremist Group at the CIA’s Counterterrorist Center (see [\(Between Summer and Winter 2001\)](#)).

Entity Tags: [Lawrence Wright](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Hendrik V.](#), [Ali Soufan](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



2000: CIA Stops Reviewing NSA Transcripts after Short Period of Time, Allegedly due to ‘Resource Constraints’



The CIA sends an officer from its Counterterrorist Center (CTC) to the NSA to review raw transcripts of intercepted communications between terrorists. However, the officer is only there for a “brief period” and is subsequently withdrawn and not replaced, damaging the CIA’s ability to exploit the information gleaned from the intercepts. The CIA only previously received summaries of intercepted calls, not the transcripts themselves, and had been arguing for years that it needed the actual transcripts to better understand the material (see [February 1996-May 1998](#), [December 1996](#), [After December 1996](#), [After December 1996](#), and [Late August 1998](#)). After the single officer leaves the NSA, which intercepts calls between the US-based 9/11 hijackers and an al-Qaeda communications hub in Yemen around this time (see [Early 2000-Summer 2001](#)), the reason the CIA gives for not replacing him is “resource constraints.” In 2005, the CIA’s Office of Inspector General will regard this failure as so serious that it will recommend an accountability board be convened to review the performance of the CTC managers responsible, and will suggest that officers should have been detailed to the NSA “on a consistent, full-time basis.” [\[CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 6/2005, PP.](#)

[XXIII\]](#) The CIA and NSA are obtaining information about people in the US from phone companies to support “black ops” at this time (see [After July 11, 1997](#)).

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [National Security Agency](#), [Office of the Inspector General \(CIA\)](#), [Counterterrorist Center](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



January 2-5, 2000: CIA Learns 9/11 Hijacker Almihdhar Has US Visa as He Is Tracked to Al-Qaeda Summit



A photocopy of Nawaf Alhazmi's passport. No image of Khalid Almihdhar's passport has been released, but it would have looked similar to this one. [Source: FBI] The CIA is aware that hijacker Khalid Almihdhar is staying at a highly monitored al-Qaeda communication hub (see [Late 1998-Early 2002](#)) and is planning to travel to an al-Qaeda meeting in Malaysia. He is closely watched as leaves the hub and flies from Sana'a, Yemen, to Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on his way to Malaysia. Agents from eight CIA offices and six friendly foreign intelligence services are all asked to help track him, in the hopes he will lead them to bigger

al-Qaeda figures. [STERN, 8/13/2003; [9/11 COMMISSION, 1/26/2004, PP. 6](#)] The CIA and local authorities are running an operation to track militants transiting Dubai airport (see [1999](#)), and United Arab Emirates officials secretly make copies of his passport as he is passing through it, immediately reporting this to the CIA. [BAMFORD, 2004, PP. 224] Another account suggests CIA agents break into Almihdhar's Dubai hotel room and photocopy the passport there. Either way, the information is immediately faxed to Alec Station, the CIA's bin Laden unit. [WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 311] The CIA not only learns his full name, but also discovers the vital fact that he has a multiple entry visa to the US that is valid from April 1999 to April 2000. But even though the CIA now knows about this US visa which indicates he plans to go to New York City, they do not place him on a terror watch list and they fail to tell the FBI about the visa. [BAMFORD, 2004, PP.

[224; 9/11 COMMISSION, 1/26/2004, PP. 6](#)]

Entity Tags: [United Arab Emirates](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Alec Station](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Al-Qaeda](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



January 5-6, 2000: CIA Liaison with FBI Who Just Learned about Almihdhar's US Visa Twice Fails to Tell FBI about It



A CIA officer known only as “James,” who knows that 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar has a US visa, twice briefs FBI officials about al-Qaeda’s Malaysia summit, but fails to mention the visa.

First Briefing - On the night of January 5, 2000, James, who has been assigned to the FBI’s Strategic Information Operations Center (SIOC) to deal with problems “in communicating between the CIA and the FBI,” briefs an FBI agent who works in the FBI’s bin Laden unit, which is part of the SIOC at that time, about a number of cables he has received regarding the al-Qaeda summit that is just starting in Malaysia and one of the people attending it, Almihdhar. The FBI agent will later say he does not know why James chooses to brief him, as he is not a designated contact point for the CIA.

Documented by E-mail - James will later write an e-mail to several other CIA officers and detail “exactly” what he briefed this person on. Although the CIA should inform the FBI of a terrorist like Almihdhar having a US visa, he does not mention discussing the visa with the FBI agent, even though he had just seen several CIA cables talking about it.

Second Briefing - Overnight, another CIA cable comes in to him providing new details about Almihdhar and the Malaysia summit. An FBI agent then asks another CIA officer detailed to the FBI for an update on Almihdhar. This second CIA officer asks James for the update, so he can pass it on. James’s response to this request is to brief a third FBI agent in the SIOC about the new information. Again, records will indicate he fails to mention anything about Almihdhar’s US visa. This FBI agent will also say he does not know why he was briefed on the matter, as he is not a designated contact point for the CIA. James then tells his CIA colleague he has already provided the FBI with an update, so this second officer does not have to do so.

Informing Other Agents - James also sends an e-mail to other CIA agents describing “exactly” what he told both of the FBI agents. One section of his e-mail reads: “Thus far, a lot of suspicious activity has been observed [in Malaysia] but nothing that would indicate evidence of an impending attack or criminal enterprise. [I told the first FBI agent] that as soon as something concrete is developed leading us to the criminal arena or to known FBI cases, we will immediately bring FBI into the loop. Like [the first FBI agent] yesterday, [the second FBI agent] stated that this was a fine approach and thanked me for keeping him in the loop.”

Refuses to Be Interviewed - After 9/11, James will refuse to talk to the Justice Department’s Office of Inspector General, but will tell the CIA’s inspector general that he has no

recollection of these events. [\[US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003, PP. 135](#) ; [US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 241-247](#) ; [TENET, 2007, PP. 195\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [CIA officer known as “James”](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. January 5, 2000: CIA Bin Laden Unit Blocks Notification to FBI about Hijacker Almihdhar's US Visa





Victims' family members Lorie Van Auken (right) and Kristen Breitweiser (left) are shocked to learn Tom Wilshire blocked a cable to the FBI about Khalid Almihdhar's visa. [Source: *Banded Artists*] Doug Miller, an FBI agent assigned to Alec Station, the CIA's bin Laden unit, reads CIA cables reporting that 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar has a US visa and drafts a cable to the FBI to inform it of this. The CIA obtained the information through a tap on Almihdhar's phone in Yemen (see [December 29, 1999](#)) and by monitoring him as he passed through Dubai (see [January 2-5, 2000](#)) on his way to an al-Qaeda summit in Malaysia (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)). Draft Cable - Miller writes that Almihdhar has a US visa (see [April 3-7, 1999](#)) and that the visa application states his destination is New York and he intends to stay for three months. The draft cable mentions the tap on Almihdhar's phone, his planned travel to Malaysia, and the links between his phone and the 1998 East African embassy bombings (see [10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998](#) and [October 4, 2001](#)). It also says that the CIA has obtained photographs of Almihdhar and these will be sent separately. Miller asks the FBI for feedback resulting from an FBI investigation.

Blocked - Another CIA officer named Michael Anne Casey accesses Miller's draft about an hour after he writes it. The cable is then blocked on the orders of the station's deputy chief, Tom Wilshire, as a few hours after Miller drafts the cable Casey attaches a message to it saying, "pls hold off on [cable] for now per [Tom Wilshire]." [9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 502; US

[DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 240](#)] Miller is also told, "This is not a matter for the FBI." [WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 311]

'No Reason to Kill the Message' - Author James Bamford will later comment: "A potential terrorist and member of al-Qaeda was heading for the US, the FBI's jurisdiction—its turf—and he [Miller] was putting the FBI on notice so it could take action. There was no reason to kill

the message.” [\[BAMFORD, 2008, PP. 19\]](#) Miller will later say he has no “rational answer” as to why the cable was blocked, but will speculate that Alec Station officers were annoyed he had encroached on their territory. [\[CONGRESSIONAL QUARTERLY, 10/1/2008\]](#) Casey drafts a cable falsely saying that the information about Almihdhar’s visa has been shared with the FBI (see [Around 7:00 p.m. January 5, 2000](#)) and there will be a discussion the next day about whether the cable should be sent (see [January 6, 2000](#)). The Justice Department’s Office of Inspector General will later call the failure to pass the information to the FBI a “significant failure” but will be unable to determine why the information was not passed on. [\[US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 250\]](#)  The 9/11 Commission will know of the incident, but will relegate it to an endnote in its final report, omitting Wilshire’s role entirely. [\[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 502\]](#) The CIA inspector general will falsely claim that the cable is not sent, “[a]pparently because it was in the wrong format or needed editing.” [\[CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 6/2005, PP. XV\]](#) 




Entity Tags: [Michael Anne Casey](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Doug Miller](#), [9/11 Commission](#), [Alec Station](#), [Tom Wilshire](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Office of the Inspector General \(CIA\)](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



[Around 7:00 p.m. January 5, 2000: CIA Officer Sends out Cable with False Claim FBI Has Been Told of Hijacker Almihdhar’s US Visa](#)



CIA officer Michael Anne Casey sends out a cable saying the information that 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar has a US visa has been sent to the FBI “for further investigation.” The cable does not state how the visa information was passed or by whom. Casey is with Alec Station, the CIA’s bin Laden unit. The cable, which is lengthy and summarizes information about Almihdhar and three other operatives planning an al-Qaeda summit in Malaysia, is sent to some overseas CIA stations, but not the FBI. [\[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 502; US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 243\]](#)  The CIA, which will be criticized for its apparent failure to tell the FBI of Almihdhar’s visa after 9/11, will repeatedly tout this cable as evidence that it had actually informed the FBI of Almihdhar’s visa, or at least thought it had done so. [\[US CONGRESS, 9/20/2002; NEW YORK TIMES, 10/17/2002; US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003, PP. 146\]](#)  ; [TENET, 2007, PP. 195\]](#) However, this appears not to be true, as after 9/11 the FBI will be unable to find any record of receiving such information and the CIA will be unable to find any record of having sent it. [\[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 502; US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 249-252\]](#)  In addition, as Casey blocked the relevant notification to the FBI on this day (see [9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. January 5, 2000](#)) and insists it not be passed the next day (see [January 6, 2000](#)), she must know the claim the information about Almihdhar’s visa had been passed is false. Casey will

apparently lie about this cable to the Justice Department's inspector general (see [February 2004](#)) and CIA Director George Tenet (see [Before October 17, 2002](#) and [Shortly Before April 30, 2007](#)).

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Michael Anne Casey](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Alec Station](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



January 6-9, 2000: Top CIA and Clinton Cabinet Officials Repeatedly Briefed about Al-Qaeda Summit in Malaysia



On January 6, 2000, the CIA station in Malaysia begins passing details from the Malaysian government's surveillance of the al-Qaeda summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to the CIA Counterterrorist Center (CTC) (see [January 5-8, 2000](#) and [January 5-8, 2000 and Shortly After](#)). Cofer Black, head of the CTC, orders that he be continually informed about the meeting. CIA Director George Tenet is frequently informed as well. They are given continual updates until the meeting ends on January 8. [STERN, 8/13/2003] National Security Adviser Sandy Berger, FBI Director Louis Freeh, and other top officials are briefed, but apparently President Clinton is not. [BAMFORD, 2004, PP. 225-26] However, it appears that the CIA deliberately and repeatedly fails to tell the FBI that one attendee, future 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar, has an active visa to visit the US (see [Mid-July 2004](#), [January 6, 2000](#), and [January 5-6, 2000](#)). No evidence will be presented suggesting anyone else outside the CIA is told this crucial fact either. The Malaysia summit ends on January 8. [9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 237] Officially, the CIA will later claim to have lost future hijackers Alhazmi and Almihdhar as they left the meeting (see [January 8, 2000](#)). However, Almihdhar will later report back to al-Qaeda that he thought he was followed to the US (see [Mid-July 2000](#)). It will not be reported whether any of the other attendees are monitored after leaving the meeting.

Entity Tags: [Sandy Berger](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [William Jefferson \("Bill"\) Clinton](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Counterterrorist Center](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Cofer Black](#), [Louis J. Freeh](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



(After January 6, 2000): CIA Fails to Check FBI Has Been Notified of 9/11 Hijacker Almihdhar's US Visa, Although this Is 'Routine Practice'



Although the CIA passes information to the FBI about the attendance of 9/11 hijackers Khalid Almihdhar and Nawaf Alhazmi at al-Qaeda's Malaysia summit, it repeatedly fails to mention

that Almihdhar has a US visa (see [January 6, 2000, 9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. January 5, 2000, January 5-6, 2000](#)). It also fails to check that the FBI has received this information. The CIA's inspector general will say it "found no indication that anyone in [the CIA's Counterterrorist Center] checked to ensure FBI receipt of the information, which, a few [Osama bin Laden] Station officers said, should have been routine practice." [\[CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 6/2005, PP.](#)

[XV](#)]

Entity Tags: [Counterterrorist Center](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Office of the Inspector General \(CIA\)](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



January 8, 2000: CIA Bangkok Station Informed 9/11 Hijacker Almihdhar Has Departed for Thailand with Two Companions



The CIA's station in Bangkok, Thailand, is informed that future 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar has departed Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where he was meeting other top al-Qaeda operatives, en route to Bangkok (see [January 8, 2000](#)). Almihdhar is known to be traveling with two companions, who turn out to be Nawaf Alhazmi and al-Qaeda leader Khallad bin Attash. [\[9/11](#)

[COMMISSION, 1/26/2004, PP. 5](#)] Some sources state that a message about this is passed from the Malaysian authorities monitoring the three men to the CIA station in Kuala Lumpur and then

to the CIA station in Bangkok. [\[BAMFORD, 2004, PP. 226; 9/11 COMMISSION, 1/26/2004, PP. 5](#)] It is not known exactly how promptly this message is sent, but it is sent five hours after another one about al-Qaeda's Malaysia summit dispatched the same day. [\[US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004,](#)

[PP. 247](#)] However, author Lawrence Wright will later say that the Malaysians notify the CIA station chief in Thailand, implying that the notification is direct and possibly faster. [\[WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 311\]](#) The 9/11 Commission will say that this notification comes too late for the three to be picked up at the airport. [\[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 181\]](#) A flight from Kuala Lumpur to Bangkok usually takes about two hours. [\[AIRLINEMEALS \(.NET\), 4/29/2008\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Khallad bin Attash](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [CIA Bangkok Station](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



January 9, 2000: CIA's Bin Laden Unit Asks for 9/11 Hijacker Almihdhar and Associates to Be Identified in Thailand



Alec Station, the CIA's bin Laden unit, sends the CIA station in Bangkok, Thailand, a NIACT cable about 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar and two associates, who turn out to be 9/11 hijacker Nawaf Alhazmi and al-Qaeda leader Khallad bin Attash. NIACT means the cable is a very high priority and has to be immediately acted on by the duty officer, even if it is received at night. Almihdhar and his two associates arrived in Bangkok the previous day, but the CIA in Thailand had apparently been unable to track them (see [January 8, 2000](#) and [January 8, 2000](#)). Alec Station wants the Bangkok station to identify Almihdhar and his associates, although the precise contents of the cable and the response to it are unknown.

[[BAMFORD, 2004, PP. 227](#); [9/11 COMMISSION, 1/26/2004, PP. 5](#) ; [US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 247](#)]

Entity Tags: [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Khallad bin Attash](#), [CIA Bangkok Station](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Alec Station](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



January 10, 2000: NSA Receives CIA Report on 9/11 Hijacker Almihdhar, but Does Not Disseminate More Information about Him



The CIA sends the NSA some information about 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar, including information about al-Qaeda's Malaysia summit (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)), which Almihdhar attended, as well as the name of a person who helped him in Kuala Lumpur, where the summit was held. The NSA is also told Almihdhar's primary purpose for coming to Malaysia was to meet with other people. The CIA knows Almihdhar has a US visa (see [January 2-5, 2000](#)), but it is unclear whether the NSA is informed of this. [[US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003, PP. 156](#)] At this time, the NSA has some information about Almihdhar, whose calls it has been intercepting for at least a year (see [Early 1999](#), [Summer 1999](#), [Late Summer 1999](#), and [Shortly Before December 29, 1999](#)), that has not been disseminated. In particular, the NSA seems to have overheard something in early 1999 that should have been disseminated, but was not. This new information from the CIA does not cause the NSA to re-examine its material on Almihdhar or disseminate any important information to other US agencies. However, Almihdhar is subsequently put on the NSA watchlist (see [Mid-January 2000](#)) and the NSA intercepts calls between his home in Yemen and him in the US (see [Spring-Summer 2000](#)), but fails to alert the FBI to his presence in the US (see [Spring 2000](#)).

Entity Tags: [National Security Agency](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Counterterrorist Center](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



January 12, 2000: CIA's Bin Laden Unit Chief Falsely Claims Malaysia Surveillance Is Continuing



Richard Blee, head of Alec Station, the CIA's bin Laden unit, gives an incorrect briefing to his CIA superiors about surveillance of al-Qaeda operatives in Southeast Asia. He claims that Malaysian authorities and the CIA are continuing to monitor al-Qaeda operatives who gathered for a summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)). In actual fact, three of the summit's attendees, 9/11 hijackers Khalid Almihdhar and Nawaf Alhazmi and al-Qaeda leader Khallad bin Attash, have already left Kuala Lumpur for Bangkok, Thailand, and have disappeared there (see [January 8, 2000](#)). The 9/11 Commission will say that Blee is "unaware at first even that the Arabs had left Kuala Lumpur, let alone that their trail had been lost in Thailand" and that he "may not have known that in fact Almihdhar and his companions had dispersed and the tracking was falling apart." These statements will be sourced to an interview with Blee in December 2003 and contemporary CIA documents. However, Alec Station is well aware of the departure of the three men, as it was notified of this and sent a follow-up cable on January 9 telling the CIA station in Bangkok to find them there (see [January 9, 2000](#)). It is unclear why Blee gives such an inaccurate briefing, but he gives a similar one two days later (see [January 14, 2000](#)), after Alec Station is again reminded that the three radicals are in Thailand, not Malaysia (see [January 13, 2000](#)). [[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 181, 354, 502](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Alec Station](#), [Richard Blee](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



January 13, 2000: CIA Says it Is Unable to Locate 9/11 Hijackers in Thailand



The CIA station in Bangkok, Thailand, sends a cable to Alec Station, the CIA's bin Laden unit, saying that it is unable to locate 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar and two companions, who turn out to be 9/11 hijacker Nawaf Alhazmi and al-Qaeda leader Khallad bin Attash, in Bangkok. The three had been under surveillance in Malaysia (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)), but the CIA's Bangkok station had been unable to pick them up at the airport when they flew to Thailand on January 8 (see [January 8, 2000](#) and [January 8, 2000](#)). According to an official, this was because "when they arrived we were unable to mobilize what we needed to mobilize." Despite the high priority allocated to the search by CIA headquarters (see [January 9, 2000](#)) and the fact bin Attash was under surveillance in Malaysia when he called the hotel where the three are staying in Bangkok (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)), they cannot be found. The

precise steps taken to locate them are unknown. [\[9/11 COMMISSION, 1/26/2004](#) ; [9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 181, 502](#); [US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 247](#)]

Entity Tags: [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Alec Station](#), [Khallad bin Attash](#), [CIA Bangkok Station](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



Mid-January 2000: CIA Asks NSA to Pass on New Information about 9/11 Hijacker Almihdhar, but NSA Fails to Do So



Following a request by the CIA, the NSA puts hijacker 9/11 Khalid Almihdhar on its watch list. This means that the NSA should pass details of any new monitored communications involving him to the CIA. [\[US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003, PP. 157](#) ; [9/11 COMMISSION, 1/26/2004, PP. 6](#)] The CIA is looking for Almihdhar and knows he has a US visa (see [January 13, 2000](#)), but fails to add him to the State Department's watch list until 19 months later (see [August 23, 2001](#)). The 9/11 Congressional Inquiry will later state: "In mid-January 2000, NSA queried its databases for information concerning Khaled [redacted]. These queries remained active until May 2000, but did not uncover any information." In fact, the NSA intercepts eight of Almihdhar's calls from San Diego to Yemen during this time and even gives some details about some of the calls to the FBI (see [Spring-Summer 2000](#)). However, they do not tell the CIA everything about them, despite the watch list requirement to provide the information. It is not clear why the NSA failed to share this with the CIA. It is also not known if or when Almihdhar was removed from the NSA watch list before 9/11. [\[US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003, PP. 157](#)]

Entity Tags: [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [9/11 Congressional Inquiry](#), [National Security Agency](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)




January 15, 2000: Thai Authorities Note 9/11 Hijackers Alhazmi and Almihdhar Depart Bangkok for US, Unclear Whether CIA Informed



Thai authorities note that 9/11 hijackers Khalid Almihdhar and Nawaf Alhazmi depart Bangkok, Thailand, for the US (see [January 15, 2000](#)). They had been put on a Thai watch list

shortly before this at the CIA's request (see [January 13, 2000](#)), but the watchlisting only means the Thais note their departure from Thailand—they are not stopped at the airport. The reason for the watchlisting was that the CIA was unable to locate them in Thailand, and wanted to be notified of the two future 9/11 hijackers' departure, so it could start tracking them again. However, it is unclear whether this information is passed to the CIA at this time. One possibility is that the Thais do not pass this information on and, according to author James Bamford, “[What’s] worse, the CIA didn’t bother to ask for it until months later.” When the CIA asks for the information in February, only one of the names, Alhazmi’s, is allegedly passed to CIA headquarters (see [March 5, 2000](#)). [BAMFORD, 2004, PP. 230; 9/11 COMMISSION,

 [1/26/2004, PP. 6](#)]

Entity Tags: [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



Mid-January 2000: Senior FBI Representative to CIA Bin Laden Unit Resigns Over Illness, Hampering Passage of Information to FBI



The FBI's most senior representative at Alec Station, the CIA's bin Laden unit, develops cancer and is forced to resign, meaning no FBI agent assigned to Alec Station has the power to release information from the CIA for months. A key cable informing the FBI that hijacker Khalid Almihdhar has a US visa will fail to be released to the FBI around this time (see [9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. January 5, 2000](#)). The representative, who is referred to in documents as “Eric”, is deputy chief of Alec Station. He has the power to release information to the FBI having acquired this power in a row with former Alec Station chief Michael Scheuer (see [June 1999](#)). The Justice Department's Office of Inspector General will say Eric left the unit in mid-January, which would have given him over a week to give the FBI information about Almihdhar discovered during the surveillance of an al-Qaeda summit held from January 5-8 (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)). It is known Eric accessed a cable related to the Malaysia summit on January 5 and discussed surveillance photos taken of the summit with CIA officer Tom Wilshire (see [Mid-January 2000](#)). Author Lawrence Wright will comment: “None of the... FBI agents remaining in Alec had the seniority to release information, and consequently had to rely on the agency to give them permission for any transfer of classified cable traffic.” [US

 [DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 241, 320](#) ; [WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 313](#)]

Entity Tags: [Office of the Inspector General \(DOJ\)](#), [“Eric”](#), [Alec Station](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



January 20, 2000: Al-Qaeda Leader Leaves Thailand; CIA Later Notified



Al-Qaeda leader Khallad bin Attash leaves Thailand and returns to Karachi, Pakistan. Bin Attash had come to Thailand with 9/11 hijackers Khalid Almihdhar and Nawaf Alhazmi (see [January 8, 2000](#)), who had departed for the US five days previously (see [January 15, 2000](#)). Bin Attash, Alhazmi, and Almihdhar had been under surveillance in Malaysia shortly before (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)) and were watchlisted around January 13 by the Thai authorities (see [January 13, 2000](#)), which are supposed to inform the US of the departure of the three men

from Thailand. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 159, 181](#); [US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 248](#)]

The CIA is informed of bin Attash's departure in early March, but he is traveling under an alias

and the CIA does not connect the alias to bin Attash. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 1/26/2004, PP. 6](#)] Under interrogation after being captured by the US, bin Attash will say that after leaving Karachi he travels to Kandahar to meet Osama bin Laden. However, such statements are considered unreliable due to the methods used to extract them (see [June 16, 2004](#)). [[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 159, 494](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Khallad bin Attash](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



January 30, 2000: 9/11 Hijacker Jarrah Detained and Questioned at Dubai Airport, Maybe Because He Is on US Watch List



Future 9/11 hijacker pilot Ziad Jarrah is briefly detained and questioned at the Dubai airport (see [January 30-31, 2000](#)), and some reports will suggest this is because he is already on a US watch list. It is not known when he may have been put on a watch list or why. The only information about this will come from conflicting accounts as to why Jarrah is stopped and questioned by immigration officials for several hours in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) on January 30.

Did the US Tell the UAE to Stop Jarrah? - According to one version, UAE officials claim Jarrah is stopped based on a tip-off from the US. A UAE source will tell author Jane Corbin: "It was at the request of the Americans and it was specifically because of Jarrah's links with Islamic extremists, his contacts with terrorist organizations. That was the extent of what we were told." [[CORBIN, 2003](#)] In 2002, CNN will also report that Jarrah is stopped because he is on a US watch list. It claims this is sourced not only from UAE sources, but from other governments in

the Middle East and Europe. However, US officials will claim no such tip-off was ever given. [\[CNN, 8/1/2002\]](#)

Passport and Religious Material Version - Other versions of the story will claim that Jarrah first raises suspicion because of an overlay of the Koran in his passport and because he is carrying religious tapes and books. This is what the 9/11 Commission will claim. [\[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 496\]](#) Other accounts, such as one in Vanity Fair in late 2004, will support this version. [\[VANITY FAIR, 11/2004\]](#)

UAE Has Existing Program to Track Militants for the CIA - There may be a middle version of sorts, that Jarrah may be stopped because the CIA wants people with a profile just like his to be stopped. According to CNN: “The questioning of Jarrah in Dubai fits the pattern of a CIA operation described to CNN by UAE and European sources. Those sources say that in 1999, the CIA began an operation to track suspected al-Qaeda operatives, as they transited there. One of those sources provided [a] drawing showing the airport layout and describes how people wanted for questioning were intercepted, most often at a transit desk. As was the case with Ziad Jarrah, CNN sources say UAE officials were, often, told in advance by American officials who was coming in and whom they wanted questioned.” [\[CNN, 8/1/2002\]](#) It will also be reported that in the summer of 1999, the CIA asked immigration officials all over the region to question anyone who may have been returning from training camps in Afghanistan, and Jarrah fits that profile (see [Summer 1999](#)). [\[VANITY FAIR, 11/2004\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [United Arab Emirates](#), [9/11 Commission](#), [Ziad Jarrah](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



Late January 2000: CIA Faces Legal Barriers Helping Warlord Who Wants to Kill Bin Laden





A US satellite photo of the Darunta camp. [Source: US military]

By the start of 2000, US intelligence has had a particular focus on Darunta Camp, one of al-Qaeda's training camps in Afghanistan. This simple camp near Jalalabad draws attention because of intelligence gathered during the last year indicating that al-Qaeda is experimenting with poisons and chemical weapons. The CIA has inserted a special device in the vicinity that can take high quality photographs of the camp from over ten miles away. Sometime in late January, the CIA learns that bin Laden has arrived in the camp. They pass this information on to Ahmed Shah Massoud and his Northern Alliance, who are fighting the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Massoud dispatches a small team on mules to get near the camp and fire rockets at bin Laden. However, when Massoud tells the CIA about this, the CIA's lawyers are alarmed. They don't want the CIA legally complicit if the operation kills innocent civilians and they order Massoud to withdraw his team. But due to poor communications the team goes ahead anyway and apparently shells the camp. However, bin Laden is not hurt and the incident passes without notice. Some US intelligence officials are upset at the legal policy that led to the order for Massoud's team to withdraw. A new policy is drawn up allowing the CIA to assist Massoud on an operation if the primary purpose of the operation is to kill bin Laden or one of his top assistants. Otherwise, the US officially remains neutral in the war between the Northern Alliance and the Taliban. [COLL, 2004, PP. 487-490]

Entity Tags: [Osama bin Laden](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Taliban](#), [Northern Alliance](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Ahmed Shah Massoud](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



February 2000: CIA Rejects Foreign Request for Involvement with 9/11 Hijacker Almihdhar Search Due to Own Investigation



The 9/11 Congressional Inquiry will later report, “[I]n February 2000, CIA rejected a request from foreign authorities to become involved [in the search for and/or monitoring of 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar] because CIA was in the middle of an investigation ‘to determine what the subject is up to.’” However, the CIA will later say it has no idea where Almihdhar is at this point (see [January 13, 2000](#)). The identity of the “foreign authorities” and the nature of the proposed assistance is not known. [[US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003, PP. 147](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



February 2, 2000: CIA Director Tells Public that Bin Laden Is Planning ‘Further Blows Against America’



CIA Director George Tenet tells a Senate committee in open session that bin Laden “wants to strike further blows against America.” He points out the close links between al-Qaeda and Islamic Jihad and says this is part of an “intricate web of alliances among Sunni extremists worldwide, including North Africans, radical Palestinians, Pakistanis, and Central Asians.” He points out ties between drug traffickers and the Taliban and says, “There is ample evidence that Islamic extremists such as Osama bin Laden use profits from the drug trade to support their terror campaign.” But there is no mention of Pakistan’s support for al-Qaeda and the Taliban, despite CIA knowledge of this (see [Autumn 1998](#)). Instead, he claims Iran is “the most active state sponsor” of terrorism. Additionally, he does not mention that bin Laden is capable of planning attacks inside the US, even though he told that to Congress in a closed session six months earlier (see [June 24, 1999](#)). [[SENATE, 2/2/2000](#)]

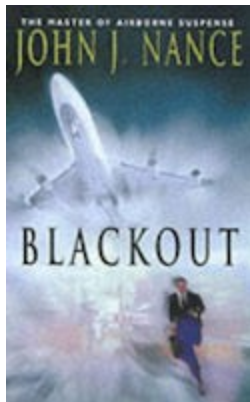
Entity Tags: [Al-Qaeda](#), [US Congress](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Islamic Jihad](#), [Taliban](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



February 7, 2000: Aviation Thriller Novel Predicts Plane Hitting WTC and Other Events Similar to 9/11





'Blackout,' by John J. Nance. [Source: Pan Books] *Blackout*, the new novel by aviation thriller writer John J. Nance, includes scenes which appear to predict aspects of the 9/11 attacks, such as a character suggesting the possibility of a Boeing 747 crashing into the World Trade Center because its pilots have been incapacitated by terrorists. [NANCE, 2000, PP. 251, 320, 344-345; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 8/24/2003] The novel's storyline involves its two central characters, FBI agent Kat Bronsky and Washington Post reporter Robert MacCabe, investigating what has caused two American passenger jets to crash. It appears that terrorists are using a special ray gun stolen from the government to kill or blind pilots in midair, resulting in their planes crashing. [PUBLISHERS WEEKLY, 1/31/2000; LOS ANGELES TIMES, 4/16/2000]

FBI Agent Fears 747 Hitting WTC - In one scene, Bronsky explains to MacCabe her fear that the terrorists are "going to shoot down another airliner somewhere." She says: "So who's next? Are we going to get a seven-forty-seven impacting the World Trade Center in New York because the two pilots were neutralized on takeoff from Newark or Kennedy?" [NANCE, 2000, PP. 319-320] Similar to this scenario, in the terrorist attacks on 9/11, the WTC will be hit by two Boeing 767s. [NEW YORK TIMES, 9/11/2001]

Agent Suggests Terrorists Profiting from Insider Trading - In a later scene, Bronsky suggests to MacCabe that the attacks against aircraft may be motivated by financial gain. She says: "How can you make lots of money from seriously undermining the airlines? How about selling their stock short or softening up the industry for financial takeovers?" She suggests the terrorists "may already be getting precisely what they want from collapsing airline market prices." When asked if stock prices are down as a result of the plane crashes, Bronsky replies: "Big-time. As much as a 10 percent drop. If this continues, they'll go into free fall." [NANCE, 2000, PP. 344-345] Similar to this scenario, evidence of possible insider trading will surface in the aftermath of 9/11, indicating that some people may have profited from having advance knowledge of the attacks. [CNN, 9/24/2001; 9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 499] In the week before 9/11 there will be surges in the volume of put options, which pay off when a stock drops in price, purchased on the stocks of the parent companies of American Airlines and United Airlines, the airlines whose planes are targeted in the attacks (see [September 6-10, 2001](#)). [SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, 9/29/2001; 9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 499] Also, in the month before 9/11 there will be a significant increase in short selling of stocks of those two companies, essentially betting that the value of the stocks will decrease (see [Early September 2001](#)). [SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, 9/22/2001; CNN, 9/24/2001] On the first day of trading following the attacks, the shares of the two companies will fall by 39 percent and 42 percent. [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 9/18/2001]

Terrorist Has Name Similar to Alleged 9/11 Commander - Furthermore, one of the terrorists responsible for causing the plane crashes in *Blackout* is called “Ben Laren,” a name similar to (Osama) bin Laden, who allegedly orders the 9/11 attacks. [[NANCE, 2000, PP. 251](#)]

Earlier Novel Described Plane Used as a Weapon - Nance, described by Publishers Weekly as “[a]rguably the king of the modern-day aviation thriller,” is a decorated Air Force pilot and a retired airline captain. He has extensive flying experience, having piloted jet aircraft including Boeing 727s, 737s, and 747s. He is also an internationally recognized analyst on matters of aviation safety and works for ABC News as an aviation consultant. [[PUBLISHERS WEEKLY, 1/31/2000](#); [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 8/24/2003](#); [ABC NEWS, 1/6/2006](#)] In his 1995 novel *Pandora’s Clock*, Nance in fact mentioned the possibility of a plane being used as a weapon by terrorists. In that novel, the deputy director of the CIA recalled an American-trained Iranian pilot, who is a member of a terrorist group, who had been caught “preparing to fly a MIG-29 fighter on a low-level suicide mission into Rome. His target had been the Vatican—and the Pope.” [[NANCE, 1995, PP. 144](#)]

Entity Tags: [John J. Nance](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



February 11, 2000: CIA Station in Malaysia Reminds CIA Station in Thailand about 9/11 Hijacker Almihdhar and Companions



The CIA station in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, asks the CIA station in Bangkok, Thailand, what is happening with surveillance of future 9/11 hijackers Nawaf Alhazmi and Khalid Almihdhar, and al-Qaeda leader Khallad bin Attash. The CIA station in Kuala Lumpur had monitored the three when they were in Malaysia (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)) and passed the surveillance over to Bangkok when they flew there in early January (see [January 8, 2000](#)). [[9/11 COMMISSION,](#)

[7/24/2004, PP. 181, 502](#); [US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 247](#)] Although, according to the 9/11 Commission, Bangkok station probably already knows that Alhazmi has departed for the US, it fails to respond for two weeks, when it claims it does not know what has happened (see [February 25, 2000](#)).

Entity Tags: [Khallad bin Attash](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [CIA Bangkok Station](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



(February 25, 2000): CIA Bangkok Station Falsely Claims It Does Not Have Information about 9/11 Hijackers Alhazmi and Almihdhar



The CIA station in Bangkok, Thailand, replies to a request from the CIA station in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, for information about future 9/11 hijackers Khalid Almihdhar and Nawaf Alhazmi and al-Qaeda leader Khallad bin Attash by saying that there will be a delay with the response due to difficulties obtaining the information. [[US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 247-](#)

[8](#)] The relevant information that should be passed to Kuala Lumpur station concerns the departure of Alhazmi and Almihdhar to the US (see [January 15, 2000](#) and [January 15, 2000](#)). Kuala Lumpur station coordinated surveillance of the three men in Malaysia in early January (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)). When the trio flew to Bangkok, the surveillance was passed on to Bangkok station (see [January 8, 2000](#)). According to the 9/11 Commission: “Presumably the departure information was obtained back in January, on the days that these individuals made their departures. Because the names were watchlisted by the Thai authorities we cannot yet explain the delay in reporting the news.” It is therefore unclear why the CIA’s Bangkok station says it is having difficulty obtaining information it already apparently has in its possession. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 181, 502](#)] The information will be reported about a week later, but will be incomplete, as Bangkok station will only report that Alhazmi has flown to the US, failing to name his companion as Almihdhar (see [March 5, 2000](#)).

Entity Tags: [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [CIA Bangkok Station](#), [Khallad bin Attash](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)

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Spring 2000: CIA Paramilitary Teams Begin Working with Anti-Taliban Forces



Around this time, special CIA paramilitary teams begin “working with tribes and warlords in southern Afghanistan” and help “create a significant new network in the region of the Taliban’s greatest strength.” [[WASHINGTON POST, 11/18/2001](#)] Journalist Bob Woodward will later report that from 2000 through March 2001, the CIA also deploys paramilitary teams at least five times into Afghanistan to work with the Northern Alliance in the north part of the country. [[WOODWARD, 2006, PP. 77-78](#)]

Entity Tags: [Northern Alliance](#), [Taliban](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)

 SHARE

March 5, 2000: CIA Learns 9/11 Hijackers Alhazmi and Almihdhar Have Entered US, but Does Not Tell FBI or Other Agencies



After being prompted by CIA colleagues in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to provide information about what happened to future 9/11 hijackers Nawaf Alhazmi and Khalid Almihdhar and al-Qaeda leader Khallad bin Attash after they flew from Malaysia to Thailand on January 8, 2000 (see [January 8, 2000](#) and [February 25, 2000](#)), the CIA station in Bangkok, Thailand, sends out a cable saying that Alhazmi arrived in the US from Thailand with an apparently unnamed companion on January 15 (see [January 15, 2000](#)). This information was received from Thai intelligence, which watchlisted Almihdhar and Alhazmi after being asked to do so by the CIA (see [January 13, 2000](#) and [January 15, 2000](#)). [[NEW YORK TIMES, 10/17/2002; 9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 181, 502](#)]

Companion - The companion to whom the cable refers is presumably Almihdhar. According to later testimony of a senior FBI official, the CIA learns the companion is Almihdhar at this time: “In March 2000, the CIA received information concerning the entry of Almihdhar and Alhazmi into the United States.” [[US CONGRESS, 9/20/2002](#)] The CIA disputes this, however. [[US](#)

[CONGRESS, 7/24/2003, PP. 157](#)] If the companion the cable refers to is Almihdhar, then it is unclear why he would not be named, as the NSA has been intercepting his calls for at least a year (see [Early 1999](#)), he was under CIA surveillance earlier in January (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)), he is known to have a US visa (see [January 2-5, 2000](#)), he is associated with Alhazmi (see [January 8-9, 2000](#)), and this cable is prompted by another cable specifically asking where Almihdhar is (see [February 11, 2000](#)).

Missed Opportunity - Later, CIA officials, including CIA Director George Tenet and Counterterrorist Center Director Cofer Black, will admit that this was one of the missed opportunities to watchlist the hijackers. Black will say: “I think that month we watchlisted about 150 people. [The watchlisting] should have been done. It wasn’t.” Almihdhar and Alhazmi will not be added to the US watchlist until August 2001 (see [August 23, 2001](#)). [[NEW](#)

[YORK TIMES, 10/17/2002; US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003, PP. 157](#)]

Unclear Who Reads Cable - Although Tenet will tell the 9/11 Congressional Inquiry that nobody at CIA headquarters reads this cable at this time (see [October 17, 2002](#)), the CIA’s inspector general will conclude that “numerous” officers access this cable and others about

Almihdhar. [[US DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA, ALEXANDRIA DISTRICT, 3/28/2006](#)]

These officers are not named, but Tom Wilshire, the CIA’s deputy unit chief in charge of monitoring the two men at this time, will access it in May 2001 at the same time as he accesses other cables about Almihdhar from early 2000 (see [May 15, 2001](#)). The 9/11 Commission will say that the cables are “reexamined” at this time, suggesting that Wilshire may have read them before. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 267, 537](#)] Wilshire certainly did access at least two of the cables in January 2000, indicating he may read the cable about the arrival of Alhazmi and the unnamed companion in the US in March 2000. [[US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,](#)

[11/2004, PP. 240, 282](#)]

FBI Not Informed - The knowledge that Alhazmi has entered the US will be disseminated throughout the CIA, but not to the FBI or other US intelligence agencies (see [March 6, 2000](#)

[and After](#)). When asked about the failure by the 9/11 Congressional Inquiry, Wilshire will be unable to explain it, saying: “It’s very difficult to understand what happened with that cable when it came in. I do not know exactly why it was missed. It would appear that it was missed completely.” [US CONGRESS, 9/20/2002]

Entity Tags: [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [CIA Bangkok Station](#), [9/11 Commission](#), [9/11 Congressional Inquiry](#), [Alec Station](#), [Tom Wilshire](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Malaysian Secret Service](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



March 6, 2000 and After: Numerous CIA Officers Learn 9/11 Hijacker Almihdhar Is in US; Fail to Inform FBI



After the CIA learns that 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar has a US visa (see [January 2-5, 2000](#)) and 9/11 hijacker Nawaf Alhazmi and a companion have arrived in Los Angeles (see [March 5, 2000](#)), operational documents reporting this are accessed by numerous CIA officers, most of whom are in the Counterterrorism Division. [CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 6/2005] In addition, the day after the cable reporting Alhazmi’s arrival in Los Angeles is received, “another overseas CIA station note[s], in a cable to the bin Laden unit at CIA headquarters, that it had ‘read with interest’ the March cable, ‘particularly the information that a member of this group traveled to the US...’” [US CONGRESS, 9/20/2002] However, it is unclear what is done with this information as CIA Director George Tenet and Counterterrorist Center Director Cofer Black will later incorrectly testify that nobody read the cable stating Alhazmi had entered the US (see [October 17, 2002](#)), so the use to which the information is put is never investigated. In addition, the CIA fails to inform the FBI that Alhazmi has entered the US. [9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 182]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



Early April 2000: 9/11 Hijacker Alhazmi Talks to 9/11 Facilitator in Dubai, Possibly Using Phone Monitored by NSA



According to the 2008 charge sheet at his military tribunal, 9/11 facilitator Ali Abdul Aziz Ali speaks on the telephone to 9/11 hijacker Nawaf Alhazmi, who is living in San Diego at this

time. The call or calls are apparently made at the direction of alleged 9/11 mastermind Khalid Shaikh Mohammed and are about a wire transfer from Ali to Alhazmi made in mid-April (see [April 16-18, 2000](#)). The source of the claim that the calls are made contained in the charge sheet is not specified, so it is unclear whether it is only based on statements made by detainees under interrogation, which may be unreliable (see [June 16, 2004](#)), or whether it is corroborated by other evidence, such as phone company records. [[US DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE,](#)

[2/11/2008](#)] At least some calls between Alhazmi and his partner, hijacker Khalid Almhidhar, and an al-Qaeda communications hub in Yemen are being monitored by the NSA at this point (see [Spring-Summer 2000](#)). However, it is unclear whether the call or calls to Ali are picked up by the NSA, or a joint CIA-NSA program to support “black ops” in progress at this time (see [After July 11, 1997](#)).

Entity Tags: [Ali Abdul Aziz Ali](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Khalid Shaikh Mohammed](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



April 4, 2000: ISI Director Visits Washington and Is Told to Give Warning to Taliban



ISI Director and “leading Taliban supporter” Lt. Gen. Mahmood Ahmed visits Washington. He meets officials at the CIA and the White House. In a message meant for both Pakistan and the Taliban, US officials tell him that al-Qaeda has killed Americans and “people who support those people will be treated as our enemies.” [[WASHINGTON POST, 12/19/2001; COLL, 2004, PP. 508-510](#)] US Undersecretary of State Thomas Pickering bluntly tells Mahmood, “You are in bed with those who threaten us.” [[RASHID, 2008, PP. 409](#)] The US threatens to support the Northern Alliance, who are still engaged in a civil war with the Taliban. A short time later, Mahmood goes to Afghanistan and delivers this message to Taliban leader Mullah Omar. However, no actual US action, military or otherwise, is taken against either the Taliban or Pakistan. Author Steve Coll will later note that these US threats were just bluffs since the Clinton administration was not seriously considering a change of policy. [[WASHINGTON POST, 12/19/2001; COLL, 2004, PP. 508-510](#)]

Entity Tags: [Taliban](#), [Pakistan](#), [Mahmood Ahmed](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Mullah Omar](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



April 7, 2000: Al-Zawahiri’s Brother Arrested and Rendered to Egypt; Reveals Secrets of Islamic Jihad



Mohammed al-Zawahiri, brother of al-Qaeda second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri, is arrested at Dubai airport in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). While much less known than his brother, Mohammed quietly served an important role as Ayman's deputy in Islamic Jihad, and as the group's military commander (see [1993](#)). He apparently disagreed with the increasing unification between Islamic Jihad and al-Qaeda, and quit in 1998 over that issue. [[JACQUARD, 2002, PP. 108](#)] He is arrested in the UAE and then flown to Egypt as a part of the CIA's rendition program (see [Summer 1995](#)). A senior former CIA officer will later confirm US involvement in the operation. [[GREY, 2007, PP. 246, 299](#)] Mohammed had been sentenced to death in absentia in Egypt the year before. [[NEW YORKER, 9/9/2002](#)] But his execution is not carried out, and he is said to reveal what he knows about Islamic Jihad. In 2007 it will be reported that his sentence is likely to be lessened in return for agreeing to renounce violence. [[JACQUARD, 2002, PP. 108](#); [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 4/20/2007](#)] Note: there is a dispute about when he was arrested. Some sources indicate it was in the spring of 1999. [[GREY, 2007, PP. 246](#); [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 4/20/2007](#)] Others indicate it was a year later. [[JACQUARD, 2002, PP. 108](#); [NEW YORKER, 9/9/2002](#)]

Entity Tags: [Mohammed al-Zawahiri](#), [Ayman al-Zawahiri](#)

Timeline Tags: [Torture of US Captives](#), [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



May 2000: CIA Physician Meets Curveball; Performs Blood Test



Les, a doctor from the CIA's counter-proliferation branch, meets Curveball and takes a blood sample. The blood is analyzed for the presence of antibodies which would indicate if he has ever been exposed to anthrax or any other biological weapons agent. Curveball claims that he was injured in an accident in the fall of 1998 at the Djerf al Nadaf industrial site that killed 12 bio-warfare technicians. His blood test results are inconclusive. The doctor, who does not speak to Curveball at all during the visit, notes that Curveball speaks excellent English even though the Germans, justifying their refusal to allow the CIA to interview him, have told the CIA that Curveball does not speak the language. [[LOS ANGELES TIMES, 11/20/2005](#)]

Entity Tags: [Les](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Bundesnachrichtendienst](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



June 2000: CIA Director Tenet Visits Pakistan, Complains about Islamic Charities' Ties to Bin Laden



CIA Director George Tenet makes a secret trip to Pakistan to complain about funds being moved through Islamic charities to al-Qaeda. This is part of an effort coordinated by the National Security Council to cut off the vast sums of money that intelligence officials believe flow to bin Laden's al-Qaeda terrorist network through Islamic charities and wealthy donors from across the Middle East. The US campaign prompts the Pakistani government in early 2001 to make some efforts to ban raising funds explicitly designated for holy war. Former US officials will later claim the trip is part of a larger effort to disrupt bin Laden's financial network following the 1998 US embassy bombings. [[WALL STREET JOURNAL, 10/1/2001](#)]

Entity Tags: [George J. Tenet](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Pakistan](#), [National Security Council](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



[June 10, 2000: 9/11 Hijacker Almihdhar Flies from San Diego to Germany; Return Date Unclear](#)



Khalid Almihdhar. [*Source: FBI*]9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar flies from San Diego to Frankfurt, Germany. [[US CONGRESS, 9/20/2002](#)] He is accompanied to the airport by another hijacker, Nawaf Alhazmi, and an unnamed associate (see [June 10, 2000](#)). Authorities later believe that Almihdhar visits his cousin-in-law Ramzi Bin al-Shibh and other al-Qaeda members in bin al-Shibh's cell. Since the CIA fails to notify Germany about its suspicions of Almihdhar and bin al-Shibh, both of whom were seen attending the al-Qaeda summit in Malaysia in January, German police fail to monitor them and another chance to uncover the 9/11 plot is missed. [[DIE ZEIT \(HAMBURG\), 10/1/2002](#); [US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003, PP. 135](#)] FBI Director Mueller and the congressional inquiry into 9/11 will claim that Almihdhar does not return to the US for over a year [[US CONGRESS, 9/20/2002](#); [US CONGRESS, 9/26/2002](#)], although it is possible that Almihdhar does return before then. For instance, there are indications Almihdhar attends a flight school in Arizona in early 2001. [[ARIZONA REPUBLIC, 9/28/2001](#)]

Entity Tags: [Ramzi bin al-Shibh](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Robert S. Mueller III](#), [9/11 Congressional Inquiry](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Germany](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



(Mid-June-Mid-July 2000): 9/11 Hijacker Almihdhar Stays in Yemen Hub House Closely Monitored by US Intelligence



When 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar leaves the US in June (see [June 10, 2000](#)), he flies to Frankfurt, Germany, and then to Oman in the Middle East. [\[US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003, PP. 135\]](#) From there he returns to his family's home in Sana'a, Yemen. [\[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 237\]](#) His wife and children live at an al-Qaeda communications hub that is run by his father in law, Ahmed al-Hada. The hub is being monitored by the NSA and CIA. Phone calls to and from the hub, including ones made by Almihdhar and other hijackers, are intercepted, rooms in the building are bugged, and spy satellites record visitors (see [Late August 1998](#), [Late 1998-Early 2002](#), and [Early 2000-Summer 2001](#)). Based on information gained from monitoring this house, the CIA and local intelligence services mounted a major operation against Almihdhar, other hijackers, and several more al-Qaeda operatives in December 1999 and January 2000, when they were followed around the Middle East and South Asia and monitored during an al-Qaeda summit in Malaysia (see [December 29, 1999](#), [January 2-5, 2000](#), and [January 5-8, 2000](#)). So presumably US intelligence should have been aware of this visit to the hub and who Almihdhar was, but what exactly was known and who may have known it has not been made public. He will return to the hub in February 2001 and stay an unknown length of time (see [February 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Ahmed al-Hada](#), [National Security Agency](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



July 2000: CIA Learns Al-Qaeda Related Group Plans to Attack US Naval Ship



A CIA informant reveals that a militant group based in Sidon, Lebanon that is affiliated with bin Laden is planning to attack a US naval ship somewhere in the Eastern Mediterranean, probably off the coast of Lebanon. [\[MINITER, 2003, PP. 215\]](#) This is a probable reference to Asbat al-Ansar, the only group that fits such a profile. [\[US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 5/21/2002\]](#) The CIA and Defense Department discount the threat, pointing out the US is not deploying ships near Lebanon. However, counterterrorism "tsar" Richard Clarke will later say he was alarmed by the warning because it showed increased ambitions for al-Qaeda in going after hardened

military targets. [MINITER, 2003, PP. 215] Al-Qaeda will successfully bomb the USS *Cole* several months later in Yemen (see [October 12, 2000](#)).

Entity Tags: [US Department of Defense](#), [Asbat al-Ansar](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Richard A. Clarke](#)



Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



July 12-27, 2000: FBI Informant Files Stay Extension for 9/11 Hijacker Alhazmi; Filing Is Late



On July 12, two days before his visa expires, an I-539 application (dated July 7, 2000) to extend 9/11 hijacker Nawaf Alhazmi's US stay is filed with the California Service Center (CSC) of the INS. [NAWAF ALHAZMI, 7/27/2000] The I-539 form is not received by the CSC until July 27, 2000, and officially it is considered a late filing. [UNKNOWN: INS, 2002; INS EMAIL, 3/20/2002; 9/11

 COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP. 12, 25] The name of the form-preparer is redacted, but according to INS records, Alhazmi's I-539 is submitted "in care of" Abdussattar Shaikh, an FBI informant Alhazmi is living with (see [May 10-Mid-December 2000](#)), and "appears to have been filed [sic] out by Shaikh." [UNKNOWN: INS, 2002; IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE, 5/26/2002] Alhazmi had been issued a one-year, multiple-entry visa on April 3, 1999, but when he arrived in the United States with Khalid Almihdhar on January 15, 2000, the immigration inspector approved a six-month stay for both of them (see [January 15, 2000](#)). Alhazmi's I-539 visa extension will be approved on June 18, 2001, 11 months later (see [June 18, 2001](#)). No other extensions of stay will be filed by, or on behalf of, Alhazmi. [9/11 COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP. 10, 12, 25] 

Entity Tags: [Abdussattar Shaikh](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [US Immigration and Naturalization Service](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



July 24, 2000: French Detail Bin Laden Network, Including His Ties to Bin Laden Family and Saudi Government Charity



The French intelligence agency, the DGSE, publishes a 13-page classified report entitled "The Networks of Osama bin Laden." According to a 2007 article, the report describes the "context, the anecdotal details, and all the strategic aspects relative to al-Qaeda" in "black and white" terms. It mentions a payment of \$4.5 million from the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO) to bin Laden. The US will not go after the IIRO even years after 9/11 because of the organization's close ties to the Saudi government (see [October 12, 2001](#) and

[August 3, 2006](#)). The report also doubts Osama bin Laden’s purported estrangement from the bin Laden family: “It seems more and more likely that bin Laden has maintained contacts with certain members of his family, although the family, which directs one of the largest groups of public works in the world, has officially renounced him. One of his brothers apparently plays a role as intermediary in its professional contacts or the monitoring of its business.” French officials will later claim they regularly passed on their intelligence on al-Qaeda to the CIA. [LE MONDE (PARIS), 4/15/2007]

Entity Tags: [Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [International Islamic Relief Organization](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



July 31, 2000: Politician Accuses Philippine Government and CIA of Manipulating Muslim Militant Group



Aquilino Pimentel. [Source: Publicity photo from Aquilino Pimentel website.]

Senator Aquilino Pimentel, president of the Philippines Senate, accuses the Philippine government of collusion with the Muslim militant group Abu Sayyaf. He cites research that names two high police officers, Leandro Mendoza and Rodolfo Mendoza, as handlers for Abu Sayyaf informants. He also names Brig. Gen. Guillermo Ruiz, commanding general of the Filipino Marines in the early 1990s, as someone who colluded with the group, even splitting profits from illegal logging with them. Pimentel says, “My information is that the Abu Sayyaf partisans were given military intelligence services IDs, safe-houses, safe-conduct passes, firearms, cell phones and various sorts of financial support.” He accuses officials of manipulating the Abu Sayyaf “in the game of divide and rule as far as the Muslim insurgency is concerned.” He also accuses the CIA of helping to create the Abu Sayyaf, saying, “For what the Abu Sayyaf has become, the CIA must merit our people’s condemnation. The CIA has sired a monster that has caused a lot problems for the country...” He says Abu Sayyaf’s handlers “passed on military equipment and funds from the CIA and its support network...” He claims witnesses have come to him with evidence but are afraid of speaking out publicly. He

concludes that “any Filipino who had a hand in the creation, training and equipping of the Abu Sayyaf should be held to account for high treason and other crimes.” [[SENATOR AQUILINO Q. PIMENTEL WEBSITE, 7/31/2000](#)]

Entity Tags: [Guillermo Ruiz](#), [Abu Sayyaf](#), [Aquilino Pimentel](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Rodolfo Mendoza](#), [Leandro Mendoza](#), [Philippines](#)

Timeline Tags: [Alleged Use of False Flag Attacks](#), [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



(August 2000): Wiretap Reveals Al-Qaeda is Planning ‘Hiroshima-type Event’ Against US



The US intelligence community has been monitoring al-Qaeda telephone communications to and from a communications hub in Yemen since the late 1990s (see [Late August 1998](#)). The CIA intercepts an al-Qaeda operative say in a monitored phone call that bin Laden is planning a “Hiroshima-type event” against the US. Failed millennium bomber Ahmed Ressam, who is arrested in late 1999 (see [December 14, 1999](#)), confirms at the time that al-Qaeda is preparing such an attack. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 10/14/2001](#); [PBS, 10/3/2002](#)] This sets off an immediate but unsuccessful search for further evidence. Shortly after 9/11, the New York Times will report that “intelligence officials now acknowledge that they never imagined that Mr. bin Laden’s organization had the ability to kill thousands of people in coordinated attacks on the American homeland. Looking back through the prism of Sept. 11, officials now say that the intercepted message was a telling sign of a drastic shift in the ambitions and global reach of al-Qaeda during the last three years.” [[NEW YORK TIMES, 10/14/2001](#)] There apparently is another intercepted message talking about a “Hiroshima” event in the summer of 2001 (see [Summer 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [Al-Qaeda](#), [Ahmed Ressam](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



August 4, 2000: Former CIA Manager David Blee Dies



Former CIA manager David Blee dies at the age of 83 at his home in Bethesda, Maryland. In recognition of the significance of his career (see [1971](#)), the New York Times’s obituary calls him “a legendary American spymaster who played a critical role in dispelling the climate of paranoia that paralyzed the Central Intelligence Agency’s espionage operations against the Soviet Union in the 1960s.” [[NEW YORK TIMES, 8/17/2000](#); [LOS ANGELES TIMES, 8/18/2000](#); [GUARDIAN, 8/22/2000](#)]

Entity Tags: [David Blee](#)

Timeline Tags: [Misc Entries](#)



August 28, 2000: Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda's Chief Bomb Maker Recognized in Aerial Photo



Midhat Mursi. *[Source: Washington Post]* Agents of the DGSE, the French intelligence agency, examine an aerial photo and spot al-Qaeda leader Midhat Mursi (a.k.a. Abu Khabab al-Masri) standing close to Osama bin Laden. Mursi is considered al-Qaeda's chief bomb maker and chemical weapons expert (he will apparently be killed in 2006 (see [January 13, 2006](#)). French intelligence reports from before 9/11 show that Mursi is being closely watched by intelligence agencies, with the French exchanging information about him with the Mossad, CIA, and Egyptian intelligence. [LE MONDE (PARIS), 4/15/2007] The quality of the aerial photo must have been extremely high in order for Mursi and bin Laden to be recognized, but it has not been explained how such a photo was obtained or what other photos of bin Laden or other al-Qaeda leaders may have been taken before 9/11. Less than two weeks later, the US begins flying Predator drones over Afghanistan to track bin Laden (see [September 7-October 2000](#)).

Entity Tags: [Osama bin Laden](#), [Midhat Mursi](#), [Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



September 2000: CIA Report Reveals Agency Supported Pinochet, Despite Repressive Policies



A CIA report is released admitting that the CIA knowingly supported the Pinochet regime's brutalities, and revealing that the head of Pinochet's dreaded secret police (responsible for

the assassination of an American in Washington DC) was a paid CIA asset. [[CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 9/19/2000](#); [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 9/19/2000](#)]

Entity Tags: [Augusto Pinochet](#)

Timeline Tags: [US International Relations](#), [US-Chile \(1964-2005\)](#)



September 7-October 2000: Predator Flights over Afghanistan Are Initiated Then Halted



The first Predator flight over Afghanistan on September 7, 2000 captures bin Laden circled by security in his Tarnak Farms complex. [*Source: CBC*] An unmanned spy plane called the Predator begins flying over Afghanistan, showing incomparably detailed real-time video and photographs of the movements of what appears to be bin Laden and his aides. It flies successfully over Afghanistan 16 times. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 3/24/2004](#)] President Clinton is impressed by a two-minute video of bin Laden crossing a street heading toward a mosque inside his Tarnak Farms complex. Bin Laden is surrounded by a team of a dozen armed men creating a professional forward security perimeter as he moves. The Predator has been used since 1996, in the Balkans and Iraq. One Predator crashes on takeoff and another is chased by a fighter, but it apparently identifies bin Laden on three occasions. Its use is stopped in Afghanistan after a few trials, mostly because seasonal winds are picking up. It is agreed to resume the flights in the spring, but the Predator fails to fly over Afghanistan again until after 9/11. [[WASHINGTON POST, 12/19/2001](#); [CLARKE, 2004, PP. 220-21](#)] On September 15, 2001, CIA Director Tenet apparently inaccurately tells President Bush, “The unmanned Predator surveillance aircraft that was now armed with Hellfire missiles had been operating for more than a year out of Uzbekistan to provide real-time video of Afghanistan.” [[WASHINGTON POST, 1/29/2002](#)]

Entity Tags: [Osama bin Laden](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [William Jefferson \(“Bill”\) Clinton](#), [George W. Bush](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)



September 10, 2000: Hijacker Hanjour's Visa Application Rejected



PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT YOUR ANSWERS IN INK

1. SURNAMES OR FAMILY NAMES (Exactly as in Passport) Hanjour		DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE	
2. FIRST NAME AND MIDDLE NAME (Exactly as in Passport) Hani S.H.		B-1/B-2 MAX B-1 MAX B-2 MAX OTHER _____ MAX Visa Classification	
3. OTHER NAMES (Maiden, Religious, Professional, Aliases)		MULT OR _____ Number Applications	
4. DATE OF BIRTH (Day, Month, Year) 30-8-1972	8. PASSPORT NUMBER C 241922	MONTHS _____ Validity	
5. PLACE OF BIRTH (City, Province) Taif	COUNTRY Saudi Arabia	L.O. CHECKED _____ ISSUED/REFUSED	
6. NATIONALITY Saudi	7. SEX <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MALE <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE	ON _____ BY _____ UNDER SEC. 370/1 INA	
9. HOME ADDRESS (include apartment no., street, city, province, and postal zone) Taif - Al-Jachh St P.O. Box 1217		REFUSAL REVIEWED BY <u>like to stay three years & more!</u>	
10. NAME AND STREET ADDRESS OF PRESENT EMPLOYER OR SCHOOL (Postal box number unacceptable) Taif		Going to flight training school wants to change status when he finds a school	
11. HOME TELEPHONE NO. 23422751	12. BUSINESS TELEPHONE NO. 61953473		
13. COLOR OF HAIR Black	14. COLOR OF EYES Brown	24. PRESENT OCCUPATION (if retired, state past occupation) student	
15. COMPLEXION	16. HEIGHT 65	25. WHO WILL FURNISH FINANCIAL SUPPORT, INCLUDING TICKETS? My father cost	
17. MARKS OF IDENTIFICATION	18. MARITAL STATUS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Married <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Separated If married, give name and nationality of spouse.	26. AT WHAT ADDRESS WILL YOU STAY IN THE U.S.A? AZ, Grand home	
19. NAMES AND RELATIONSHIPS OF PERSONS TRAVELING WITH YOU (NOTE: A separate application must be made for a visa for each traveler, regardless of age.)		27. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR TRIP? Visit	
20. HAVE YOU EVER APPLIED FOR A U.S. VISA BEFORE, WHETHER IMMIGRANT OR NONIMMIGRANT? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes Where? <u>Jakarta</u> When? <u>1998</u> Type of visa? <u>Student</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Visa was issued <input type="checkbox"/> Visa was refused		28. WHEN DO YOU INTEND TO ARRIVE IN THE U.S.A? <u>enter after tax</u>	
21. HAS YOUR U.S. VISA EVER BEEN CANCELED? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Where? _____ When? _____ By whom? _____		29. HOW LONG DO YOU PLAN TO STAY IN THE U.S.A? <u>about three</u>	
22. Bearers of visitor visas may generally not work or study in the U.S. DO YOU INTEND TO WORK IN THE U.S.? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If YES, explain.		30. HAVE YOU EVER BEEN IN THE U.S.A? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes When? <u>1995</u> For how long? <u>one year</u>	
23. DO YOU INTEND TO STUDY IN THE U.S.? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes If YES, write name and address of school as it appears on form I-20.		NONIMMIGRANT VISA APPLICATION	

OPTIONAL FORM 156 (Rev. 6-93) PAGE 1
Department of State

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Hani Hanjour's September 10 US visa application, which was rejected. The fact he requested permission to stay in the US for three years is highlighted on the right. [Source: National Review] (click image to enlarge) Future 9/11 hijacker Hani Hanjour applies for a US tourist/business visa at the US consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Hanjour, who has already spent a good deal of time in the US (see [October 3, 1991-February 1992](#), [Spring 1996](#), [October](#)

[1996-December 1997](#), and [1998](#)), uses a passport issued on July 24, 2000. His application is incomplete, as he says he is a student, but fails to give his school's name and address. After his application is screened, he is referred to a consular officer for an interview. [[9/11](#)

[COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP. 13, 174-5](#)] This consular officer is Shayna Steinger, who issues a total of 12 visas to the 9/11 hijackers (see [July 1, 2000](#)). [[9/11 COMMISSION, 12/30/2002, PP. 2](#); [OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL \(US DEPARTMENT OF STATE\), 1/30/2003](#)] Hanjour's application is denied as he says he wants to stay in the US for three years, raising concerns he might become an immigrant. Hanjour also says he wants to attend flight school in the US, changing his status to "student" from "tourist" after arrival. However, this is another reason Steinger denies the visa application, "because he has been in the States long enough to decide what he wanted." Hanjour will return to the consulate two weeks later and successfully obtain a visa from Steinger using a different application (see [September 25, 2000](#)). [[9/11 COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP.](#)

[13, 174-5](#)] Steinger will later give a series of conflicting explanations about why she reversed her decision and issued the visa (see [August 1, 2002](#), [January 20, 2003](#), and [December 30, 2003](#)). After 9/11, a former consular official named Michael Springmann will say that while serving in Jeddah during the Soviet-Afghan War he was sometimes pressured to reverse denials of visa applications by the CIA for apparent mujaheddin (see [September 1987-March 1989](#)).

Entity Tags: [Shayna Steinger](#), [US Consulate, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia Office](#), [Hani Hanjour](#), [Michael Springmann](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



September 2000-July 24, 2001: Alleged CIA Informant Said to Be in Contact with 9/11 Hijacker Atta



In September 2000, Luai Sakra enters Germany seeking asylum, using the name "Louia Sakka" (one of several ways his name is transliterated). He moves with his wife and two children to a government asylum dormitory in a small town in central Germany while waiting for a verdict. [[DER SPIEGEL \(HAMBURG\), 8/15/2005](#); [AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 10/27/2005](#)] After his 2005 arrest in Turkey, Sakra will confess to helping some of the 9/11 hijackers. He will claim to have helped some of the 9/11 hijackers while in Bursa, a city in Turkey 60 miles south of Istanbul (see [Late 1999-2000](#)). [[WASHINGTON POST, 2/20/2006](#)] But he will also say that he knew hijacker Mohamed Atta, which presumably would take place during Sakra's time in Germany (see [Early August 2005](#)). He will warn the Syrian government about the 9/11 attacks one day before they happen (see [September 10, 2001](#)) and evidence will suggest he was an informant working for the CIA and other governments (see [2000](#)). He will later admit meeting Assef Shawkat, head of Syrian intelligence, in Germany, but it is not known when this meeting took place. [[BBC, 11/10/2005](#)] Apparently while still living in Germany, Sakra is indicted in Jordan for allegedly supporting

planned attacks around the turn of the millennium (see [November 30, 1999](#)). His 2001 Jordanian indictment reads, “Current residence: Germany, on the run.” It is not clear if Jordan communicated with the German government about his whereabouts at this time. He will be convicted in absentia in Jordan in early 2002 and sentenced to 15 years in prison. Meanwhile, in Germany he loses his asylum appeal and leaves the country on July 24, 2001. His family flies to Syria around the same time. [[DER SPIEGEL \(HAMBURG\), 8/15/2005](#)]

Entity Tags: [Assef Shawkat](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Luai Sakra](#), [Mohamed Atta](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



September 25, 2000: Hijacker Hanjour Receives US Visa despite Previous Denial; Visa Wrongly Recorded in State Department Database



Future 9/11 hijacker Hani Hanjour again applies for a US visa at the US consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. An application two weeks earlier had been rejected (see [September 10, 2000](#)), but he is successful this time. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP. 13-14](#)] The application is dealt with by consular officer Shayna Steinger, who issues a total of 12 visas to the 9/11 hijackers (see [July 1, 2000](#)) and who rejected Hanjour’s previous application. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 12/30/2002, PP. 2](#); [OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL \(US DEPARTMENT OF STATE\), 1/30/2003](#)] Hanjour apparently applies for a student visa, not a tourist visa, as he had done previously, saying he wishes to attend a language school in California. Steinger will later recall that Hanjour, or someone acting on his behalf, submits an I-20 INS school enrollment form, the documentation required for the visa. She will say: “It came to me, you know, at the end of the day to look at it. I saw he had an I-20 and it [his visa] was issued.” This apparently allows Hanjour to overcome his previous rejection, as the two applications are treated as one case. The INS had approved a change of status for Hanjour to attend the same school in 1996, but Steinger does not know of this. She will later say that, if she had known, she might have denied the visa. Although a photocopy of a student visa in Hanjour’s passport will later be made public, Steinger now enters the visa in the State Department’s records as a business/tourist visa. (Note: the visa in Hanjour’s passport may be changed upon his entry to the US (see [December 8, 2000](#)).) [[9/11 COMMISSION, 12/30/2002, PP. 13-14, 38](#)] Steinger will later give conflicting accounts of her issuance of this visa. She will first falsely claim to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform that she issued the visa under the Visa Express program and that Hanjour was not even present during the first application on September 10 (see [August 1, 2002](#)), but will later change her story for the State Department’s inspector general (see [January 20, 2003](#)) and the 9/11 Commission (see [December 30, 2003](#)). After 9/11, a former consular official named Michael Springmann will say that while serving in Jeddah during the Soviet-Afghan War he was sometimes pressured to reverse denials of visa applications by the CIA for apparent mujaheddin (see [September 1987-March 1989](#)).

Entity Tags: [US Consulate, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia Office](#), [Hani Hanjour](#), [Shayna Steinger](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



September 27, 2000: Islamist Radical Confesses to Arms Smuggling in Italy, No Apparent Action Taken



A Tunisian militant based in Italy named Sekseka Habib Waddani confesses to Italian police that he has helped run an elaborate arms smuggling ring, but it is unclear whether Italy or the US does anything to stop him. Waddani will be placed on the US Treasury Department's list of most-wanted militants on August 29, 2002, but this "prompts questions about when the United States learned of Waddani, and whether any action was taken by Italian or US officials after Waddani's claim that large amounts of weapons were being sold to Islamic terrorists." When the CIA is asked in 2002 whether it did anything about Waddani, the agency will decline to comment.

Walk In - Waddani just walks in to a police station in Milan in 2000 and discloses the information, which he learned because he was involved when the weapons transited Italy and Switzerland. He approaches the police because he is being blackmailed and needs protection. The weapons smuggling scheme Waddani reports to the Italians initially involved smuggling the arms from Russia to Italy by sea, then to Croatia and on to Bosnia during the war there from 1992 to 1995. Weapons were also supplied to Albanian fighters in Kosovo in 1998. The deals were brokered by Italian and Muslim lawyers in Switzerland, who found buyers there. However, this system is abandoned as too difficult and the weapons—pistols, machine guns, missiles, and grenades—are then shipped through Uzbekistan to Pakistan for use at terrorist training camps in Pakistan, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Companies Involved - Several European companies are involved in moving the arms, including one that handled transactions in Switzerland and is owned by a Pakistani named Haji Agka and two Swiss-based Tunisians, Ahmed and Shoyab Sharifi, and a front named the Mother Teresa of Calcutta Center of Lucerne. The two Tunisians are friends of Ahmad Huber, who reportedly facilitates "periodic and regular" weapons shipments and is accused of moving money for Osama bin Laden through the suspect Al Taqwa bank (see [November 7, 2001](#)). Huber denies the charges and, although the Italians passed the information on to Switzerland, says neither he nor any of his associates were ever even questioned about it. Waddani will be indicted in October 2001 in Italy, for trafficking in arms, explosives, chemical weapons, identity papers, receiving stolen goods, and illegal immigration. The Treasury Department will also say he is a member of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). [MSNBC,

9/16/2002]

Entity Tags: [Mother Teresa of Calcutta Center of Lucerne](#), [Ahmed Sharifi](#), [Ahmad Huber](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Haji Agka](#), [Shoyab Sharifi](#), [Guardia di Finanza](#), [Sekseka Habib Waddani](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



October 2000: Almihdhar Visits Malaysia to Discuss Attack on US Interests in Singapore



Faiz abu Baker Bafana, an operative of al-Qaeda affiliate Jemaah Islamiyah based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, receives an Arab visitor and they discuss attacks on US interests in Singapore. Bafana knows the Arab as “Bandar,” but this is not his real name and it appears that “Bandar” is an alias for 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar. Almihdhar again stays in Yazid Sufaat’s apartment and travels to Afghanistan after the meeting. [[US DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA, ALEXANDRIA DIVISION, 3/8/2006](#); [US DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA, ALEXANDRIA DIVISION, 3/8/2006](#)] The apartment is also used by Zacarias Moussaoui at around the same time (see [September-October 2000](#)), and Almihdhar and several other al-Qaeda commanders had used it for a summit at the start of the year (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)). Malaysian intelligence had been monitoring the apartment and passing the results on to the US, but the CIA did not ask for the surveillance to continue and it ended, apparently before this visit. Malaysian Legal Affairs minister Rais Yatim will express puzzlement over the CIA’s lack of interest in the apartment: “We couldn’t fathom it, really. There was no show of concern.” [[NEWSWEEK, 6/2/2002](#)] Almihdhar will return to Malaysia to continue the planning for the Singapore attack in the middle of 2001 (see [June 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [Jemaah Islamiyah](#), [Faiz abu Baker Bafana](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Yazid Sufaat](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



October 10-21, 2000: Bin Al-Shibh in Yemen, Reportedly Takes Part in *Cole* Bombing



Before the bombing of the USS *Cole* in Aden, Yemen, Ramzi bin al-Shibh makes two trips to Yemen’s capital, Sana’a, and will later be said to play a role in the attack. Although bin al-Shibh is never named as a certain participant in the operation, he flies from Frankfurt, Germany, to Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), on October 10, 2000. The next day, he flies from Dubai to Sana’a, putting him there one day before the bombing (see [October 12, 2000](#)). He flies from Sana’a to Dubai on October 21, and where he goes from there is not certain. [LOS ANGELES TIMES, 10/24/2001; [KHAN, 8/11/2002](#) ; AUSTRALIAN, 12/24/2002; [MCDERMOTT, 2005, PP. 209](#)] Bin al-Shibh was also in Yemen for about four weeks up until a month before the bombing (see [August-September 2000](#)). Note also that the CIA is working with the Dubai airport to track all suspected militants passing through it, although it is not known if bin al-Shibh is suspected at

this time (see [1999](#)). He apparently attended an al-Qaeda summit with the other commanders of the ship-bombing operation in 2000 (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)) and some media reports indicate an application for a US visa he makes after the attack is rejected due to concerns about his involvement in the bombing. For example, the Los Angeles Times, based on conversations with law enforcement officials, will report that bin al-Shibh is “linked to the terrorist attack in Yemen on the US Navy destroyer *Cole*.” [[LOS ANGELES TIMES, 10/21/2001](#)] Newsweek, the BBC, and Al Jazeera journalist Yosri Fouda will also report similar statements by law enforcement officials (see [May 17, 2000-May 2001](#)). [[NEWSWEEK, 11/26/2001](#); [BBC, 9/14/2002](#); [TBS JOURNAL, 10/2002](#)] One of the 9/11 hijackers, Khalid Almihdhar, may also be involved in the bombing (see [Around October 12, 2000](#)).

Entity Tags: [Ramzi bin al-Shibh](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)

EVENTS

Page 6 of 19 (1807 events (use filters to narrow search))

[previous](#) | [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#), [12](#), [13](#), [14](#), [15](#), [16](#), [17](#), [18](#), [19](#) | [next](#)

[October 12, 2000: Cameraman Misses *Cole* Attack because He Oversleeps](#)



Fahad al-Quso. [*Source: Khaled Fazaal/AFP/Getty Images*] Al-Qaeda operative Fahad al-Quso is supposed to video the attack on the USS *Cole* that occurs on this day (see [October 12, 2000](#)). However, al-Quso sleeps through his alarm and is not able to set his camera up in time. The bombers call him repeatedly on his cell phone until seconds before the crash, but he is in a taxi when the explosion occurs. He immediately goes into hiding and the camera is later found at his sister’s house. Osama bin Laden had specifically asked that the attack be videoed and had allocated funds for this purpose. The CIA will later trace \$5,000 sent by bin Laden to the bombers’ cell in Yemen. [[MINITER, 2003, PP. 217, 229](#); [NEW YORKER, 7/10/2006](#)]

Entity Tags: [Fahad al-Quso](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



After October 12, 2000: CIA Discusses Increased Support for Northern Alliance in Wake of *Cole* Bombing



Following the attack on the USS *Cole* (see [October 12, 2000](#)), the CIA discusses possible policy changes in the hunt for Osama bin Laden. Disappointed by US inaction, Alec Station chief Richard Blee decides “we’ve got to change the rules,” because he thinks al-Qaeda is getting stronger and stronger. This entails enhanced support for the Northern Alliance led by Ahmed Shah Massoud, which is the only credible opposition fighting the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. Although some CIA officers still think Alec Station’s staff is “over the top,” both the CIA’s Near East division and Counterterrorist Center chief Cofer Black agree with Blee, and they decide what is needed is aid to enable Massoud to pressure the Taliban, creating the conditions for CIA operations against bin Laden. The list of assistance includes cash to bribe commanders, trucks, helicopters, light arms, ammunition, uniforms, food, and possibly mortars and artillery. The plan will cost between \$50 and \$150 million, and will include a permanent CIA base in Afghan territory controlled by the Northern Alliance. CIA officers will then be able to accompany Massoud’s men on missions. It takes some time to arrive at these conclusions, which will be formalized into a plan (see [December 29, 2000](#)). However, the plan will not be accepted by the outgoing Clinton administration or the incoming Bush administration (see [December 20, 2000](#)). [[COLL, 2004, PP. 539-541](#); [WASHINGTON POST, 2/23/2004](#)]

Entity Tags: [Richard Blee](#), [Counterterrorist Center](#), [Cofer Black](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Bush administration](#), [Ahmed Shah Massoud](#), [Osama bin Laden](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Late October-Late November 2000: Confession Leads FBI to *Cole* Mastermind



Fahad al-Quso, a Yemeni and known associate of Osama bin Laden, turns himself in to the Yemeni government after some of his relatives are questioned in the wake of the USS *Cole* bombing (see [October 12, 2000](#)). [[NEW YORKER, 7/10/2006](#)] He admits that he and one of the two *Cole* suicide bombers went to Bangkok, Thailand, and gave several thousand dollars to a man known as Khallad, who is identified as one of the masterminds of the *Cole* bombing. He says the money is to buy a new artificial leg for the one-legged Khallad. The transcript of the

interrogation is given to the FBI a month later. FBI agent Ali Soufan sees the transcript and remembers a source he recruited in Afghanistan who spoke of a one-legged man named Khallad who is close to bin Laden. Khallad is his nickname; his real name is Tawfiq bin Attash. A mug shot of bin Attash is sent to this source, who makes a positive identification. Soufan wonders why money was being sent away from the *Cole* plotters and away from Yemen prior to a major planned attack and speculates that it may mean another al-Qaeda operation is being planned elsewhere. Soufan asks the CIA for information about Khallad and this other attack, which turns out to be 9/11, but the CIA withholds the information (see [Late November 2000](#)). Al-Quso will later reveal more to the FBI, leading to more missed opportunities (see [Early December 2000](#)). [[WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 328-329](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Fahad al-Quso](#), [Ali Soufan](#), [Khallad bin Attash](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



November 7, 2000: Plans to Target Bin Laden Delayed Pending 2000 Election



In the wake of the USS *Cole* bombing, National Security Adviser Sandy Berger meets with Defense Secretary William Cohen to discuss a new approach to targeting Osama bin Laden. Berger says: “We’ve been hit many times, and we’ll be hit again. Yet we have no option beyond cruise missiles.” He once again brings up the idea of a “boots on the ground” option—a Delta Force special operation to get bin Laden. A plan is drawn up but the order to execute it is never given. Cohen and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Henry Shelton oppose the plan. By December 21, the CIA reports that it strongly suspects that al-Qaeda was behind the bombing, but fails to definitively make that conclusion. That makes such an attack politically difficult. Says a former senior Clinton aide, “If we had done anything, say, two weeks before the election, we’d be accused of helping [presidential candidate] Al Gore.” [[TIME, 8/4/2002; 9/11 COMMISSION, 3/24/2004](#)]

Entity Tags: [William S. Cohen](#), [Sandy Berger](#), [Henry Hugh Shelton](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Albert Arnold \(“Al”\) Gore, Jr.](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Late November 2000: FBI Formally Asks CIA about Al-Qaeda Leader and Possible Meeting in Southeast Asia, but Gets No Answer



Based on information obtained during the investigation of the USS *Cole* bombing (see [Late October-Late November 2000](#)), the FBI asks the CIA for information about al-Qaeda leader Khallad bin Attash and a possible al-Qaeda meeting in Southeast Asia in early 2000, but the CIA withholds the information. The request is sent by FBI Director Louis Freeh on behalf of agent Ali Soufan, who is working on the *Cole* investigation. Soufan began to suspect such a meeting may have taken place when he learned that two of the operatives involved in the bombing had taken money out of Yemen to give to bin Attash in Thailand before the attack (see [January 13, 2000](#)), making him think the money may have been intended for a bigger plot. The CIA is highly aware of the January 2000 al-Qaeda summit in Malaysia (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)), which was considered so important that CIA Director George Tenet and other CIA leaders were repeatedly briefed about it (see [January 6-9, 2000](#)). The CIA has photos of bin Attash and al-Quso attending the meeting (see [January 5-8, 2000 and Shortly After](#)), which took place only a few days before al-Quso's meeting with bin Attash in Thailand. Yet the CIA does not respond to Soufan's clearly stated request. Author Lawrence Wright will later comment, "The fact that the CIA withheld information about the mastermind of the *Cole* bombing and the meeting in Malaysia, when directly asked by the FBI, amount[s] to obstruction of justice in the death of seventeen American sailors [who were killed in the *Cole* bombing]." Although he was not told one of the 9/11 hijackers had a US visa, Freeh was briefed on the Malaysia summit when it took place (see [January 6, 2000](#)), but apparently he does not tell Soufan what he knows, and Soufan remains unaware that any kind of al-Qaeda meeting in Southeast Asia even occurred. [[WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 328-9; NEW YORKER, 7/10/2006](#)]

Entity Tags: [Khallad bin Attash](#), [Louis J. Freeh](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Lawrence Wright](#), [Ali Soufan](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



[November 22-December 16, 2000: Yemen Provides Photos of Al-Qaeda Leader to Cole Investigators, Bombing Linked to Al-Qaeda](#)





Khallad bin Attash. [Source: FBI]After talks that last some time,

Yemeni authorities agree to provide the FBI team investigating the USS *Cole* bombing with passport photos of suspects in the attack, including al-Qaeda leader Khallad bin Attash. The photos are provided to lead investigators John O’Neill and Ali Soufan, and Soufan immediately sends bin Attash’s photo to the CIA and to an FBI colleague in Islamabad, Pakistan. [9/11

COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 192; NEW YORKER, 7/10/2006.] The FBI colleague is Michael Dorris. [SOUFAN, 2011, PP. 117] The CIA agent is known only as “Chris.” [9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 537] Chris shows the photo to a source, and the source, known only as “Omar,” confirms that the man in the photo is bin Attash. Author Lawrence Wright will comment, “This suggested strongly that al-Qaeda was behind the *Cole* attack.” However, this does not motivate the US to retaliate against al-Qaeda (see [Shortly After October 12, 2000](#)). Around this time, the FBI also learns that Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, another al-Qaeda operative involved in the embassy bombings, had a hand in the *Cole* attack as well (see [November-December 2000](#)). [9/11 COMMISSION,

7/24/2004, PP. 192; NEW YORKER, 7/10/2006.]

Entity Tags: [Khallad bin Attash](#), [John O’Neill](#), [Ali Soufan](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), “Chris”, “Omar”, [Michael Dorris](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)

 SHARE

December 2000: Incoming Bush Administration Briefed on Terrorism Threat; Apparently Ignores Recommendations



CIA Director Tenet and other top CIA officials brief President-elect Bush, Vice President-elect Cheney, future National Security Adviser Rice, and other incoming national security officials on al-Qaeda and covert action programs in Afghanistan. Deputy Director for Operations James Pavitt recalls conveying that bin Laden is one of the gravest threats to the country. Bush asks

whether killing bin Laden would end the problem. Pavitt says he answers that killing bin Laden would have an impact but not stop the threat. The CIA recommends the most important action to combat al-Qaeda is to arm the Predator drone and use it over Afghanistan. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 3/24/2004](#); [REUTERS, 3/24/2004](#)] However, while the drone is soon armed, Bush never gives the order to use it in Afghanistan until after 9/11 (see [September 4, 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [George J. Tenet](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [George W. Bush](#), [Condoleezza Rice](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [James Pavitt](#), [Osama bin Laden](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



December 4, 2000: Special Forces Commander Appointed FAA Security Chief



US Army Lieutenant General Michael A. Canavan is appointed associate administrator for civil aviation security at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), a position that includes being the “hijack coordinator” (see [8:30 a.m. September 11, 2001](#)). [[FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION, 11/2000](#)] In early 1998, Canavan participated in reviewing a CIA plan to capture Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan. He was then the commander of the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), which oversees the military’s counterterrorism operations and covert missions. He objected to the plan, saying it was too complicated for the CIA and “out of their league.” [[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 113](#)] The plan was later canceled (see [1997-May 29, 1998](#)). It is not known if Canavan’s appointment at the FAA is related to his prior involvement in counterterrorism or to any intelligence that al-Qaeda might target civil aviation. He will leave the post in October 2001, after only 10 months, reportedly after clashing with other FAA officials. [[LOS ANGELES TIMES, 10/13/2001](#)]

Entity Tags: [Federal Aviation Administration](#), [Mike Canavan](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Mid-Late December 2000: CIA Receives Additional Confirmation of 9/11 Hijacker Almihdhar’s Al-Qaeda Connection



The CIA station in Islamabad, Pakistan, writes a cable noting that further connections have been made between 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar and al-Qaeda. This CIA station is already aware that Almihdhar attended an al-Qaeda summit in Malaysia in January 2000 (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)). Due to these additional connections, the CIA believes that there may be a

connection between Almihdhar and the USS *Cole* bombers and that Almihdhar may have met Fahad al-Quso and Khallad bin Attash, two of the operatives involved in the bombing, in Southeast Asia in January 2000 (see [January 13, 2000](#) and [Early December 2000](#)). The station realizes this is important because bin Attash is linked to Osama bin Laden, but also speculates that bin Attash and Almihdhar may be the same person. The reason given for this speculation is that both bin Attash and Almihdhar are in Bangkok, Thailand, at the same time, in the second week of January 2000 (see [Mid-Late December 2000](#)). [[US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 269-270](#)]

Entity Tags: [Khallad bin Attash](#), [CIA Islamabad Station](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



Mid-Late December 2000: Some CIA Officers Speculate 9/11 Hijacker Almihdhar May Be Al-Qaeda Leader Bin Attash, FBI Not Informed



Khallad bin Attash (left) and Khalid Almihdhar (right) were apparently confused by the CIA. [*Source: FBI*] Because the CIA thinks 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar and al-Qaeda leader Khallad bin Attash are in the same place at the same time—in Bangkok, Thailand, for a meeting with Fahad al-Quso, an operative involved in the attack of the USS *Cole*, in January 2000 (see [January 5-6, 2000](#))—and possibly because of the similarity between Almihdhar’s first name Khalid and bin Attash’s nickname Khallad, some officers apparently theorize that bin Attash and Almihdhar may be the same person. However, the FBI is not informed of this. In order to confirm or refute this theory, the CIA station in Islamabad, Pakistan, asks for surveillance photos of an al-Qaeda summit that Almihdhar attended, intending to show the photos to a source who knows bin Attash and has previously identified him in another photo (see [November 22-December 16, 2000](#) and [Early January 2001](#)). However, there is no record of this theory being communicated to the FBI, even though the CIA knows bin Attash was involved in the *Cole* bombing and the FBI is investigating him (see [Late October-Late November 2000](#)). Some CIA cables drafted at this time contain information about bin Attash and information not related to bin Attash; CIA officers are instructed to

share the information not related to bin Attash with the FBI, but are not instructed to share the information about bin Attash and al-Qaeda's Malaysia summit. The Justice Department's Office of Inspector General will later say that if the CIA had told the FBI more about bin Attash around this time, the FBI would have asked for more information about Almihdhar and had a better chance of locating him before 9/11. [[US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 269-270,](#)


[278](#)]

Entity Tags: [Khallad bin Attash](#), [Office of the Inspector General \(DOJ\)](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [CIA Islamabad Station](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



December 19, 2000: Clinton Tells Bush His Top Priority Should Be Bin Laden; Bush Says It's Saddam Hussein Instead



Clinton and Bush meeting in the White House on December 19, 2000. [Source: NBC] President Clinton and President-Elect Bush meet for their "exit interview," in a two-hour meeting. [CNN, 12/19/2000] Clinton gives Bush his list of his top five priorities. At the top of the list is dealing with Osama bin Laden. Clinton also discusses the tensions between Pakistan and India, who are threatening each other with nuclear strikes; the crisis in the Middle East between Israel and Palestine; he discusses North Korea; and he discusses Iraq and Saddam Hussein. Bush shakes Clinton's hand after Clinton wraps up his presentation, and says, "Thanks for your advice, Mr. President, but I think you've got your priorities wrong. I'm putting Saddam at the top of the list." [[MOORE, 3/15/2004, PP. 16-17](#)] Just one day before, CIA Director George Tenet had warned Clinton that al-Qaeda could attack US interests in the next several weeks (see [December 18, 2000](#)). In 2003, Clinton will speak about the interview, saying that he recognized Bush felt the biggest security issues facing the US was Iraq and a national missile defense: "I told him that in my opinion, the biggest security problem was Osama bin Laden." [[REUTERS, 10/16/2003](#)]

Entity Tags: [Saddam Hussein](#), [George W. Bush](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [William Jefferson \("Bill"\) Clinton](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)

 SHARE

December 24-30, 2000: Al-Qaeda Linked Group Bombings Kill Dozens in Indonesia and Philippines



Damaged cars from the Christmas Eve bombings. [Source: SBS

Dateline] Al-Qaeda affiliate Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) sets off two series of bombs, first in Indonesia, then in the Philippines. The Christmas Eve attacks in Indonesia comprise a series of 38 bombings in 11 cities and are directed against churches. Nineteen people are killed and over a hundred injured. [ASIA TIMES, 10/8/2004] The attacks in the Philippines kill 22 and injure 120 in the country's capital, Manila. The operation, involving attacks on a train, a bus, an abandoned petrol station, an airport car park, and a park, is apparently carried out by Indonesian JI operative Fathur Rohman Al-Ghozi. [BBC, 2/27/2002] Many militants are arrested after the attacks. The investigation leads to JI and al-Qaeda leader Hambali, a veteran Islamic fighter who was involved in the Bojinka plot (see [January 6, 1995](#)), is tied to 9/11 mastermind Khalid Shaikh Mohammed (see [June 1994](#)), and attended an al-Qaeda Malaysia summit in 2000, which was monitored by Malaysia intelligence and the CIA (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)). Although Hambali, an Indonesian, has lived in Malaysia since the mid-1990s, the authorities cannot find him and say that he has fled to Saudi Arabia (see [January 2001 and after](#)). [JAKARTA POST, 2/7/2001] JI's spiritual leader, Abu Bakar Bashir, is also arrested, but then released. [CNN, 2/26/2004] Hambali will finally be captured in August 2003 in Thailand (see [August 12, 2003](#)). In February 2001, evidence will come out suggesting links between some of the bombers and the Indonesian military (see [February 20, 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [Jemaah Islamiyah](#), [Hambali](#), [Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi](#), [Abu Bakar Bashir](#)

Timeline Tags: [Alleged Use of False Flag Attacks](#), [Complete 911 Timeline](#)

 SHARE

December 28, 2000: Bush Chooses Rumsfeld as Defense Secretary over Objections of Father's Friends



President-elect George W. Bush meets with Donald Rumsfeld in Washington, and offers him the position of secretary of defense. Insiders are amazed that Bush would even consider Rumsfeld, the chief of staff for former President Ford (see [September 21, 1974 and After](#)), after Rumsfeld's open contempt and enmity towards the elder Bush, the "Team B" onslaught against the elder Bush's CIA (see [Late November 1976](#) and [Late November, 1976](#)), and his attempts to keep Bush off the presidential tickets in 1976 and 1980 (see [Before November 4, 1975](#)). "Real bitterness there," a close friend of the Bush family later says. "Makes you wonder what was going through Bush 43's head when he made [Rumsfeld] secretary of defense." The Bush family's great friend and fixer, James Baker, even tries to dissuade Bush from choosing Rumsfeld, telling him, "All I'm going to say is, you know what he did to your daddy." But Bush chooses Rumsfeld anyway. Not only does Rumsfeld have a long and fruitful relationship with Vice President Cheney (see [1969](#)), but Rumsfeld, described as always an ingratiating courtier by author Craig Unger, plays on Bush's insecurity about his lack of experience and his desire to be an effective commander in chief. Rumsfeld is also a key element of Cheney's long-term plan to unify power in the executive branch (see [1981-1992](#)), to the detriment of Congress and the judiciary. [[UNGER, 2007, PP. 186-187](#)]

Entity Tags: [Donald Rumsfeld](#), [Craig Unger](#), [Richard \("Dick"\) Cheney](#), [George W. Bush](#), [James A. Baker](#)

Timeline Tags: [US Military](#)



December 29, 2000: CIA Develops 'Blue Sky' Plan to Increase Support to Massoud, Strike Bin Laden



National Security Adviser Sandy Berger asks CIA Director how he would go after al-Qaeda if he were unconstrained by resources and policies. He assigns Cofer Black and the CIA's Counterterrorism Center to develop a plan for the incoming Bush administration. It is dubbed the "Blue Sky Memo." The CIA presents it to counterterrorism "tsar" Richard Clarke on December 29, 2000. It recommends increased support to anti-Taliban groups and especially a major effort to back Ahmed Shah Massoud's Northern Alliance, to tie down al-Qaeda personnel before they leave Afghanistan. No action is taken on it in the last few weeks of the Clinton administration; and the new Bush administration does not appear interested in it either. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 3/24/2004](#); [TENET, 2007, PP. 130-131](#)] The National Security Council counterterrorism staff also prepares a strategy paper, incorporating ideas from the Blue Sky Memo. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 3/24/2004](#)]

Entity Tags: [Sandy Berger](#), [Richard A. Clarke](#), [Northern Alliance](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [National Security Council](#), [Bush administration](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Ahmed Shah Massoud](#), [Clinton administration](#), [Cofer Black](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Counterterrorist Center](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Late December 2000: Sexual Liaisons Cost Wolfowitz Post as Director of CIA



Shaha Ali Riza. [Source: World Bank] With Donald Rumsfeld in as Defense Secretary (see [December 28, 2000](#)), Vice President Cheney is moving closer to getting a team in place that will allow him to fulfill his dream of the “unitary executive”—the gathering of power into the executive branch at the expense of the legislative and judicial branches. One key piece to Cheney’s plan is to place neoconservative academic Paul Wolfowitz as the head of the CIA. However, Wolfowitz’s personal life is proving troublesome for Cheney’s plans. Wolfowitz’s marriage is crumbling. His wife of over 30 years, Clare, is threatening to go public with her husband’s infidelities. Wolfowitz is having one affair with a staffer at the School of International Studies, and is openly romancing another woman, Shaha Ali Riza, a secular Muslim neoconservative with close ties to Iraqi opposition groups, including Ahmed Chalabi’s Iraqi National Congress. Smitten with the idea of a secular Muslim and a secular Jew forming a romantic liaison, Wolfowitz frequently escorts Riza, and not his wife, to neoconservative social events. Many insiders joke about Wolfowitz’s “neoconcubine.” His dalliances, particularly with a Muslim foreign national, raise questions about his ability to obtain the necessary national security clearance he will need to head the CIA. Cheney does not intend to allow questions of security clearances or wronged and vengeful wives to stop him from placing Wolfowitz at the head of the agency, but this time he does not succeed. After Clare Wolfowitz writes a letter to President-elect Bush detailing her husband’s sexual infidelities and possible security vulnerabilities, Wolfowitz is quietly dropped from consideration for the post. Current CIA Director George Tenet, after reassuring Bush that he can work with the new regime, is allowed to keep his position. Author Craig Unger later writes, “If Cheney and the neocons were to have control over the national security apparatus, it would not come from the CIA.” [[UNGER, 2007, PP. 187-189](#)]

Entity Tags: [Iraqi National Congress](#), [Clare Wolfowitz](#), [Craig Unger](#), [Donald Rumsfeld](#), [Paul Wolfowitz](#), [Richard \(“Dick”\) Cheney](#), [Shaha Ali Riza](#), [George W. Bush](#), [George J. Tenet](#)

Timeline Tags: [Civil Liberties](#), [Neoconservative Influence](#)



Early January 2001: CIA Passes Photos of Hijackers Alhazmi and Almihdhar for Source to Identify



The CIA’s Counterterrorist Center passes a photo of hijacker Khalid Almihdhar and a photo of hijacker Nawaf Alhazmi taken at al-Qaeda’s Malaysia summit (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)) to the CIA station in Islamabad, Pakistan. The station is to show the photos to a source, later referred to as “Omar,” to see if he can identify Khalid Almihdhar or al-Qaeda manager Khallad bin Attash, as Omar has previously identified bin Attash in another photo (see [November 22-December 16, 2000](#)). According to cables drafted at this time, the overseas station requested the photo of Almihdhar because it thinks that Almihdhar and bin Attash might be the same person (see [Mid-Late December 2000](#)). It is unclear why the photo of Alhazmi is also passed at the same time. The CIA has numerous other photos taken at the Malaysia summit as well as video (see [January 5, 2000](#)), but these are not passed. [\[US](#)



[DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 269-270](#)]

Entity Tags: [Khallad bin Attash](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Counterterrorist Center](#), [CIA Islamabad Station](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [“Omar”](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



January 3, 2001: Yemen Authorities Receive Malaysia Photographs from CIA, but FBI Does Not



Yemeni authorities receive photographs of operatives who attended al-Qaeda’s Malaysia summit. The exact number of photographs they receive is not known, but they include three photos, of 9/11 hijackers Khalid Almihdhar, Nawaf Alhazmi, and a man who looks like one of their associates, Fahad al-Quso, that are later shown to the FBI (see [June 11, 2001](#)). It is unclear who provides the photos to the Yemenis, but the CIA has them and is interested in the bombing of the USS *Cole* in Yemen (see [October 12, 2000](#)), so presumably they come from the CIA. The photos are highly relevant to the FBI, as they connect extremists known to be involved in the *Cole* attack to Almihdhar and Alhazmi, but even though the FBI is in charge of the *Cole* investigation, the CIA continues to withhold the information from the FBI for months (see [January 5, 2001 and After](#), [CIA Conceals Key Information Leading to Two 9/11 Hijackers](#))" onmouseout="return nd(">February 1, 2001, [Late May, 2001](#) and [August 30, 2001](#)). The

Yemenis' response to the photographs is unknown. [US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 293]
The CIA is aware by June 2001 that Almihdhar is the son-in-law of Ahmed al-Hada, a Yemeni extremist who runs a communications hub for Osama bin Laden (see [Late August 1998](#)), but it is not known whether they obtain this information now or at some other time. [WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 343]

Entity Tags: [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Fahad al-Quso](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Yemen](#)



Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



January 4, 2001: Informer Sees Known Al-Qaeda Leader in Malaysia Summit Photos



Nawaf Alhazmi (left) and Khallad bin Attash (right) are said to have been confused by an informer. [Source: FBI]A CIA officer in Islamabad, Pakistan, known only as “Chris” shows a source known as “Omar,” who provides information on al-Qaeda, photographs of future 9/11 hijackers Khalid Almihdhar and Nawaf Alhazmi taken at the al-Qaeda Malaysia summit (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)). [9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 537; US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 268-271] Omar has previously identified a photo of al-Qaeda leader Khallad bin Attash (see [November 22-December 16, 2000](#)) and Chris has been told that bin Attash and Almihdhar might be the same person (see [Mid-Late December 2000](#)). Omar says that the photo of Alhazmi, who the CIA apparently does not recognize at this time, actually shows bin Attash. As Omar cannot identify Almihdhar, but says he can identify bin Attash, this indicates Almihdhar and bin Attash are not the same person. The identification causes the CIA to believe that bin Attash attended al-Qaeda’s Malaysia summit. Although this belief is based on a mistaken identification, it is actually correct, as bin Attash was present at the summit—the CIA has photos of bin Attash there, but fails to show them to Omar. This identification is important because bin Attash is a known bin Laden operative connected to the USS *Cole* attack and East African embassy bombings. The CIA also knows that Almihdhar and Alhazmi were at the summit, so this could connect them to the *Cole* attack. [US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 268-271] An FBI official named Michael Dorris is also at the meeting. [US DEPARTMENT

 [OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 272](#) ; [SOUFAN, 2011](#)] However, Dorris does not learn of the identification of bin Attash by “Omar.” [\[US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 270-274 \]](#) 

Entity Tags: [Michael Dorris](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Khallad bin Attash](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [CIA Islamabad Station](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [“Chris”](#), [“Omar”](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



January 5, 2001 and After: CIA Does Not Tell FBI about Identification of Al-Qaeda Leader by Informer, but Allegedly Thinks It Has Done So



After an informer later referred to as “Omar” tells the CIA that al-Qaeda leader Khallad bin Attash was at al-Qaeda’s Malaysia summit (see [January 4, 2001](#)), the CIA fails to communicate this information to the FBI, even though it is important for the FBI’s investigation of the USS *Cole* bombing and connects future 9/11 hijackers Khalid Almihdhar and Nawaf Alhazmi to the *Cole* bombers. Omar is a joint FBI/CIA source, but the FBI assistant legal attaché responsible for him, Michael Dorris, will later say he does not know of this identification, and documentation he drafts at this time indicates he is unaware of it. It is unclear why Dorris is unaware of the identification, although he does not speak Omar’s language and may have been out of the room making photocopies when Omar identified bin Attash in a photo of the Malaysia summit for his CIA counterpart. That officer, known only as “Chris,” will later say he has no independent recollection of any particular meeting with Omar.

Comparison with Previous Meeting - However, when Omar previously identified a photo of bin Attash provided by Yemeni authorities on December 16, 2000 (see [November 22-December 16, 2000](#)), Chris had him repeat the identification specifically for the benefit of Dorris, and the cable he drafted about the meeting said this clearly. In addition, Dorris will later say that he recalls the specific circumstances of the previous debriefing and would be able to recount them, including the identification of bin Attash in the photograph provided by the Yemenis.

Three Cables Drafted - Chris drafts three cables about the January 4 meeting; one internal cable provides little detail about it, but says bin Attash was identified in one of the photos, a cable to the general US intelligence community fails to mention the identification of bin Attash, as does a third cable, which is sent to the CIA.

CIA Later Makes False Claims - However, according to statements made by CIA officials after 9/11, at this time the CIA thinks that the FBI knows that bin Attash has been identified in the photos. For example, Director of the CIA’s Counterterrorist Center Cofer Black will tell the 9/11 Congressional Inquiry, “[O]ur records establish that the special agents from the FBI’s New York Field Office who were investigating the USS *Cole* attack reviewed the information about the Kuala Lumpur photo in late January 2001.” However, there is no documentary record of information about the second identification placing bin Attash in Kuala Lumpur with the two hijackers being passed to the FBI at this time. In addition, in July 2001 CIA manager

Tom Wilshire will suggest passing this information to the FBI (see [July 13, 2001](#)), possibly meaning he thinks it is not passed at this time. [[US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 264-278](#)] The CIA will not notify the FBI that Omar identified bin Attash in the photo until August 30, 2001, less than two weeks before 9/11 (see [August 30, 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [Michael Dorris](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Khallad bin Attash](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Cofer Black](#), [“Chris”](#), [“Omar”](#), [CIA Islamabad Station](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



January 11, 2001: Wolfowitz Becomes Deputy Secretary of Defense



Although neoconservative Paul Wolfowitz has lost his chance of becoming director of the CIA due to his sexual entanglements with foreign nationals (see [Late December 2000](#)), he has not been entirely dismissed from consideration for high positions, and has the support of Vice President Cheney. President Bush, who has insisted that his administration’s officials comply with the highest moral standards, never learns about Wolfowitz’s infidelities. (A letter that Wolfowitz’s wife wrote to Bush about her husband’s affairs was intercepted by Cheney’s chief of staff, Lewis Libby. Wolfowitz himself unleashed a group of lawyers on his wife and forced her to sign a non-disclosure agreement to keep quiet about his affairs.) Incoming Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld chooses Wolfowitz to be his deputy, blocking incoming Secretary of State Colin Powell’s choice for the position, Richard Armitage, from taking the office (see [Late December 2000 and Early January 2001](#)). The Washington Post calls Wolfowitz’s selection “another victory for... Cheney over... Powell.” Rumsfeld knows about Wolfowitz’s sexual liaisons, as do most White House officials, and chooses to remain silent. “Rumsfeld told Wolfowitz to keep it zipped,” a State Department source later says. “He didn’t want any problems. He was basically to run the show and Wolfowitz could come on those terms.” [[UNGER, 2007, PP. 191-192](#)]

Entity Tags: [Donald Rumsfeld](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Clare Wolfowitz](#), [Lewis \(“Scooter”\) Libby](#), [Colin Powell](#), [Richard \(“Dick”\) Cheney](#), [Paul Wolfowitz](#), [US Department of Defense](#)

Timeline Tags: [US Military](#)



Before January 20, 2001: Pre-Inaugural Discussions about Removing Saddam Hussein



There are discussions among future members of the Bush administration, including Bush himself, about making the removal of Saddam Hussein a top priority once they are in office. After the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, counterterrorism “tsar” Richard Clarke will say that the Bush team had been planning regime change in Iraq since before coming to office, with newly named Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld (see [December 28, 2000](#)) and his deputy Paul Wolfowitz (see [January 11, 2001](#)) taking the lead. “Since the beginning of the administration, indeed well before, they had been pressing for a war with Iraq,” he will write in his book *Against All Enemies*. “My friends in the Pentagon had been telling me that the word was we would be invading Iraq sometime in 2002.” [CLARKE, 2004, PP. 7-9; UNGER, 2007, PP. 192] During an appearance on *Good Morning America* on March 22, 2004, he will say, “[T]hey had been planning to do something about Iraq from before the time they came into office.” [GOOD MORNING AMERICA, 3/22/2004] Evidence of pre-inaugural discussions on regime change in Iraq comes from other sources as well. Imam Sayed Hassan al-Qazwini, who heads the Islamic Center of America in Detroit, will tell the New York Times in early 2004 that he spoke with Bush about removing Saddam Hussein six or seven times, both before and after the 2000 elections. [NEW YORK TIMES, 1/12/2004] In 2007, author Craig Unger will write: “In certain respects, their actions were a replay of the 1976 Team B experiment (see [Early 1976](#) and [November 1976](#)), with one very important difference. This time it wasn’t just a bunch of feverish ideologues presenting a theoretical challenge to the CIA. This time Team B controlled the entire executive branch of the United States.” [UNGER, 2007, PP. 192]

Entity Tags: [Richard A. Clarke](#), [Imam Sayed Hassan al-Qazwini](#), [Craig Unger](#), [Saddam Hussein](#), [‘Team B’](#), [George W. Bush](#), [Richard \(“Dick”\) Cheney](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



[After January 20, 2001: George Tenet Accompanies Daily Morning CIA Briefer to Oval Office](#)



After George W. Bush is inaugurated into office, the manner in which the daily intelligence briefings are presented to the president changes. President Bill Clinton read the PDBs, usually about 12 pages in length, himself and often had no need for the follow-up oral briefings. Bush, on the other hand, prefers a shorter seven-to-10-page PDB containing “more targeted hard intelligence” items. The PDB is delivered to him orally, as he reads along. According to the Washington Post, the CIA’s top officials personally review the PDB before it is presented to Bush. “Tenet reviews the PDB with the briefer as they drive from the director’s Maryland home to the White House. On the way, Tenet often makes notes and looks over the backup material the briefer has brought. Tenet and, often, the deputy director for intelligence have already looked it over before going to bed the night before, though it is finished by staffers who go to work at midnight and monitor incoming intelligence throughout the night.” Tenet is present during the actual briefing and “expands where he believes necessary and responds to questions by Bush and others,” the Post reports. [CNN, 1/18/2001; WASHINGTON POST, 5/24/2002]

According to retired veteran CIA analyst Ray McGovern, the CIA director's presence during these briefing is highly unusual. The daily briefings began during the Reagan administration at the suggestion of then-Vice President George H. W. Bush. According to McGovern, the briefings were done at that time by a "small team of briefers... comprised of senior analysts who had been around long enough to earn respect and trust." McGovern, who did such briefings for the vice president, the secretaries of state and defense, the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, and the national security assistant from 1981 to 1985, says that briefers "had the full confidence of the CIA director, who... rarely inserted himself into the PDB process..... The last thing we briefers needed was the director breathing down our necks." McGovern suggests that Tenet's presence at the briefings possibly influenced the content of the briefing. [TRUTHOUT (.ORG), 3/5/2005]

Entity Tags: [Condoleezza Rice](#), [George W. Bush](#), [Ray McGovern](#), [William Jefferson \("Bill"\) Clinton](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



January 21, 2001: Bush Administration Takes Over; Many Have Oil Industry Connections



The Chevron oil tanker named after National Security Advisor Rice. [Source: ABC News] George W. Bush is inaugurated as the 43rd US President, replacing Bill Clinton. The only Cabinet-level figure to remain permanently in office is CIA Director Tenet, appointed in 1997 and reputedly a long-time friend of George H. W. Bush. FBI Director Louis Freeh stays on until June 2001. Numerous figures in Bush's administration have been directly employed in the oil industry, including Bush, Vice President Cheney, and National Security Adviser Rice. Rice had been on Chevron's Board of Directors since 1991, and even had a Chevron oil tanker named after her. [SALON, 11/19/2001] It is later revealed that Cheney is still being paid up to \$1 million a year in "deferred payments" from Halliburton, the oil company he headed. [GUARDIAN, 3/12/2003] Enron's ties also reach deep into the administration. [WASHINGTON POST, 1/18/2002]

Entity Tags: [William Jefferson \("Bill"\) Clinton](#), [Condoleezza Rice](#), [Richard \("Dick"\) Cheney](#), [George W. Bush](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Louis J. Freeh](#), [Enron Corporation](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Shortly Before February 1, 2001: CIA Bin Laden Unit Asked to 'Touch Base' with Cole Investigators about Identification of Al-Qaeda Leader, but Key Information Leading to Two 9/11 Hijackers Is Not Passed



A CIA officer in Islamabad, Pakistan, asks Alec Station, the CIA's bin Laden unit, to "touch base" with FBI agents investigating the bombing of the USS *Cole* who are preparing to come to Islamabad to interview a joint FBI/CIA source about the identification of one of the *Cole* bombers, but the suggested briefing is either never given or lacks a crucial detail. Alec Station is aware that the source, referred to later as "Omar," has identified al-Qaeda leader Khallad bin Attash as being present at al-Qaeda's Malaysia summit (see [January 4, 2001](#)) and that the FBI agents are going to Islamabad specifically to document another identification of bin Attash by Omar (see [November 22-December 16, 2000](#)). The cable from the officer in Islamabad, known only as "Chris," even notes that Omar is "currently of very high interest to our [FBI] colleagues," but Alec Station fails to notify the *Cole* investigators that bin Attash attended the summit in Malaysia. This is important because it connects bin Attash to future 9/11 hijackers Khalid Almihdhar and Nawaf Alhazmi, who also attended the summit (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)). [US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 275-8] Chris will meet the FBI agents in Pakistan, but will also fail to mention the identification of bin Attash at the Malaysia summit to them (see [CIA Conceals Key Information Leading to Two 9/11 Hijackers'](#) onmouseout="return nd()">February 1, 2001).

Entity Tags: [Khallad bin Attash](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), "Omar", [Central Intelligence Agency](#), "Chris", [Alec Station](#), [CIA Islamabad Station](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



January 24, 2001: Media Reports Tie 9/11 Plotter to Bombings in Indonesia



Following a series of bombings in Indonesia and the Philippines at the end of the previous year (see [December 24-30, 2000](#)), Southeast Asian authorities begin to investigate the Islamic militant group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) with more urgency (see [January 2001 and after](#)). One of the prime suspects in the bombings is Hambali, a JI leader, and his name appears in the media. Initially, Hambali is thought to have fled to Saudi Arabia. [NEW STRAITS TIMES, 1/25/2001; NEW STRAITS TIMES, 1/27/2001; JAKARTA POST, 2/7/2001; JAKARTA POST, 2/9/2001] The Malaysian government

finds more information out about him in the spring and puts out an all points bulletin for him (see [April-May 2001](#)). The FBI had previously connected Hambali to the Bojinka plot (see [May 23, 1999](#)) of Ramzi Yousef and Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, and Hambali attended the Malaysia summit in January 2000 at which al-Qaeda apparently planned various attacks, including 9/11. The summit was monitored by Malaysian intelligence, which recognized Hambali as an attendee (see [Shortly After January 8, 2000](#)) and a report on the summit was passed on to the CIA (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)). However, the publicity Hambali receives at this point apparently does not lead to a re-examination of the Malaysia summit.

Entity Tags: [Jemaah Islamiyah](#), [Hambali](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



January 25, 2001: Counterterrorism ‘Tsar’ Clarke Presents Plan to Roll Back Al-Qaeda, but Response Is Delayed



Richard Clarke. [Source: Robert Flores/ Defense Information Systems

Agency]Counterterrorism “tsar” Richard Clarke submits a proposal to National Security Adviser Rice and “urgently” asks for a Cabinet-level meeting on the al-Qaeda threat. [CLARKE, 2004, PP. 230-31] He forwards his December 2000 strategy paper and a copy of his 1998 “Delenda Plan” (see [August 27, 1998](#)). He lays out a proposed agenda for urgent action:

- Approve covert assistance to Ahmed Shah Massoud’s Northern Alliance fighting the Taliban. [9/11 COMMISSION, 3/24/2004]
- Significantly increase funding for CIA counterterrorism activity. [9/11 COMMISSION, 3/24/2004]
- Respond to the USS *Cole* bombing with an attack on al-Qaeda. (The link between al-Qaeda and that bombing had been assumed for months and is confirmed in the media two days later.) According to the Washington Post, “Clarke argue[s] that the camps [are] can’t-miss

targets, and they [matter]. The facilities [amount] to conveyor belts for al-Qaeda's human capital, with raw recruits arriving and trained fighters departing either for front lines against the Northern Alliance, the Afghan rebel coalition, or against American interests somewhere else. The US government had whole libraries of images filmed over Tarnak Qila and its sister camp, Garmabat Ghar, 19 miles farther west. Why watch al-Qaeda train several thousand men a year and then chase them around the world when they left?" No retaliation is taken on these camps until after 9/11. [[WASHINGTON POST, 1/20/2002](#)]

■ Go forward with new Predator drone reconnaissance missions in the spring and use an armed version when it is ready (see [January 10-25, 2001](#)). [[9/11 COMMISSION, 3/24/2004](#)]

■ Step up the fight against terrorist fundraising. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 3/24/2004](#)]

■ Be aware that al-Qaeda sleeper cells in the US are not just a potential threat, but are a "major threat in being." Additionally, more attacks have almost certainly been set in motion (see [January 25, 2001](#)). [[WASHINGTON POST, 1/20/2002](#)] Rice's response to Clarke's proposal is that the Cabinet will not address the issue until it has been "framed" at the deputy secretary level. However, this initial deputy meeting is not given high priority and it does not take place until April 2001. [[CLARKE, 2004, PP. 230-31](#)] Henry Shelton, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman until 9/11, says, "The squeaky wheel was Dick Clarke, but he wasn't at the top of their priority list, so the lights went out for a few months. Dick did a pretty good job because he's abrasive as hell, but given the [bureaucratic] level he was at" there was no progress. [[BENJAMIN AND SIMON, 2002, PP. 335-36](#); [LOS ANGELES TIMES, 3/30/2004](#)] Some counterterrorism officials think the new administration responds slowly simply because Clarke's proposal originally came from the Clinton administration. [[TIME, 8/4/2002](#)] For instance, Thomas Maertenson, on the National Security Council in both the Clinton and Bush administrations, says, "They really believed their campaign rhetoric about the Clinton administration. So anything [that administration] did was bad, and the Bushies were not going to repeat it." [[NEW YORK TIMES, 3/24/2004](#); [STAR-TRIBUNE \(MINNEAPOLIS\), 3/25/2004](#)] The Bush administration will finally address the gist of Clarke's plan at a cabinet-level meeting on September 4, 2001, just one week before 9/11 (see [September 4, 2001](#)). Clarke will later comment that the plan adopted "on Sept. 4 is basically... what I proposed on Jan. 25. And so the time in between was wasted."

Entity Tags: [Henry Hugh Shelton](#), [Northern Alliance](#), [Richard A. Clarke](#), [Condoleezza Rice](#), [Clinton administration](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Bush administration](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Thomas Maertenson](#), [Taliban](#), [Ahmed Shah Massoud](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



[January 30, 2001: 9/11 Hijacker Jarrah Possibly Questioned at Request of CIA, Then Released; This May Have Happened One Year Earlier Instead](#)



Future 9/11 hijacker pilot Ziad Jarrah is questioned at Dubai airport in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) over suspected radical Islamist links in January of 2000 or 2001. Initial accounts will place the stop in 2001, after Jarrah has received flight training in the US. [[SOUTH FLORIDA SUN-SENTINEL](#), 12/13/2001; [CNN](#), 8/1/2002; [CORBIN](#), 2003] However, other accounts will place it a year earlier (see [January 30, 2000](#) and [January 30-31, 2000](#)). [[9/11 COMMISSION](#), 7/24/2004, PP. 496; [VANITY FAIR](#), 11/2004; [MCDERMOTT](#), 2005, PP. 186-7; [CHICAGO TRIBUNE](#), 9/28/2005] In the 2001 version, Jarrah has already started flight training and has a US visa, whereas in the 2000 version he merely tells UAE officials of his plans to get a US visa and receive flight training there. [[CORBIN](#), 2003; [HISTORY CHANNEL](#), 2004] There is evidence to suggest Jarrah is not in Dubai on January 30, 2001 (see [Late November 2000-January 30, 2001](#)). In addition, there is evidence to suggest Jarrah was in Afghanistan in January 2000 (see [January 18, 2000](#)). After 9/11, there will be a prolonged debate about the details of Jarrah's questioning in Dubai (see [December 14, 2001-September 28, 2005](#)).

Entity Tags: [Ziad Jarrah](#), [United Arab Emirates](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



Late January 2001: US Intelligence Told to Back Off from Investigating Bin Laden Financing and Saudi Connections



A. Q. Khan receiving a medal. [*Source: Associated Press*]The BBC later reports, “After the elections, [US intelligence] agencies [are] told to ‘back off’ investigating the bin Ladens and Saudi royals, and that anger[s] agents.” This follows previous orders to abandon an investigation of bin Laden relatives in 1996 (see [February-September 11, 1996](#)), and difficulties in investigating Saudi royalty. [[BBC](#), 11/6/2001] An unnamed “top-level CIA operative” says there is a “major policy shift” at the National Security Agency at this time. Bin Laden could still be investigated, but agents could not look too closely at how he got his money. One specific CIA investigation hampered by this new policy is an investigation in Pakistani nuclear scientist A. Q. Khan and his Khan Laboratories. Khan is considered the “father” of Pakistan’s

nuclear weapons capability. But since the funding for this nuclear program gets traced back to Saudi Arabia, restrictions are placed on the inquiry. [PALAST, 2002, PP. 99-100] Also in early 2001, FBI agent Robert Wright, attempting to pursue an investigation into Saudi multimillionaire Yassin al-Qadi, is told by FBI superiors, “it’s just better to let sleeping dogs lie”(see [January-March 2001](#)). Reporter Greg Palast notes that President Clinton was already hindering investigations by protecting Saudi interests. However, as he puts it, “Where Clinton said, ‘Go slow,’ Bush policymakers said, ‘No go.’ The difference is between closing one eye and closing them both.” [PALAST, 2002, PP. 102]

Entity Tags: [Yassin al-Qadi](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Abdul Qadeer Khan](#), [Bin Laden Family](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [William Jefferson \(“Bill”\) Clinton](#), [National Security Agency](#)


Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



February 1, 2001: Cole Investigators Interview Source over Identification of Al-Qaeda Leader, CIA Conceals Key Information Leading to Two 9/11 Hijackers



Two FBI agents investigating the bombing of the USS *Cole* interview a source, referred to later as “Omar,” who previously identified a photo of one of the bombers as al-Qaeda leader Khallad bin Attash (see [November 22-December 16, 2000](#)). However, a CIA officer present at the interview, known only as “Chris,” fails to add a crucial detail. The interview, which apparently takes place in Pakistan, is held to document the previous identification by Omar of bin Attash, who led the attack on the *Cole*, based on a photograph provided by Yemeni authorities. Chris is also aware that Omar has identified bin Attash in a surveillance photo taken of al-Qaeda’s Malaysia summit (see [January 5-8, 2000](#) and [January 4, 2001](#)). The identification of bin Attash in the photo taken at the summit is important because it connects bin Attash to future 9/11 hijackers Khalid Almihdhar and Nawaf Alhazmi, who were also at the summit, and because it casts light on bin Attash’s interaction with the other *Cole* bombers. The Justice Department’s Office of Inspector General will later say it believes “that had the FBI known about the identification of [bin Attash] in the Kuala Lumpur photographs, they would likely have sought information about the other participants in the meeting, including Almihdhar and Alhazmi, which could have increased the FBI’s chances of locating them before the September 11 attacks.” Chris had previously failed to notify the FBI of the identification of bin Attash in the Malaysia summit photo (see [January 5, 2001 and After](#)), as had the CIA’s bin Laden unit (see [Shortly Before February 1, 2001](#)). [US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,

 [11/2004, PP. 275-8](#)] Omar is usually handled by *Cole* case agents Ali Soufan and Steve Bongardt. [SOUFAN, 2011, PP. 120] Presumably, one of them is the lead FBI agent at this interview, although it is not clear which.

Entity Tags: [Khallad bin Attash](#), [Steve Bongardt](#), [Office of the Inspector General \(DOJ\)](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [“Omar”](#), [CIA Islamabad Station](#), [“Chris”](#), [Ali Soufan](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



February 7, 2001: CIA Director Tenet Publicly Warns Congress that Bin Laden's Network Is 'Most Immediate and Serious Threat' to US Interests



CIA Director Tenet warns Congress in open testimony that the “threat from terrorism is real, it is immediate, and it is evolving.” He says Osama bin Laden and his global network remains “the most immediate and serious threat” to US interests. “Since 1998 bin Laden has declared that all US citizens are legitimate targets,” he says, adding that bin Laden “is capable of planning multiple attacks with little or no warning.” [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 2/7/2001; [SUNDAY HERALD \(GLASGOW\)](#), 9/23/2001]

Entity Tags: [Al-Qaeda](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [US Congress](#), [George J. Tenet](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



February 9, 2001: Bin Laden's Financial Network Supposedly Laid Bare



US officials claim significant progress in defeating bin Laden's financial network, despite significant difficulties. It is claimed that “bin Laden's financial and operational networks has been ‘completely mapped’ in secret documents shared by the State Department, CIA, and Treasury Department, with much of the mapping completed in detail by mid-1997.” [UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL, 2/9/2001] While it is unclear exactly how much the US knew about bin Laden's finances before 9/11, it is known that the names and details of many organizations funding bin Laden were known as far back as 1996 (see [January 1996](#)). Shortly after 9/11, Richard Palmer, head of the CIA's Moscow station in the 1990s, will say of al-Qaeda, “We could have starved the organization if we put our minds to it. The government has had the ability to track these accounts for some time.” [NEW YORK TIMES, 9/20/2001] The New York Times will later conclude that by 9/11, “The American government had developed a good deal of information about al-Qaeda's finances, but it was not widely shared among agencies.” [NEW YORK TIMES, 12/10/2001] Ironically, this development comes right as the new Bush administration institutes a new policy prohibiting investigators from looking closely into the sources of bin Laden's financing (see [Late January 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [Osama bin Laden](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Richard Palmer](#), [United States](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



February 13, 2001: Interagency Counterterrorism Communications Now Channeled Through National Security Adviser Rice



President Bush issues a little-noticed directive that dramatically changes the way information flows among top Bush administration officials. It states that attendees of National Security Council (NSC) meetings shall continue to include the president, vice president, secretary of state, treasury secretary, defense secretary, CIA director, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, and assistant to the president for national security affairs. However, other officials, including the “heads of other executive departments and agencies, as well as other senior officials” are excluded from the automatic right to attend NSC meetings. Instead, they “shall be invited to attend meetings of the NSC when appropriate.” National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice is given a pivotal position. In addition to attending all NSC meetings, she is responsible for determining the agenda of all the meetings. The directive also states, “The existing system of Interagency Working Groups is abolished.” Instead, Rice will coordinate a series of eleven new interagency coordination committees within the NSC. She is designated the executive secretary of all eleven committees, meaning that she will schedule the meetings and determine agendas. She is made chairperson of six of the committees, including “Counter-Terrorism and National Preparedness,” “Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence,” and “Records Access and Information Security.” Professor Margie Burns will later ask rhetorically, “How could the White House ever have thought that abolishing the interagency work groups was a good idea, if security was the objective? Why was so much responsibility placed on the shoulders of one person, Condoleezza Rice, whose [only] previous experience had been at Stanford University and Chevron?” [[US PRESIDENT, 2/13/2001](#); [CHRONICLES MAGAZINE, 1/2004](#)]

Entity Tags: [Margie Burns](#), [Condoleezza Rice](#), [George W. Bush](#), [National Security Council](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Spring 2001: White House Pressures CIA to Drop Objection to Chalabi



During a White House meeting, Bush administration officials discuss new proposals on how to undermine Saddam Hussein. At one point during the meeting, Deputy National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley tells Deputy CIA Director John McLaughlin that the CIA needs to stop bad-mouthing Iraqi exile Ahmed Chalabi so the Bush administration can work with Chalabi to overthrow the Iraqi government. McLaughlin reportedly makes it clear to Hadley that the agency will not undermine White House efforts to work with Chalabi. Hadley’s pressure on the

CIA produces the intended results. Though the CIA will never work directly with Chalabi, the CIA will nonetheless allow the Pentagon to disseminate intelligence reports to other US intelligence agencies based on information from Iraqi defectors supplied by Chalabi's organization, the Iraqi National Congress. One CIA official later tells author James Risen that the White House message to drop its objections to Chalabi was sent to the CIA "a thousand times, in a thousand different ways." [RISEN, 2006, PP. 183-184]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [John E. McLaughlin](#), [Ahmed Chalabi](#), [Stephen J. Hadley](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



March 7, 2001: Russia Submits Report on Bin Laden to UN Security Council, US Fails to Act on It



The Russian Permanent Mission at the United Nations secretly submits "an unprecedentedly detailed report" to the UN Security Council about bin Laden, his whereabouts, details of his al-Qaeda network, Afghan drug running, and Taliban connections to Pakistan and the ISI. The report provides "a listing of all bin Laden's bases, his government contacts and foreign advisers," and enough information to potentially locate and kill him. It is said to contain an "astonishing degree of information." The US fails to use the information in any noticeable manner. Alex Standish, the editor of the highly respected Jane's Intelligence Review, concludes that the attacks of 9/11 were less of an American intelligence failure than the result of "a political decision not to act against bin Laden." [JANE'S INTELLIGENCE REVIEW, 10/5/2001; TIMES OF INDIA, 10/8/2001] In May 2002, Jane's will further comment, "it is becoming clear that this was only the most high profile of a number of attempts by the Russians to alert the US and other members of the Security Council to the extent of the inter-dependence between the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and the ISI. According to [our] Russian sources, there was a regular flow of information from Moscow to the US dating back to the last years of the Clinton presidency. It seems apparent, however, that although this intelligence was being received by the CIA and other US agencies, there was a distinct lack of enthusiasm within political - as opposed to military - circles for the launch of pre-emptive strikes against either the Taliban or al-Qaeda. However, given the detailed intelligence being provided by the Russians - and the fact that bin Laden was making very clear threats to launch further strikes against US targets - it seems bizarre, to say the least, that no high-level political decision was taken to focus US intelligence efforts on al-Qaeda and its international network..." [JANE'S INTELLIGENCE DIGEST, 5/28/2002]

Entity Tags: [Russia](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [United Nations](#), [Osama bin Laden](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



March 26, 2001: CIA Benefits from Major Software Improvements



The Washington Post reports on major improvements of the CIA's intelligence gathering capability "in recent years." A new program called Oasis uses "automated speech recognition" technology to turn audio feeds into formatted, searchable text. It can distinguish one voice from another and differentiates "speaker 1" from "speaker 2" in transcripts. Software called Fluent performs "cross lingual" searches, translates difficult languages like Chinese and Japanese (apparently such software is much better than similar publicly available software), and even automatically assesses the contextual importance. Other new software can turn a suspect's "life story into a three-dimensional diagram of linked phone calls, bank deposits and plane trips," while still other software can efficiently and quickly process vast amounts of video, audio, and written data. [\[WASHINGTON POST, 3/26/2001\]](#) However, the government will later report that a number of messages about the 9/11 attacks, such as one stating "tomorrow is the zero hour," are not translated until after 9/11 because analysts were "too swamped." [\[ABC NEWS, 6/7/2002\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Oasis](#), [Fluent](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



Late March-Early April 2001: CIA Warns Al-Qaeda Leader Zubaida Planning an Attack



The CIA issues repeated warnings that al-Qaeda leader Abu Zubaida may be planning an attack for the near future. One report cites a source indicating an attack on Israel, Saudi Arabia, or India. At this time, the CIA believes Zubaida was a major figure in the Millennium plots (see [May 30, 2001](#)). Counterterrorism "tsar" Richard Clarke relays these reports to National Security Adviser Rice. She is also briefed on Zubaida's activities and the CIA's efforts to locate him. [\[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 255; US DISTRICT COURT OF EASTERN VIRGINIA, 5/4/2006, PP.](#)



Entity Tags: [Richard A. Clarke](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Condoleezza Rice](#), [Abu Zubaida](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



April 2001: Informer Shares Some Information on Moussaoui with CIA



A CIA informer who is aware of Zacarias Moussaoui's connection to terrorism and met him in Azerbaijan in 1997 (see [1997](#)) shares some information on him with the CIA. However, the informer is not aware of Moussaoui's real name and knows him under an alias, "Abu Khalid al-Francia." An intelligence official will indicate in 2002 that the source reports on Moussaoui under this name. However, CIA director George Tenet, writing in 2007, will say that the informer only reports on Moussaoui as "al Francia." One of Moussaoui's known aliases in 2001 is Abu Khalid al-Sahrawi, similar to the name the source knows him under, but when Moussaoui is arrested in the US (see [August 16, 2001](#)) the CIA apparently does not realize that Abu Khalid al-Francia is Moussaoui. [[MSNBC, 12/11/2001](#); [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 6/4/2002](#); [TENET, 2007, PP. 201](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Zacarias Moussaoui](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



[April 6, 2001: Rebel Leader Warns Europe and US About Large-Scale Imminent Al-Qaeda Attacks](#)



Ahmed Shah Massoud speaking before European Parliament. [*Source: Robert Sanchez/ Black Star*] Ahmed Shah Massoud, leader of the Northern Alliance fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan, has been trying to get aid from the US but his people are only allowed to meet with low level US officials. In an attempt to get his message across, he addresses the European Parliament: "If President Bush doesn't help us, these terrorists will damage the US and Europe very soon." [[DAWN \(KARACHI\), 4/7/2001](#); [TIME, 8/4/2002](#)] A classified US intelligence document states, "Massoud's intelligence staff is aware that the attack against the US will be on a scale larger than the 1998 embassy bombings, which killed over two hundred people and injured thousands (see [10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998](#))." [[DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY,](#)

[11/21/2001](#)] Massoud also meets privately with some CIA officials while in Europe (see [Early](#)

[April 2001](#)). He tells them that his guerrilla war against the Taliban is faltering and unless the US gives a significant amount of aid, the Taliban will conquer all of Afghanistan. No more aid is forthcoming. [[WASHINGTON POST, 2/23/2004](#)]

Entity Tags: [Taliban](#), [Northern Alliance](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [George W. Bush](#), [Ahmed Shah Massoud](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



April 9, 2001: Washington Post Columnist Lauds Chalabi, Advocates Regime Change in Iraq



In a column exploring the idea of US-led regime change in Iraq and advocating the support of Iraqi opposition groups to overthrow Saddam Hussein, Washington Post columnist Jim Hoagland calls Iraqi opposition leader Ahmed Chalabi (see [1992-1996](#)) “a dedicated advocate of democracy” in Iraq. (Hoagland lauds Chalabi’s advanced college degrees, his success as a Jordanian banker (see [August 2, 1989](#)), and what he calls Chalabi’s exposure of the CIA’s “gross failures” in Iraq (see [1994](#))). Hoagland decries “15 years of failed US policy toward Saddam,” and writes that Chalabi is a fine choice to lead Iraq in the place of Hussein. “Mr. Chalabi is a dedicated advocate of democracy who does fight against enormous military odds and deep religious and social divisions in the Arab world,” he writes. Lambasting those in the CIA and State Department who are determined to prove that Chalabi is a fraud (see [January 1996](#)), Hoagland writes, “A policy review dedicated to trashing him and other exiles is a shameful and self-defeating way to begin anew on Iraq. It is a phony way to argue that nothing can or should be done to oust the predatory psychopath who holds Iraq hostage.”

[[WASHINGTON POST, 4/9/2001](#); [UNGER, 2007, PP. 206](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Ahmed Chalabi](#), [Washington Post](#), [Saddam Hussein](#), [Jim Hoagland](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



April 10, 2001: CIA Report Says Tubes Being Imported by Iraq Likely Meant for Nuclear Program



A classified intelligence report, based primarily on the work of junior CIA analyst Joe T., concludes that the 7075-T6 aluminum tubes sought by Iraq from China (see [2000](#)) “have little use other than for a uranium enrichment program.” But the report also notes that “using aluminum tubes in a centrifuge effort would be inefficient and a step backward from the

specialty steel machines Iraq was poised to mass produce at the onset of the Gulf War.” The report is passed on to the White House. [[US CONGRESS, 7/7/2004](#); [NEW YORK TIMES, 10/3/2004](#)]

Entity Tags: [Bush administration](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Joe Turner](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



April 11, 2001: Energy Department Report Challenges CIA Assessment that Tubes Being Imported by Iraq Are Intended for Nuclear Program



US officials in the Department of Energy (DOE) respond to an intelligence report released the previous day (see [April 10, 2001](#)) which contended that the aluminum tubes sought by Iraq (see [July 2001](#)) are destined for use as centrifuge rotors in a uranium enrichment program. The Energy Department argues that the tubes are too narrow, too heavy, and too long to be used in a gas centrifuge. Furthermore, “the tubes’ specifications suggest a centrifuge design quite different from any Iraq is known to have.” The officials also note that there is no evidence that Iraq is seeking to acquire other materials that would be needed to construct a centrifuge. And if the Iraqis intend to use the tubes for uranium enrichment, the officials ask, why are they making no effort to conceal their interest in acquiring the tubes? “[T]he manner in which the procurement is being handled (multiple procurement agents, quotes obtained from multiple suppliers in diverse locations, and price haggling) seems to better match our expectations for a conventional Iraqi military buy than a major purchase for a clandestine weapons-of-mass destruction program,” the report notes. [[US CONGRESS, 7/7/2004](#); [NEW YORK TIMES, 10/3/2004](#)] The DOE therefore concludes that “while the gas centrifuge application cannot be ruled out, we assess that the procurement activity more likely supports a different application, such as conventional ordnance production.” The agency considers it more plausible that the tubes are meant to serve as rocket casings. Notwithstanding, the DOE concedes that it has “not identified an Iraq-specific, military, or other noncentrifuge application that precisely matches the tube specifications.” [[US CONGRESS, 7/7/2004](#)] The DOE will identify a possible specific conventional military application for the tubes the following month (see [May 9, 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [US Department of Energy](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



April 13, 2001: FBI Warned to Search for Information on Muslim Extremist Threat



Shortly after discovering that Osama bin Laden and Chechen rebel leader Ibn Khattab may be planning an attack against the US (see [Before April 13, 2001](#)), the FBI sends a message to all its field offices summarizing intelligence reporting to date on the Sunni extremist threat (see [February 6, 2001](#)). (Bin Laden is the most wanted Sunni extremist by this time.) The offices are told to task all resources, including human sources and electronic databases, for any information pertaining to “current operational activities relating to Sunni extremism.” No specific domestic threat is mentioned, but the FBI’s mission is to protect domestic security while the CIA is in charge of overseas threats. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 255](#); [US DISTRICT COURT](#)

[OF EASTERN VIRGINIA, 5/4/2006, PP. 1](#)] There is no mention about what is done, if anything, in response to this message. This also appears to be the last time before 9/11 that FBI field offices are tasked to work on any Muslim extremist threat in the US. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 264](#)]

Entity Tags: [Osama bin Laden](#), [Ibn Khattab](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



April 23-June 29, 2001: 9/11 ‘Muscle’ Hijackers Arrive in US at This Time or Earlier



This Ahmed Al-Haznawi picture is a photocopy of his 2001 US visa application. [*Source: 9/11 Commission*]The 13 hijackers commonly known as the “muscle” allegedly first arrive in the US. The muscle provides the brute force meant to control the hijacked passengers and protect the pilots. [[WASHINGTON POST, 9/30/2001](#)] Yet, according to the 9/11 Commission, these men “were not physically imposing,” with the majority of them between 5 feet 5 and 5 feet 7 tall, “and slender in build.” [[9/11 COMMISSION, 6/16/2004, PP. 8](#)] According to FBI Director Mueller, they all pass through Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and their travel was probably coordinated from abroad by Khalid Almihdhar. [[US CONGRESS, 9/26/2002](#)] However, some information contradicts their official arrival dates:

■ April 23: Waleed Alshehri and Satam Al Suqami arrive in Orlando, Florida. Suqami in fact arrived before February 2001. A man named Waleed Alshehri lived with a man named Ahmed Alghamdi in Virginia and Florida between 1997 and 2000. However, it is not clear whether they were the hijackers or just people with the same name (see [1999](#)). [[DAILY TELEGRAPH, 9/20/2001](#)] Alshehri appears quite Americanized in the summer of 2001, frequently talking with an apartment mate about football and baseball, even identifying himself a fan of the Florida Marlins baseball team. [[ASSOCIATED PRESS, 9/21/2001](#)]

■ May 2: Majed Moqed and Ahmed Alghamdi arrive in Washington. Both actually arrived by mid-March 2001. A man named Ahmed Alghamdi lived with a man named Waleed Alshehri in Florida and Virginia between 1997 and 2000. However, it is not clear whether they were the hijackers or just people with the same name (see [1999](#)). [[DAILY TELEGRAPH, 9/20/2001](#)] Alghamdi apparently praises Osama bin Laden to Customs officials while entering the country and Moqed uses an alias (see [May 2, 2001](#)).

■ May 28: Mohand Alshehri, Hamza Alghamdi, and Ahmed Alnami allegedly arrive in Miami, Florida. Alnami may have a suspicious indicator of terrorist affiliation in his passport (see [April 21, 2001](#)), but this is apparently not noticed by US authorities. The precise state of US knowledge about the indicator at this time is not known (see [Around February 1993](#)). The CIA will learn of it no later than 2003, but will still not inform immigration officials then (see [February 14, 2003](#)). According to other reports, however, both Mohand Alshehri and Hamza Alghamdi may have arrived by January 2001 (see [January or July 28, 2001](#)).

■ June 8: Ahmed Alhaznawi and Wail Alshehri arrive in Miami, Florida. Alhaznawi may have a suspicious indicator of terrorist affiliation in his passport (see [Before November 12, 2000](#)), but this is apparently not noticed by US authorities.

■ June 27: Fayez Banihammad and Saeed Alghamdi arrive in Orlando, Florida.

■ June 29: Salem Alhazmi and Abdulaziz Alomari allegedly arrive in New York. According to other reports, however, Alhazmi arrived before February 2001. Alhazmi has a suspicious indicator of terrorist affiliation in his passport (see [June 16, 2001](#)), but this is apparently not noticed by US authorities.

After entering the US (or, perhaps, reentering), the hijackers arriving at Miami and Orlando airports settle in the Fort Lauderdale, Florida, area along with Mohamed Atta, Marwan Alshehhi, and Ziad Jarrah. The hijackers, arriving in New York and Virginia, settle in the Paterson, New Jersey, area along with Nawaf Alhazmi and Hani Hanjour. [[US CONGRESS, 9/26/2002](#)] Note the FBI's early conclusion that 11 of these muscle men "did not know they were on a suicide mission." [[OBSERVER, 10/14/2001](#)] CIA Director Tenet's later claim that they "probably were told little more than that they were headed for a suicide mission inside the United States" [[US CONGRESS, 6/18/2002](#)] and reports that they did not know the exact details of the 9/11 plot until shortly before the attack [[CBS NEWS, 10/9/2002](#)] are contradicted by video confessions made by all of them in March 2001 (see [December 2000-March 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [Marwan Alshehhi](#), [Mohand Alshehri](#), [Majed Moqed](#), [Mohamed Atta](#), [Ziad Jarrah](#), [Saeed Alghamdi](#), [Khalid Almhidhar](#), [Waleed Alshehri](#), [Wail Alshehri](#), [Satam Al Suqami](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Hani](#)

[Hanjour](#), [Salem Alhazmi](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Hamza Alghamdi](#), [Abdulaziz Alomari](#), [Ahmed Alhaznawi](#), [Ahmed Alghamdi](#), [Fayez Ahmed Banihammad](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Ahmed Alnami](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



April 30, 2001: Deputy Defense Secretary Wolfowitz in Deputy Secretary Meeting: Who Cares About [Bin Laden]?



The Bush administration finally has its first Deputy Secretary-level meeting on terrorism. [\[TIME, 8/4/2002\]](#) According to counterterrorism “tsar” Richard Clarke, he advocates that the Northern Alliance needs to be supported in the war against the Taliban, and the Predator drone flights need to resume over Afghanistan so bin Laden can be targeted. [\[CLARKE, 2004, PP. 231\]](#) Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz says the focus on al-Qaeda is wrong. He states, “I just don’t understand why we are beginning by talking about this one man bin Laden,” and “Who cares about a little terrorist in Afghanistan?” Wolfowitz insists the focus should be Iraqi-sponsored terrorism instead. He claims the 1993 attack on the WTC must have been done with help from Iraq, and rejects the CIA’s assertion that there has been no Iraqi-sponsored terrorism against the US since 1993 (see [April 30, 2001](#)). (A spokesperson for Wolfowitz later calls Clarke’s account a “fabrication.”) [\[CLARKE, 2004, PP. 30, 231; NEWSWEEK, 3/22/2004\]](#) Wolfowitz repeats these sentiments immediately after 9/11 and tries to argue that the US should attack Iraq. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage agrees with Clarke that al-Qaeda is an important threat. Deputy National Security Adviser Steve Hadley, chairing the meeting, brokers a compromise between Wolfowitz and the others. The group agrees to hold additional meetings focusing on al-Qaeda first (in June and July), but then later look at other terrorism, including any Iraqi terrorism. [\[CLARKE, 2004, PP. 30, 231-32\]](#) Vice President Cheney’s Chief of Staff I. Lewis “Scooter” Libby and Deputy CIA Director John McLaughlin also attend the hour-long meeting. [\[TIME, 8/4/2002\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Stephen J. Hadley](#), [Richard Armitage](#), [Richard A. Clarke](#), [Taliban](#), [Paul Wolfowitz](#), [Richard \(“Dick”\) Cheney](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [John E. McLaughlin](#), [Northern Alliance](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Bush administration](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



May 2001: CIA Official Connected to Cases of Moussaoui and Two 9/11 Hijackers Tasked to Help FBI



Tom Wilshire, a former deputy chief of Alec Station, the CIA's bin Laden unit, is detailed to the FBI to help with its counterterrorism work. Wilshire was involved in the failure to watchlist 9/11 hijackers Nawaf Alhazmi and Khalid Almihdhar during the al-Qaeda Malaysia summit (see [9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. January 5, 2000](#)), and will also be involved in the failed search for them in the summer of 2001 (see [May 15, 2001](#), [Late May, 2001](#), and [July 13, 2001](#)), as well as the failure to obtain a search warrant for Zacarias Moussaoui's belongings (see [August 24, 2001](#)). He acts as the CIA's chief intelligence representative to Michael Rolince, head of the Bureau's International Terrorism Operations Section. His primary role is apparently to help the FBI exploit information for intelligence purposes. [[US DEPARTMENT OF](#)

[JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 282-348](#)]

Entity Tags: [Michael Rolince](#), [Tom Wilshire](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Alec Station](#), [International Terrorism Operations Section](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



May 8-10, 2001: Senate Hearings Discuss Possibility of Terrorist Attack in the US



Senator Pat Roberts. [Source: Publicity photo]Based on concerns that the US is unprepared for a terrorist attack on its soil, the Republican chairmen of three Senate committees—appropriations, armed services and intelligence—arrange three days of hearings to explore how to better coordinate efforts at preventing and responding to terrorist attacks within the United States. Eighteen government officials testify, including CIA Director George Tenet, Secretary of State Colin Powell, Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, Attorney General John Ashcroft, and Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz. Before the hearings commence, Senator Pat Roberts (R-Kan) tells reporters, “The United States is very likely to suffer, on our soil, an attack by a weapon of mass destruction, by a terrorist group or cell. It should come as no surprise this nation is not prepared for such an attack.” [[WASHINGTON POST, 5/9/2001](#); [RED CROSS, 5/10/2001](#)] In his testimony at the hearings, John Ashcroft warns, “It is clear that American citizens are the target of choice of international terrorists. Americans comprise only about 5

percent of the world's population. However, according to State Department statistics, during the decade of the 1990s, 36 percent of all worldwide terrorist acts were directed against US interests. Although most of these attacks occurred overseas, international terrorists have shown themselves willing to reach within our borders to carry out their cowardly acts.” [\[US CONGRESS. SENATE. APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, 5/9/2001\]](#) Yet in a letter describing the agenda of the new administration that he sends to department heads the day after giving this testimony, Ashcroft does not mention terrorism (see [May 10, 2001](#)). [\[NEW YORK TIMES, 2/28/2002\]](#) Also testifying at the hearings, FEMA Director Joe Allbaugh announces he will soon be establishing an Office of National Preparedness to coordinate efforts at responding to terrorist attacks. [\[WASHINGTON POST, 5/9/2001\]](#) On the day the hearings start, President Bush announces that he is putting Vice President Dick Cheney in charge of overseeing a coordinated effort to address the threat posed to the United States by chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons (see [May 8, 2001](#)). [\[WHITE HOUSE, 5/8/2001\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Paul Wolfowitz](#), [Paul O'Neill](#), [John Ashcroft](#), [Joseph M. Allbaugh](#), [Pat Roberts](#), [Colin Powell](#), [George J. Tenet](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



Mid-May 2001: CIA Officer Obtains More Information about USS *Cole* Bombing



CIA officer Tom Wilshire, currently assigned to the FBI, discusses al-Qaeda's Malaysia summit with another CIA officer called Clark Shannon, who is assigned to the CIA's Counterterrorist Center and wrote a report on the USS *Cole* bombing (see [January 2001](#)). Shannon gives Wilshire a timeline of events related to the *Cole* attack and they discuss Fahad al-Quso, a member of the bombing team in custody at this point (see [Early December 2000](#)), and Khallad

bin Attash. [\[US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 282\]](#) Around this time, Wilshire also accesses a March 2000 cable about travel to the US by 9/11 hijacker Nawaf Alhazmi and a companion following the summit (see [May 15, 2001](#)). According to Margaret Gillespie, an FBI agent on loan to the CIA, Wilshire “had always been interested in the Malaysia summit and he was especially concerned about any potential ties between the USS *Cole* investigation and the Malaysia summit.” [\[US DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA, ALEXANDRIA DIVISION,](#)

[7/31/2006\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Tom Wilshire](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Clark Shannon](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Fahad al-Quso](#), [Margaret Gillespie](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



May 15, 2001: CIA Hides Al-Qaeda Malaysia Summit Information from FBI



Tom Wilshire, a former deputy chief of the CIA's bin Laden unit on attachment to the FBI, sends a request to CIA headquarters for the surveillance photos of the January 2000 al-Qaeda summit in Malaysia (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)). Three days later, Wilshire explains the reason for his interest in an e-mail to a CIA analyst: "I'm interested because Khalid Almihdhar's two companions also were couriers of a sort, who traveled between [the Far East] and Los Angeles at the same time ([H]azmi and [S]alah)." Hazmi refers to hijacker Nawaf Alhazmi, and Salah Said is the alias al-Qaeda leader Khallad bin Attash traveled under during the summit. Apparently, Wilshire receives the photos. Toward the end of May, a CIA analyst contacts a specialist working at FBI headquarters about the photographs. The CIA wants the FBI analyst to review the photographs and determine if a person who had carried money to Southeast Asia for bin Attash in January 2000 could be identified. The CIA fails to tell the FBI analyst anything about Almihdhar or Alhazmi. Around the same time, the CIA analyst receives an e-mail mentioning Alhazmi's travel to the US. These two analysts travel to New York the next month and again the CIA analyst fails to divulge what he knows. [\[US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003](#) ; [US](#)

[DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 283](#)]

Entity Tags: [Tom Wilshire](#), [Khallad bin Attash](#), [Counterterrorist Center](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



Mid-May 2001: CIA Withholds Photo of Al-Qaeda Leader from FBI



Although three surveillance photographs of al-Qaeda's Malaysia summit are passed to the FBI at this time (see [Late May, 2001](#) and [June 11, 2001](#)), another key photograph the CIA has of the meeting is withheld by CIA officers Clark Shannon and Tom Wilshire. The key photograph shows al-Qaeda logistics manager Khallad bin Attash, who commanded the attack on the USS *Cole* (see [October 12, 2000](#)). Author Lawrence Wright will later comment: "Thanks to [FBI agent Ali] Soufan's interrogation of [USS *Cole* bomber Fahad al-Quso], the *Cole* investigators had an active file on Khallad and were preparing to indict him. Knowledge of that fourth photo would likely have prompted [FBI manager John] O'Neill to demand that the CIA turn over all information relating to Khallad and his associates. By withholding the picture of Khallad attending the meeting with the future hijackers [Khalid Almihdhar and Nawaf Alhazmi], the CIA may in effect have allowed the September 11th plot to proceed." [\[NEW](#)

[YORKER, 7/10/2006](#)] The CIA also has video and even more photos of the meeting (see [January](#)

[5, 2000](#) and [January 5-8, 2000 and Shortly After](#)), but these are not shared either, and it is unclear how aware Wilshire and Shannon are of this additional material.

Entity Tags: [Tom Wilshire](#), [Khallad bin Attash](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Clark Shannon](#), [Lawrence Wright](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



Mid-May 2001: CIA Officer Misrepresents 9/11 Hijacker Alhazmi's Travel to US in E-mail Copied to FBI Agent



In an email sent to a fellow CIA officer Clark Shannon and copied to FBI agent Margaret Gillespie, who is working on the USS *Cole* bombing and the Malaysia summit, Tom Wilshire, a CIA officer assigned to the FBI, misrepresents the travel of 9/11 hijacker Nawaf Alhazmi and an associate to the US. According to the Justice Department's Office of Inspector General, the e-mail says that Alhazmi and an associate traveled from Bangkok to Los Angeles to Hong Kong, indicating they did not remain in the US and left for Hong Kong. However, Alhazmi and hijacker Khalid Almihdhar traveled from Bangkok to Hong Kong and then to Los Angeles. Gillespie and Shannon will subsequently attend a meeting at which this information should be shared, but is not (see [June 11, 2001](#)). [[US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 282-3, 288, 300](#)]

Entity Tags: [Tom Wilshire](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Office of the Inspector General \(DOJ\)](#), [Margaret Gillespie](#), [Clark Shannon](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



(Late May-Early June): FBI Agent at CIA Searches Only One of Two Databases with Information about 9/11 Hijackers



Margaret Gillespie, an FBI agent detailed to the CIA who has been asked to research the connection between al-Qaeda's Malaysia summit and the bombing of the USS *Cole*, checks a CIA database and finds some NSA information about 9/11 hijackers Khalid Almihdhar and Nawaf Alhazmi and their travel to an al-Qaeda summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, that was monitored by the US. The database she uses is Intelink, which only has information the CIA makes available to other intelligence agencies. However, she does not also examine the CIA's Hercules database. It is unclear why she does not do so and whether, as an FBI agent, she has access to it. If she did access it, she would have a complete picture of the CIA's knowledge of

Almihdhar and Alhazmi and would know Almihdhar had a US visa and Alhazmi had traveled to the US (see [January 2-5, 2000](#) and [March 5, 2000](#)). As Gillespie is only working this line of inquiry in her free time, she does not put together the information contained in the Hercules system until late August (see [August 21-22, 2001](#)). [[WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 340, 425](#)]

Entity Tags: [Alec Station](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Margaret Gillespie](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



May 23-24, 2001: Defense Secretary Rumsfeld Warns of Inevitability of Strategic Surprise; Refers to Pearl Harbor



Thomas Schelling. [[Source: University of Maryland](#)] During a meeting with the House Armed Services Committee, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld says that the inevitability of surprise is a guiding principle of the Bush administration's national security strategy. To emphasize his point about the need to prepare for the unexpected, he gives panel members copies of the foreword to Roberta Wohlstetter's 1962 book, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision*. This foreword, written by Thomas Schelling, argues that in order to prepare for the next crisis, the US military needs to avoid thinking that the most familiar threat is also the most likely one. Rumsfeld says that, in line with this reasoning, a key element of the administration's strategy will be preparing for the unexpected. [[US DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, 5/23/2001](#); [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 5/24/2001](#)] The following day, he has a similar closed-door meeting with the Senate Armed Services Committee. He hands out to senators a four-page paper dealing with the inevitability of strategic surprise, and summarizing various defense surprises and incorrect predictions made during the 20th century. The paper states that the Department of Defense should "give some thought to the flexibility of a capability-based strategy, as opposed to simply a threat-based strategy." What this means, according to the Washington Post, is that the "US military needs to move away from a Cold War structure designed to counter one large, clear threat—from the Soviet Union—and to develop capabilities to respond to everything from ballistic missiles to terrorist attacks." [[NPR, 5/25/2001](#);

[WASHINGTON POST, 5/25/2001](#)] Rumsfeld had previously warned of the danger of a surprise attack, like Pearl Harbor, during his confirmation hearing in January (see [January 11, 2001](#)). Journalist Bob Woodward will later report that one of the main themes Rumsfeld referred to in the eight months prior to 9/11 was surprise, and he had “routinely handed out or recommended” Wohlstetter’s book on Pearl Harbor. [[WOODWARD, 2002, PP. 22-23](#)] Yet when, in July, he receives a CIA briefing about the imminent danger of an al-Qaeda attack on an American target, Rumsfeld reportedly responds with “vehement dismissal,” and criticizes the CIA for its “gullibility” (see [July 11-17, 2001](#)). [[COCKBURN, 2007, PP. 9](#)]

Entity Tags: [Donald Rumsfeld](#)


Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



Late May, 2001: CIA Officer Passes Three Malaysia Summit Photographs to FBI, but Fails to Mention Some Important Details



Tom Wilshire, a CIA officer on loan to the FBI, obtains three photographs from the surveillance of al-Qaeda’s Malaysia summit (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)), and passes them to Dina Corsi, an agent with the FBI’s bin Laden unit. Corsi learned of the photographs’ existence following a discussion with CIA officer Clark Shannon. Although Wilshire does not have a “substantive conversation” with Corsi about the photos, he does identify hijacker Khalid Almihdhar in one of them, and says Almihdhar traveled from Sana’a, Yemen, to Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and then Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in early January 2000. However, Wilshire omits to mention that Almihdhar has a US visa, his associate hijacker Nawaf Alhazmi has traveled to the US, or another associate, Khallad bin Attash, has been identified in the photos. He also does not say why the photos were taken. Author Lawrence Wright will later say the photos are passed because Wilshire wants to know what the FBI knows. The CIA says it thinks the photos may show Fahad al-Quso, an al-Qaeda operative involved in the USS *Cole* bombing. Corsi understands that the photos are “not formally passed” to the FBI, but are only for limited use at a forthcoming meeting. Therefore, only limited information about them is provided at the meeting, causing a disagreement (see [June 11, 2001](#)). However, Wilshire will later say that Corsi could give the photos to the FBI, but the FBI could not then give them to a foreign government (note: the photos had been provided to a foreign government five months previously, so this restriction is meaningless). [[US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 286-7, 293-4](#) ;

 [NEW YORKER, 7/10/2006](#)] Other pictures of the summit are available to the CIA, and there is even video footage (see [February 2000](#) and [Mid-May 2001](#)), but these are not shared with the FBI or widely discussed.

Entity Tags: [Tom Wilshire](#), [Khallad bin Attash](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Dina Corsi](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Clark Shannon](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



(May 26, 2001): 9/11 Hijacker Almihdhar Probably Stays in Closely Monitored Yemen Hub House Yet Again



Future 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar probably visits the closely monitored al-Qaeda communications hub in Yemen again. While it will not be reported that he is at the hub at this time, it is known that he flies from Sana'a, Yemen, to Saudi Arabia on May 26, 2001 (see [May 26, 2001](#)), and the Yemen hub is in Sana'a. [\[BAMFORD, 2008, PP. 64\]](#) Furthermore, Almihdhar's wife, his recently born baby, and other family members live in the hub (which is run by his father-in-law Ahmed al-Hada). It would seem highly likely he would not pass through Sana'a without visiting his family. Almihdhar stayed at the hub for around a month in June 2000 (see [\(Mid-June-Mid-July 2000\)](#)) and then visited it again in February 2001 (see [February 2001](#)). Details of Almihdhar's travels are unclear, but he may have traveled to Afghanistan via Iran later in February (see [February 2001](#)). He is in the United Arab Emirates and Malaysia in June 2001. [\[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 237\]](#) Each time Almihdhar visits the hub presents a great opportunity for the CIA and NSA, because they have been closely monitoring the hub for years. Phone calls to and from the hub, including ones made by Almihdhar and other 9/11 hijackers, are intercepted, rooms in the building are bugged, and spy satellites record visitors (see [Late August 1998](#), [Late 1998-Early 2002](#), and [Early 2000-Summer 2001](#)). Based on information gained from monitoring this house, the CIA and local intelligence services mounted a major operation against Almihdhar, other 9/11 hijackers, and several more al-Qaeda operatives in December 1999 and January 2000, when they were followed around the Middle East and South Asia and monitored during an al-Qaeda summit in Malaysia (see [December 29, 1999](#), [January 2-5, 2000](#), and [January 5-8, 2000](#)). So presumably US intelligence should be aware of this visit to the hub and who Almihdhar is, but what exactly is known and who may know it will not be made public.

Entity Tags: [National Security Agency](#), [Ahmed al-Hada](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



May 29, 2001: CIA and FBI Possibly Have Meeting about Cole and Malaysia Summit, but Nobody Will Later Remember Anything about It



There is some evidence CIA and FBI representatives meet on this day to compare notes about the investigation into the USS *Cole* bombing and al-Qaeda's Malaysia summit, but an

investigation by the Justice Department’s Office of Inspector General (OIG) will not be able to confirm the meeting takes place, as all the participants say they are unable to recall whether they attended the meeting or not. If the meeting actually occurs, it is probably attended by CIA officer Clark Shannon, FBI agent Dina Corsi, an FBI agent known as “Kathy”, and FBI agent Margaret Gillespie. The topics of discussion may include the state of the *Cole* investigation and the identification of Khallad bin Attash in photographs of al-Qaeda’s Malaysia summit. Despite the poor memories of the potential attendees, the OIG will later find an email from Shannon to Gillespie saying that they met on this date, and Kathy will say that Shannon’s name sounds familiar. However, the OIG will conclude, “We were unable to determine with certainty whether a meeting... took place on May 29.” [\[US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 285,](#)

[296](#)]

Entity Tags: [Margaret Gillespie](#), [Khallad bin Attash](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Clark Shannon](#), [Dina Corsi](#), [“Kathy”](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



May 30, 2001: CIA Leaders Warn National Security Adviser Rice about Expected Al-Qaeda Attack



During a regularly scheduled weekly meeting between National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice and CIA Director George Tenet, CIA official Richard Blee describes a “truly frightening” list of warning signs of an upcoming terrorist attack. He says that al-Qaeda leader Abu Zubaida is working on attack plans. CIA leaders John McLaughlin and Cofer Black are also present at this meeting, as is counterterrorism “tsar” Richard Clarke and Mary McCarthy, a CIA officer serving as National Security Council senior director. [\[TENET, 2007, PP. 145\]](#) Just the day before, Clarke suggested that Tenet and Rice discuss what could be done to stop Zubaida from launching “a series of major terrorist attacks,” so presumably this discussion is in response to that (see [May 29, 2001](#)). Tenet will later recall: “Some intelligence suggested that [Zubaida’s] plans were ready to be executed; others suggested they would not be ready for six months. The primary target appeared to be in Israel, but other US assets around the world were at risk.” Rice asks about taking the offensive against al-Qaeda and asks how bad the threat is. Black estimates it to be a seven on a one-to-10 scale, with the millennium threat at the start of 2000 ranking an eight in comparison. Clarke tells her that adequate warning notices have been issued to the appropriate US entities. [\[TENET, 2007, PP. 145-146\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Richard Blee](#), [Richard A. Clarke](#), [John E. McLaughlin](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Cofer Black](#), [Mary McCarthy](#), [Condoleezza Rice](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Abu Zubaida](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



June 2001: CIA Gets Hints of Imminent, Multiple Al-Qaeda Attacks



CIA Director George Tenet will later write that in June 2001, the CIA learns that Arabs in Afghanistan are said to be anticipating as many as eight celebrations. Additionally, al-Qaeda operatives are being told to await important news within days. [TENET, 2007, PP. 148-149] This is just one of many indications word of the upcoming 9/11 attacks is spreading widely in the Afghanistan training camps in the summer of 2001 (see [Summer 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [George J. Tenet](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



June 4, 2001: Congressional Committee Warned of Large Attacks Soon



A deputy head of the CIA's Counterterrorism Center warns a closed session of the House Intelligence Committee, "We're on the verge of more attacks that are larger and more deadly." Apparently this is based on the spike in "chatter" picked up by NSA and CIA monitors and the realization that a number of well-known al-Qaeda operatives have gone underground. [VANITY FAIR, 11/2004]

Entity Tags: [House Intelligence Committee](#), [Counterterrorist Center](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



June 11, 2001: FBI and CIA Hold Shouting Match over Information on Al-Qaeda; CIA Still Withholds Information





Margaret Gillespie. [Source: Doug Dreyer / Associated Press]

The FBI and the CIA hold a meeting to discuss the investigation into the USS *Cole* bombing and a possible connection between it and al-Qaeda's Malaysia summit (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)). However, the CIA and FBI headquarters refuse to share all they know, and agents investigating the *Cole* bombing become angry over this.

Attendees - The meeting, which lasts between two and four hours, is attended by CIA officer Clark Shannon, FBI headquarters agent Dina Corsi, an FBI agent loaned to the CIA named Margaret Gillespie, FBI agent Steve Bongardt, FBI agent Russell Fincher, and Assistant US Attorney David Kelley.

Purpose - Although there is no agenda for the meeting and Corsi will later say it is a brainstorming session, author Lawrence Wright will say that one of the reasons for the meeting is that CIA officer Tom Wilshire, an associate of Shannon's, "want[ed] to know... what the FBI knew" about al-Qaeda's Malaysia summit. [[ABC NEWS, 8/16/2002](#); [US DEPARTMENT OF](#)

[JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 289-294](#) ; [NEW YORKER, 7/10/2006](#)] FBI agent Ali Soufan will also say that he later learned that Wilshire "was fishing to see if the FBI knew anything about the men in the photos." [[SOUFAN, 2011, PP. 243](#)]

Photos Shown - Initially, Bongardt and Fincher brief Shannon on progress in the *Cole* investigation. Corsi then shows the two *Cole* investigators three photographs taken at al-Qaeda's Malaysia summit in 2000 (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)), showing future 9/11 hijackers Khalid Almihdhar and Nawaf Alhazmi, and another man, and Shannon asks if the agents recognize Fahad al-Quso, who is thought to have attended the Malaysia summit and has been interviewed by the FBI. However, one of the photos shows Khalid Almihdhar, Nawaf Alhazmi, and a tree, and the CIA has already recognized Almihdhar and Alhazmi, so it is unclear how the *Cole* investigators are supposed to recognize al-Quso in the photo. Corsi received the photographs from Wilshire, but Wilshire did not provide her with all the relevant information about them (see [Late May, 2001](#)).

Questions Asked - Bongardt and Fincher ask who is in the pictures, why were taken, and whether there are other photos of the meeting. Shannon refuses to say, but Corsi eventually admits one of the men is named Khalid Almihdhar. As a name alone is not sufficient reason to start an investigation, Bongardt asks for a date of birth or other details that will allow him to know which Khalid Almihdhar in the world is being discussed, but Shannon refuses to provide them. Shannon admits that Almihdhar was traveling on a Saudi passport and then leaves the meeting. Lawrence Wright will say that providing a date of birth is "standard procedure—the

first thing most investigators would do.” Realizing that the photos pertain to the *Cole* investigation, Bongardt and Fincher become angry at the lack of information being provided and the meeting descends into a “shouting match.” [\[ABC NEWS, 8/16/2002; US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE,](#)

[11/2004, PP. 289-294](#) ; [NEW YORKER, 7/10/2006](#)]

What Shannon Knew - Shannon will later admit that at this time he knew Almihdhar had a US visa, that Alhazmi had traveled to the US in 2000, that al-Qaeda leader Khallad bin Attash had been recognized in one of the photos, and that Alhazmi was known to be an experienced operative. However, he does not tell any of this to any FBI agents, as he apparently thinks he does not have the authority. He does not let them keep copies of the photos either and will give conflicting accounts of the meeting after 9/11 (see [Between September 12, 2001 and](#)

[October 17, 2002](#)). [\[US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003](#) ; [US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 289-292](#)]

Corsi Withholds Information - Corsi has NSA information saying Almihdhar and Alhazmi attended the Malaysia meeting, but apparently believes that the *Cole* agents cannot be told more because of restrictions on sharing intelligence with criminal agents (see [July 19, 1995](#)). However, one of the *Cole* agents present is an intelligence agent, so the information can be communicated to him immediately without Corsi obtaining permission from the NSA and/or Justice Department. In addition, the NSA sent the information to the FBI’s New York field office, where the *Cole* investigators are based, in 1999 (see [December 1999-January 2000](#)). Furthermore, when she asks the NSA’s permission to share the information 10 weeks later, the NSA approves the request on the same day (see [August 27-28, 2001](#)). She does not share the information at this time, but promises Bongardt and Fincher to try to do so later. The *Cole* agents will not receive more information for months. [\[US CONGRESS, 9/20/2002; 9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 269, 537\]](#)

Almihdhar Gets New Visa - Two days after this meeting, Almihdhar has no trouble getting a new, multiple reentry US visa (see [May 2001](#) and [June 13, 2001](#)). [\[US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT, 12/12/2001; US CONGRESS, 9/20/2002\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Dina Corsi](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [David Kelley](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Clark Shannon](#), [Margaret Gillespie](#), [Ali Soufan](#), [Steve Bongardt](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Russell Fincher](#), [Khallad bin Attash](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Lawrence Wright](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



June 12, 2001: CIA Learns KSM Is Sending Operatives to US to Meet Up with Operatives Already There



A CIA report says that a man named “Khaled” is actively recruiting people to travel to various countries, including the US, to stage attacks. CIA headquarters presume from the details of this report that Khaled is Khalid Shaikh Mohammed (KSM). On July 11, the individual source for this report is shown a series of photographs and identifies KSM as the person he called

“Khaled.” [\[USA TODAY, 12/12/2002; 9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 277, 533\]](#) This report also reveals that:

- Al-Qaeda operatives heading to the US would be “expected to establish contact with colleagues already living there.”
- KSM himself had traveled to the US frequently, and as recently as May 2001.
- KSM is a relative of bomber Ramzi Yousef.
- He appears to be one of bin Laden’s most trusted leaders.
- He routinely tells others that he can arrange their entry into the US as well. However, the CIA doesn’t find this report credible because they think it is unlikely that he would come to the US (in fact, it appears he had (see [Summer 1998](#))). Nevertheless, they consider it worth pursuing. One agent replies, “If it is KSM, we have both a significant threat and an opportunity to pick him up.” In July, the source clarifies that the last time he can definitely place KSM in the US was in the summer of 1998 (see [Summer 1998](#)). The CIA disseminates the report to all other US intelligence agencies, military commanders, and parts of the Treasury and Justice Departments. The 9/11 Congressional Inquiry will later request that the CIA inform them how CIA agents and other agencies reacted to this information, but the CIA does not respond to this. [\[US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003\]](#) It appears that KSM will send at least one and probably two operatives to the US after this time and before 9/11 (see [August 4, 2001](#) and [September 10, 2001](#)). On July 23, 2001, the US consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia will give KSM a US visa (he uses an alias but his actual photo appears on his application) (see [July 23, 2001](#)). Also, during this summer and as late as September 10, 2001, the NSA will intercept phone calls between KSM and Mohamed Atta, but the NSA will not share this information with any other agencies (see [Summer 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [US Department of Justice](#), [US Department of the Treasury](#), [Khalid Shaikh Mohammed](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



[June 13, 2001: 9/11 Hijacker Almihdhar Obtains US Visa despite Incorrect Passport and Lies on Application; US Intelligence Knows He Is an Al-Qaeda Operative](#)



Future 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar obtains a second US visa from the US consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. [\[9/11 COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP. 24-25\]](#) The visa is issued by Shayna Steinger, a consular official who apparently issues the future 9/11 hijackers with 12 visas (see [July 1, 2000](#)). [\[9/11 COMMISSION, 12/30/2002, PP. 2; OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL \(US DEPARTMENT OF STATE\), 1/30/2003\]](#) Almihdhar’s passport, which was issued two weeks previously (see [June 1, 2001](#)), lacks an expiry date, but contains an indicator of possible terrorist affiliation used by

the Saudi authorities to track suspected radicals (see [November 2, 2007](#)). His application form is incomplete, as it lists his occupation as “businessman,” but does not give his employer’s name and address.

Lies on Application Form - The form, which is submitted through the Visa Express program (see [May 2001](#)), meaning Almihdhar is not interviewed, contains two lies: Almihdhar says he has never received an American visa or traveled to the US, whereas he received a visa in 1999 (see [April 3-7, 1999](#)) and traveled to the US on it in 2000 (see [January 15, 2000](#)). As Almihdhar’s first visa was also issued by the Jeddah consulate, through which the CIA sent radical Arabs to the US for training during the Soviet-Afghan war (see [September 1987-March 1989](#)), consular officials could discover he is lying, but information about prior visas issuances is not automatically displayed to them.

Known Terrorist - By this time, several intelligence agencies are aware that Almihdhar is an al-Qaeda operative; for example, the CIA (see [9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. January 5, 2000](#)), NSA (see [December 29, 1999](#)), FBI (see [January 5-6, 2000](#)), a US Army intelligence program (see [January-February 2000](#)), the Saudi General Intelligence Presidency (see [1997](#)), Malaysian Special Branch (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)), and an intelligence service in the United Arab Emirates (see [January 2-5, 2000](#)).

Parallels to Case of Blind Sheikh - Almihdhar will re-enter the US on the visa three weeks later (see [July 4, 2001](#)). The 9/11 Commission will find that the series of missteps preceding the issuance of visas to Almihdhar and the other future 9/11 hijackers has some “eerie parallels” to the “series of exceptional failures” that led to US visas being issued to the “Blind Sheikh,” Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman (see [December 15, 1986-1989](#) and [July 1990](#)). [[9/11 COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP. 24-27, 33, 49](#)]

Entity Tags: [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Shayna Steinger](#), [US Consulate, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia Office](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



June 14, 2001: CIA Report Suggests Tubes Being Imported by Iraq Are Meant For Iraq’s Alleged Nuclear Program



The CIA produces a Senior Publish When Ready (SPWR) report stating that the aluminum tubes being imported by Iraq from China are “controlled items under the Nuclear Suppliers Group and Chinese export laws, are suitable for uranium enrichment gas centrifuge rotors and, while less likely, could be used as rocket bodies for multiple rocket launchers (MLRs).” The CIA does not explain in this assessment why it believes the tubes are more likely to be used for centrifuge rotors than for rocket bodies. [[US CONGRESS, 7/7/2004](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



June 18, 2001: 9/11 Hijacker Alhazmi's US Stay Renewed despite Expiration, Late Filing, Unlawful Presence, and Indicator of Islamic Extremism in Passport



The INS extends future 9/11 hijacker Nawaf Alhazmi's permitted stay in the US, 11 months after he filed a late application to extend it (see [July 12-27, 2000](#)). The INS should not grant the extension due to the late filing, but does so anyway. It is unclear why it has taken 11 months to process the application. The approval retroactively extends Alhazmi's stay for six months, from the date it originally expired until January 14, 2001. While his unlawful US presence after July 14, 2000 is retroactively legalized, Alhazmi's presence after January 14, 2001 remains unlawful, and no other applications for extensions will be filed. [[IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE, 2002](#); [INS EMAIL, 3/20/2002](#); [IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE, 5/26/2002](#); [9/11](#)

[COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP. 12, 25](#)] An INS report will note, "The application shouldn't have been approved because it was filed 13 days late." However, an official, whose name will be redacted, will write in an INS e-mail: "Per [redacted]. This is a common occurrence that is within the adjudicator's discretion to forgive a late filing, if it is brief and the applicant has a good story.... How do you suppose the press may spin this, and more importantly, how will the INS defend itself?" [[IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE, 2002](#); [INS EMAIL, 3/20/2002](#)] Alhazmi never receives notification of the extension, as the notice will be returned as undeliverable on

March 25, 2002. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP. 25](#)] His passport contains an indicator of Islamist extremism used to track terrorists by the Saudi authorities (see [March 21, 1999](#)). The 9/11 Commission will comment that this extension is "[y]et another opportunity to spot the suspicious indicator," but US authorities fail to do so. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP. 12](#)] The precise state of US knowledge about the indicator at this time is unknown (see [Around February 1993](#)). The CIA will learn of it no later than 2003, but will still not inform immigration officials then (see [February 14, 2003](#)).

Entity Tags: [US Immigration and Naturalization Service](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [9/11 Commission](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



June 19-25, 2001: 9/11 Hijacker Alhazmi Flies to Miami to Meet Other 9/11 Hijackers



9/11 hijacker Nawaf Alhazmi flies from Newark to Miami and presumably meets the other hijackers there. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 243](#)] Earlier in the month the CIA showed the FBI a

photo of Alhazmi taken at a meeting in Malaysia with other al-Qaeda members, but refused to identify him in the photo (see [June 11, 2001](#)). The CIA will watchlist Alhazmi in August (see [August 23, 2001](#)), but his Florida trip apparently fails to lead US intelligence to the other hijackers. He obtains a Florida driver's license on June 25 (see [April 12-September 7, 2001](#)), giving the same address as two of the other Florida-based hijackers, but this will not be noticed before 9/11 either. [[ST. PETERSBURG TIMES, 9/16/2001](#); [9/11 COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP. 26](#)] Alhazmi purchased his ticket for the outward journey at Apollo Travel in Paterson, New Jersey, which was also used by Mohamed Atta (see [March 2001-September 1, 2001](#)), and perhaps some of the other hijackers (see [July 2001](#)). [[CNN, 10/29/2001](#)]

Entity Tags: [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [Apollo Travel](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



June 20, 2001: CIA Acknowledges Potential Non-Nuclear Uses for Aluminum Tubes



The CIA issues a classified report, titled “Iraq’s Current Nuclear Capabilities,” noting that the aluminum tubes being imported by Iraq from China (see [2000](#) and [Early Summer 2001](#)) could possibly be intended for use in non-nuclear applications. [[THE COMMISSION ON THE INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITIES OF THE UNITED STATES REGARDING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION \(AKA 'ROBB-SILBERMAN COMMISSION'\), 3/31/2005](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



June 22, 2001: CIA Warns of Imminent Al-Qaeda Suicide Attack



The CIA notifies its station chiefs about intelligence suggesting a possible al-Qaeda suicide attack on a US target over the next few days. CIA Director George Tenet asks that all US ambassadors be briefed on the warning. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 256](#)]

Entity Tags: [George J. Tenet](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Al-Qaeda](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



June 23, 2001: White House Warned 'Bin Laden Attacks May Be Imminent'



A Senior Executive Intelligence Brief (SEIB) with the title “Bin Laden Attacks May Be Imminent” is sent to top White House officials. The details of this brief are not known. It is probable President Bush received this warning since SEIBs are usually reshapes of the previous days’ President Daily Briefing (see [January 20-September 10, 2001](#)). Also on this day a CIA cable is distributed with the title, “Possible Threat of Imminent Attack from Sunni Extremists.” The cable warns that there is a high probability of near-term “spectacular” terrorist attacks resulting in numerous casualties. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 256, 534](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [George W. Bush](#), [White House](#), [Osama bin Laden](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



June 25, 2001: Counterterrorism 'Tsar' Clarke Tells National Security Adviser Rice that Pattern of Warnings Indicates an Upcoming Attack



Counterterrorism “tsar” Richard Clarke warns National Security Adviser Rice and Assistant National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley that six separate intelligence reports show al-Qaeda personnel warning of a pending attack. These include a warning by al-Qaeda leaders that the next weeks “will witness important surprises” (see [June 21, 2001](#)) and a new recruitment video making further threats (see [June 19, 2001](#)). The 9/11 Commission will say that “Clarke [argues] that this [is] all too sophisticated to be merely a psychological operation to keep the United States on edge...” It is unclear how Rice and Hadley respond, but the CIA agrees with Clarke’s assessment. [[NEWSWEEK, 7/22/2001; 9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 257](#)]

Entity Tags: [Stephen J. Hadley](#), [Condoleezza Rice](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [9/11 Commission](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Richard A. Clarke](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



June 28, 2001: CIA Director Tenet Warns National Security Adviser Rice of Imminent Al-Qaeda Attack



CIA Director Tenet writes an intelligence summary for National Security Adviser Rice: “It is highly likely that a significant al-Qaeda attack is in the near future, within several weeks.” A

highly classified analysis at this time adds, “Most of the al-Qaeda network is anticipating an attack. Al-Qaeda’s overt publicity has also raised expectations among its rank and file, and its donors.” [WASHINGTON POST, 5/17/2002] The same day, Tenet is briefed by another CIA official that bin Laden “will launch a significant terrorist attack against US and/or Israeli interests in the coming weeks. The attack will be spectacular and designed to inflict mass casualties against US facilities or interests” (see [June 28, 2001](#)). [US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003] Apparently, these warnings are partly based on a warning given by al-Qaeda leaders to a reporter a few days earlier (see [June 21, 2001](#)). Counterterrorism “tsar” Richard Clarke also later asserts that Tenet tells him around this time, “It’s my sixth sense, but I feel it coming. This is going to be the big one.” [CLARKE, 2004, PP. 235]

Entity Tags: [Richard A. Clarke](#), [Bush administration](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Condoleezza Rice](#), [George J. Tenet](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



June 30, 2001: CIA Report Acknowledges Aluminum Tubes Imported by Iraq Could be Intended for Conventional Rockets



The CIA publishes a classified Senior Publish When Ready report which notes that Iraq will likely claim that the aluminum tubes it is importing from China are intended for conventional or civilian use. The report acknowledges that such claims “cannot be discounted,” but adds that the tubes’ specifications “far exceed any known conventional weapons application, including rocket motor casings for 81mm” multiple rocket launchers. [THE COMMISSION ON THE INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITIES OF THE UNITED STATES REGARDING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION (AKA 'ROBB-SILBERMAN COMMISSION'), 3/31/2005]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#)


Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



July 2001: CIA Rejects Third FBI Request for Malaysia Summit Information



Ali Soufan, an FBI agent working on the investigation into the USS *Cole* bombing, submits a third request to the CIA for information about travel by al-Qaeda operatives in Southeast Asia (see [Late November 2000](#) and [CIA Again Reveals Nothing](#))" onmouseout="return nd()">[April 2001](#)). Whereas in previous requests to the CIA he had only asked for information about a possible meeting somewhere in Southeast Asia, he has now developed a much clearer understanding of the relationship between al-Qaeda manager Khallad bin Attash and the *Cole*

conspirators, and correctly suspects some operatives met in Malaysia in January 2000. He asks the CIA about this and about a trip by bin Attash to Bangkok to meet another two members of the *Cole* bombing team (see [January 13, 2000](#)). The CIA actually monitored the meeting Soufan suspects took place in Malaysia (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)) and considered it so important that the CIA director and other top officials were repeatedly briefed about it (see [January 6-9, 2000](#)), but the CIA does not respond to his inquiry. FBI managers are also aware of some of this information, including the existence of an al-Qaeda meeting in Malaysia at the time Soufan suspects one took place, but they apparently do not tell Soufan either (see [January 6, 2000](#)).  [\[NEW YORKER, 7/10/2006\]](#) Author Lawrence Wright will later say: “The FBI’s investigating the death of 17 American sailors and they’re asking the CIA for information that would solve the crime. And the CIA is refusing, essentially obstructing justice.” [\[FEDERAL NEWS SERVICE, 10/5/2006\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Ali Soufan](#), [Lawrence Wright](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)

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July 3, 2001: US Intelligence Hears Bin Laden Promise that Attack Is Near



US intelligence learns that Osama bin Laden has recently promised colleagues that an attack is near. This warning is first revealed in CIA Director George Tenet’s 2007 book. He will not explain how this was known except that it was “learned as a result of intelligence.” [\[TENET, 2007, PP. 149 SOURCES: GEORGE J. TENET\]](#)

Entity Tags: [US intelligence](#), [Osama bin Laden](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)

 SHARE

July 4-14, 2001: Bin Laden Reportedly Receives Lifesaving Treatment in Dubai, Said to Meet with CIA While There





The American Hospital in Dubai. [Source: *American*

Hospital] Bin Laden, America's most wanted criminal with a \$5 million bounty on his head, supposedly receives lifesaving treatment for renal failure from American specialist Dr. Terry Callaway at the American hospital in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. He is possibly accompanied by Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri (who is said to be bin Laden's personal physician as well as al-Qaeda's second-in-command), plus several bodyguards. Callaway supposedly treated bin Laden in 1996 and 1998, also in Dubai. Callaway later refuses to answer any questions on this matter. [LE FIGARO (PARIS), 10/31/2001; [AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 11/1/2001](#); LONDON TIMES, 11/1/2001] During his stay, bin Laden is visited by "several members of his family and Saudi personalities," including Prince Turki al-Faisal, then head of Saudi intelligence. [[GUARDIAN, 11/1/2001](#)] On July 12, bin Laden reportedly meets with CIA agent Larry Mitchell in the hospital. Mitchell apparently lives in Dubai as an Arab specialist under the cover of being a consular agent. The CIA, the Dubai hospital, and even bin Laden deny the story. The two news organizations that broke the story, Le Figaro and Radio France International, stand by their reporting. [LE FIGARO (PARIS), 10/31/2001; RADIO FRANCE INTERNATIONAL, 11/1/2001] The explosive story is widely reported in Europe, but there are only two, small wire service stories on it in the US. [UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL, 11/1/2001; REUTERS, 11/10/2001] The Guardian claims that the story originated from French intelligence, "which is keen to reveal the ambiguous role of the CIA, and to restrain Washington from extending the war to Iraq and elsewhere." The Guardian adds that during his stay bin Laden is also visited by a second CIA officer. [[GUARDIAN, 11/1/2001](#)] In 2003, reporter Richard Labeviere will provide additional details of what he claims happened in a book entitled "The Corridors of Terror." He claims he learned about the meeting from a contact in the Dubai hospital. He claims the event was confirmed in detail by a Gulf prince who presented himself as an adviser to the Emir of Bahrain. This prince claimed the meeting was arranged by Prince Turki al-Faisal. The prince said, "By organizing this meeting...Turki thought he could start direct negotiations between [bin Laden] and the CIA on one fundamental point: that bin Laden and his supporters end their hostilities against American interests." In exchange, the CIA and Saudis would allow bin Laden to return to Saudi Arabia and live freely there. The meeting is said to be a failure. [[REUTERS, 11/14/2003](#)] On July 15, Larry Mitchell reportedly returns to CIA headquarters to report on his meeting with bin Laden. [RADIO FRANCE INTERNATIONAL, 11/1/2001] French counterterrorism expert Antoine Sfeir says the story of this meeting has been verified and is not surprising: It "is nothing extraordinary. Bin Laden maintained contacts with the CIA up to 1998. These contacts have not ceased since bin Laden settled in Afghanistan. Up to the last moment, CIA agents hoped that bin Laden would return to the fold of the US, as was the case before 1989." [LE FIGARO (PARIS), 11/1/2001] A CIA spokesman calls the entire account of bin Laden's stay at Dubai "sheer fantasy." [[REUTERS, 11/14/2003](#)]

Entity Tags: [Ayman al-Zawahiri](#), [Larry Mitchell](#), [Antoine Sfeir](#), [Turki al-Faisal](#), [Terry Callaway](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Richard Labeviere](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



July 5, 2001: CIA Warns Attorney General Ashcroft of Imminent, Multiple Attacks from Al-Qaeda



The CIA briefs Attorney General Ashcroft on the al-Qaeda threat. Several senior CIA Counterterrorist Center officials warn him that a significant attack is imminent, preparations for multiple attacks are in the late stages or already complete, and that little additional warning can be expected. He is told the attack is more likely to occur overseas than in the US. He was also briefed by the CIA on the al-Qaeda threat on May 15, 2001. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 258-259, 534](#); [TENET, 2007, PP. 150](#)] CIA Director Tenet will later claim in a book that at the end of the briefing, Ashcroft turned to some FBI personnel and asked them, “Why are they telling me this? Why am I not hearing this from you?” [[TENET, 2007, PP. 150](#)] However, in fact, the FBI did brief Ashcroft for an hour on the al-Qaeda threat one week earlier (see [June 28, 2001](#)). One week later, the FBI will brief him again about the al-Qaeda threat and he will reportedly reply, “I do not want to hear about this anymore” (see [July 12, 2001](#)). By the end of July, he will stop flying commercial aircraft in the US (see [July 26, 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [John Ashcroft](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



July 6, 2001: CIA Warns Upcoming Al-Qaeda Attack Will Be ‘Spectacular’ and Different



The CIA warns the interagency Counterterrorism Security Group (CSG) that al-Qaeda members “believe the upcoming attack will be ‘spectacular,’ qualitatively different from anything they have done to date.” [[9/11 COMMISSION, 3/24/2004](#); [9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 259](#)] Counterterrorism “tsar” Richard Clarke, who leads the CSG, similarly warned the CSG of a “spectacular” al-Qaeda attack the day before (see [July 5, 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Counterterrorism and Security Group](#), [Al-Qaeda](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



(July 9, 2001): Chechen Leader Promises Fighters ‘Very Big News’; CIA Learns of This and Briefs White House



Chechen rebel leader Ibn Khattab promises some “very big news” to his fighters and this statement is communicated to the CIA. The CIA then forwards the warning to National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice together with several similar pieces of intelligence, saying it is evidence that an al-Qaeda attack is imminent (see [July 10, 2001](#)). [TENET, 2007, PP. 151] The FBI is already aware that Ibn Khattab and Osama bin Laden, who have a long relationship (see [1986-March 19, 2002](#)), may be planning a joint attack against US interests (see [Before April 13, 2001](#)). One of the operatives, Zacarias Moussaoui, will be arrested a month later (see [August 16, 2001](#)), but a search warrant for his belongings will not be granted (see [August 16, 2001](#), [August 22, 2001](#) and [August 28, 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [Ibn Khattab](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



July 10, 2001: Urgent CIA Request for Funds to Immediately Deal with Bin Laden Is Denied



On this date, CIA Director George Tenet and CIA counterterrorism chief Cofer Black give the White House an urgent al-Qaeda briefing that, if heeded, Black later believes could have stopped bin Laden. Tenet and Black strongly suggest that both an overall strategy and immediate covert or military action against bin Laden are needed (see [July 10, 2001](#)). According to a 2006 book by journalist Bob Woodward that is likely paraphrasing Black, one of Woodward’s sources for his book, “Black calculated that if [the White House] had given him \$500 million of covert action funds right then and reasonable authorizations from the president to go kill bin Laden, he would have been able to make great strides if not do away with him.... Over the last two years—and as recently as March 2001—the CIA had deployed paramilitary teams five times into Afghanistan to work with the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance, a loose federation of militias and tribes in the north. The CIA had about 100 sources and subsources operating throughout Afghanistan. Just give him the money and the authority and he might be able to bring bin Laden’s head back in a box.” [WOODWARD, 2006, PP. 77-78; [NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, 9/29/2006](#)]

Entity Tags: [Osama bin Laden](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Cofer Black](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



July 10, 2001: CIA Director Tenet Briefed about Al-Qaeda; Urgent White House Meeting Results



CIA counterterrorism chief Cofer Black and Richard Blee, a manager responsible for the CIA's bin Laden unit, meet with CIA Director George Tenet and review the latest intelligence about al-Qaeda. Black lays out a case based on communications intercepts and other intelligence suggesting a growing chance that al-Qaeda will attack the US soon. There is no smoking gun per se, but there is a huge volume of data indicating an attack is coming (see [July 9-10, 2001](#)). The case is so compelling—Tenet will later say it “literally made my hair stand on end”—that Tenet decides to brief the White House on it this same day (see [July 10, 2001](#)).

[[WASHINGTON POST, 10/1/2006](#); [TENET, 2007, PP. 151](#)]

Entity Tags: [White House](#), [Richard Blee](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Cofer Black](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



July 10, 2001: CIA Director Gives Urgent Warning to White House of Imminent, Multiple, Simultaneous Al-Qaeda Attacks, Possibly within US



Condoleezza Rice and George Tenet in the White House. This picture is actually taken on October 8, 2001, and President Bush is elsewhere in the room. [Source: [Eric Draper / White House](#)] CIA Director George Tenet finds the briefing that counterterrorism chief Cofer Black gave him earlier in the day (see [July 10, 2001](#)) so alarming that he calls National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice from his car as he heads to the White House and says he needs to see her right away, even though he has regular weekly meetings with her. [[WASHINGTON POST, 10/1/2006](#)] Tenet and Black let a third CIA official, Richard Blee, who is responsible for Alec

Station, the CIA's bin Laden unit, brief Rice on the latest intelligence. Deputy National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley and counterterrorism "tsar" Richard Clarke are also present.

[[MCCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS, 10/2/2006](#)]

'Significant Attack' - Blee starts by saying, "There will be a significant terrorist attack in the coming weeks or months!" He argues that it is impossible to pick the specific day, saying Osama bin Laden "will attack when he believes the attack will be successful." He mentions a range of threat information including:

- A warning related to Chechen leader Ibn Khattab (see [July 9, 2001](#)) and seven pieces of intelligence the CIA recently received indicating there would soon be a terrorist attack (see [July 9-10, 2001](#));

- A mid-June statement by bin Laden to trainees that there would be an attack in the near future (see [Mid-June 2001](#));

- Information that talks about moving toward decisive acts;

- Late-June information saying a "big event" was forthcoming;

- Two separate bits of information collected "a few days before the meeting" in which people predicted a "stunning turn of events" in the weeks ahead. This may be a reference to intercepts of calls in Yemen, possibly involving the father-in-law of 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar (see [June 30-July 1, 2001](#)).

Multiple, Simultaneous Attacks in US Possible - Blee says that the attacks will be "spectacular," they will be designed to inflict mass casualties against US facilities and interests, there may be multiple, simultaneous attacks, and they may be in the US itself. He outlines the CIA's efforts to disrupt al-Qaeda by spreading incorrect word that the attack plans have been compromised, in the hope that this will cause a delay in the attack. But he says this is not enough and that the CIA should go on the attack. Blee also discounts the possibility of disinformation, as bin Laden's threats are known to the public in the Middle East and there will be a loss of face, funds, and popularity if they are not carried out. Blee urges that the US take a "proactive approach" by using the Northern Alliance. [[TENET, 2007, PP. 151-4](#)]

Author Bob Woodward will later write: "Black emphasize[s] that this amount[s] to a strategic warning, meaning the problem [is] so serious that it require[s] an overall plan and strategy. Second, this [is] a major foreign policy problem that need[s] to be addressed immediately. They need [...] to take action that moment—covert, military, whatever—to thwart bin Laden. The United States ha[s] human and technical sources, and all the intelligence [is] consistent." [[WOODWARD, 2006, PP. 80](#); [WASHINGTON POST, 10/1/2006](#)]

Richard Clarke expresses his agreement with the CIA about the threat's seriousness, and Black says, "This country needs to go on a war footing *now*."

Rice's Response - There are conflicting accounts about the CIA's reading of Rice's response. According to Woodward: "Tenet and Black [feel] they [are] not getting through to Rice. She [is] polite, but they [feel] the brush-off." They leave the meeting frustrated, seeing little prospect for immediate action. Tenet and Black will both later recall the meeting as the starkest warning they gave the White House on al-Qaeda before 9/11 and one that could have potentially stopped the 9/11 attacks if Rice had acted on it (see [July 10, 2001](#)) and conveyed their urgency to President Bush. (Tenet is briefing Bush on a daily basis at this time, but he

will later say that Rice has a much better rapport with the president.) Black will say, “The only thing we didn’t do was pull the trigger to the gun we were holding to her head.”

[[WOODWARD, 2006, PP. 80](#); [WASHINGTON POST, 10/1/2006](#)] Rice says that Bush will align his policy with the new realities and grant new authorities. Writing in 2007, Tenet will say that this response is “just the outcome I had expected and hoped for,” and recall that as they leave the meeting, Blee and Black congratulate each other on having got the administration’s attention. Nevertheless, Rice does not take the requested action until after 9/11. [[TENET, 2007, PP. 153-4](#)]

Rice Concerned about Genoa - Clarke will recall in 2006 that Rice focuses on the possible threat to Bush at an upcoming summit meeting in Genoa, Italy (see [June 13, 2001](#) and [July 20-22, 2001](#)). Rice and Bush have already been briefed about the Genoa warning by this time (see [July 5, 2001](#)). Rice also promises to quickly schedule a high-level White House meeting on al-Qaeda. However, that meeting does not take place until September 4, 2001 (see [September 4, 2001](#)). [[MCCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS, 10/2/2006](#)] Rice also directs that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Attorney General John Ashcroft be given the same briefing, and they receive it a short time later (see [July 11-17, 2001](#)).

Meeting Not Mentioned in 9/11 Commission Report - The meeting will not be mentioned in the 9/11 Commission Report (see [August 4, 2002](#)), and there will be controversy when it is fully revealed in 2006 (see [September 29, 2006](#), [September 30-October 3, 2006](#), and [October 1-2, 2006](#)).

Entity Tags: [Richard Blee](#), [Stephen J. Hadley](#), [White House](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Richard A. Clarke](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Cofer Black](#), [Donald Rumsfeld](#), [Condoleezza Rice](#), [John Ashcroft](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



July 11-17, 2001: Rumsfeld and Ashcroft Receive Urgent Al-Qaeda Warning Recently Given to White House



Defense Secretary Rumsfeld and Attorney General Ashcroft receive the same CIA briefing about a likely imminent, multiple, and simultaneous al-Qaeda strike that was given to the White House on July 10, 2001 (see [July 10, 2001](#)). In 2006, the State Department will reveal the two were briefed within a week of the White House briefing, at the request of National Security Adviser Rice. One official who helped prepare the briefing later describes it as a “ten on a scale of one to ten” that “connected the dots” to present a stark warning that al-Qaeda is ready to launch a new attack. A Pentagon spokesman says he has no information “about what may or may not have been briefed” to Rumsfeld, and Rumsfeld does not answer questions about it. Ashcroft says he was not given any briefing and calls it “disappointing” that he was not briefed. After it is confirmed that Ashcroft was briefed, apparently on July 17, Ashcroft will still claim not to remember the briefing, and will say he only recalls another

CIA briefing earlier in the month (see [July 5, 2001](#)). Journalist Andrew Cockburn later reports that, “according to several intelligence sources,” Rumsfeld’s reaction to the briefing at the time “was one of vehement dismissal, complete with cutting observations about the CIA falling victim to ‘vast doses of al-Qaeda disinformation’ and ‘mortal doses of gullibility.’” McClatchy Newspapers will comment that these briefings raise “new questions about what the Bush administration did in response, and about why so many officials have claimed they never received or don’t remember the warning.” [[MCCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS, 10/2/2006](#); [COCKBURN, 2007, PP. 9](#)] On July 26, 2001, it will be reported that Ashcroft has stopped flying on commercial airlines within the US (see [July 26, 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [John Ashcroft](#), [Donald Rumsfeld](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Condoleezza Rice](#), [White House](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



July 12, 2001: Acting FBI Director Prevented by CIA from Telling Attorney General Ashcroft about Al-Qaeda Malaysia Summit



On July 12, 2001, acting FBI Director Tom Pickard briefs Attorney General Ashcroft a second time about the al-Qaeda threat (see [July 12, 2001](#)). In a later letter to the 9/11 Commission discussing the meeting, Pickard will mention, “I had not told [Ashcroft] about the meeting in Malaysia since I was told by FBI Assistant Director Dale Watson that there was a ‘close hold’ on that info. This means that it was not to be shared with anyone without the explicit approval of the CIA.” During the briefing, Pickard also strongly recommends that Ashcroft be briefed by the CIA to learn details that Pickard feels he is not allowed to reveal. The “meeting in Malaysia” is an obvious reference to the January 2000 al-Qaeda summit in Malaysia (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)). Louis Freeh, the FBI director at the time of the summit, and other unnamed FBI officials were told some about the summit while it was taking place (see [January 6, 2000](#)). It is unknown if Pickard and Watson learned about it at that time, but Pickard’s letter shows they both knew about it by the time of this briefing. It is not known why the CIA placed a “close hold” on any mention of the Malaysian summit so strict that even the attorney general could not be told. Since two of the 9/11 hijackers attended that summit, sharing the information about the summit with other agencies may have helped stop the 9/11 attacks. [[PICKARD, 6/24/2004](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [John Ashcroft](#), [Thomas Pickard](#), [Dale Watson](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



July 13, 2001: Bush Administration Again Denies CIA Expanded Authority to Assassinate Bin Laden



The Bush administration again denies the CIA expanded authorities to go on the offensive against bin Laden. These authorities would include permission to assassinate bin Laden without making an attempt to capture him alive first. In March 2001, the CIA wanted to give a draft request about this to the Bush administration, but officials weren't ready so the draft was withdrawn (see [Early March 2001](#)). On July 13, three days after a dramatic CIA presentation about a likely upcoming al-Qaeda attack (see [July 10, 2001](#)), a meeting of deputy cabinet officials is held to discuss the CIA's expanded authorities request. However, no decisions are made. Tenet will later comment, "the bureaucracy moved slowly." The Bush administration will grant these authorities a few days after 9/11. [[TENET, 2007, PP. 154](#)]

Entity Tags: [Bush administration](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



[July 13, 2001: CIA Reexamines Al-Qaeda Malaysia Summit but 'Major League Killer' Is Not Put on Watch List](#)



Tom Wilshire, a CIA manager assigned to the FBI who expressed interest two months earlier in surveillance photos from the al-Qaeda Malaysia summit (see [January 5-8, 2000](#)), now finds a cable he had been looking for regarding that summit. The cable, from January 2001, discusses al-Qaeda leader Khallad bin Attash's presence at the summit. Wilshire explains later that bin Attash's presence there had been troubling him. He writes an e-mail to the CIA's Counterterrorist Center (CTC), stating, "[Khallad] is a major league killer, who orchestrated the *Cole* attack (see [October 12, 2000](#)) and possibly the Africa bombings (see [10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998](#))." Yet Khallad is still not put on a terrorist watch list. Wilshire asks that the FBI be passed this information, but the FBI will not actually be given the information until August 30, a week after it learns future 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar is in the US. [[US](#)

[CONGRESS, 7/24/2003, PP. 157](#) ; [US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 298](#)] Although the CIA managers that receive this e-mail are not named, Richard Blee, in charge of the CIA's bin Laden unit and Wilshire's former boss, appears to be one of the recipients: According to an endnote to the 9/11 Commission report, on the very same day Wilshire sends this e-mail, Blee writes his own e-mail entitled "Identification of Khallad," which is sent to another CIA officer. [[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 537](#)] An FBI analyst assigned to the CTC is given the task of reviewing all other CIA cables about the Malaysian summit. It takes this analyst until August 21—over five weeks later—to put together that Khalid Almihdhar had a US visa and that Nawaf Alhazmi had traveled to the US. Yet other CIA agents are already well aware of these facts but are not sharing the information (see [August 22, 2001](#)). Working with immigration officials, this analyst then learns that Almihdhar entered and left the US in 2000, and entered again on

July 4, 2001, and that Alhazmi appears to still be in the US. [[US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003, PP. 157](#) ; [US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 298](#)]

Entity Tags: [Richard Blee](#), [Tom Wilshire](#), [Khallad bin Attash](#), [Nawaf Alhazmi](#), [US Immigration and Naturalization Service](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Alec Station](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



July 13, 2001: CIA Manager Says Extra Person to Be Allocated to Malaysia Summit Re-evaluation, Unclear If this Happens



A CIA manager says that an additional intelligence officer, Doug Miller, will be assigned to help an ongoing low-key review of al-Qaeda's Malaysia summit when Miller returns from holiday (see [January 5-8, 2000](#) and [Mid-May 2001](#)). The statement is made in response to an e-mail by CIA manager Tom Wilshire, who pointed out that al-Qaeda leader Khallad bin Attash attended the summit, meaning it was important (see [January 4, 2001](#)). Presumably, the manager that sends this e-mail is Richard Blee, who is responsible for Alec Station, the CIA's bin Laden unit. Blee appears to have received the e-mail to which this is a response (see [July 13, 2001](#)). The review is currently only being conducted by one intelligence officer, Margaret Gillespie, who is only told to do it in her spare time and whom it takes over three months to find CIA cables indicating two of the future 9/11 hijackers have entered the US (see [August 21-22, 2001](#)). Miller's help would certainly benefit the review, as he is already aware one of the hijackers, Khalid Almihdhar, has a US visa, but a cable he drafted to notify the FBI about this was blocked by Wilshire (see [9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. January 5, 2000](#)). However, there is no mention of Miller actually being given the assignment on his return and no sign he does any work on this. Wilshire also asked that the FBI be officially told bin Attash attended the summit in Malaysia, but this information is again withheld (see [January 5, 2001 and After](#)). [[us](#)

[DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 298-9](#)]

Entity Tags: [Richard Blee](#), [Tom Wilshire](#), [Doug Miller](#), [Margaret Gillespie](#), [Counterterrorist Center](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



Mid-July 2001: CIA Director Tenet Warns National Security Adviser Rice About Major Attack



CIA Director Tenet has a special meeting with National Security Adviser Rice and her aides about al-Qaeda. Says one official at the meeting, “[Tenet] briefed [Rice] that there was going to be a major attack.” Another at the meeting says Tenet displays a huge wall chart showing dozens of threats. Tenet does not rule out a domestic attack but says an overseas attack is more likely. [\[TIME, 8/4/2002\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Condoleezza Rice](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Al-Qaeda](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



Mid-July 2001: Pentagon Official Suggests to CIA Director Tenet that Al-Qaeda Is Just ‘Phantom Enemy’



Shortly after a pivotal al-Qaeda warning given by the CIA to top officials (see [July 10, 2001](#)), Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence Steve Cambone expresses doubts. He speaks to CIA Director George Tenet, and, as Tenet will later recall, he “asked if I had considered the possibility that al-Qaeda threats were just a grand deception, a clever ploy to tie up our resources and expend our energies on a phantom enemy that lacked both the power and the will to carry the battle to us.” Tenet claims he replied, “No, this is not a deception, and, no, I do not need a second opinion.... We are going to get hit. It’s only a matter of time.” After 9/11, Cambone will reportedly apologize to Tenet for being wrong. [\[TENET, 2007, PP. 154\]](#) Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz raises similar doubts around the same time (see [Mid-July 2001](#)), and Tenet believes Defense Secretary Rumsfeld is blocking efforts to develop a strategy to fight bin Laden (see [Summer 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [George J. Tenet](#), [Stephen A. Cambone](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



July 23, 2001: CIA Officer Says Al-Qaeda Leader’s Associates like 9/11 Hijacker Almihdhar Are of ‘Very High Interest,’ Mentions Mysterious Almihdhar Connection



Due to a lack of response to a previous request that information about the *Cole* bombing and al-Qaeda’s Malaysia summit be passed to the FBI (see [July 13, 2001](#)), CIA officer Tom Wilshire e-mails another CIA manager asking about the request’s status. The manager’s identity is not known, but the previous request was received by Richard Blee, a close associate of Wilshire’s who is responsible for the CIA’s bin Laden unit (see [June 1999](#) and [Between Mid-January and July 2000](#)), so presumably he receives this request as well. Wilshire writes: “When the next

big op is carried out by [Osama bin Laden's] hardcore cadre, [Khallad bin Attash] will be at or near the top of the command food chain—and probably nowhere near either the attack site or Afghanistan. That makes people who are available and who have direct access to him of very high interest. Khalid [Almihdhar] should be very high interest anyway, given his connection to the [redacted].” The name of the redacted event or entity is unclear. [[US DISTRICT COURT FOR THE](#)

[EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA, ALEXANDRIA DIVISION, 7/31/2006](#)] However, it could be a mention of Almihdhar's role in the 1998 US embassy bombings in East Africa, since the CIA was aware of that since at least January 2000 (see [9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. January 5, 2000](#)). Or, more likely, it could be a mention of Almihdhar's role in the 2000 USS *Cole* bombing (see [October 12, 2000](#)), since Wilshire mentioned earlier in the month that Almihdhar could be linked to the *Cole* bombers (see [July 5, 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [Richard Blee](#), [Tom Wilshire](#), [Khallad bin Attash](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



July 24 or 28, 2001: Captured Operative Had Links That Could Have Led to Moussaoui, 9/11 Plot



Djamel Beghal. [*Source: Public domain*] High-level al-Qaeda operative Djamel Beghal is arrested in Dubai on his way back from Afghanistan. Earlier in the month the CIA sent friendly intelligence agencies a list of al-Qaeda agents they wanted to be immediately apprehended, and Beghal was on the list (see [July 3, 2001](#)).

Information Obtained - Beghal quickly starts to talk, and tells French investigators about a plot to attack the American embassy in Paris. Crucially, he provides new details about the international-operations role of top al-Qaeda deputy Abu Zubaida, whom he had been with a short time before. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 12/28/2001](#); [TIME, 8/4/2002](#)] One European official says Beghal talks about “very important figures in the al-Qaeda structure, right up to bin Laden's inner circle. [He] mention[s] names, responsibilities and functions—people we weren't even aware of before. This is important stuff.” [[TIME, 11/12/2001](#)] One French official says of Beghal's

interrogations, “We shared everything we knew with the Americans.” [\[TIME, 5/19/2002\]](#)
[Link to 9/11](#) - The New York Times later will report, “Enough time and work could have led investigators from Mr. Beghal to an address in Hamburg where Mohamed Atta and his cohorts had developed and planned the Sept. 11 attacks.” Beghal had frequently associated with Zacarias Moussaoui. However, although Moussaoui is arrested (see [August 16, 2001](#)) around the same time that Beghal is revealing the names and details of all his fellow operatives, Beghal is apparently not asked about Moussaoui. [\[NEW YORK TIMES, 12/28/2001; TIME, 8/4/2002\]](#)
[Timing of Arrest](#) - Most media accounts place the arrest on July 28. However, in a 2007 book CIA Director George Tenet will say he received a briefing about the arrest on July 24. [\[TENET, 2007, PP. 156-157\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Djamel Beghal](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Mohamed Atta](#), [George J. Tenet](#), [Zacarias Moussaoui](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



Shortly After July 24 or 28, 2001: British Authorities Learn of London-Based Militant’s Arrest in Dubai, Take No Action against Top Associate



British authorities learn of the arrest of top Islamist militant Djamel Beghal in Dubai (see [July 24 or 28, 2001](#)), and the CIA tells them that an operative behind a plot Beghal is helping organize, a bombing of the US embassy in Paris, has arrived in Britain. [\[TENET, 2007, PP. 157\]](#) It is unknown who the operative behind the plot is and what action British authorities take on the matter, but arrests of people linked to Beghal and his associates are made around Europe in the next few months (see [September 13, 2001](#), [September 26, 2001](#) and [March 2000-September 22, 2001](#)). Beghal has been active in Britain for some time, in particular at London’s radical Finsbury Park mosque, which is under surveillance by the British (see [1997](#)), and a group of his associates are arrested in Britain one day after his capture is made public (see [March 2000-September 22, 2001](#)). However, no action is taken against one of his key associates, Abu Hamza al-Masri, who is an informer for the British (see [Early 1997](#)). Authors Sean O’Niell and Daniel McGrory will comment: “Despite Beghal’s clear links to operations in London and Leicester, however, there was no search of the [mosque] building and no attempt to arrest the chief recruiter [Abu Hamza] who had led the prayers there. The mosque continued to be at the centre of jihad recruitment.” [\[O’NEILL AND MCGRORY, 2006, PP. 94\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Djamel Beghal](#), [Daniel McGrory](#), [Sean O’Niell](#), [Abu Hamza al-Masri](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#)



July 26, 2001: Attorney General Ashcroft Stops Flying Commercial Airlines; Refuses to Explain Why



Dan Rather in July 2001 presenting the story about John Ashcroft.

[Source: CBS via Banded Artists Productions] CBS News reports that Attorney General Ashcroft has stopped flying commercial airlines due to a threat assessment, but “neither the FBI nor the Justice Department... would identify [to CBS] what the threat was, when it was detected or who made it.” [CBS NEWS, 7/26/2001] One newspaper reports, “Ashcroft demonstrated an amazing lack of curiosity when asked if he knew anything about the threat. ‘Frankly, I don’t,’ he told reporters.” [SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, 6/3/2002] It is later reported that he stopped flying in July based on threat assessments made on May 8 and June 19. In May 2002, it is claimed the threat assessment had nothing to do with al-Qaeda, but Ashcroft walked out of his office rather than answer questions about it. [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 5/16/2002] The San Francisco Chronicle will later conclude, “The FBI obviously knew something was in the wind.... The FBI did advise Ashcroft to stay off commercial aircraft. The rest of us just had to take our chances.” [SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, 6/3/2002] CBS’s Dan Rather will later ask of this warning: “Why wasn’t it shared with the public at large?” [WASHINGTON POST, 5/27/2002] On July 5, the CIA had warned Ashcroft to expect multiple, imminent al-Qaeda attacks overseas (see [July 5, 2001](#)) and on July 12 the FBI warned him about the al-Qaeda threat within the US (see [July 12, 2001](#)).

Entity Tags: [John Ashcroft](#), [Dan Rather](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [US Department of Justice](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



(July 27, 2001): CIA Checks Out Radicals Mentioned in Phoenix Memo, Also Receives Memo?



The FBI sends a request to the CIA, asking the agency to check for information on eight Islamist radicals mentioned in the Phoenix memo (see [July 10, 2001](#)). However, the CIA apparently does not find any additional information about them. [USA TODAY, 5/20/2002;

WASHINGTON TIMES, 5/23/2002; [WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 350-1](#)] Had the CIA investigated these men closely

they might have turned up ties connecting them to al-Qaeda. For instance, in 2000, two friends of the main target of the Phoenix memo were detained and deported after twice attempting to enter a US airplane cockpit in what may have been practice for the 9/11 attacks. That same year it was learned by US intelligence that one of these men had received explosives and car bombing training in Afghanistan (see [November 1999-August 2001](#)). Other ties between the men in the memo go undiscovered; for instance, another person targeted in the memo had trained in al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan and will later be arrested with a top al-Qaeda leader (see [July 10, 2001](#)). Around this time, the Phoenix memo is sent to FBI headquarters and its I-49 squad in New York (see [July 27, 2001 and after](#) and [July 27, 2001 or Shortly After](#)). After 9/11, the CIA will say it did not receive the memo and its Office of Inspector General will agree with this. [[US DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA,](#)

[ALEXANDRIA DIVISION, 3/28/2005](#)] However, in a 2006 book journalist Lawrence Wright will report that the memo was also sent to the CIA's bin Laden unit. One of the sources Wright cites for this passage is Mark Rossini. Rossini is an FBI agent who at one time worked in the unit's I-49 squad in New York, but was detailed to the bin Laden station in the summer of 2001. [[WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 316, 350, 381, 426 SOURCES: MARK ROSSINI](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Ken Williams](#), [Alec Station](#), [Mark Rossini](#), [I-49](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



Late July 2001: FBI Agent Possibly Confused by Error in CIA Cable, Fails to Tell FBI that 9/11 Hijacker Almihdhar Has US Visa



An FBI agent assigned to the CIA's bin Laden unit locates a CIA cable that says 9/11 hijacker Khalid Almihdhar has a US visa, but fails to disseminate the information to the FBI. It is not clear why the agent, Margaret Gillespie, fails to do this. However, at the same time she locates another CIA cable which mistakenly states that the information about the visa has already been passed to the FBI (see [9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. January 5, 2000](#)). [[US DEPARTMENT OF](#)

[JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 299](#)]

Entity Tags: [Margaret Gillespie](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Alec Station](#), [Khalid Almihdhar](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



Late July 2001: CIA Official Says of Al-Qaeda, 'They're Coming Here'



CIA Director George Tenet will recall in his 2007 book that “during one of my updates in late July when, as we speculated about the kind of [al-Qaeda] attacks we could face, Rich B. suddenly said, with complete conviction, ‘They’re coming here.’ I’ll never forget the silence that followed.” Rich B. is the alias Tenet uses for Richard Blee, the official who oversees Alec Station, the CIA’s bin Laden unit, at this time (see [June 1999](#) and [Between Mid-January and July 2000](#)). It is not known who else is at the meeting. [TENET, 2007, PP. 158]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Richard Blee](#), [George J. Tenet](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



Early August 2001: CIA’s Concern over Planned Bin Laden Strikes inside US Are Heightened



The CIA has “developed general information a month before the [9/11] attacks that heightened concerns that Osama bin Laden and his followers were increasingly determined to strike on US soil,” the Associated Press will later report. A CIA official will affirm, “There was something specific in early August that said to us that [bin Laden] was determined in striking on US soil.” [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 10/3/2001] Further details about this information will remain unknown. However, the October 2001 article mentioning it could be describing an early, incomplete account of the CIA-produced Presidential Daily Briefing (PDB) entitled “Bin Laden Determined to Strike in US” from August 6, 2001 (see [August 6, 2001](#)). The full title of that PDB will be made public in May 2002 (see [May 15, 2002](#)), and the full text of it will be made public in April 2004 (see [April 11, 2004](#)).

Entity Tags: [Osama bin Laden](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



August 2, 2001: Defense Intelligence Report Mentions Diverging Views on Aluminum Tubes



The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) publishes an internal background paper explaining the debate within the US intelligence community over Iraq’s intended use for the aluminum tubes it attempted to import from China (see [July 2001](#)). The paper describes the assessments of both the CIA and the Department of Energy, the latter of which does not believe the tubes

are suitable for use as rotors in a gas centrifuge (see [August 17, 2001](#)). The DIA says its “analysts found the CIA WINPAC presentation to be very compelling.” [[US CONGRESS, 7/7/2004](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [US Department of Energy](#), [Defense Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Events Leading to Iraq Invasion](#)



(August 4-5, 2001): Phoenix Memo Agent Vets Bush PDB, Fails to Add Relevant Information, Does Not Contact Phoenix Office



The CIA officers who draft a presidential daily briefing (PDB) item given to George Bush on August 6 (see [August 6, 2001](#)) ask an FBI agent for additional information and also to review a draft of the memo, but she does not provide all the additional information she could. The 9/11 Commission will refer to the FBI agent as “Jen M,” so she is presumably Jennifer Maitner, an agent with the Osama bin Laden unit at FBI headquarters. The purpose of the memo is to communicate to the president the intelligence community’s view that the threat of attacks by bin Laden is both current and serious. But Maitner fails to add some important information that she has: around the end of July, she was informed of the Phoenix memo, which suggests that an inordinate number of bin Laden-related Arabs are taking flying lessons in the US (see [July 10, 2001](#)). She does not link this to the portion of the memo discussing aircraft hijackings. Responsibility for dealing with the Phoenix memo is formally transferred to her on August 7, when she reads the full text. The finished PDB item discusses the possibility bin Laden operatives may hijack an airliner and says that there are “patterns of suspicious activity in this country consistent with preparations for hijackings.” It is unclear whether the draft PDB item Maitner reviews contains this information. However, if it does, it apparently does not inspire her to take any significant action on the memo before 9/11, such as contacting the agents in Phoenix to notify them of the preparations for hijackings (see [July 27, 2001 and after](#)). The PDB will contain an error, saying that the FBI was conducting 70 full field investigations of bin Laden-related individuals (see [August 6, 2001](#)), but this error is added after Maitner reviews the draft, so she does not have the opportunity to remove it.



[[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 260-2, 535](#); [US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 69-77](#)]

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [FBI Headquarters](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Usama bin Laden Unit \(FBI\)](#), [Jennifer Maitner](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



August 6, 2001: Bush Receives Briefing Titled ‘Bin Laden Determined to Strike in US’



President Bush at his Crawford, Texas, ranch on August 6, 2001. Advisors wait with classified briefings. [Source: White House] President Bush receives a classified presidential daily briefing (PDB) at his Crawford, Texas ranch indicating that Osama bin Laden might be planning to hijack commercial airliners. The PDB provided to him is entitled, “Bin Laden Determined to Strike in US.” The entire briefing focuses on the possibility of terrorist attacks inside the US. [NEW YORK TIMES, 5/15/2002; NEWSWEEK, 5/27/2002] The analysts who drafted the briefing will say that they drafted it on the CIA’s initiative (see [July 13, 2004](#)), whereas in 2004 Bush will state that he requested a briefing on the topic due to threats relating to a conference in Genoa, Italy, in July 2001, where Western intelligence agencies believed Osama bin Laden was involved in a plot to crash an airplane into a building to kill Bush and other leaders (see [April 13, 2004](#)). The analysts will later explain that they saw it as an opportunity to convey that the threat of an al-Qaeda attack in the US was both current and serious. [9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 260] The existence of this briefing is kept secret, until it is leaked in May 2002, causing a storm of controversy (see [May 15, 2002](#)). While National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice will claim the memo is only one and a half pages long, other accounts state it is 11 1/2 pages instead of the usual two or three. [NEW YORK TIMES, 5/15/2002; NEWSWEEK, 5/27/2002; DIE ZEIT (HAMBURG), 10/1/2002] A page and a half of the contents will be released on April 10, 2004; this reportedly is the full content of the briefing. [WASHINGTON POST, 4/10/2004] The briefing, as released, states as follows (note that the spelling of certain words are corrected and links have been added):

- Clandestine, foreign government, and media reports indicate bin Laden since 1997 has wanted to conduct terrorist attacks in the US (see [December 1, 1998](#)). Bin Laden implied in US television interviews in 1997 and 1998 that his followers would follow the example of World Trade Center bomber Ramzi Yousef and “bring the fighting to America” (see [May 26, 1998](#)).

- After US missile strikes on his base in Afghanistan in 1998, bin Laden told followers he wanted to retaliate in Washington, according to a -REDACTED-service (see [December 21, 1998](#)).

- An Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) operative told -REDACTED- service at the same time that bin Laden was planning to exploit the operative’s access to the US to mount a terrorist strike.

- The millennium plotting in Canada in 1999 may have been part of bin Laden’s first serious attempt to implement a terrorist strike in the US. Convicted plotter Ahmed Ressam has told the FBI that he conceived the idea to attack Los Angeles International Airport himself (see [December 14, 1999](#)), but that bin Laden lieutenant Abu Zubaida encouraged him and helped facilitate the operation. Ressam also said that in 1998 Abu Zubaida was planning his own US attack (see [Late March-Early April 2001](#) and [May 30, 2001](#)).
- Ressam says bin Laden was aware of the Los Angeles operation.
- Although bin Laden has not succeeded, his attacks against the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 (see [10:35-10:39 a.m., August 7, 1998](#)) demonstrate that he prepares operations years in advance and is not deterred by setbacks. Bin Laden associates surveyed our embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam as early as 1993 (see [Late 1993-Late 1994](#)), and some members of the Nairobi cell planning the bombings were arrested and deported in 1997.
- Al-Qaeda members—including some who are US citizens—have resided in or traveled to the US for years, and the group apparently maintains a support structure that could aid attacks (see [January 25, 2001](#)). Two al-Qaeda members found guilty in the conspiracy to bomb our embassies in East Africa were US citizens (see [September 15, 1998](#)), and a senior EIJ member lived in California in the mid-1990s (see [November 1989](#) and [September 10, 1998](#)).
- A clandestine source said in 1998 that a bin Laden cell in New York was recruiting Muslim-American youth for attacks (see [October-November 1998](#)).
- “We have not been able to corroborate some of the more sensational threat reporting, such as that from a [REDACTED] service in 1998 saying that bin Laden wanted to hijack a US aircraft to gain the release of ‘Blind Sheikh’ Omar Abdul-Rahman and other US-held extremists” (see [1998, December 4, 1998](#), and [May 23, 2001](#)). [[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 223](#)] According to the Washington Post, this information came from a British service. [[WASHINGTON POST, 5/18/2002](#)]
- Nevertheless, FBI information since that time indicates patterns of suspicious activity in this country consistent with preparations for hijackings or other types of attacks, including recent surveillance of federal buildings in New York (see [May 30, 2001](#)).
- The FBI is conducting approximately 70 full-field investigations throughout the US that it considers bin Laden-related (see [August 6, 2001](#)). CIA and the FBI are investigating a call to our embassy in the UAE in May saying that a group or bin Laden supporters was in the US planning attacks with explosives (see [May 16-17, 2001](#)). [[9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 223](#)] In retrospect, the briefing is remarkable for the many warnings that apparently are not included (see for instance, from the summer of 2001 prior to August alone: [May 2001](#), [June 2001](#), [June 12, 2001](#), [June 19, 2001](#), [Late Summer 2001](#), [July 2001](#), [July 16, 2001](#), [Late July 2001](#), [Late July 2001](#), [Summer 2001](#), [June 30-July 1, 2001](#), [July 10, 2001](#), and [Early August 2001](#)). According to one account, after the PDB has been given to him, Bush tells the CIA briefer, “You’ve covered your ass now” (see [August 6, 2001](#)). Incredibly, the New York Times later reports that after being given the briefing, Bush “[breaks] off from work early and

[spends] most of the day fishing.” [\[NEW YORK TIMES, 5/25/2002\]](#) In 2002 and again in 2004, National Security Adviser Rice will incorrectly claim under oath that the briefing only contained historical information from 1998 and before (see [May 16, 2002](#) and [April 8, 2004](#)).

Entity Tags: [George W. Bush](#), [Islamic Jihad](#), [Omar Abdul-Rahman](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Los Angeles International Airport](#), [Condoleezza Rice](#), [Abu Zubaida](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [World Trade Center](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [9/11 Commission](#), [Ahmed Ressam](#), [Ramzi Yousef](#), [Osama bin Laden](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



August 6, 2001: President Bush Tells CIA Regarding Bin Laden Warning, 'You've Covered Your Ass, Now'



According to journalist and author Ron Suskind, just after a CIA briefer presents President Bush with the later infamous PDB (Presidential Daily Briefing) item entitled “Bin Laden Determined to Strike in US” (see [August 6, 2001](#)), Bush tells the briefer, “You’ve covered your ass, now.” This account is from Suskind’s 2006 book *The One Percent Doctrine*, which is based largely on anonymous accounts from political insiders. In the book, after describing the presentation of the PDB, Suskind will write: “And, at an eyeball-to-eyeball intelligence briefing during this urgent summer, George W. Bush seems to have made the wrong choice. He looked hard at the panicked CIA briefer. ‘All right,’ he said. ‘You’ve covered your ass, now.’” [\[SUSKIND, 2006, PP. 2; WASHINGTON POST, 6/20/2006\]](#)

Entity Tags: [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [George W. Bush](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



August 6, 2001: President Bush Is Misled on Number and Extent of FBI's Bin Laden Related Investigations



The CIA’s Presidential Daily Briefing (PDB) given to President Bush on this day (see [August 6, 2001](#)) contains the important line, “The FBI is conducting approximately 70 full field investigations throughout the US that it considers bin Laden-related.” Bush will state in 2004 that, based on this, “I was satisfied that some of the matters were being looked into.” National Security Adviser Rice will explain that since the FBI had 70 “full-field investigations under way of cells” in the US, “there was no recommendation [coming from the White House] that we do something about” the large number of warnings coming in. However, the number and content of the FBI investigations appears grossly exaggerated. The FBI later will reveal

that the investigations are not limited to al-Qaeda and do not focus on al-Qaeda cells. Many were criminal investigations, which typically are not likely to help prevent future terrorist acts. An FBI spokesman will say the FBI does not know how that number got into Bush's PDB. The 9/11 Commission will later conclude, "The 70 full-field investigations number was a generous calculation that included fund-raising investigations. It also counted each individual connected to an investigation as a separate full-field investigation. Many of these investigations should not have been included, such as the one that related to a dead person, four that concerned people who had been in long-term custody, and eight that had been closed well before August 6, 2001." [NEWSDAY, 4/10/2004; ASSOCIATED PRESS, 4/11/2004; 9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 262, 535]

Entity Tags: [Al-Qaeda](#), [Condoleezza Rice](#), [Osama bin Laden](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)



August 7-September 10, 2001: Fire and Evacuation at CIA Headquarters Helps Prepare for Response on 9/11



CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia. [Source:

GlobeExplorer] A fire lasting several hours leads to the forced evacuation of the CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia. [REUTERS, 8/8/2001] The fire is discovered on August 7 at around 5:45 p.m., in the northeast section of the agency's older headquarters building, and more than 60 firefighters are involved in putting it out. It was reportedly caused by a workman at the top of an elevator shaft dropping a welder, which ignited wood at the bottom of the shaft. Both the older headquarters building and the agency's new headquarters building nearby are

evacuated. Following this fire, A. B. “Buzzy” Krongard—the executive director of the CIA since March this year—is dismayed to find that plans for an evacuation of the headquarters are patchy, and that some of the fire alarms do not work. In the ensuing month he therefore initiates regular fire drills and equips key agency officials with tiny walkie-talkies, meaning communication will still be possible should cell phones ever go out. Krongard declares that evacuating safely is to be more important than storing classified material, and has the agency’s computer network reprogrammed so an evacuation warning could be flashed on all computer screens. Journalist and author Ronald Kessler will describe the August 7 fire as being “fortuitous,” as little over a month later, on the morning of September 11, CIA Director George Tenet will order the evacuation of the headquarters building due to fears that it might be targeted (see [\(9:50 a.m.-10:00 a.m.\) September 11, 2001](#)). On that day, Tenet and other top officials will reconvene at an alternate location on the CIA campus, “[f]ollowing procedures laid out by Krongard after the fire.” [[CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, 3/16/2001](#); [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 8/7/2001](#); [WASHINGTON POST, 8/8/2001](#); [KESSLER, 2003, PP. 222-223](#)]

Entity Tags: [A.B. \(“Buzzy”\) Krongard](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Timeline Tags: [Complete 911 Timeline](#), [9/11 Timeline](#)

