



Osama Bin Laden, terrorist moneybags

by Joseph Brewda

Osama Bin Laden, the Saudi financier now bankrolling the so-called "Islamic Jihad" against U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia, is no "Islamic leader." He is simply a paymaster for British intelligence operations targeting the United States in the Mideast and internationally.

As part of this campaign, Bin Laden has called for a "jihad" against U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia, and is taking credit for the 1996 Khobar U.S. Army barracks bombing which left 19 U.S. servicemen dead. "What happened in Khobar is a clear proof of the enormous rage of the Saudi population against them," he told the London *Independent* in July 1996, "Resistance against America will spread in many places through Muslim lands." In a September 1996 interview with the London-based *Al Arab*, he added that "the [Saudi] regime is the lesser evil, and America is the greater evil. Fighting against this greater evil is the biggest duty of a Muslim after belief in God."

Bin Laden's statements may be wild, but he is no lone operative; he is the pampered son of the wealthiest non-princely family in Saudi Arabia. The family is of Yemenite origin, and, according to regional sources, was moved to what became Saudi Arabia by the British, at the beginning of this century. The family's wealth, acquired through its franchise on construction projects in the kingdom, is estimated at \$5 billion. Osama's kitty, according to his family, is at least \$300 million, through which he has provided millions to "Islamic terrorist" organizations throughout the world.

All in the family

Osama first got involved in the terrorist-financing business through his cousin and patron, the late Sheikh Salim M. Bin Laden, owner of the family business, Bin Laden Brothers Construction. Sheikh Bin Laden was one of only four Saudis whom Britain's Prince Philip invited to join his 1001 Club, composed of 1001 members of the international financial and oligarchical elite. The Club, and its World Wide Fund for Nature, is the primary intelligence agency of the British royal family.

As a result of this patronage, Sheikh Salim, together with his close Saudi crony, Khalid Bin Mahfouz, became major stockholders in the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, the cash-cow that British intelligence used to

finance the 1980s Afghanistan War, and arm Iran. U.S. Vice President George Bush, as mandated by National Security Decision Directives 2 and 3, was the U.S. official assigned to oversee the U.S. intelligence agencies running that and other wars.

Sheikh Salim was close to Bush since at least 1979, when he became a business partner with Bush's son, George W. Bush, the current governor of Texas, in the Bush family's Arbusto Ltd. Salim's proxy representative in the firm, James R. Bath, was later investigated by the U.S. government for Saudi influence-peddling in the United States.

Osama, now 39 years old, first became involved in intelligence matters in 1979, immediately after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. According to a May 6, 1996, *Time* magazine interview with Bin Laden's associates, Osama "recruited thousands of Arab fighters in the Gulf, paid for their passage to Afghanistan, and set up the main guerrilla camp to train them." Prince Bandar, the Saudi ambassador to the United States, acknowledges that the Saudis ultimately spent \$500 million on the operation. Osama Bin Laden was one of the conduits through which Saudi covert funds were passed on to the Afghani mujahideen, to prosecute the decade-long war against the Soviet Red Army. The mujahideen used in this venture were later dumped, after their objective was achieved, and today constitute a terrorist pool used for disavowable British intelligence actions, such as attacks on U.S. facilities in Saudi Arabia.

According to a 1996 U.S. State Department statement entitled "Osama Bin Laden: Islamic Extremist Financier," Pakistani and Egyptian investigators have determined that the Saudi financier made heavy use of these mujahideen. "Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, the alleged mastermind of the February 1993 World Trade Center bombing, resided at the Bin Laden-funded Bayt Ashuhada guest house in Peshawar [Pakistan] during most of the three years before his apprehension in February 1995; Bin Laden remains the key financier behind the 'Kunar' camp in Afghanistan, which provides terrorist training to al-Jihad and al-Gamaat al-Islamiyyah [Islamic Group] members."

Osama moved to Sudan in 1991, after he allegedly fell out with his family over such radical politics (his presence there was used to smear Sudan as harboring terrorists). But for all that, Osama spent much of the time that he was nominally living in Sudan, at his favorite residence in the fashionable London, England suburb of Wembley. In 1996, the Sudanese government expelled Bin Laden, and he fled to London, and, soon thereafter, Afghanistan. He was tracked down there by the ever-intrepid journalists of the London *Independent*, overseeing a new jihad against America. Afghanistan, he told the paper, is the "safest place in the world for me." But London, nonetheless, remains Osama's base, and the headquarters of his Advise and Reform Commission, the coordinating center of his diverse terrorist operations, run by his London appointee Khalid al Fawwaz.