

How al-Qaeda Is a British-Saudi Project

by Ramtanu Maitra

Aug. 8—In late July, the U.S. State Department issued a worldwide alert warning of potential terrorist attacks against U.S. citizens and interests overseas due to an enhanced potential for anti-American violence following the killing of Osama bin Laden in May. Current information suggests that al-Qaeda and affiliated organizations continue to plan terrorist attacks against U.S. interests in multiple regions, including Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

It is widely acknowledged that Saudi Arabia remains a critical financial support base for al-Qaeda, the Taliban, LeT (Lashkar-e-Taiba), and other terrorist groups, including Hamas. It is well known that Britain remains a haven for Islamist jihadis—but no actions have been taken against London, thus far.

Any adequate protection of the population against terror requires a clear picture of the role of Britain and Saudi Arabia in protecting and nurturing al-Qaeda, and what purpose it serves. That is the purpose of this review.

Al-Qaeda and 9/11

There is no dearth of evidence to show that the al-Qaeda leaders and operatives who were eventually arrested, were functioning from Britain before 9/11. There are also documented reports which show the City of London's laundering of narcotics-generated money of various terrorist groups, as well as the presence of a large number of Britons operating as terrorists in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border areas.

Most of these exposés occurred following the 9/11 event, giving an impression that the terrorists had gathered strength, and were operating with impunity from various parts of the world, only *after* 9/11. However, looking back at the British role prior to the attacks, it becomes clear that the British and Saudis, each for their own purpose, had joined hands years ago to bring al-Qaeda into existence.

Al-Qaeda's targets of attack were American and Iranian interests. After the Saudi-Pakistani military-backed

Taliban had secured control over Kabul in 1996, al-Qaeda moved into Afghanistan to garner strength and secure control over the opium money—the age-old currency of the British empire—generated in Afghanistan.

But years before the 9/11 event, in which the Saudi involvement is impossible to refute, al-Qaeda was in the process of formation. Al-Qaeda was never a consolidated group that functioned under a definite hierarchy, but was rather a loosely-assembled group of jihadis, most of whom were local, and dependent on money from the core group, known as al-Qaeda, that operated directly under the British-Saudi control. The only commonality among these groups, other than being terrorists, is that they considered America—and not the West as a whole—and the Shi'as, as their greatest enemies.

While these two objectives had posed no problem to Britain, who had kept Iran at the top of its enemies list since the ouster of Reza Shah Pahlavi, the Saudi interest was not only to undermine Iran, but also to spread their virulent form of Islam, Wahhabism, throughout the Islamic world, and thus establish Saudi ownership of the Islamic nations. Although al-Qaeda was for setting up a caliphate from the Dardanelles to the Volga, it is also virulently anti-Shi'a—an indicator of its total dependence on Saudi Arabia.

All Clues, All Roads Lead to London

That Britain harbors terrorists of all colors and creeds, but particularly of the Islamic jihadi varieties, since the British Empire basically drew the map of the Islamic countries, and remained their “protector,” is well established by now. Some Americans, other than those who have become such hard-core anglophiles that they would blame someone else for criminal acts in order to protect Britain, and thus endanger many American lives, have spoken out against the British-harbored terrorists. One such individual is Bruce Riedel.



NASA/Paul E. Alers

HRH Queen Elizabeth II and Her Royal Consort Prince Philip

Irrefutable evidence, long in the public domain, has established the role of the British royals in harboring terrorists and protecting the City of London's drug-money laundering. Likewise, the role of the Saudi royal family, notably former Ambassador to the U.S. and Bush family friend, Prince Bandar, particularly their involvement in the 9/11 attacks. Now, as the State Department warns of renewed potential terrorist attacks against U.S. targets, the time has come to shut down the British-Saudi terrorist apparatus.



President George W. Bush and Saudi King Abdullah.



FEMA/Andrea Booher

The World Trade Center site, Sept. 19, 2001.



Osama bin Laden



UN photo

A Taliban militant oversees poppy cultivation in Helmand province, Afghanistan, 2008.

Riedel, a 29-year CIA veteran and counter-terrorism expert, told the London *Sunday Telegraph* in February 2009, that “the British Pakistani community is recognized as probably al-Qaeda’s best mechanism for launching an attack against North America.

“The American security establishment believes that danger continues and there’s very intimate cooperation between our security services to monitor that.” Riedel, who served three Presidents as a Middle East expert on the White House National Security Council, added: “President Obama’s national security team are well aware that this is a serious threat.”

Why have even hard-core anglophile Americans felt pressure to name Britain as a potential terrorist threat?

In a Feb. 14, 2002 London *Guardian* article, “Allies point the finger at Britain as al-Qaida’s ‘revolving door,’” writers Audrey Gillan, Richard Norton-Taylor, and John Hooper in Berlin, Jon Henley in Paris, and Giles Tremlett in Madrid, point out that “documents compiled in Madrid, Milan, Paris and Hamburg and seen by the *Guardian* indicate that most of the known attacks planned or executed by al-Qaida in the past four years had links to Britain. Investigating magistrates, police and intelligence officers in those cities believe that Islamist spiritual leaders based in Britain played a key role in the indoctrination and possibly even the authorization of terrorist operations.”

Since Britain is small geographically, its population is less than one-third of Pakistan’s, and it has Her Majesty’s fabled intelligence service, it is safe to assume that the terrorists are there because they are under the protection of the British authorities.

The *Guardian* article noted that the investigators in France, Spain, Germany, and Italy are adamant that at least seven top bin Laden lieutenants have operated out of Britain in recent years. They claim that Muslim clerics, such as Abu Qatada, allowed to openly preach jihad in the U.K., were in fact spinning a “revolving door” to radical Islam and to terrorism.

One source close to the French investigation told the *Guardian* that before the events of Sept. 11, “Britain acted—and, to some extent, may still act—as a kind of filter for parts of al-Qaeda. The main European centers for spiritual indoctrination were London and Leicester; any weak links were weeded out there. The new recruit would then be sent to suffer in the camps in Afghanistan. After passing both tests, the mujahid could take

his place in the sleeper networks in Europe.” A senior German intelligence officer summed up the mood when he told the *Guardian*: “All the clues lead to London. All the roads lead to London.”

Here is a short list of those terrorists who prove that Britain was indeed the terrorists’ “revolving door.”

Abu Qatada: A Spanish judge, Baltasar Garzon, has stated that Sheikh Abu Qatada, the London-based Muslim cleric who ran the Four Feathers Centre near Baker Street, is “the spiritual leader of mujahedin [holy warriors] across Europe.” Qatada was sentenced to death in absentia in Jordan and is accused by the U.S., Spain, France, and Algeria of being a key influence in the 9/11 attacks. Videos of his speeches were found in the Hamburg flat of Mohammad Atta, the hijackers’ ringleader.

Djamel Beghal: Beghal, a French Algerian who was detained in Dubai, a Britain-controlled offshore banking and drug-and-gun-running center, who was questioned about his plot to bomb the American Embassy in Paris, told police he had been a follower of Qatada, who was a key figure in his radical conversion. Beghal moved from France to Leicester, U.K. where he worshipped at the Mosque of Piety, and travelled to London to listen to Qatada preach. Beghal is suspected of having recruited **Zacarias Moussaoui**, the former South Bank University student suspected of being part of the 9/11 plot; and **Richard Reid**, the alleged “shoe bomber,” who tried to blow up a Paris-Miami flight in transit to terrorist training camps in Afghanistan.

Kamel Daoudi: The *Guardian* also noted that French authorities point to the confession of Daoudi, who had been living in Beghal’s flat in Paris, was also found in Beghal’s other flat in Leicester. He is said to be the unit’s computer expert.

Abu Abdallah: Daoudi told French police that he met an al-Qaeda guerrilla in Leicester called Abu Abdallah. Abdallah’s identity remains uncertain, but French investigators believe he may be among the 11 men arrested in Leicester in early 2002. In addition, **Baghdad Meziane** and **Brahim Benmerzouga** were arrested in Leicester in January 2002. Meziane is accused of “directing the activities of al-Qaida.”

Abu Doha: Five months before the attacks on America, Italy’s special operations police produced a report which identified two al-Qaeda networks in Europe. Both were run by Islamist extremists based in

Britain—“one made up principally of Algerians and led by Abu Doha; the second made up predominantly of Tunisians and led by the Tunisian **Seifallah Ben Hassine.**”

Spain points to four more British-based bin Laden lieutenants, identifying them by their pseudonyms in an indictment. Spanish police taped a series of cryptic phone calls from a caller in Britain using the codename “Shakur.” One of these, according to Judge Garzon, shows that Shakur knew of the upcoming Sept. 11 attacks. “In our classes, we have entered the field of aviation, and we have even cut the bird’s throat,” he said on Aug. 27.

Pakistan has repeatedly reported the influx of British Muslims working hand-in-glove with the terrorists along the Afghan-Pakistan borders. Many of these terrorists are drug-runners and chemists refining opium into more expensive heroin. Pakistani intelligence has intercepted talks among these British Muslim terrorists, and the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) have recovered T-shirts carrying the logos of British soccer teams.

Money To Be Made in Harboring Terrorists

In 2001, a French parliamentary report exposed the connection between the drug money laundered through the City of London and the narcoterrorists. In a *Guardian* article Oct. 10, 2001, John Henley, citing an exhaustive 180-page French report, wrote that up to 40 companies, banks, and individuals based in Britain can legitimately be suspected of maintaining direct or indirect relations with the narcoterrorists. The report is based on interviews with senior Metropolitan Police officers, leading City financial regulators, and European judges investigating cross-border financial crimes in Spain, Belgium, and France.

According to a 70-page addendum, “The Economic Environment of Osama bin Laden,” compiled by an independent team of financial experts whose identity has not been revealed, and attached to the French report, the structure of bin Laden’s financial network bears a striking similarity to that used by the collapsed BCCI bank for its fraudulent operations in the 1980s.

The report establishes numerous links between bin Laden and international arms and oil traders, and even members of the Saudi elite. It also pinpoints the relationship and its subsequent breakdown between bin

Laden and his family’s holding company, the Saudi Binladin Group, and its multiple subsidiaries, investments, and offshoots in Europe. The names of half a dozen former BCCI clients and officials, including Ghaith Pharaon, wanted by the U.S. authorities for fraud, and Khalid bin Mahfouz, a Saudi banker who was closely involved with the bank before it was closed down by the Bank of England in 1991, recur throughout the report, and are directly linked to Osama bin Laden through banks, holding companies, foundations, and charities, at least one of which, the International Development Foundation, is headquartered in London.

“This document clearly shows the great permeability of the British banking and financial system and the fragility of the controls operated at its points of entry,” the French report concludes.

Many of the individuals concerned, several with British connections, were also involved in various senior roles with BCCI, the now-defunct drug bank set up in the 1970s, the report says. Hundreds of banks and companies are mentioned, from Sudan, Geneva, and London, to Oxford, the Bahamas, and Riyadh, Henley wrote.

“The convergence of financial and terrorist interests, apparent particularly in Great Britain and in Sudan, does not appear to have been an obstacle with regard to the objectives pursued [by bin Laden],” the report concludes. “The conjunction of a terrorist network attached to a vast financing structure is the dominant trait of operations conducted by bin Laden.”

Britain also spends some money in nurturing the terrorists. On June 7, 2011, The *Guardian* reported the admission by British Home secretary Theresa May, that the money from the £63 million anti-radicalization budget has been given to “the very extremist organizations that Prevent should have been confronting.” May conceded saying Operation Prevent, originally launched in 2007 to counter the growth of home-grown terrorism, “failed to tackle the extremist ideology that not only undermines the cohesion of our society, but also inspires would-be terrorists to seek to bring death and destruction to our towns and cities.”

The British-Saudi Nexus

The British intervention in Iraq in 2003 was, in reality, the continuation of the British effort to unleash Shi’a-Sunni violence, a Saudi project as well, that

began in the post-World War I Arabia. In the 1920s, Britain set about carving up Southwest Asia to serve its own needs. Gertrude Bell, a spy and operative for the British Empire, was at the forefront of creating “nations” and in king-making. In 1921, Bell drew the borders of Iraq, and so created disastrous problems for generations to come, which ultimately would lead to war. Newcastle University historian Jim Crow said: “Without that imperial carve-up, Iraq would not be in the state it is in today. Gertrude Bell was one of two or three Britons who were instrumental in the creation of the Arab states in the Middle East that were favorable to Britain.”

In 1919, at the Paris Conference ending World War I, Bell argued for the establishment of independent Arab emirates for the area previously covered by the Ottoman Empire. The Arab delegation, which was actually under Bell’s control, was led by Faisal Saeed al-Ismaïly, a Bedouin Sunni steeped in the orthodox version of the religion, born in Taïf (now, Saudi Arabia), the third son of the Grand Sharif of Mecca.

Planting a Sunni Bedouin in historical Mesopotamia was a long-term British design which served a number of purposes for the Empire. To begin with, a desert Bedouin and feudal potentate was surely not acceptable as a ruler to the Shi’a-majority Iraqis, who had a strong sense of their heritage. In addition, Faisal played a role back then in forming the British-Sunni-Israeli nexus to perpetuate the British Empire’s role in what is known today as the Middle East.

That tradition of British geopolitics, backed by Saudi Arabia’s oil money, has continued to create terrorists and produce violence in the Muslim world. In recent days, bribing the Saudis by the British empire-promoters, such as former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, was the business model.

In the April 17, 2009 *EIR* article, “[BAE Al-Yamah Scandal Back in the Headlines](#),”¹ Jeffrey Steinberg wrote about “the case of BAE Systems (formerly British Aerospace), the giant British arms cartel, and its unprecedented barter deal with Saudi Arabia, a deal known as Al-Yamah (‘The Dove’). The Anglo-Saudi Al-Yamah deal was, and remains, far more than an unusual oil-for-weapons barter scheme. The story goes far beyond the tens of billions of dollars in payoffs from the British firm to scores of Saudi princes

and businessmen. It goes beyond the larger-than-life role of Saudi Arabia’s longtime former ambassador to Washington, Prince Bandar bin-Sultan, who brokered the Al-Yamah deal back in 1985, and received, at a minimum, \$2 billion in BAE kickbacks for his efforts.”

As *EIR* documented, under the Al-Yamah barter deal, an offshore, off-the-books black operations slush fund, estimated at more than \$100 billion, was built up, to finance covert operations on a global scale. Among those covert operations, acknowledged by author William Simpson in his semi-authorized biography of Prince Bandar: the bankrolling of the Afghan mujahideen, during the later phase of their decade-long war to drive the Soviet Army out of Afghanistan (1979-90); and the arming of the government of Chad with Soviet weapons, during Chad’s war with Libya.

In a [June 29, 2007 *EIR* article](#),² Steinberg reported: “Between April 1998 and May 2002, some \$51-73,000 in checks and cashier’s checks were provided by the Saudi Ambassador to the United States and his wife to two families in southern California, who in turn bankrolled at least two of the 9/11 hijackers. The story was investigated by the 9/11 Commission, but never fully resolved, and remains, to this day, one of the key unanswered questions concerning the backing for the worst terrorist attack ever to occur on U.S. soil.

“According to numerous news accounts and the records of the 9/11 Commission, in April 1998, a Saudi national named Osama Basnan wrote to the Saudi Embassy in Washington, D.C., seeking help for his wife, Majeda Dweikat, who needed surgery for a thyroid condition. Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the Saudi Ambassador, wrote a check for \$15,000 to Basnan. Beginning in December 1999, Princess Haifa, the wife of Prince Bandar, began sending regular monthly cashier checks to Majeda Dweikat, in amounts ranging from \$2,000 to \$3,500. Many of these checks were signed over to Manal Bajadr, the wife of Omar al-Bayoumi, another Saudi living in the San Diego area.

“Around New Year’s Day 2000, two other Saudi nationals, Nawaf Alhazmi and Khalid Almihdhar, arrived at Los Angeles International Airport, where they were greeted by al-Bayoumi, provided with cash, and outfitted with an apartment, Social Security ID cards,

1. http://www.larouche.com/eiw/public/2009/2009_10-19/2009_10-19/2009-15/pdf/56-60_3615.pdf

2. http://www.larouche.com/eiw/public/2007/eirv34n26-20070629/34-37_726.pdf

and other financial assistance. Al-Bayoumi helped the two Saudi men to enroll in flight schools in Florida. Two months before the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, al-Bayoumi moved to England, and shortly after that, he disappeared altogether. But before his disappearance, and within days of the 9/11 attacks, agents of New Scotland Yard, working in conjunction with the FBI, raided his apartment in England and found papers hidden beneath the floorboards, according to *Newsweek* magazine, that had the phone numbers of several officials at the Saudi Embassy in Washington. Al-Bayoumi was suspected by the Arab community in the San Diego area of being an agent of Saudi intelligence, which kept tabs on Saudi residents in the area, particularly Saudi students attending college in southern California.”

Steinberg pointed out that Prince Bandar and Princess Haifa denied that they had played any role in financing the 9/11 hijackers, and claimed that they were merely providing charitable assistance to the Saudi community in the United States. The co-chairs of the Senate Intelligence Committee at the time, Robert Graham (D-Fla.) and Richard Shelby (R-Ala.), accused the FBI of failing to fully pursue this “9/11 money trail.” Sources told *EIR* that the FBI refused to allow the Committee to interview the FBI investigators who had probed the Basnan and al-Bayoumi links.

Al-Qaeda: An Old British Project

Long before the 9/11 event, Britain had begun to put together a “cohesive” Islamic terrorist organization. In its [Jan. 21, 2000](#) issue,³ *EIR*, urging the then-U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to declare Britain a terrorist state, pointed out the following relevant facts which justified taking such an action:

- In July 1998, a former British MI5 officer, David Shayler, revealed that in February 1996, British security services financed and supported a London-based Islamic terrorist group, in an attempted assassination against Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi. The action, Shayler charged, in an interview with the British *Daily Mail*, was sanctioned by then-Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind.

- On June 25, 1996, a bomb blew up the U.S. military barracks in Dharam, Saudi Arabia, killing 19 American soldiers. The next day, Saudi expatriate

Mohammed al-Massari, the head of the London-based Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights, was interviewed on BBC. He warned the United States to expect more terror attacks, which he described as “intellectually justified.” Al-Massari is allied with the well-known Saudi expatriate Osama bin Laden, who, to this day, maintains a residence in the wealthy London suburb of Wembley. And London is the headquarters of bin Laden’s Advise and Reform Commission, run by the London-based Khalid al-Fawwaz.

Bin Laden has been given regular access to BBC and a variety of major British newspapers, to spread his calls for jihad against the United States.

- On Jan. 25, 1997, Tory Member of Parliament Nigel Waterson introduced legislation to ban foreign terrorists from operating on British soil. His “Conspiracy and Incitement Bill,” according to his press release, would have for the first time banned British residents from plotting and conducting terrorist operations overseas.

- On Feb. 14, 1997, Labor MP George Galloway succeeded in blocking Waterson’s bill from getting out of committee.

- On Nov. 17, 1997, the Gamaa al-Islamiya (Islamic Group) carried out a massacre of tourists in Luxor, Egypt, in which 62 people were killed. . . . Yet, the leaders of the organization have been provided with political asylum in Britain, and repeated efforts by the Egyptian government to have them extradited back to Egypt have met with stern rebuffs by Tory and Labor governments alike.

- On Dec. 14, 1997, British Ambassador to Egypt David Baltherwick was summoned by Egypt’s Foreign Minister Amr Moussa and handed an official note, demanding that Britain “stop providing a safe haven to terrorists, and cooperate with Egypt to counter terrorism.”

To substantiate the charges against Britain, the Egyptian State Information Service posted a “Call to Combat Terrorism” on its official web site. The document read, in part, “Hereunder, is a list of some of the wanted masterminds of terrorism, who are currently enjoying secure and convenient asylum in some world capitals.” The “wanted list” consisted of photographs and biographical data on 14 men, linked to the Luxor massacre and other earlier incidents of terrorism. The first seven individuals listed were all, at the time, residing in London.

EIR also had urged Secretary Albright to take note

3. http://www.larouchepub.com/lar/2000/terror_memo_2703.html

that shortly before the Luxor massacre, on Oct. 8, 1997, the U.S. State Department, in compliance with the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1996, released a list of 30 Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) banned from operating on U.S. soil.

Of the 30 groups named, six maintain headquarters in Britain. They are: the Islamic Group (Egypt), Al-Jihad (Egypt), Hamas (Israel, Palestinian Authority), Armed Islamic Group (Algeria, France), Kurdish Workers Party (Turkey), and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Sri Lanka)... Similarly, the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA), which was responsible for the assassination of Algerian President Mohamed Boudiaf on June 29, 1992, has its international headquarters in London.

- On Nov. 20, 1999, the *Daily Telegraph* admitted, following the release of the U.S. State Department's updated list of FTOs, that "Britain is now an international center for Islamic militancy on a huge scale ... and the capital is the home to a bewildering variety of radical Islamic fundamentalist movements, many of which make no secret of their commitment to violence and terrorism to achieve their goals."

The Next al-Qaeda

Now that the al-Qaeda chief, a bag carrier for Britain and Saudi Arabia, Osama bin Laden, is no more, the elites of those two nations will put together another international Islamic terrorist organization to continue with their old objectives. Already, terrorist groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Hizb ut-Tahrir (HuT) among others, have graduated to become international terrorist outfits using Saudi money and British protection.

Recently, the Obama Administration announced that al-Qaeda's role in Afghanistan has faded after eight years of war. Gone is the once-formidable network of camps and safehouses where bin Laden and his mostly Arab operatives trained thousands of young Muslims to wage a global jihad. The group is left with fewer than 100 core fighters, the statement added.

Despite what the anglophile Obama Administration may say to mislead the American people and protect the British-Saudi nexus of terrorists, there is no reason to believe that the demise of al-Qaeda will end the British-Saudi-organized terrorist operations. Saudi money is pouring in, in the midst of what is called the Arab Spring, pursuing Saudi objectives,

while London provides protection to the terrorists to meet their and the Saudis' violent aspirations.

Reuters' Alex Spillius, reporting on Dec. 5, 2010, cited a cable from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, dated Dec 30, 2009, which said: "It has been an ongoing challenge to persuade Saudi officials to treat terrorist financing emanating from Saudi Arabia as a strategic priority... Donors in Saudi Arabia constitute the most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorist groups worldwide."

In a recent interview with the *Weekend Review* in London, Sherard Cowper-Coles, the British Ambassador to Afghanistan from 2007 to 2009, and later promoted to the post of Britain's Special Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan until 2010, when he left the Foreign Office, criticized Clinton's recent statement calling for a regional solution to the Afghan conflict.⁴ During Cowper-Coles' ambassadorship in Afghanistan, two of his MI6 moles, Michael Semple and Mervyn Patterson, had been summarily kicked out by President Karzai in 2009, when he learned that they were organizing and funding some "good Taliban" behind his back.

Criticizing the U.S. Secretary of State, Cowper-Coles said: "But what is missing from the present plans and what is essential is that all the regional players have to be included, such as Pakistan, India, China, Russia and Iran, and the three stans [Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan]. But I would also argue that Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the UAE have to be part of the process. For example, Saudi Arabia has facilitated talks, as have the Qataris. They have a role in this.

"Today what is needed is Mrs Clinton to get all the foreign ministers around a table and regulate and manage the problem. We need to establish a council for regional stability, probably based in the UAE in either Dubai or Abu Dhabi. It needs a standing secretariat of the region's foreign ministers so that Afghanistan's neighbors can take ownership of the issue."

Cowper-Coles is a close associate of Tony Blair's protégé David Miliband. It is evident from what he said, that Britain wants the Saudis back in Afghanistan to set up another al-Qaeda, or some such terrorist outfit, to threaten Iran, Central Asia, China, India, and possibly Russia.

4. See Ramtanu Maitra, "Progress Seen Toward a Regional Solution for Afghanistan," *EIR*, Aug. 5, 2011, http://www.larouche.org/eiw/private/2011/2011_30-39/2011-30/pdf/50-53_3830.pdf