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**Memorandum**

To: Philip Zelikow  
From: Dieter Snell, Raj De, Mike Jacobson  
Date: 25 February 2004  
Re: Summary of interviews conducted in Saudi Arabia

We arrived in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on the night of February 20. Saudi Mabath officials met with us on the night of February 22 to discuss scheduling the interviews for the six individuals we identified: Fahad al-Thumairy [redacted] Khalid Abdulrab al-Yafai, Saud al-Rasheed, Khalil al-Khalil, and Yazeed al-Salmi. Over the next two days, February 23-24, we interviewed five of these individuals (as discussed below, Fahad al-Thumairy met with us on two separate occasions). We have not interviewed Yazeed al-Salmi, whom we understand is no longer in country. All the interviews were conducted at the Conference Palace and were attended by either, or both, Major Khalid and Major Habib of the Mabath.

We are in the process of preparing MFRs for these interviews. As you requested, here is a brief synopsis of the some of the highlights:

**Meeting with Mabath Officials**

Date: 22 February 2004

Commission Participants: Dieter Snell, Raj De, Mike Jacobson

Non-Commission Participants [redacted] (FBI)

- Mabath officials present at the meeting were: General Abdul Aziz Hawareiny, General Khalid, Major Khalid, Captain Faris.
- The Mabath informed us that we were not expected until February 24, and therefore they had believed the interviews would not be needed until a few days later. In view of our arrival, however, every effort would be made to expedite the schedule.
- We were reminded of their opinion of Saud al-Rasheed (i.e. a wayward youth caught up in drugs and a bad family situation). Although he was located in or near Riyadh, they were not sure he would be available but would make every effort in that regard.
- We were informed that Fahad al-Thumairy and Khalil al-Khalil also were located in

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Riyadh: [REDACTED] is still a member of the [REDACTED] and he was located nearby as well. Khalid Abdulrab al-Yafai and Yazeed al-Salmi were thought to be in Jeddah.

- By the conclusion of the meeting, we were informed that Khalid Abdulrab al-Yafai would be made available the following night, as well perhaps as others.

### Fahad al-Thumairy

Dates: 23 February 2004; 24 February 2004

Commission Participants: Dieter Snell, Raj De

Non-Commission Participants: [REDACTED] (FBI)

- We initially interviewed Thumairy on February 23. The following night, we received word from Major Habib of the Mabathith that Thumairy wished to clarify some of the information he had provided in his first interview concerning his rental history at the Avalon apartment complex in Culver City. We invited Thumairy back for a second interview on February 24.
- Our general impression of Thumairy is that he was deceptive during both interviews. His answers were either inconsistent or, at times, in direct conflict with information we have from other sources. During some of the more pointed exchanges, his body language suggested that he grew increasingly uncomfortable (for instance, he would cross his arms, sit back in his chair, etc.).
- Thumairy denied presiding over any wedding ceremonies at the King Fahad mosque during his time in LA. He denied knowing anybody by the name of Iyad Kreiwesh. He also denied knowing Modhar Abdullah or Qualid Moncef Benomrane (and when he was shown their photos, claimed not to recognize them). In the initial interview, Thumairy first said he did not know how to perform such ceremonies. He then said was not qualified to perform them. During his second interview, when his prior claim of lack of authority was challenged, he admitted that he was qualified to perform wedding ceremonies under Islamic law, but insisted that he never did so while in the U.S.
- Thumairy denied knowing someone named Omar al-Bayoumi. When shown a photo of this individual, Thumairy first denied recognizing it. Major Khalid said something to Thumairy in Arabic (it appeared as if he was suggesting who the person was in the picture). Thumairy then said "Oh, Bayoumi," and recalled that he had heard of him in the press. Thumairy, however, continued to deny ever having met him or spoken to him. When pressed during the second interview with the fact that there appear to be numerous telephone calls between both his cell phone and his home phone and the phones of Bayoumi, and that other individuals we have spoken with stated that he had been seen meeting with Bayoumi on several occasions (see Khalil summary below), Thumairy offered a few implausible explanations (such as maybe his phone numbers

were assigned to somebody else who called Bayoumi) before reminding us that there are people who may say bad things about him out of jealousy (although he would not name any names, this was only one of several thinly veiled references we believe to Khalil).

- Thumairy at first denied hosting any visitors when he was in the U.S. other than one or two relatives. He said that those duties fell to others in the consulate, but not him. He then said that the sole exception was circa 1999 when a Saudi person by the name of [redacted] came to the U.S. with his sick father for medical treatment in LA. Without being asked, Thumairy stated that he did not rent any apartment or make any reservations for these visitors (the issue of his apartment rental history at the Avalon complex had not yet been raised). Thumairy said all he did was provide them with advice about where to stay in LA and denied that he asked anybody to show them around. He first stated that they told him they had a driver; when pressed, he denied ever seeing their driver and ultimately stated he was not sure they even had a driver. When asked whether this was the same person who came to LA with his sick father that he had mentioned during his interview in May 2003 at LAX, Thumairy did not recognize the name he had previously provided to the FBI ("Salah").
- During the first interview, Thumairy denied ever renting more than one apartment at the Avalon apartment complex. When asked whether someone else could have rented an apartment in his name, he said that was not possible since the management would have required his identification. When presented with the fact that we know his name appeared on more than one lease, Thumairy stated that maybe that happened because when he was ready to move into his apartment it was not yet ready, and he was put in another apartment – perhaps his name appeared on that lease as well.
- During the second interview, Thumairy stated that after further reflection, he wished to clarify why his name could have appeared on more than one lease at Avalon. He stated that he recalled one instance in July 2001 when he received a call from a Saudi who was coming to LA for a liver transplant and was going to be accompanied by his son. Thumairy did not know who told this individual to contact him. Thumairy was asked to reserve an apartment in advance for the son and the sick father, which he had to do in his own name. Thumairy paid the deposit for the apartment and the rent (one month), and was later repaid by this individual (he could not remember how or when he was repaid). The father has since passed away and Thumairy said he no longer recalled the name of the son, other than it might be "Ali" or "Saleh." When pressed repeatedly, Thumairy claimed that his instance of a son with a sick father, as well as the son and the sick father he recounted during the first interview, are the only two instances when Thumairy could have assisted any foreign visitors.

[redacted]  
Date: 23 February 2004

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Commission Participants: Raj De

Non-Commission Participants [REDACTED] (FBI)

- Because the FBI had an interview request pending for Harbi, [REDACTED] took the lead during this interview. [REDACTED] came across as extremely credible. He is presently [REDACTED]. He knew immediately why we wanted to speak with him, namely his contact with Nawaf al-Hazmi in the U.S. in the spring of 2000.
- [REDACTED] arrived in the U.S. in October 1999 and believed that his first encounter with Nawaf al-Hazmi was probably about three months after that time.
- [REDACTED] stated that he met a young Saudi named "Nawaf" outside the Islamic Center of San Diego in the spring of 2000 during the Eid celebration. After a few pleasantries, they exchanged phone numbers. [REDACTED] said that there was no substantive discussion, but rather he simply gave his number to this young Saudi who had just arrived in case he needed any assistance (basically one Saudi being friendly to another). Nawaf said he was in the U.S. to learn English. [REDACTED] said Nawaf told him he lived with another person, but to his knowledge [REDACTED] did not believe he met this person. [REDACTED] moved to Rhode Island about one month later for the second part of his naval program.
- Shortly after this initial encounter, [REDACTED] had a phone conversation with Nawaf (but could not recall who called whom). When pressed about the discussion [REDACTED] could only recall that Nawaf asked him about how to buy a cheap car and whether he knew how Nawaf could arrange to stay with an American family. [REDACTED] knew that Nawaf currently lived nearby across Balboa Avenue and behind the Burger King. Although he was not clear about the details, [REDACTED] appeared to recall a few phone conversations with Nawaf during this month but could not recall the details. [REDACTED] said that he was recounting everything he could recall, but that his conversations with Nawaf were not very substantive so it was difficult to remember.
- [REDACTED] said he last attempted to contact Nawaf a little over a month after he moved to Rhode Island. He called just to check up on him, but when he tried the same number it was disconnected. [REDACTED] made no further effort to contact Nawaf and left the U.S. about six to eight-months prior to 9/11.

**Khalid Abdulrab al-Yafai**

Date: 23 February 2004

Commission Participants: Dieter Snell, Mike Jacobson

Non-Commission Participants: [REDACTED] (FBI)

- The Commission was interested in interviewing Abdulrab based on several reports possibly tying him to the hijackers during their time in San Diego.

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- Abdulrab displayed a rather non-challant attitude, and was dismissive towards much of the questioning. While he was truthful on some issues, there were other questions where we believe he answered less honestly and/or withheld information.
- Abdulrab was asked about the infamous party at which he was presented with a plaque by Omar Al-Bayoumi. He claimed that he was not aware until our interview that the party took place in Hazmi and Midhar's apartment. He said that al-Bayoumi had invited him to the party and given him the apartment number, and that the apartment appeared to be empty (though he did not ask anyone to whom the apartment belonged). He said that he did not meet either Hazmi or Midhar at the party, although he did acknowledge seeing Hazmi.
- Abdulrab was questioned about a report that the hijackers were going to move into Hashim al-Attas's apartment as a favor to Abdulrab. He admitted knowing al-Attas, but denied knowing the hijackers or having assisted in any way with their living arrangements.
- Abdulrab was asked about a report that, after the attack on the USS Cole, he told his host family that his brother had met Bin Ladin. He recalled having a conversation with the host family about the USS Cole attack, but said that he had never made such a comment, and that none of his brothers had ever been to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Chechnya, or Bosnia.

#### Saud al-Rasheed

Date: 24 February 2004

Commission Participants: Dieter Snell, Raj De

Non-Commission Participants: [REDACTED] (FBI)

- Saud al-Rasheed was produced on short notice during the afternoon of February 24. Because the FBI had an interview request pending for [REDACTED] [REDACTED] took the lead during this interview.
- Although initially denying having any other names, al-Rasheed acknowledged when he was pressed that he also went by Faruq al-Najdi in Afghanistan. He said he decided to go to Afghanistan to participate in jihad after watching a video about Chechnya.
- A friend of al-Rasheed's cousin knew how to go to Afghanistan and told them how to get there. Al-Rasheed then got a passport expressly for the purpose of this trip. He and his cousin bought plane tickets to Pakistan. He traveled by land to Bahrain, and then flew to Karachi.

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- Al-Rasheed provided details about his travel from Pakistan into Afghanistan and about his time there. He acknowledged meeting 9/11 hijacker Ahmed Haznawi. He denied meeting any other of the 9/11 hijackers. Al-Rasheed also denied meeting UBL or KSM, pledging bayat, or agreeing to be a martyr. He claimed not to have heard of al Qaeda until after returning from Afghanistan. Al-Rasheed admitted returning from Afghanistan through Dubai, but he denied knowing Hawsawi.
- Despite being pressed, al-Rasheed repeatedly denied any involvement with al Qaeda, any martyrdom operation, and any knowledge about 9/11.
- We believe that al-Rasheed was being deceptive. It is our impression that he has had enough time to develop a coherent story and is sticking to it (and that he even may have been coached at some point).
- Over the course of the interview, it was evident that al-Rasheed was not going to change his story and that he was confident his denials of any involvement despite significant information to the contrary (which was recounted to him in detail) would have no immediate consequences.

**Khalil al-Khalil**

Date: 24 February 2004

Commission Participants: Dieter Snell, Raj De, Mike Jacobson

Non-Commission Participants:  (FBI)

- The interview was delayed for two hours after Mahabith representatives informed us that the interview would begin shortly. After the interview concluded, the Mahabith explained the reason for the delay – apparently, Khalil did not want to be interviewed, and Major Khalid had to spend 45 minutes on the phone with him, convincing him to come to the Conference Palace.
- Khalil is currently a professor in Saudi Arabia, but still spends several months a year in Los Angeles. He was one of the original founders of the King Fahad Mosque and is still closely connected to the mosque.
- It was clear that Khalil had certain topics that he was willing to discuss, and others on which he was far more reticent. He was seemingly eager to talk about the danger that al Qaeda and extremism posed to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and to the U.S., and the importance of international cooperation on these issues. He portrayed himself as someone who recognized the danger posed by UBL very early on.
- He said that he was one of only four people at a meeting with UBL in 1990 in which UBL offered his services to the Kingdom to fight against Iraq after Iraq had invaded

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Kuwait.

- Khalil claimed to have warned the Saudis, both privately and publicly, about UBL years prior to 9/11. He said that this damaged his credibility, and that many Saudi religious leaders and government officials asked him to stop criticizing UBL.
- Khalil was far more reluctant to comment on individuals in the community in LA, and, in particular, on individuals at the King Fahad Mosque (KFM). Despite this general reluctance, he provided several tantalizing facts during the course of the interview:
  - Khalil said that he was at a conference in Saudi Arabia in December 2003 and had a brief conversation with an individual who had served as a visiting scholar at the King Fahad Mosque. This scholar told him that after a lecture given by him at the KFM, either al-Hazmi or al-Midhar had approached him. Al-Hazmi/al-Midhar said that he was interested in getting married, and asked whether the scholar would be willing to perform the ceremony. The scholar told him that he could not, and that al-Hazmi/al-Midhar should approach the mosque leadership and ask them. Al-Hazmi/al-Midhar said he had already made this request, and that the mosque leadership informed him that they could not perform the wedding without getting the approval of the Saudi consulate. Khalil was asked by the Commission to name the "mosque leadership" and he responded that this would have been either Fahad al-Thumairy or Tajjudin Shuaib.
  - At the conclusion of the interview, the FBI asked Khalil to look at several photographs. He was initially unwilling, but then agreed to so do. He recognized the photograph of Omar al-Bayoumi, and said that he saw him frequently with Fahad al-Thumairy at the KFM.

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|-------------|--------------|------|---------------------------|----------|------|----|---|------------------|----------------|
| 05/24/04    |              | MFR  |                           | 04019352 |      |    | Interview of [REDACTED]                                       |                  | Master Box 152 |
| 05/24/04    |              | MFR  |                           | 04019353 |      |    | Interview of [REDACTED] Saudi Institute                       |                  | Master Box 152 |
| 05/24/04    |              | MFR  |                           | 04019354 |      |    | Briefing on activities of Nawaf al-Hazmi and Khalid al-Midhar |                  | Master Box 152 |
| 05/24/04    |              | MFR  |                           | 04019355 |      |    | Meeting with Judge Baltasar Garzon (Madrid, Spain)            |                  | Master Box 152 |
| 05/24/04    |              | MFR  |                           | 04019356 |      |    | Interview of [REDACTED] Madrid, Spain)                        |                  | Master Box 152 |
| 05/24/04    |              | MFR  |                           | 04019357 |      |    | Interview of Dr. Ulrich Von Jeinsen (Hannover, Germany)       |                  | Master Box 152 |
| 05/24/04    |              | MFR  |                           | 04019358 |      |    | Meeting with Andreas Schulz and (?) Hoffman (Berlin, Germany) |                  | Master Box 152 |
| 05/24/04    |              | MFR  |                           | 04019359 |      |    | Meeting with German MOI Officials (Berlin, Germany)           |                  | Master Box 152 |
| 05/24/04    |              | MFR  |                           | 04019360 |      |    | Interview of [REDACTED] Berlin, Germany)                      |                  | Master Box 152 |
| 05/24/04    |              | MFR  |                           | 04019361 |      |    | Interview of Fahad al-Thumairy (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia)         |                  | Master Box 152 |



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|-------------|--------------|------|---------------------------|----------|------|----|--|------------------|----------------|
| 05/24/04    |              | MFR  |                           | 04019362 |      |    | Interview of Fahad al-Thumairy (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia)        |                  | Master Box 152 |
| 05/24/04    |              | MFR  |                           | 04019363 |      |    | Interview of Khalid Abdulrab al Yafai (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia) |                  | Master Box 152 |
| 05/24/04    |              | MFR  |                           | 04019364 |      |    | Interview of [REDACTED] (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia)               |                  | Master Box 152 |
| 05/24/04    |              | MFR  |                           | 04019365 |      |    | Interview of Khalil A. Khalil (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia)         |                  | Master Box 152 |
| 05/24/04    |              | MFR  |                           | 04019366 |      |    | Meeting with Mabahith Officials (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia)       |                  | Master Box 152 |
| 05/24/04    |              | MFR  |                           | 04019367 |      |    | Interview of Saud al-Rasheed (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia)          |                  | Master Box 152 |
| 05/24/04    |              | MFR  |                           | 04019368 |      |    | Interview of [REDACTED] (Sanaa, Yemen)                       |                  | Master Box 152 |

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MFR04019366

Memorandum for the Record

Event Meeting with Mabath Officials  
Location: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia  
Date: 22 February 2004  
Access Restrictions: D.S.M.  
Commission participants: Dieter Snell  
Raj De  
Mike Jacobson  
Non-Commission participants: 9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy  
Prepared By: Raj De  
Reviewed By: Dieter Snell  
Mike Jacobson

Due to the informal nature of this meeting, and the desire not to alter the casual dynamic, no participants took contemporaneous notes. This write-up was therefore prepared based on the collective recollection of Commission staff. (U)

The meeting took place in a special Mabath off-site location close to the U.S. Embassy. Saudi participants included Major General Abdul Aziz al-Hawareiny, Brigadier General Khalid Humaydan, Major Khalid, and Captain Faris of the Mabath. Interpretation was performed by General Khalid. (S)

After introductions and pleasantries, the discussion turned to the six individuals whom the Commission had requested to interview: Saud al-Rashid, [REDACTED] Fahad al-Thumairy, Khalil al-Khalil, Yazeed al-Salmi, and Khalid Abdulrab al-Yafai. General Khalid said that the Mabath had been under the impression that the Commission staff was not going to arrive in Saudi Arabia until February 24, therefore the interviews were originally to be scheduled between February 24 and 26. He promised that the Mabath would work to expedite these interviews in view of our arrival and current schedule. (C)

General Khalid asked whether we had any priorities among the six individuals that we wished to interview. Snell noted that of the two requests that are still pending from the last visit, Saud al-Rashid is the priority. Snell also said it would be difficult to prioritize among the remaining witnesses as they are all important to the work of the Commission. Snell noted that, if possible, Commission staff would prefer to interview Khalil al-Khalil before interviewing Fahad al-Thumairy. General Khalid did not believe that this request presented a problem, as they both are located here in Riyadh. (C)

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General Khalid informed us that three of the individuals whom we requested to interview are located in Riyadh. In addition to al-Thumairy and al-Khalil, he said Saud al-Rashid is in Riyadh. Moreover, though [redacted] is originally from the eastern province, he is a member of the Saudi navy and is stationed close to Riyadh at the moment. The two other persons we wished to interview, Khalid Abdulrab al-Yafai and Yazeed al-Salmi, would have to be brought from Jeddah. General Khalid noted that it might be easier to change the schedule for the individuals located in Riyadh because they are closer, but all efforts would be made to accommodate our schedule. (S)

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At this point, Detective Sassok noted that according to the information available to U.S. authorities, al-Rashid pledged bayat to UBL and had been selected to participate in the martyrdom operation that became the 9/11 attack. Thus, al-Rashid is no different from Mushabib al-Hamlan, who is currently in Saudi custody. [redacted] concurred and noted that al-Rashid's passport photo was recovered in a raid in Pakistan on a CD that also held pictures of three other 9/11 hijackers. Snell stressed the value of an al-Rashid interview for the Commission given his first-hand knowledge of the training received by al-Qaeda operatives. (S)

General Khalid stated that even if al-Rashid had been selected for a martyrdom operation while in Afghanistan, he decided against going through with it on his own accord once he returned to Saudi Arabia. In this sense, al-Rashid should be less of concern that someone like Mushabib al-Hamlan, who did not participate in the martyrdom operation that was to become the 9/11 plot only because of his family's intervention. General Khalid said that al-Hamlan's mother hid his passport, and al-Hamlan's brother threatened to harm him if he continued with his plan toward jihad. Unlike al-Hamlan, al-Rashid changed his mind on his own. (S)

At this point in the meeting, General Abdul Aziz received a call on his cell phone. After the phone call, we were informed that Khalid Abdulrab al-Yafai would be made available the following night for an interview. (S)

Turning to the other individuals whom we had requested to interview, General Khalid confirmed that Lafi al-Harbi is still an active member of the Saudi Navy. He said that it would not be difficult to produce him. General Khalid also expressed optimism that we would be able to interview Khalil al-Khalil, who is now a scholar and writer in Riyadh.

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General Khalid said that he has only read a small amount of al-Khalil's writings but that al-Khalil is a well-known opponent of Islamic extremism. (C)

Finally, as a side note, General Khalid then informed us that Omar al-Bayoumi had called him earlier that day to wish him a happy new year (Islamic new year). (C)

The meeting concluded with an understanding that the Mabathith would call the following afternoon with more information about who could be available to meet that evening. (C)

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Memorandum for the Record

**Meeting with Mabath officials**

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

October 14-15, 2003

**Commission participants: Philip Zelikow and Dieter Snell**

9/11 Closed by Statute

**Interview writeup: Philip Zelikow**

9/11 Classified Information

[redacted] stressed the identity of interests with the US. Before 9/11 there had been some ambivalence in the cooperation. Now this was gone. [redacted] recounted his long experience in working on terrorism problems, [redacted]

9/11 Classified Information

The SANG and Khobar Towers bombings in 1995 and 1996 were a turning point in cooperation with Americans [redacted] 9/11 Classified Information Turning to UBL, he said the Saudis had underestimated his plans and potential danger, although this became much clearer to them after UBL moved to Afghanistan in 1996. The East Africa bombings of 1998 were important, and he hoped Americans were aware of the details of how Saudi Arabia helped the US in the investigation of those cases. (C)

Referring to the Cole [redacted] commented on the scale of the smuggling problem from Yemen. [redacted]

9/11 Classified Information

[redacted] felt that a principal target of the terrorists was Saudi friendship with the US. This always comes up. After all, it is hard to name any enemy of the US that is not also an enemy of Saudi Arabia. It was important to convey this point to average Americans. Of the 15 hijackers, none were recruited for this in Saudi Arabia. They would go to Chechnya, to Afghanistan. The US-Saudi relationship was clearly a reason for choosing the 15. Visas, yes, but this was also a factor. (C)

After 9/11 many people were just in denial, including the parents and relatives of the hijackers – whom they had interviewed. The only good thing that UBL did was to admit

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what he had done. It was hard to explain to the families that their sons or relatives were murderers. This was damaging to Islam. No religion justifies killing the innocent. (U)

The Saudi government's message was clear: Anyone who conducts, supports, harbors, or "incites" terrorism is as guilty as the terrorists. This includes fraud or other ways of beating the legal system. They were not confused about this. (U)

Looking at different countries, the problem was not poverty, or lack of human rights, or lack of democracy. The problem was ideology and it was hard to arrest people just for spreading ideas. But, as security officials, there was nothing to stop them from arresting anyone for support of terrorism in any form. To repeat, there was nothing to stop them. If we wanted to hear details of cooperation, it would take years. (U)

[redacted] thought it was important to keep politics away - no side or partisan agendas. Innocents will be the victims. (U)

[redacted] underscored that 9/11 had been a turning point. [redacted]

[redacted] 9/11 Classified Information

[redacted] He hoped the Saudi message was clear. They wanted to reach the truth about 9/11 too and would be our partners in that. (C)

[redacted] 9/11 Classified Information

Muslims in Western Europe might become a new pool of recruits for Al Qa'ida, somewhat like Saudis had been before 9/11. The Europeans had the passports, money, and language skills. (U)

[redacted] called attention to the Saudi decision to publicize their internal war against terrorists. This had been valuable in awakening public consciousness to the scale of the problem and in rallying almost everyone to the government. (C)

[redacted] 9/11 Classified Information

The Saudis said that both sides needed cooperation and needed it badly. Anyone who doesn't cooperate is a conspirator. [redacted] 9/11 Classified Information

9/11 Classified Information

9/11 Closed by Statute

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Asked about the biggest obstacle to success [redacted] said it was the lack of sufficient international cooperation. [redacted]

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Asked if the USG could do more, they mentioned small problems, such as an accusation about not doing enough to control the Saudi-Iraqi border when – in fact – the problem was more on the other, coalition, side of the border. (C)

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**Memorandum for the Record**

Meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister Nizar Madani

Date: October 15, 2003

Location: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Riyadh

Commission participants: Philip Zelikow, Daniel Byman, and Kevin Scheid

Other participants: Acting Charge d' Affaires Margaret Scobey, MFA protocol representatives

Writeup by: Dan Byman

Reviewed by: Philip Zelikow

Notes: This memorandum is a summary of the key points of the meeting

Philip Zelikow began with an overview of the Commission's work and asked questions on the Kingdom's willingness and capacity to fight terrorism, both before and after September 11, 2001. Nizar responded to the questions and raised several additional issues for consideration.

Nizar emphasized that the September 11 attacks horrified most Saudis. The 15 Saudis who carried out the attacks do not represent the government or the people. He claimed that polling indicated that 90 percent of Saudis reject Bin Ladin and his activities. In Nizar's view, the United States and Saudi Arabia are in the "same boat" with regard to terrorism. In fact, he believes that Bin Ladin made the decision to use Saudis for the attack in order to drive a wedge between the United States and Saudi Arabia.

Since the September 11 attacks, Saudi Arabia has taken seven steps to fight terrorism:

- Saudi leaders have declared a "relentless war" against terrorists, those who fund them, and those who justify their activities ideologically;
- The Kingdom has frozen terrorist assets and tried to block both deliberate and accidental financial support;
- A High Commission was established in 2003 to oversee charities;
- Approximately 500 suspected terrorists have been arrested, and regular arrests continue;
- Terrorist cells have been broken up, and arms seized;
- Saudis have provided information on terrorists to several governments, including the United States, that has saved many lives; and
- The Kingdom has established two joint task forces with the United States.

Saudi Arabia often did a poor job explaining its policies to the American public. After September 11, however, it has become more open. He encourages Americans to visit the Kingdom to learn about how it is fighting terrorism.

Saudi foreign policy emphasizes preserving peace and stability. The primary issues today are the Arab-Israeli conflict and Iraq. The Arab-Israeli dispute is a primary source of instability, so the Kingdom works hard for peace. In Iraq, Saudi Arabia wants to preserve both the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. He believes that Iraqi stability requires progress on the political process in Iraq, the role of the United Nations, and the economic situation.

Saudi Arabia has made progress on relations with its neighbors. Saudi Arabia and Yemen cooperate closely. The often-troubled relationship improved considerably after the 2000 border agreement. Relations with Iran were poor after the 1979 Islamic revolution, but have improved

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In Saudi embassies, the Ambassador has the responsibility for the bilateral relationship. Embassy officials responsible for Islamic affairs or commerce rely on their own agencies for administration and budget concerns. If they are acting inappropriately, the Ambassador can take the issue to the government in Riyadh.

Nizar had no information on the post-September 11 departure of several members of the Bin Ladin family from the United States, but he noted that this was not a Ministry of Foreign Affairs responsibility. Zelikow asked that he look into this matter and provide additional information, and Nizar promised to help in this process.'

Nizar expressed disbelief about the allegations regarding Princess Haifa, noting that it was preposterous that she was involved in terrorism. Zelikow expressed understanding of this position and explained that the interest was primarily due to the unclear role of Osama Bassnan - if the Commission could learn more about his role, everything could be put in a clearer perspective.

Nizar also emphasized that [redacted] [Embassy believes he is a member of the *shura* Council] was a good man, whom he knew personally and respected. Zelikow noted that circumstances had put him in the public eye in the United States and that the Commission sought access to him to set the record straight.

9/11 Personal Privacy

MF04019362

**Memorandum for the Record**

Event: Interview of Fahad al-Thumairy

Location: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Date: 23 February 2004

Access Restrictions: D.S.M.

Commission Participants: Dieter Snell  
Raj De

Non-Commission Participants: 9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy

Foreign Representative: Major Khalid (Mabahith)

Interpreter: U.S. Embassy representative from B.P.M.

Prepared By: Raj De

Reviewed By: Dieter Snell

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The interview of Fahad al-Thumairy was conducted at the Conference Palace in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Al-Thumairy was waiting at this location with Mabahith representatives when Commission staff arrived. The interview of al-Thumairy started at approximately 9:20 pm and concluded at approximately 11:50 pm. Commission staff led the interview.

Upon arriving at the Conference Palace, the interpreter approached al-Thumairy and asked him whether he would prefer to conduct the interview in English or to use an interpreter. Al-Thumairy stated he preferred to use an interpreter because he would be more comfortable doing so. Before starting, Commission staff again confirmed this preference. During the interview, al-Thumairy appeared to generally understand the questions in English and early on started to answer in English. He would only use the interpreter on occasion.

Al-Thumairy initially sat at the table calmly with his hands folded in front of him. Over the course of the interview, his posture changed noticeably when the questions became more confrontational. During such instances, al-Thumairy would cross his arms, sit back in his chair, and rely more heavily on the interpreter (not only would he answer in Arabic, but he also waited for the interpreter to translate the questions – which he otherwise usually seemed to understand – rather than answer immediately). One example of this change in behavior occurred when the questions turned to his reported role in the wedding of Iyad Kreiwesh at the King Fahad Mosque (KFM).

The interview began with discussion concerning al-Thumairy's education and background. Al-Thumairy stated that he concentrated in Islamic Studies. He received his masters degree from the Imam Muhammed Bin Saud Islamic University. He has also studied English at UCLA for three quarters.

Al-Thumairy stated that it was because of this background in Islamic Studies that the Saudi government placed him at the Saudi consulate in Los Angeles. His role was to deal with any religious issues that arose at the consulate. Saudi Arabia is the "Mecca" for Muslims around the world, and therefore people came to the consulate to ask about Islam, the Hajj, etc. He was there to help answer such questions. Al-Thumairy added that he also served as the person to answer such questions at the KFM, and that this role was part of his official duties working for the consulate.

Al-Thumairy said that he spent a total of about six and a half years in the U.S. He returned to Riyadh about one year ago, around 6-7 February 2003. While living in Los Angeles, al-Thumairy noted that he traveled back to Saudi Arabia every year for vacation. He stated that he liked Los Angeles and that the people were friendly there. Al-Thumairy lived in Los Angeles with his wife and two children, ages three and six years old.

When asked how he was assigned to the Saudi consulate in Los Angeles, al-Thumairy said that he was given the position by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs. He said that any person who graduated with a degree in Islamic Studies like he did from Imam Muhammed Bin Saud Islamic University could have been a candidate for this position. Al-Thumairy denied that he was sponsored for this particular position by any specific individual. He said that after he graduated, he simply filled out an application and submitted it to the Ministry of Islamic Affairs.

Al-Thumairy stated that the application itself did not specify any particular position. Only at the interview was he told what positions were available. Al-Thumairy said that he wanted to go to a place where he could learn English, so he chose the U.S. He stated that he did not choose Los Angeles, though. Once he was chosen to serve in the U.S., al-Thumairy said he was sent to the Saudi Embassy in Washington, D.C. The Embassy then assigned him to the Saudi consulate in Los Angeles. Al-Thumairy said he was pleased with this assignment because of the warm weather in Los Angeles.

When asked who at the Saudi Embassy in Washington, D.C. made the decision to send him to Los Angeles, al-Thumairy said he could not recall, but noted that it was the person in charge of Islamic Affairs, who was new at the time. Al-Thumairy said that he first went to Los Angeles by himself. He was not married at the time. After six months, he came to Riyadh to get married. He returned to the U.S. with his wife.

Al-Thumairy said the person in the Islamic Affairs section at the Embassy in Washington, D.C. whose name he could not recall had phoned the Saudi consulate in Los Angeles and arranged a hotel room for him when he first traveled to the West Coast. He

looked for apartments with the assistance of the Consul General at the consulate in Los Angeles at the time. He could only remember this individual as "Hassan." This individual assigned his driver to help al-Thumairy look for apartments and interpret for him. Al-Thumairy recalled that the driver was a Saudi, but could not recall his name.

Upon arriving in Los Angeles, al-Thumairy stayed in a hotel close to both the KFM and the Saudi consulate for approximately one week. He then moved into an apartment on Kelton Avenue, near Venice Boulevard. Al-Thumairy said he subsequently moved from this apartment to a house in Culver City on Huron Avenue. This house was at the end of the same street as the KFM. Al-Thumairy said he moved from this house into an apartment closer to the consulate during his last year in the U.S. Specifically, he said he moved into the Avalon Westside apartment complex on Sepulveda Avenue with his family sometime in 2002. Al-Thumairy said that he decided to move at that time because he gave up his prior place (so as not to waste rent) when he traveled to Saudi Arabia for two months.

When asked for more details about his position at both the Saudi consulate and the KFM in Los Angeles, al-Thumairy said that before he started working, he was a full-time student at UCLA. He studied English for seven months in 1998 initially, and only after that time did he start his job at the consulate, where, as he mentioned earlier, he answered religious questions. People at the KFM would direct those from the mosque with questions about Islam to him at the consulate. Although he also helped at the KFM, al-Thumairy wanted to clearly express that he did not consider his activities at the mosque to be "work." As he put it, the mosque is a place for prayer, and he volunteered his services at the KFM.

Although it was difficult for him to estimate, al-Thumairy said that he spent about 60-70% of his time at the consulate, and about 20% at the KFM. When asked if he had an office at the consulate, al-Thumairy replied that there were more desks than there were people so he would often sit in different places while he was working there. He would answer religious questions in person and in writing, and provided advice on a range of issues concerning how to pray, etc. Al-Thumairy said he never had any role in the secular duties of the consulate, such as dealing with issues involving passports and visas.

When asked whether others at the consulate performed duties similar to his, al-Thumairy said he was the only person who dealt with religious issues besides those who assisted him with administrative matters, such as answering the phone. Al-Thumairy was asked to name others who worked at the consulate when he was there. He named the following individuals: Hamad Saloun, Consul General; Dr. Sami Ibrahim, Deputy Consul General; and Waleed Bukhari, who dealt with visa matters. Al-Thumairy said that he worked most closely with two individuals named Said Jabreen and Abdullah Hawad, both of whom helped him with administrative matters. Jabreen replaced Hawad in this role. Al-Thumairy denied having a driver at the consulate; he said he drove his own car. When asked who was his superior, al-Thumairy said he reported to the Consul General. When asked if there was anybody at the Saudi Embassy in Washington, D.C. to whom he

reported, al-Thumairy said that he had the most contact with Dr. Majid, who was responsible for Islamic Affairs at the Embassy.

Turning to his role at the KFM, al-Thumairy said that while he was a full-time student at UCLA, he did not provide any religious consultation at the mosque. As did everybody else at the consulate, he attended the KFM. Because he was a good reader of the Koran, he was on occasion asked to lead the Friday prayer. This was a very important role, but any student of Islam with the ability to do so may be asked to lead prayer. When asked who selected him to lead this prayer, al-Thumairy named Tajjudin Shuaib, the manager of the KFM and the main imam at the mosque. Shuaib was al-Thumairy's primary contact at the KFM.

Al-Thumairy stated that at the time, the KFM constantly approached the consulate for help because it needed support. Lots of Muslims and non-Muslims came to the mosque with religious questions, and the KFM did not have the resources to address them. Al-Thumairy said that people soon started to approach him with questions after prayers at the mosque, and he started to spend more and more time at the KFM providing religious consultation. He did not perform any function other than prayer and consultation at the KFM, though. Shuaib performed most of the weddings and funerals. Shuaib is not Saudi. He is from Africa, but he is an American and has lived in the U.S. for 25 years. Al-Thumairy was not sure how Shuaib was assigned his position at the KFM because that was before his time there. He speculated that Shuaib was likely appointed by the Council of the KFM.

Al-Thumairy said he did not have much contact with the Council. Although he prayed with its members at the KFM, he did not know them well. Al-Thumairy said that his appointment to the KFM was not made by the Council, but rather by the consulate. He reiterated that his role at the mosque was not "work," however. When asked about the names of people on the Council, Al-Thumairy identified only a Turk named Dr. Othman and another person from Burma whose name he could not recall. Al-Thumairy noted again that he did not have much contact with the Council.

Al-Thumairy described the mosque as having approximately 500 attendees at Friday prayer services. He did not believe that was especially large compared to other mosques in the area. Thumairy said that about 90% of Friday attendees were people who came to the KFM on more than one occasion and whom he at least recognized as such. Only about 10% were newcomers. He saw many of the attendees in the neighborhood, however he said that most of his friends were from the consulate rather than the KFM.

When asked whether he ever helped students or other visitors to the U.S. get settled in the U.S. either through the mosque or the consulate, al-Thumairy recounted only one occasion around 1999. Al-Thumairy recalled two Saudi guests to whom he gave some general advice about where to live. He stated that a man named [REDACTED] came to the U.S. with his sick father who needed medical treatment. Notably, without being asked, Thumairy volunteered that he did not find an apartment for these visitors or make any reservations for them. He recalled that the son and the sick father stayed

somewhere near the UCLA hospital and left after about three months. Al-Thumairy did not know where or exactly how long they stayed, but he guessed it must have been about three months based on when he saw them at the KFM.

When pressed as to whether he could narrow the time period during which the two Saudi visitors may have come to the U.S., al-Thumairy could not provide any greater detail other than to say that it must have been after 1998 when he finished his courses at UCLA and began to spend more time at the consulate. Al-Thumairy repeatedly confirmed that this was the only instance in which he assisted Saudi visitors, that the only people who came were the son and his sick father, and that all he did was provide them with his general thoughts on which areas of Los Angeles it would be safe to stay. Further, al-Thumairy did not think that they traveled outside Los Angeles at any time, such as to San Diego.

Al-Thumairy insisted that he first saw the sick father and son at the Saudi consulate and that he did not find any drivers or taxis for them. While initially stating that the Saudis told him they already had a driver, al-Thumairy conceded, when pressed, that he never actually saw their driver. When pressed further as to how they would have had a driver, he stated that many people come with their own driver, or maybe they obtained a driver through the Embassy or the consulate. He ultimately stated that he really did not know if they had a driver, and they could have gotten around in numerous ways. They may even have had a drivers license and rented a car on their own.

Al-Thumairy said that visitors came all the time – students, sick people, etc. He repeated that he provided religious advice at the Saudi consulate and never provided help with apartments, taxis, or other similar things. When asked who at the Saudi consulate was responsible for providing such assistance, al-Thumairy said that nobody in particular had this responsibility. Rather, he stated, visitors would be assisted by the first person they dealt with at the consulate and everybody who worked there helped in this way.

When asked whether he recognized the name Iyad Kreiwesh, al-Thumairy said no. When confronted with the fact that we have information that he performed a wedding ceremony for this individual, who is from San Diego, at the KFM, al-Thumairy responded that he never performed any wedding ceremony and that he in fact does not know how to do so. When asked whether anybody at the KFM performs weddings other than Shuaib, al-Thumairy referred to an individual named FNU Amin, or Abu Ahmed. Al-Thumairy stated that in order for a wedding to be legal, the person performing the ceremony must possess some kind of license. His description of the authorization needed to perform a wedding ceremony was translated literally as “the writing of the book.”

Al-Thumairy again denied recognizing the name Iyad Kreiwesh. He also denied recognizing the names Qualid Moncef Benomrane and Mohdar Abdullah. Al-Thumairy repeated that his friends were mostly from the consulate, but that while he may be known to many people as the person who provides religious advice, he himself might not everyone who knows him. He said that he does not question the people who approach him for religious advice, and that the only individuals from the KFM he would know are

those who may have lived nearby and whom he may have seen regularly. When asked if he knew whether any individuals from San Diego visited the KFM, al-Thumairy remembered an individual named Hassan Abukar. Abukar was an old man from Somalia, and according to al-Thumairy he always came to the KFM seeking assistance for the Somali community.

Al-Thumairy stated that he did not recognize the name Omar al-Bayoumi. When shown a photo of al-Bayoumi, al-Thumairy first denied recognizing him. At this time, Major Khalid whispered something to him in Arabic, and Thumairy said in English, "Oh, Bayoumi." Al-Thumairy then acknowledged that he recognized al-Bayoumi because he had seen him on television, but he denied ever seeing him in Los Angeles. Al-Thumairy was then shown a series of photos of individuals whom he denied recognizing, including: Qualid Moncef Benomrane, Osama Basnan (though he said he recognized the name from newspapers), Osama Nooh, Mohdar Abdullah, and Yazeed al-Salmi. Al-Thumairy once again said that normally there were many people coming to the KFM, indeed as many as 500 on some Fridays, so he simply cannot remember all those people.

When asked whether he had ever been to San Diego, al-Thumairy recounted one time when Hassan Abukar invited him to the opening of a new mosque. Al-Thumairy said that he only went for dinner and he returned to Los Angeles that same night. He did not know exactly where the mosque was, other than that it was in the city of San Diego. The mosque was called the al-Ansar mosque. Al-Thumairy recalled that both he and Shuaib went that night. When asked whether he had heard of the al-Ribat mosque, al-Thumairy said that he could not recall specifically but noted that there was a list of all mosques in southern California posted at the Saudi consulate. When asked whether he had ever had any contact with any individuals associated with the al-Ribat mosque, perhaps by providing Korans or the like, al-Thumairy said that he did not know because, like any mosque in the area, its people may have come to the consulate at some point and he would not remember. Al-Thumairy did not recognize the name or identify the photo of Anwar Aulaqi.

Al-Thumairy was next asked about his rental history at the Avalon apartment complex, where he rented an apartment after vacating the house on Huron Street. When asked specifically whether he, the KFM, or the Saudi consulate ever rented any other apartments there, al-Thumairy responded no. He said he did not know many others from the complex, and remembered only one individual named [redacted] who was about 40 years old and lived at Avalon with his family, including four or five children. Al-Thumairy did not recognize the name [redacted]. Al-Thumairy did not know of any relationship between the apartment complex and either the mosque or the consulate. He said that if somebody were coming to the mosque, he believed that Shuaib would usually recommend staying at the Travel Lodge on Sepulveda. He did not know, but speculated that maybe Shuaib received some sort of discount there.

Focusing on the time period around of January 2000, al-Thumairy could not definitely recall whether he was in Los Angeles or not. He said that although he usually traveled to Saudi Arabia in the summers, one year he went in January. He could not recall what year



it was that he visited in January. He thus assumed he was probably in Los Angeles at this time. When asked if he remembers two Saudi visitors appearing at the consulate, perhaps even with a sick father, at this time, Thumairy said no and that the only visitor he recalled was the person who came alone with his sick father, as he described earlier. When pressed a bit more on this topic, al-Thumairy repeated that visitors seek assistance from the consulate but not from him specifically. As a religious figure, he would not be approached in this way. He believed that visiting students may not be provided a point of contact as he was through the Embassy when he moved to Los Angeles, but rather might simply walk into the consulate after arriving at the airport.

When asked whether he recognized the name Mohammed al-Muhanna, al-Thumairy said yes. According to him, al-Muhanna had a similar role as he did at the consulate. When asked why he did not mention al-Muhanna before when he was asked whether any other people at the consulate performed a similar religious function as he did, al-Thumairy said that al-Muhanna only arrived during his last year in the U.S. Al-Thumairy said that al-Muhanna volunteered at the KFM in the same capacity as he did. Al-Thumairy confirmed that neither of them received any financial compensation from the KFM. Al-Thumairy also confirmed that while living in the U.S., he had no source of income other than the consulate.

Al-Thumairy said the KFM was a gift from King Fahad in 1996 or 1997. Construction of the KFM was coordinated through the Saudi Embassy and the mayor of Culver City. Upon further questioning, al-Thumairy clarified that from 1996-1998 the mosque used to be known as the Ibn Tamiyah mosque, and that services were held in the small prayer hall across the street from the current KFM. The license needed to open the KFM was not obtained until 1998. One of the sons of King Abdul Aziz attended the opening ceremony.

Al-Thumairy was then asked whether he recognized the name Khalil al-Khalil. Al-Thumairy recognized the name, and said that al-Khalil had been in the U.S. for a long time and had helped coordinate construction of the KFM through the Saudi Embassy in Washington, D.C. Al-Thumairy said he saw al-Khalil a couple of times at the consulate in Los Angeles, as well as at the opening ceremony for the KFM in 1998, which is where he learned about al-Khalil's role in coordinating construction of the KFM. Al-Khalil was the head of the KFM Council. Al-Thumairy said he first met him at the old Ibn Tamiyah prayer center before the KFM was built. Al-Thumairy claimed to have never met al-Khalil prior to coming to the U.S., but he knew that al-Khalil had his family in Saudi Arabia.

When asked about the following individuals, al-Thumairy claimed not to recognize their names: Fathi Abdullah, Arif Sheikh, Asif Sheikh, Abdusattar Sheikh, Musaed al-Jarrah, Fahad al-Hudaydi, Khalid Cherif, Mohammed Aliter. He was also shown photographs of 9/11 hijackers Nawaf al-Hazmi and Khalid al-Mihdar, but he said he recognized these people only from the news.

Returning to the issue of weddings, al-Thumairy again denied ever performing a ceremony at the KFM. He said that the closest thing he ever did was congratulate people after they were married. When confronted again with the fact that we have information from other sources that he performed the ceremony for an individual named Iyad Kreiwesh, al-Thumairy flatly denied that this information could be true. Al-Thumairy also explained once again that he did not assist Saudi visitors because, as a religious figure at the consulate, it was beneath him to do things like look for apartments for guests. Al-Thumairy said that the only visitors he ever had from abroad were his father-in-law and his uncle-in-law. Al-Thumairy also once again confirmed that he never rented any other apartments at the Avalon complex. When asked whether he would be surprised if there were other apartments at Avalon with leases in his name, he said yes because the management would have required identification to sign the lease.

When asked whether students from the Ministry of Islamic Affairs would ever visit the U.S. prior to the completion of their studies in Saudi Arabia, al-Thumairy said no. When asked where he had traveled during his time in the U.S., al-Thumairy said he had been to Orlando, Florida to visit Disneyworld with his family and he had been to Washington, D.C. and Virginia when he first arrived. Al-Thumairy denied ever having traveled to any other places in the western U.S., such as Arizona or New Mexico.

Finally, al-Thumairy was asked whether there ever were disagreements at the KFM. He acknowledged that there were disagreements, but said he was not involved with them, and that they concerned such issues as who would provide the Friday sermon. When asked to explain why such disagreements arose, al-Thumairy somewhat cryptically said sometimes religious figures like him are loved by the community and others, who may wear religious clothing, are not religious in their heart and therefore people do not love them. These latter people are envious of the first kind. Al-Thumairy at first refused to name any person in particular because he said he did not want to speak behind anyone's back. Upon further questioning, he mentioned Khalil al-Khalil.

When asked whether there was any discussion of jihad at the KFM, al-Thumairy said that there was but that it was only about "good" jihad, not "bad" jihad. He said that this discussion was not only necessary, but that it was his responsibility to teach the Islamic community the different between good and bad jihad, especially after 9/11.

At this point during the interview [redacted] asked a few questions of al-Thumairy. Upon being asked the number of his apartment at the Avalon complex, al-Thumairy said he could recall only that it was on the second floor of the complex. He then stated that he actually lived there twice, first in an apartment alone on the first floor and then second with his family on the second floor. No further details were provided. When told by SA Maguire that his name appears on more than one lease at Avalon in the summer of 2001, al-Thumairy said that when he returned from vacation in Saudi Arabia, his apartment was not yet ready so he was living in a different apartment from that into which he later moved. Al-Thumairy offered this speculation as his only explanation for why his name may appear on the lease for more than one apartment at that time. He could not recall whether this was in 2001 or 2002, however.

Al-Thumairy was asked whether the disagreements at the KFM discussed earlier ever escalated beyond discussion and whether anybody was ever asked to leave the mosque or not give a prayer. Al-Thumairy said no. Al-Thumairy also denied ever having a disagreement with an unknown Yemeni at the KFM, and could not identify who this unknown Yemeni might be even when told he owns both a blue car and an off-white minivan.

Al-Thumairy was asked whether the individual with the sick father that he discussed earlier was the same person he mentioned during his interview last year at LAX, when he spoke of a person named "Salah." Al-Thumairy did not recall mentioning that individual during a prior interview and affirmed that the only person with a sick father who visited was the person he described in this interview.

Lastly, when asked about his attire in the Los Angeles, al-Thumairy confirmed that he generally wore a thobe both at the consulate and at the KFM. However, he also indicated that he sometimes wore a western business suit, pointing to Snell as an example.

Before concluding the interview, al-Thumairy wished to say a few words. He said that he has always spread the message of peace, both in the U.S. and here in Saudi Arabia, and especially since 9/11. He said he wants to work with the U.S. and the Saudi government because terrorism hurts everyone.

Al-Thumairy also said that he has been affected a great deal by the media, since everybody assumes he helped the 9/11 hijackers. In particular, he referred to an article in the Los Angeles Times.

Al-Thumairy also noted that it is difficult for him to feel like he cannot go to the U.S., even though he is settled here in Saudi Arabia. At some point, he would like to finish his PhD in the U.S. and does not know if that will be possible.

YFR 04019361

**Memorandum for the Record**

Event: Interview of Fahad al-Thumairy

Location: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Date: 24-25 February 2004

Access Restrictions: D.S.M.

Commission Participants: Dieter Snell  
Raj De

Non-Commission Participants: 9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy

Foreign Representatives: Major Khalid (Mabahith)  
Major Habib (Mabahith)

Interpreter: 9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy

Prepared By: Raj De

Reviewed By: Dieter Snell

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At about 7:00 pm on the evening of 24 February 2004, Major Habib of the Mabahith informed Commission staff that he had received a call from Fahad al-Thumairy, who wanted to clarify some statements he had made the previous night regarding his rental history at the Avalon Westside apartment complex. Al-Thumairy was invited to return for a follow-up interview. This follow-up interview started at approximately 11:45 pm, and ended at about 1:15 am. The interview was conducted at the Conference Palace in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Commission staff led the interview.

Al-Thumairy began the follow-up interview by noting that, upon further reflection, he wished to clarify what he had said the previous night regarding his rental history at the Avalon apartment complex. Al-Thumairy said that he had thought of a reason why his name may have appeared on multiple leases at Avalon. Contrary to what he said at his first interview, it was probably not because he had been placed in a separate apartment until his regular apartment was ready. He said he now recalled another incident that he had forgotten to mention in his prior interview.

Al-Thumairy said that in July 2001 he received a call concerning an old, sick man from Riyadh who was soon going to come to Los Angeles for a liver transplant. The name of the man was Muhammed al-\_\_\_\_\_. Al-Thumairy said he spoke with this man's son, but he could not recall the son's name. The son's name may have been "Ali" or "Saleh."

The son said that he would be accompanying his father to Los Angeles for the medical treatment and that they needed a house or an apartment in which to stay. Al-Thumairy initially suggested that they stay in a hotel, but he was told that they needed a place with a kitchen to prepare special food for the old man. The son asked al-Thumairy to reserve an apartment for them.

Al-Thumairy approached the leasing office at Avalon and was told that he would need to sign a lease in his name and place a deposit in order to reserve an apartment for these two Saudi visitors. Al-Thumairy therefore signed a lease and placed a deposit. The sick man and his son arrived about a week later. The sick man went to UCLA hospital for his liver transplant, but he was told that his body was not ready and that he would need to wait six more months. The sick man and his son decided to return to Saudi Arabia soon thereafter and to come back to the U.S. at a later date for the medical treatment, so they only ended up staying in Los Angeles until about mid-August. The lease for the Avalon apartment that al-Thumairy had rented was month-to-month, so it was not a problem to cut it short. Because the sick man and his son did not have any checks to pay the rent, al-Thumairy said he paid it on their behalf and they paid him back. Al-Thumairy said the deposit for the apartment was returned to him directly by the management at Avalon. Although he said that he knew when the two Saudis had arrived at LAX, al-Thumairy said he did not know exactly when the two left the U.S. Al-Thumairy said that the sick man and his son spent most of their time in the hospital at UCLA, but that he saw them a few times at the KFM during the month or so that they stayed in Los Angeles. According to al-Thumairy, the sick man has since passed away.

When pressed about the details of the visit, al-Thumairy often claimed not to know or to recall many specifics. For instance, although al-Thumairy said he remembered receiving the initial call on his cell phone, he did not know how the sick man and his son knew to call him. He said he assumes that somebody at the Saudi Embassy in Washington, D.C. or somebody in Riyadh gave them his name and number. Al-Thumairy also said he did not know exactly when the two men left Los Angeles because they did not let him know when they were leaving. When asked how they could have paid him back for the rent if they did not inform him of their departure, al-Thumairy said that he could not recall but thought that they must have deposited cash or a traveler check into his Wells Fargo bank account. Although al-Thumairy claimed that he accompanied the sick man and his son to the leasing office at the Avalon apartment complex when they arrived in Los Angeles, he did not recall how the two visitors received the key to the apartment, which was rented under his name. When pressed about the fact that the Avalon management assigns individualized electronic key cards to its residents for the outer gate, al-Thumairy speculated that the two Saudi visitors may have used his electronic key card. Finally, al-Thumairy said he did not know how the sick man and his son got around Los Angeles; he guessed that they may have called the Saudi consulate in Los Angeles for assistance, but said he was unsure.

Al-Thumairy was certain that this sick father and son, as well as the sick father and son he had mentioned during his prior interview, were the only Saudi guests he had assisted while he was in the U.S. Al-Thumairy was also explicitly asked to confirm again that at

no time during his six and a half years in the U.S. did he ever arrange for or pay for any visitors to be driven around Los Angeles. He said that was correct.

At this point, al-Thumairy was asked again about Omar al-Bayoumi. Al-Thumairy was reminded that at his interview the previous night, he had initially denied recognizing al-Bayoumi until Major Khalid said something to him, which was when he acknowledged recognizing al-Bayoumi from the media. Al-Thumairy was also informed that we have information that shows numerous phone calls between him and al-Bayoumi over a short period in December 1999, from both al-Thumairy's cell and landline phones. Finally, al-Thumairy was told that since speaking with him the prior night, we were told by another witness [i.e. Khalil al-Khalil] that he had been seen meeting with al-Bayoumi on several occasions at the KFM.

Despite being confronted with these facts, al-Thumairy continued to deny knowing al-Bayoumi. First, he suggested that his phone number may have been given to somebody else after him, so the calls may have been made by that person. When he was reminded about the time frame of the calls, as well as the fact that the calls were reflected on more than one phone line subscribed under his name, he noted that he often spoke with people who called him with religious questions but he did not necessarily know them. When he was reminded about the frequency of the calls during this time period, as well as the fact that a person whom we recently interviewed said he knew that al-Thumairy had met with Bayoumi in person at the KFM, al-Thumairy initially said he may have been mistaken for somebody else. He then said that there are some people who may say things that are false out of mere spite or jealousy. When asked whether he was speaking about any particular person, al-Thumairy declined to provide a name but did note that some of those involved in the management of KFM wanted to be loved and respected even though they were not.

At this point, al-Thumairy was once again pressed on the issue of wedding ceremonies at the KFM. When asked to confirm what he had stated in his prior interview, namely that he was not qualified to perform wedding ceremonies, al-Thumairy contradicted himself, saying that under Islamic jurisprudence he was qualified to perform weddings. However, although he was qualified, he said he never performed a wedding at the KFM. He said that Tajuddin Shuaib, the manager and primary imam at the KFM, was the individual to whom people went when they wanted to get married because Shuaib was known to have the necessary authority. Al-Thumairy once again denied performing a wedding for Iyad Kreiwesh. Al-Thumairy said that if somebody came to the KFM and wanted to marry a second wife (while still married to his first wife), no official at the KFM would perform such a wedding because it would violate U.S. law, and the policy of the KFM was to do nothing illegal.

Al-Thumairy also confirmed that when a Saudi person wanted to marry a non-Saudi, the KFM would have had to notify the Saudi consulate for approval. Al-Thumairy said that he was unaware of any such weddings at the KFM. When asked whether he knew if one of the 9/11 hijackers Nawaf al-Hazmi or Khalid al-Midhar had ever approached anybody at the KFM to inquire about the possibility of getting married without notifying the Saudi consulate, al-Thumairy said he did not know of any such thing. If this incident happened,

al-Thumairy speculated that it must have been one of the visiting imams that the hijacker approached.

Returning to the issue of the sick father and son for whom he claimed to have rented an apartment at Avalon, al-Thumairy was asked how he thought we could confirm his story, since (1) the sick man is dead, (2) al-Thumairy could not seem to recall the name of the son, and (3) the Avalon records would have no indication of who actually lived in that apartment. Al-Thumairy first suggested that we check the hospital records at UCLA. When it was brought to his attention that it could very well be that such an individual did in fact visit UCLA hospital, but that the key point we would need to confirm was whether this man and his son stayed at the Avalon apartment that al-Thumairy had rented, he suggested we speak with the "Iranian" man with whom he dealt in the Avalon leasing office. Al-Thumairy could not recall this man's name or other details to identify him.

Lastly, al-Thumairy was asked whether the individual he identified from the consulate in Los Angeles only as "Hassan" during his prior interview was named Abdul Aziz Hassan. Al-Thumairy, contrary to his apparent inability to recall the name of this person the night before, quickly said no, and that the person to whom he had referred was named Hassan Nazer.

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**Memorandum for the Record**

Subject: Interview of Hamdan Bin Gharib Al-Shalawi  
Location: Conference Palace, Riyadh  
Interviewed by: S/A Jaqueline Maguire (FBI-Penttbom)  
[Redacted] 9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy  
Dietrich Snell (9-11 Commission) (DS)  
Interpreter: [Redacted] 9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy  
Also present: Col. Jaber (Mabahith)  
Maj. Khalid (Mabahith)  
Maj. Habib (Mabahith)  
Interview Date: October 22-23, 2003  
MFR Date: October 23, 2003  
MFR Prepared By: DS

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The interview commenced at approximately 10:15 pm. It was led by S/A Maguire, pursuant to an agreement between the Commission and the FBI (which had requested to interview Al-Shalawi back in June but had seen no movement on that request until the Commission asked in late September to interview him as well). DS asked questions after S/A Maguire had concluded her questioning.

Although he was made aware of the availability of an interpreter, Al-Shalawi declined that option and the interview was conducted entirely in English, in which he plainly was fluent. He appeared quite relaxed throughout the 3-hour interview and very intelligent, answering questions appropriately without any evident comprehension problems.

**Background**

After introductions, Al-Shalawi was asked to provide his professional and educational background. He currently is an Assistant Professor in Linguistics at the Imam University and is entering his third year in that position. He received his B.A. from the University in 1413 (Hejira) and found his further education delayed by the Gulf War, during which he remained at the University as a teaching assistant.

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In 1995, Al-Shalawi and his family moved to East Lansing, Michigan, where he enrolled in the Linguistics M.A. program of Michigan State University, receiving his degree in 1997. Thereafter, he enrolled at Arizona State University (ASU) in Tempe. He remained at ASU for 4 years until receiving his Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Linguistics in the spring of 2001. While at ASU, he returned to Saudi Arabia each summer (receiving tickets from the KSA government) with his family, except for the summer of 2000.

In response to a question about travel to countries other than the KSA during his time at ASU, Al-Shalawi stated that he took only a trip to Jordan to pursue one [redacted] who had bounced a check paying for a large quantity of baby formula. According to Al-Shalawi, [redacted] owed him \$15,000-\$18,000 for the formula, which Al-Shalawi and others had purchased for immediate re-sale. (Al-Shalawi volunteered - somewhat defensively - that he considered the baby formula caper perfectly legal and noted that his student status prevented him from obtaining regular employment.)

The trip to Jordan lasted only about ten days and proved successful, as Al-Shalawi succeeded in finding [redacted] in the Jordanian military and, after complaining to [redacted] superiors, obtained approximately \$12,000 from [redacted]. According to Al-Shalawi, [redacted] had traveled to the US in order to obtain medical treatment for his child. Al-Shalawi initially dated his trip to Jordan in 2000 or 2001; when pressed on this later in the interview, he telephoned his wife who, after reportedly conferring with her brother, called back and said the trip was in October 1999. Al-Shalawi renewed his passport in Los Angeles before the trip to Jordan and traveled on Royal Jordanian Airlines.

Contacts in Arizona

Al-Shalawi did not leave the US after the 11/19/99 America West incident (see below) until he completed his studies. His visa application in August 2001 - submitted so that he could return to ASU and participate in his graduation ceremony and wind up his affairs in Tempe - was denied. He eventually sold his house in Tempe to the leader of the Islamic Center (IC) there, one Ahmad Al-Shukarat (ph). Al-

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Shalawi used to lead prayers at the IC and served as Imam for his last two years in the community.

While in Tempe, Al-Shalawi was close friends with [redacted] a microbiologist whom he first met upon arriving in Arizona. Although Al-Shalawi at first denied having any special relationship with anyone else, he admitted, when specifically prompted, being close to Ghassen Al-Sharbi, who attended school in Flagstaff. Al-Shalawi then gave an unsolicited description of Al-Sharbi as a "very good person," "sociable," and "very nice" with "a sense of humor" despite his current incarceration in GITMO. Al-Shalawi has received two postcards from Al-Sharbi and admitted knowing, while still in Arizona, that Al-Sharbi was planning to go to Chechnya for Jihad, or "work to satisfy the Creator" and receive the ultimate "reward" of "Paradise." Al-Sharbi's intent was to contact the El Mouhajiroun in the UK. He left Arizona before Al-Shalawi did, and Al-Shalawi heard nothing further about him until after returning to the KSA, at which point Al-Sharbi's father told him that Ghassen had gone to Afghanistan. Al-Shalawi insisted that Al-Sharbi has nothing against Americans and is simply a victim of "circumstance."

Asked specifically about Zakaria Soubra, Al-Shalawi acknowledged him to be a close friend of Al-Sharbi's and a frequent visitor (every 2-3 weeks) at Shalawi's house. He also stated that Soubra was well known as a leader of demonstrations and was disliked by the IC leadership. Soubra may have helped facilitate Al-Sharbi's Chechnya venture through connections in the UK.

Al-Shalawi also associated with Muhammad Al-Qudhaieen (MAQ) while in Arizona, having first met him at Imam University in Riyadh, where Al-Shalawi participated in a phonetics study MAQ was performing.

At this point in the interview, Al-Shalawi was shown numerous photographs of 9/11 plot figures and was asked whether he knew any of them. He identified only the photograph of Hani Hanjour, whom he recalled attending services during Ramadan with Rayed Abdullah at a time when Al-Shalawi and Abdullah were leading the prayers. Al-

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Shalawi dated his encounter with Hanjour as occurring before the America West incident.

Al-Shalawi denied knowing anyone named Ziyad Khalil.

America West Incident

Al-Shalawi's description of the 11/19/99 America West flight was consistent with the version set forth in the 11/22/99 FD-302 of his post-arrest statement.\* He and MAQ were among a group of Saudi students invited to attend a symposium at the KSA Embassy in Washington, DC. When they boarded the flight, Al-Shalawi and MAQ had a discussion as to whether the flight was non-stop, which MAQ promptly took up with a female flight attendant who assured both passengers that the flight would arrive in DC in time for their engagement at the Embassy.

Because they had checked in at different times, MAQ and Al-Shalawi had seat assignments far apart from each other. While they were still on the ground, MAQ came back to where Al-Shalawi was sitting and asked why he had declined a male flight attendant's suggestion that he take the seat next to MAQ. Never having received any such invitation from the attendant, Al-Shalawi now moved forward to sit next to MAQ.

During the flight, Al-Shalawi and MAQ spoke loudly in Arabic with each other (as Al-Shalawi said Arabs are wont to do). When MAQ said he had to go to the bathroom, Al-Shalawi advised him to go to the rear of the plane, but saw MAQ go forward; he returned less than minute later, saying that he had been told to use the aft facilities. Al-Shalawi maintained that he slept for the remainder of the flight and was surprised to be arrested and removed from the plane in handcuffs when they landed in Columbus.

During his FBI interview, Al-Shalawi was told that the flight crew reacted as they did because everyone was still

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\*Al-Shalawi's account of this incident was delivered in narrative form with very few questions interspersed. He clearly has told the tale, including the description of the humiliation he experienced, many times.

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very nervous about possible terrorist activity in the wake of the Egypt Air crash.

After Al-Shalawi and MAQ were released, America West upgraded their tickets, flew them to DC, and paid cab fare to the Embassy, where they briefed the Cultural Attache, Mazyad Al-Mazyad, on the incident. Mazyad notified Al-Shalawi's brother that everything was OK, and advised Al-Shalawi and MAQ to take it easy. They appeared at a news conference staged the following day by the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR).

At this point in the interview, Al-Shalawi took the (unsolicited) opportunity to hold forth at length on the subject of terrorism and what he considers to be its incompatibility with Islam, which he said requires respect for the rights of others and does not dictate that everyone become Muslim. He described those who perpetrated the 9/11 attacks as having done the "worst I can imagine." While expressing some question as to whether the 19 individuals identified by law enforcement actually committed the crime, he stated that the act was unjustified. That 15 of those individuals were Saudi, however, should not damn the entire Saudi nation in his view.

Al-Shalawi described the lawsuit he and MAQ filed against America West as necessary to teach others that the treatment they received was wrong. Unable to get CAIR to give the lawsuit immediate attention, they contacted Robert Shapiro, who advised them to retain Ohio counsel. They hired a Tucson lawyer MAQ found near the University instead. During the litigation, which lasted about 2 years, Al-Shalawi's deposition was taken. He denies having read transcripts of any depositions of America West employees, but admits hearing their version of the facts from the FBI at the time of his arrest.

The lawyer contacted Al-Shalawi 3-4 months ago, informed him that the case had been dismissed, and advised him not to appeal, given the post-9/11 climate. Al-Shalawi discussed the matter with MAQ (who now teaches in the same department at Imam University) and both agreed to adopt this course. Al-Shalawi claims not to have opened the envelope containing the case documents the lawyer sent him.

Other Foreign Travel: Afganistan/Pakistan

Asked again about travel to countries other than the KSA, Al-Shalawi now identified a tourism trip he took one summer around 1998 (i.e., before the America West incident) with a friend who was traveling in connection with a furniture business to Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Bahrain. Al-Shalawi said he also visited Indnonesia another time about 6-7 years ago.

In response to a question whether the foregoing represented all of his foreign travel, he said, "That's all, I think." When asked again a few minutes later, however, he identified a trip of several months he took around 1987-88 to Afghanistan, where he went to engage in charity work supported by the KSA government. Al-Shalawi denied ever returning to Afghanistan since that trip. Regarding Afghanistan, Al-Shalawi made a point of saying that he encountered volunteers from many different organizations, including the Red Cross. He admitted also meeting people who had come to Afghanistan to fight. He denied using a different name there, and emphasized that Al-Qaeda did not exist, all was "open," and everyone he met was there to help.

Al-Shalawi assisted in collecting and delivering donations for a school in Peshawar run by a man who, according to Al-Shalawi, was killed by an Egyptian upset with the teacher's non-violent philosophy.

When questioned by DS whether he had seen any training camps, Al-Shalawi admitted attending a camp (Sayaf) in Pakistan, where he received physical conditioning and weapons training before going briefly to Jajee, Afghanistan at a time when the war was no longer going on in that area. (Abdullah Azzam was still alive at this time, according to Al-Shalawi.) He claimed never to have received any training in explosives and said he could not recall the names of any of the trainers at the camp, nor those of any of the individuals with whom he trained. He made a point of saying that some of the people in the camp were American. Al-Shalawi said he was not familiar with the

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names Osama Asmurai, Wali Khan Amin Shah, or Ali Muhammed, and that he never met Abu Zubaida.

In response questioning about his whereabouts during the 2000-2001 time frame, Al-Shalawi stated that he was enrolled in and present at ASU during that entire academic year.

UBL and Terrorism

Asked specifically what he thought of UBL and his fatwas, Al-Shalawi said UBL "is not doing the right thing, not doing fine," that his actions are "not acceptable," that "violence leads to other violence," and that the targeting of innocent people is "unacceptable." Al-Shalawi claimed that UBL's name never came up at the IC in Tempe, where he could not recall anyone being pro-jihad.

According to Al-Shalawi, scholars who know Islam better than UBL does have rejected his teaching. Al-Shalawi was very surprised by the 9/11 attacks.

On the other hand, Al-Shalawi insisted, at length, that the problem of terrorism arises out of the inherent double standard treatment accorded by the US to Israel and Palestine.

When asked whether he considers the Pentagon or Khobar Towers to be more legitimate targets than the World Trade Center because of their military connection, Al-Shalawi said he did not. He condemned Khobar Towers as a sneak attack, which he deems contrary to Islam.

MFR 04019363

**Memorandum for the Record**

Subject: Interview of Khalid Abdulrab al Yafai  
Location: Conference Palace, Riyadh  
Interviewed by: Dietrich Snell (9-11 Commission) (DS)  
Michael Jacobson (9-11 Commission)  
Interpreter: Major Habib (Mabahith)  
Also present: 9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy  
Interview Date: February 24, 2004  
MFR Date: February 24, 2004  
MFR Prepared By: Michael Jacobson

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The interview commenced at approximately midnight. At the start of the interview, the interviewee said that he would prefer to use an interpreter, rather than conduct the interview in English. As the U.S. Government's interpreter had already departed, Major Habib agreed to translate. During the course of the interview, it became clear that the interviewee understood and could speak English reasonably well, and there were a number of occasions when he answered the questions in English, without waiting for Major Habib to translate the questions for him. The interview concluded at approximately 2 A.M.

**Education in the U.S.**

Abdulrab came to the U.S. to study English, after graduating from university in Jordan. He was planning to eventually study for his CPA in the United States. He first came to the U.S. in October 1998, and was enrolled at the English Language School (ELS) in San Diego. ELS arranged his accommodations in the U.S., and put him up with a family named the  . He did not know the   before he arrived in San Diego. He came to San Diego on his own. Abdulrab was enrolled in ELS from the time that he arrived in the U.S. While he was at ELS, he applied for another school, and he transferred from ELS to this other school after about 3-4 months. He could not remember the exact name of this second school, but he thought that it was something like "ESC" or "ESF." He remained at this second school for about a month and a half or two months, before transferring to a third school. This was a public school, he noted, though he did not provide the name of this school. He studied there for about 2 months in all. While in San Diego, Abdulrab studied accounting on his own. He would go to a school named "Baker" and take accounting materials from this school and use them at home.

Living in San Diego was not that big a change or cultural shock for him. He had traveled quite a bit, including a trip to England, and he had lived in Jordan as well.

Abdulrab did not have a scholarship of any type while he was studying in San Diego. He acknowledged that this was difficult, from a financial perspective. The Saudi

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Consulate in LA and the Embassy in Washington, DC did not provide him with any assistance, either financial or otherwise. In fact, he had no contact with them, other than one visit to the Consulate in LA, when he went there to deal with a visa issue. He was not a Saudi citizen yet at the time, and he went there to change his multiple entry visa to a permanent one.

#### Employment in the U.S.

Abdulrab worked at Broadway Pizza in San Diego, as a delivery person. He worked there maybe 45 hours a week. He found this job through a friend of his from the university named [redacted]. He could not recall [redacted] last name, but described him as a student who was about the same age as himself. [redacted] was already working at Broadway Pizza when he helped Abdulrab get a job there. Abdulrab cannot recall when he started working there, but he worked there for about eight months.

#### Family Background

Abdulrab is Yemeni by birth, but he was able to get Saudi citizenship after his father obtained it. The process for him to obtain Saudi citizenship was not hard once his father had citizenship. He does not recall with whom he dealt at the Saudi Consulate in LA. His family used to live in a village called "Yafie" which is 4-5 hours from Aden by car. He has never lived in or even been to Yemen though. His family had moved to Saudi Arabia by the time he was born, but he was a Yemeni citizen.

Abdulrab has 3 brothers and 6 sisters. One of his brothers was also an imam. His brothers' names are: Mohammed, Saleh, and Abdul Aziz. Mohammed is the oldest of the brothers, Abdulrab is next, and then Saleh and Abdul Aziz are the two youngest.

#### Relationship to Omar Al-Bayoumi

Abdulrab was asked about his relationship to Omar Al-Bayoumi. Abdulrab said that when people from the Middle East travel abroad, they will usually meet people at the mosque. This is how he met Bayoumi. He did not know Bayoumi before meeting him at the Islamic Center of San Diego. He does not recall anyone introducing him to Bayoumi. He thinks that Bayoumi approached him. He thinks that he met Bayoumi after he had been already living in San Diego for a while. He was busy with school and his studies for a while, and so he wasn't attending the mosque very regularly when he first came to San Diego. Abdulrab said that he met a lot of people at the mosque.

Abdulrab does not know what role Bayoumi had in setting up the El Cajon mosque.

Abdulrab was asked what other mosques he attended in San Diego. He said that he went to the mosque in El Cajon, and to another mosque, but he can't recall the name of the other mosque.

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Abdulrab stated that he had a car while living in San Diego.

Bayoumi's Party

Abdulrab was asked about the party at which he was presented with a plaque by Bayoumi. He said that he was going back to Saudi Arabia and that was why they threw him the party. He doesn't really recall who was at the party. The imam of the El Cajon mosque was there, and the imam of the ICSD was there as well.

Bayoumi invited him to the party. He doesn't remember how Bayoumi invited him, whether he called him or invited him in person. Bayoumi didn't tell him to bring anyone else with him to the party. The party was not in Bayoumi's apartment, Abdulrab stated. It was in a different apartment, an empty apartment, at the same complex. There was no furniture in the apartment, the chairs had been taken away. He had never been to this particular apartment before so he didn't know whether anyone was living there. He didn't ask anyone whose apartment it was and why the apartment was so empty. When asked why, he seemed to indicate that this would have been rude to ask. He went to the party by himself. Bayoumi had given him the number of the apartment where the party was being held, and he was able to find it, since he knew the complex.

Abdulrab was asked whether he was aware that the apartment where the party took place belonged to al-Hazmi and al-Midhar. He said that he did not know this, and indicated that he was unaware of this fact until we brought it to his attention. Abdulrab was pressed on this issue, as Snell made clear that we were not insinuating that he knew at the time that these two were terrorists, but that we interested in his impressions now, looking back. Abdulrab still maintained that he did not know that he was in Hazmi and Midhar's apartment until we told him. Abdulrab did not know Midhar or Hazmi at the time of the party, and had never met them before. He had never seen them at the mosque. Abdulrab thinks that he saw Hazmi at the party. That was the first time that he ever saw Hazmi. He did not talk to him during the party. Abdulrab clarified, saying that he can't remember whether he talked to Hazmi or anyone else at the party or what anyone talked about that night. Hazmi may have been in the back room of the party; he doesn't recall seeing him in the living room area. Abdulrab was asked whether Hazmi may have been helping serve or prepare food at the party. He said that he may have been but he doesn't remember. The party took place years ago, Abdulrab noted, so he doesn't remember a lot of details. He just remembers that he was there.

Abdulrab was asked several additional questions about his selection as an imam for the El Cajon mosque. He thinks that the imam of the ICSD recommended him to Omar al-Bayoumi for this assignment. The imam at the ICSD came to Abdulrab and told him that he wanted Abdulrab to be an imam at some mosque in San Diego during Ramadan. Al-Bayoumi then approached him subsequently and told him that he would be the imam at El Cajon.

Abdulrab was then asked to provide additional elaboration on the party. He acknowledged that he received a plaque at the party. He was given this plaque in

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recognition for his service as the imam at the Kurdish mosque (El Cajon) during Ramadan. He was not exactly certain why he was selected as an imam, but he thought that it might be due to his knowledge of the Koran, which he had memorized. The mosque also didn't have someone who could read a particular prayer, since it was so lengthy. They had an imam, but he couldn't read it because it was too long, and he would get too tired. He can't recall the imam's name. The El Cajon mosque had two imams during that time: one who was permanent and one who was visiting. The visiting imam was an old man, perhaps from Belgium. When pressed, Abdulrab remembered that the imam was not from Belgium but from Norway. This visiting imam was at the party in question. Abdulrab did not notice this imam talking to Hazmi during this party. There were maybe 20 people at the party in all, including the two imams from the El Cajon mosque, one imam from the ICSD, Bayoumi, and others. Abdulrab stayed at the El Cajon mosque for Ramadan, but noted that he didn't go to this particular mosque except during Ramadan.

[redacted] pressed Abdulrab on the timeframe of the party, asking Abdulrab how long before he departed the U.S. did the party take place. Abdulrab said that the party occurred not long before he left San Diego, but that he wasn't exactly sure how long before. He did again acknowledge seeing al-Hazmi at the ICSD, once after the party. He didn't talk to him then. He just saw him from a distance. Hazmi never came by Broadway Pizza.

#### Relationship with Hashim al-Attas

Abdulrab was asked whether he knew Hashim al-Attas. He asked whether we were talking about Hashim or Hisham al-Attas. He said that he knows a Hashim al-Attas. To make sure that we were talking about the same person, he described Hashim as "fat" and recalled meeting him at the ICSD, perhaps 5-6 months before Abdulrab left San Diego. He visited al-Attas at his apartment in El Cajon probably 2-3 times. He doesn't remember when al-Attas left the U.S. They sometimes emailed and called each other, but he was not really a "friend." Abdulrab is not in touch with him currently. He never spoke to al-Attas about who might move into al-Attas's apartment, after al-Attas left. He was aware that al-Attas had a girlfriend (al-Attas told him about her), but he never met her. Al-Attas worshipped at the ICSD and Abdulrab would also see him there.

Abdulrab said that no one else named "Khalid" worked at Broadway Pizza. He said that there were not. Al-Attas worked at a technology company in San Diego but he couldn't recall the name of the company. It was owned by a Palestinian. Abdulrab visited Al-Attas at work on one occasion. Upon learning that someone said that al-Attas allowed al-Hazmi and al-Midhar to move into his apartment as a favor to Abdulrab, Abdulrab denied this, saying that he never helped al-Attas find anyone to move into his apartment. He doesn't know whether al-Attas ever returned to the U.S. after leaving San Diego in early 2000.

#### Relationship with host family in San Diego

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Abdulrab lived with the [redacted] in La Mesa. Their address was [redacted].  
[redacted] The house was near the ICSD.

Abdulrab does not recall having any conversation about any of his brothers with the [redacted]. Abdulrab said that none of his brothers have ever been to Pakistan, Afghanistan, Chechnya, or Bosnia. He was asked whether he would necessarily know if they had been. He responded that they are close and that he would have known. Abdulrab stated that none of his brothers has ever met Osama Bin Ladin, and that none of his brothers has ever made a comment about meeting Bin Ladin.

Abdulrab did say that he talked to the [redacted] about the USS Cole attack. They all saw the stories about the attack on the news. [redacted] was asking him questions about the attack, asking him whether he knew who perpetrated this attack. Abdulrab said that [redacted] was asking him these questions because his family is from Yemen and the attack occurred in Aden. Abdulrab had no theories at the time on who perpetrated the USS Cole attack.

Abdulrab was asked more generally whether he knew anyone in San Diego who was advocating violent jihad. He said that he did not. He was then asked whether he ever had or heard discussions about jihad more generally, including conversations about the distinctions between "bad" and "good" jihad. He said that he was not aware of any such conversations.

#### Relationship with Mohdar Abdullah

He initially said that he did not know Mohdar Abdullah, but when shown a photo, he acknowledged knowing him. Abdulrab said that he met Abdullah during Eid one year, but couldn't remember what year. He only remembers that the meeting was close to the mosque, and that they had coffee together. Abdullah told him that he had come from Canada and was studying some undisclosed subject in the U.S. He could tell that Abdullah was very sociable, but he doesn't know who Abdullah's friends were. He thinks that he met Abdullah through someone, but he can't remember who introduced them. When asked whether or not Bayoumi may have introduced them, he responded that he does not think so. Abdulrab saw Abdullah again after this initial meeting, but he didn't talk to him. He doesn't know whether Abdullah had a job at the mosque, but noted that he didn't ever seem to be working there. He doesn't recall seeing Abdullah with Bayoumi and that he never saw Abdullah with Hazmi.

#### Relationship with Osama Bassnan

Abdulrab recognized the picture of Osama Bassnan, whom he described as an individual with 6-7 children, and living close to the mosque, where Abdulrab would see him. He just spoke to Bassnan about general things. Bassnan asked him what he was doing in the U.S., what he was studying, etc. Abdulrab met Bassnan's children at the mosque as well. Bassnan told him that he was in business, buying and selling cards. Bassnan said that he was in "trading."

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Relationship with Osama Nooh

Abdulrab recognized a photo of Osama Nooh, who he said had died about a month ago and was in the military. Nooh was only 38 or 39 years old, and had two children. Describing Nooh as "a friend" Abdulrab recalled meeting him at the mosque, where he saw him many times.

Abdulrab was asked whether he ever saw either Bassnan or Nooh with Hazmi. He said that he's 100% sure that he never saw Nooh with Hazmi, but as for Bassnan, he said he couldn't be sure, although he didn't recall seeing them together on any specific occasion.

Relationship with [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] is a friend of his who was studying English in San Diego, after which he left San Diego, and moved to NY. Abdulrab met [REDACTED] at the ICSD. He doesn't know whether or not [REDACTED] had a role at any of the other mosques in San Diego.

[REDACTED] lived close by in San Diego, and like Abdulrab, also lived with a family, whose name Abdulrab doesn't know. When asked why [REDACTED] had a driver's license with the [REDACTED] address on it, Abdulrab recalled that [REDACTED] had told him that he was giving the [REDACTED] address to some government agency upon leaving San Diego, basically as a forwarding address for all of his papers and bills. [REDACTED] came to San Diego to study. He was "a 100 times very" wealthy, Abdulrab noted. Abdulrab does not know whether or not [REDACTED] donated money to mosques in San Diego. [REDACTED] never mentioned whether he knew al-Hazmi. When asked to speculate on how and where he thought [REDACTED] may have met al-Hazmi, he said that he didn't know and wryly observed that he wasn't the Mabahith. As to why [REDACTED] left San Diego to move to NYC, Abdulrab thought that it was because [REDACTED] uncle had told him to go to NYC experience working for a bank. [REDACTED] never mentioned knowing Khalid al-Midhar.

Relationship with [REDACTED]

Abdulrab met [REDACTED] at the mosque, but does not recall when. [REDACTED] was a good friend of his and visited Abdulrab during a trip to Saudi Arabia, when [REDACTED] came here for the hajj. While in Saudi Arabia, [REDACTED] stayed with a cousin of his in Jeddah. Abdulrab is "sometimes" still in contact with [REDACTED]. The last time was about 3-4 months ago.

Relationship with Abdussattar Shaikh

Abdulrab met Abdussattar Shaikh at the mosque. He never visited Shaikh at his home and he doesn't know where Shaikh lived. He never met anyone else in Shaikh's family. He has never been to Shaikh's mosque in Lemon Grove, and did not even appear to have ever heard of Lemon Grove.

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**Relationship with Anwar Aulaqi and Al-Ribat Mosque**

Abdulrab was then shown a picture of Anwar Aulaqi. Abdulrab recognized Aulaqi, and recalled attending Aulaqi's mosque, the Al-Ribat, a few times. He went to Al-Ribat after hearing about it from someone, whose name he couldn't remember. This person gave him directions to the mosque, and he went there on his own to see it. He probably went there twice in all. The majority of the attendees were from Somalia and Pakistan, and he didn't recognize anyone at the mosque. Abdulrab said that he never went to any of the apartment buildings near the mosque (a reference to 7200 Saranac Street).

**Other possible associates**

Abdulrab knows Omar Bakarbashat, with whom he attended ELS school. Abdulrab never visited Bakarbashat at any of his residences. Bakarbashat told him at one point that he was living with an American family. He doesn't know whether or not Bakarbashat had a job. He would also see Bakarbashat at the ICSD.

Abdulrab does not know Osama Awadallah.

Abdulrab does not know Iyad Kreiwesh.

Abdulrab does not know Samir Abdoun.

Abdulrab did not recognize a picture of Qualid Moncef Benomrane.

Abdulrab does not recognize the name Diah Thabet.

Abdulrab does not recognize the name [REDACTED]

Abdulrab does not recognize the name [REDACTED]

9/11 Personal Privacy

**Ongoing Contacts in San Diego**

Abdulrab was asked whether he is still in contact with others in San Diego. He paused and thought about it. He said that it's hard to say because he often sends out mass emails to friends all over, and he was trying to remember whether friends in San Diego are on this distribution list. He is still in contact with [REDACTED] in San Diego, although he couldn't remember [REDACTED] last name. He described [REDACTED] as a white American, whom he met at an El Cajon complex, and with whom he's in touch often.

**Trips to Los Angeles**

Abdulrab went to Los Angeles twice while living in San Diego. The first time, he went to a wholesale market in LA with a white American person from San Diego, whose

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name is Osama. Before he converted, his name was something like "Sam." He described this person as young, small, and short (even smaller and shorter than himself). This person was around his age, which was about 26 at the time. [N.B. This is likely is a reference to Isamu Dyson]. He met Osama at the mosque, and Osama knew al-Bayoumi as well. The second time he traveled to LA was when he went to the Saudi Consulate. This trip he went by himself. While he was in LA, he probably went to the King Fahad Mosque. This mosque is very famous. He doesn't remember who he met while he was there.

MFR 04019365

**Memorandum for the Record**

Subject: Interview of Khalil A. Khalil  
Location: Conference Palace, Riyadh  
Interviewed by: Dietrich Snell (9-11 Commission)  
Raj De (9-11 Commission)  
Michael Jacobson (9-11 Commission)  
Also present: 9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy  
Foreign Representatives: Major Habib (Mabahith)  
Major Khalid (Mabahith)  
Interview Date: February 24, 2004  
MFR Date: February 25, 2004  
MFR Prepared By: Michael Jacobson

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At approximately 7:15, the Mahabith representatives informed us that the interview with Khalil A. Khalil would begin in about 20-30 minutes. However, the interview did not begin until almost 9:30. After the interview concluded, the Mahabith representatives explained the reason for the delay. Apparently, Khalil did not want to be interviewed, and Major Khalid had to spend 45 minutes on the phone with him, convincing him to come to the Conference Palace.

**How 9/11 was an attack on U.S. and Saudi Arabia**

Khalil began the interview by saying that he had a few points that he wanted to make. Khalil said that he has been encouraging the Saudis to have direct contact with the US, on many different fronts. This liaison should include academics, writers, and government officials. Khalil lived in the U.S. for 17 years and has two children who are Americans. He cares about the U.S. 9/11 was a great disaster, in his opinion. He saw the second plane hit the World Trade Center live on TV (he was in Saudi Arabia at the time). His kids started crying after the attacks occurred. They wanted to know whether they would ever be able to visit the U.S. again. They had friends in the U.S. with whom they were still in contact, and they were worried that they wouldn't see them again. Khalil said that the 9/11 attacks were not only perpetrated on America, but on the Saudis as well. Al-Qa'ida was trying to target not only the U.S., but the Saudis too. Khalil has mentioned this point to a number of sheikhs.

As far as why al-Qa'ida would target the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, the U.S. is the only country that can actually wage a worldwide war against them. The Saudis are the only country which could stop them, from a legitimacy standpoint, since it is an Islamic country. Al-Qa'ida wanted to undermine both countries.

Khalil mentioned that he has religious credentials: he said that he is currently affiliated with a Wahhabi university in Saudi Arabia, and graduated from the College of Islamic Laws in Saudi Arabia.

When the May 12<sup>th</sup> attacks occurred in Riyadh, by coincidence he was on TV in Saudi Arabia at the same time talking about the dangers of extremism (he was on a program that started 30 minutes before the attacks). He was not surprised by the attack in Riyadh.

### **Khalil's Time in the U.S.**

Many people in Saudi Arabia did not understand the scope of 9/11. Khalil graduated from the College of Islamic Laws. It was not a university at the time, just 3 colleges. After graduating, he was a teaching assistant there in 1978. In 1979, he was chosen by the school, along with 14 others, to study in the U.S. The president of the school at the time was a Wahhabi but respected Western culture and wanted to help modernize Saudi Arabia. There were two groups that had been previously sent to the U.S. by the school. Khalil mentioned that an individual who was in one of the first two groups is now the Minister of Social Affairs.

While Khalil was in the U.S., he met his wife. He studied English in the U.S., and ended up getting 2 masters degrees and his PhD in the U.S. His PhD, he noted, was from U.S.C. It took him quite a while to complete his PhD. He had started his studies in California, and then Prince Bandar called him and asked him to join the Embassy in Washington. The Iranian crisis had begun, and Bandar wanted assistance in handling the crisis. He then left DC to return to LA, when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. He was called back to DC, and remained at the Embassy until 1992. At that point, he returned to Los Angeles, where he completed his PhD. He returned to Saudi Arabia in 1997.

Khalil tries to educate and to share his experiences with others. He has visited the U.S. 3 times since 9/11. He met with people at think tanks like Brookings (and others) in LA and Washington, D.C. during this past trip. They were discussing the best ways to combat terrorism and extremism.

### **Publicly warning about Bin Ladin in 1997**

When he returned to Saudi Arabia, he grew concerned about the radicalization, and about Bin Ladin. He had seen an interview of Bin Ladin in which Bin Ladin was discussing the 1995 OPM Sang bombing, and Khalil decided he should write an article about him. In April 1997, he submitted the article to al-Jazeera for publication. In the article, he noted that Bin Ladin had visions of establishing God's kingdom in Saudi Arabia. Al-Jazeera asked him to change a number of things in the article, but did publish it. Khalil said that he lost credibility after the article was published.

### **Bin Ladin announcement in 1994 regarding creation of Joint Islamic Fighting Force**



Khalil also recalled an article that he had seen in 1994 which concerned him. According to the article, Bin Ladin announced that he was establishing joint forces for various Islamic movements. This announcement took place at a meeting in Peshawar. Khalil noted that he also found the Egyptian movements "troubling." Yet the "world" was busy focusing on other things.

### First World Trade Center Attack

Khalil was asked whether, at the time, he thought that Bin Ladin was behind the first World Trade Center attack. It was an article of faith that Bin Ladin was behind it. Bin Ladin used to issue 1-2 page statements, which most people would throw away, but which Khalil would read.

### Reaction in Saudi Arabia to his opposition to Bin Ladin, pre 9/11

Khalil recounted a story from early 2001, when he was meeting with a number of imams in Riyadh. He told them that he was against Bin Ladin, and that he thought that Bin Ladin was a "big jerk." People were so surprised by his comments that they stopped eating. One imam pulled him aside and asked him why he was against Bin Ladin.

Khalil also met with a colleague in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Khalil was asking this colleague why the Government wouldn't wage a campaign against Bin Ladin. The MFA official told Khalil that noone would listen (were he to propose this), and asked why Khalil thought that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia should wage war against one individual. In the MFA official's opinion, it was better to have the U.S. handle Bin Ladin in a "confidential" manner. Khalil told the MFA official that this approach would be problematic. After 9/11, Khalil saw the MFA official again. The official asked Khalil what he thought would happen. Khalil predicted that there would be an attack in Saudi Arabia.

### Meeting with Bin Ladin in 1990

Khalil said that he first met Bin Ladin in 1990. One more after Iraq invaded Kuwait, a Saudi Government official told him to go to a meeting in Jeddah. He wasn't told prior to the meeting, exactly who would be there. It turned out that the meeting was with Bin Ladin. Khalil noted that it was a small meeting: there were only 3 other people in the room, including a Saudi prince. Bin Ladin brought with him a 60 page document, outlining his plan for fighting Iraq. He asked the prince to facilitate a meeting with King Fahd. Khalil was turned off by Bin Ladin, because he repeatedly attacked King Fahd during the meeting. He kept asking the government officials in the room why they had brought the Americans into this war. Bin Ladin said that he wanted to fight alongside the Saudi army. The prince asked Bin Ladin whether or not he had his own army. Bin Ladin said that he did, and that he had a 20,000 person standing army, with 40,000 in reserves. Bin Ladin said that he didn't care about King Fahd, only about Allah. The prince told Bin Ladin that he didn't like his tone, and ordered him not to fight the Iraqis. The prince said that this would be against Saudi law. Khalil also added that Bin Ladin did not eat

during the meeting. He thought that the Saudis were "criminals" and he didn't want to accept their food. Bin Ladin had a security guard outside the house where the meeting took place. The security guard waiting outside for him the whole time. It was during this meeting, Khalil said, that he first knew that Bin Ladin was dangerous. His interest in Bin Ladin started at that time.

### **Fundamentalists' Recruiting Efforts in the U.S.**

For the years prior to this, Khalil had been living in the U.S. In Khalil's opinion, the religious figures were targeting the Saudis for recruitment for two reasons. 1) the Saudis had so much money; 2) legitimacy. The religious leaders were sending people to the U.S. to recruit students. He noticed while in was in California that they were often focused on recruiting Saudi students. It appeared to be a planned movement to recruit students. Khalil noted that Abdullah Azzam visited Los Angeles in 1995. Khalil was asked, but refused to provide advice for Azzam during his trip. Others were willing, and did, help Azzam. It was not clear at the time that Bin Ladin was the one behind this recruitment campaign. They were sending very inspiring, influential people to the U.S. to do the recruiting. Even students who were not particularly religious liked these influential recruiters, in the same way that Jerry Fallwell and others like him have a broader appeal than just very religious Christians. They were also successful in raising money during these recruiting visits.

### **Initial Concern about Islamic Fundamentalism**

The first time that Khalil became concerned about Islamic fundamentalism was during college, when an Egyptian minister was assassinated. He was told that the assassination had been perpetrated by a group in Egypt who believed that the Egyptian government was not legitimate. This group wanted to establish an Islamic kingdom in Egypt.

### **Positive Influence of Education on Youth**

Khalil mentioned that he's had a positive influence on one of his young relatives. This relative's mother told Khalil that her son had been planning to go to Tora Bora to fight against the U.S. However, after reading some of Khalil's writings, he had decided not to do so. Khalil added that he does not think that either the Saudis or the U.S. can fight al-Qa'ida alone. This concluded Khalil's initial remarks, and he said he was prepared to respond to questions.

### **Hijackers' ability to Settle into Southern California**

Khalil was asked to explain to the Commission how two young individuals like Hazmi and Midhar, with no previous experience in the West, could manage to settle into Southern California. The Commission was interested in Khalil's viewpoint on this, given his knowledge of the King Fahd mosque, and the surrounding community. Khalil began to smile as Snell was asking the question, but it was not entirely clear why. Khalil

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responded that he had no specific information about the hijackers, but that it's not so difficult to understand how they may have managed. He thinks that there it's possible some were called and asked to help, but didn't know what would happen. This is just speculation on his part. The hijackers were trained and programmed to do anything that the leadership wanted them to do. They probably feared the consequences from the authority figures in the organization if they did not go through with it. Khalil thinks that each of the hijackers should be studied individually, to try and understand this issue better. He thinks that al-Qa'ida selected many Saudis to be hijackers because of the legitimacy issue, discussed above. They were probably also chosen because of their readiness for the task.

**Fahad Al-Thumairy**

Khalil has nothing to offer that would be helpful, in terms of what the hijackers would do or did when they arrived in LA. People generally went to see Fahad al-Thumairy, not him. Khalil was in LA from June 6, 2001-August 18, 2001, but he didn't meet either Hazmi or Midhar during this time. They would have probably asked for al-Thumairy, if anyone, but Khalil never saw them.

Thumairy had been in the U.S. for six years. He was a "regular" Saudi. He was conservative in nature, and not "open." There was nothing unusual in terms of his religiousness or practice of Islam, unless there was something that was not clear. He was a regular person. He graduated from school, and then went to the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and asked for a job. He was then sent to the U.S.

As far as the process through which al-Thumairy was selected for assignment to the U.S., it's difficult to say. The process is constantly changing. They usually have a committee of 3-4 people who would look at a candidate. They are always careful not to send someone with a political agenda. As a side note, Khalil mentioned that he is in a disagreement with the Ministry of Islamic Affairs. He's not happy with their rules and how they are choosing people. Some of the imams are not responding appropriately to 9/11.

Al-Thumairy wanted to stay longer in the U.S. Khalil was surprised to read (in the newspaper article) that Thumairy wanted to go back to the U.S.

Khalil said that he has no idea about the reported controversy surrounding al-Thumairy at the mosque. Thumairy was conversative, and didn't want to meet with women. He was considered too "closed" by the mosque. They wanted someone who could administer wedding ceremonies. As an example of his closed attitude, Thumairy didn't even learn English while in the U.S. He is aware that Thumairy made some type of comment about 9/11 being a conspiracy. The administration at the mosque (Shuaib) didn't like the tone of this. Thumairy was also not interested in reaching out to or meeting with non-Muslims.

Khalil does not know any specifics about Thumairy's visitors in the U.S. He knows that not all of the visitors were family members, and that he had a lot of visitors.

There is no way to know where visitors would stay. It would be rude to ask such questions about another person's visitors.

Khalil was then asked to elaborate on his earlier comments about weddings. Khalil said that marriage ceremonies were supposed to be performed by an imam, to ensure that they are conducted in accordance with Islamic law. For example, if someone came to get married and they were divorced, the imam would want to make sure that the divorce was acceptably done. As far as Khalil knows, Thumairy was not interested in seeing women, who were not proper. He wasn't effective in this role. As a result, normally Shuaib would perform the wedding ceremonies. Khalil said that there is no need though for "authorization" to perform wedding ceremonies. As long as the person performing the wedding was accepted by the participants, it was not a problem. There were no specific codes or requirements governing who could perform a wedding. The person performing the ceremony did not need to have a license.

As far as whether marrying a second wife would be prohibited, Khalil doesn't know. The King Fahd Mosque did not encourage this practice because they didn't want to go against secular law. Even if Islamic law allowed it, they had a policy not to violate American law. The Saudi Consulate in LA had sent a message to the mosques in the U.S. that they needed permission from the Consulate to perform weddings.

#### Hazmi/Midhar and possible connections to King Fahd Mosque

Khalil mentioned that he was at a conference in Saudi Arabia in December 2003 and had a brief conversation with an individual, who had previously served as a visiting scholar at the King Fahad Mosque. This scholar told him that after a lecture that he gave at the KFM, either Hazmi or Midhar had approached him. Hazmi/Midhar said that he was interested in getting married, and asked whether the scholar would be willing to perform the ceremony. The scholar told him that he could not, and that Hazmi/Midhar should approach the mosque leadership and ask them. Hazmi/Midhar said he had already made this request, and that the mosque leadership informed him that they could not perform the wedding without getting the approval of the Saudi Consulate. As Hazmi/Midhar didn't want to approach the Consulate with this request, he tried another avenue. Khalil was asked by the Commission to name the "mosque leadership" and he responded that this would have been either Fahad al-Thumairy or Tajjudin Shuaib. Khalil was then asked a number of additional questions about the identity of the scholar, the lecture in question, and the time frame in which this scholar was at the King Fahd Mosque. He said that he did not know any of the answers to these questions. He said that he only had a very brief conversation with the scholar, in which they discussed this matter. Khalil is not sure whether or not he was in LA at the same time as this scholar. Every summer, they had 2-3 visiting scholars to the King Fahd Mosque. There was no typical place where the scholars would stay during their time in LA.

Khalil was asked what would happen if someone performed a wedding without consulting with the Consulate. He said that this could jeopardize the person's relations

with the Saudi Government, and that the imams need to maintain good ties with the government.

### Categories of Extremism

Khalil said that he thinks that there are a number of different types of extremism. The first keeps their extremism entirely to themselves. The second is more aggressive about it. Some of the religious police in Saudi Arabia would fall into this second category. The third would actually be terrorists. In Saudi Arabia, most people are conservative. That is, that they are practicing Islam with knowledge.

### San Diego connections to King Fahd Mosque

Khalil was questioned about individuals coming from San Diego to the King Fahd Mosque. He said that there was nothing unusual at all in this regard, with the exception of one person. This person used to come to the King Fahd Mosque, and sleep in his car in the parking lot. Khalil described this individual as "strongly built." The mosque was concerned and called the police about him. They also established a policy that noone could be in the mosque parking lot from 11 pm-4 am. Despite this policy, in August 2001, the individual was in the mosque parking lot during these hours. The police responded to the mosque's call and removed this individual. It turned out that the authorities had been looking for this person, and he had lived in San Diego. Khalil doesn't remember his name. He was North African (maybe Algerian).

### Invitation to Khalil's Home

Khalil then said that he had to leave in five minutes, as he had promised his wife that he would be home. He then offered to host all of us at his house on Friday night. He said that he would invite other Saudi intellectuals, and we would have a chance to hear their perspective on all of these matters. We told him that we appreciated his generous offer, and that if we were still in town, we would certainly accept.

### Extremism at the King Fahd Mosque

[redacted] asked Khalil to rate the King Fahd Mosque leadership, in terms of their extremism, using the categories Khalil had outlined earlier. Khalil said he didn't know because the leadership and people themselves are constantly changing. The Board of the King Fahd Mosque is "regular" Muslims.

The imam replacing Thumairy was named "Omar." He was replaced as well, because he wasn't adaptable. The extremists have tried to "hijack" the King Fahd Mosque many different times. This first occurred in 1986, when a group of radical Palestinians tried to do so. In 1990, others made a similar attempt. The Blind Sheikh also visited the mosque, and some of his people attempted to radicalize the mosque. The Blind Sheikh and his followers alarmed the mosque leadership, and they didn't want to

accept anyone from that school of thought. There was another effort not too long before 9/11. Four individuals were thrown out of the mosque. They had been delivering lectures at the mosque and were extreme. He said of these four, one was a Libyan named "Abu Sulaiman," and one was a Yemeni named "Abdu." He responded, when asked, that one of the four was Khalid Charif. In this case the King Fahd Mosque actually took legal action, and got a restraining order against these individuals. The mosque leadership tried to be very careful, and they were aware that the mosque was being targeted by extremists.

The King Fahd Mosque is very well known in Saudi Arabia. The inauguration of the mosque was publicized on TV, and was attended by Crown Prince Abdullah.

### Visitors to the King Fahd Mosque

There is no "welcoming committee" at the mosque. If someone came there to pray, they would find someone to help them. The mosque did not have any particular favoritism towards welcoming Saudi students (or Saudis in general) over anyone else. The mosque tried hard to avoid this type of stratification. At one point, the Consulate had three or four designated parking spaces at the mosque. However, these were eventually taken away by the mosque.

### Funding of King Fahd Mosque

Khalil participated in the process of building the King Fahd Mosque. He loves the mosque, and has spent a lot of time and money calling back from Saudi Arabia to LA to keep up to date on developments at the mosque, and to make sure that noone is "hijacking" the mosque. They never had to raise funds outside of the U.S. for the mosque. He set rules that they wouldn't do this type of fundraising. The mosque cost \$7 million in all to build, and the land is worth about \$1 million. This was paid for in 2 or 3 checks.

### Omar Al-Bayoumi

At this point, [redacted] asked Khalil to look at two photos. He was very reluctant, and said that he didn't want to comment on specific people. She pressed him to look at the photos, saying that she only wanted him to say whether or not he knew the people. She first handed Khalil the photograph of Qualid Benomrane, whom Khalil said he did not recognize. The second photograph was of Omar Al-Bayoumi. Khalil recognized Bayoumi, and said that Bayoumi came to the King Fahd Mosque a number of times. He said that Bayoumi used to come frequently to the mosque to see Fahad Al-Thumairy.

As he was getting ready to depart, Khalil delivered a rather cryptic remark. He said that he has his opinions and interpretations about people, but he doesn't want to speak about them.

Memorandum for the Record

Meeting with Members of Majlis Ash Shura

Date: October 14, 2003

Location: Majlis Ash Shura Building

Commission Participants: Philip Zelikow, Daniel Byman, and Kevin Scheid

Other Amcits: PolCouns Matthew Tueller

Drafted by: Philip Zelikow

9/11 Classified Information

The Majlis Ash Shura is the Consultative Assembly of Saudi Arabia. It is the first legislative assembly in Saudi history, currently composed of 120 members appointed by the King from among the leading figures of the nation. The Commission met with five members [redacted]

9/11 Classified Information

After introductions, Zelikow posed a set of questions which members answered in turn. This summary will organize their answers around the questions.

Saudi Propagation of Islam Around the World as a Factor Supporting Terrorism

[redacted] 9/11 was a great shock to us, not only the human loss but also the effort to destroy normal society. First few days we were in a state of denial. Just couldn't believe 15 Saudis could be involved in such a thing. This disbelief was not a denial of the facts, however, which we recognize.

Funds were probably misused. Saudis have an obligation to give to charity. People don't ask questions about where the money goes. There are no competent auditing mechanisms. Doubt that officials know.

To correct this the Shura has passed a law establishing a public agency to audit donations and oversee all financial transactions by charitable agencies in and out of the Kingdom. Collections of petty cash have been prohibited altogether because they cannot be audited.

Saudi Arabia has been a party to anti-money laundering agreements since 1999. This cooperation has intensified. A law has been passed by the Shura on this as well. Every Saudi has been seeing a red stamp on their monthly bank statements requiring them to update their data as needed, or else their accounts will be frozen. This rule has been applied by the Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority (SAMA) indiscriminately to everyone, regardless of how long they have been banking with that institution.

Imams have probably committed abuses. Saudi Islam is not extremist. It is conservative. But is not fanatical or violent. We teach that violence in politics is illegitimate, except to protect civil order. This priority on civil order is typical of Sunni Islam.

But a twisting of traditional beliefs took place among some radicals. Two developments were critical: (1) The aftermath of the Iranian revolution and the struggle for the hearts

and minds of Muslims around the world and (2) The Afghanistan struggle that raised the banner of jihad.

[redacted] Originally Saudi Islam was not politicized. Political Islam had stronger roots in Egypt. Europeans actually wanted Saudis involved in Islamic activities overseas in order to contain political activism. In some respects, since the mid-1970s, we perhaps played a positive role.

[redacted] We were a center for worldwide Islam before 9/11. No one asked about these contributions. Then came 9/11 and all these questions! We are trying to change our system. It is hard to change everything in two years. We are a third world country. In the third world it is hard to control all these activities. Money often moves through hawala or cash transfers. But it is time to change. We are now going in the right direction.

[redacted] We held our first human rights conference last night, which announced the initiatives to begin holding elections for local representatives, the first elections in Saudi history. Attendees also asked questions like yours. We started organizing this before 9/11, but we are glad it is happening now.

We were shocked by 9/11. Couldn't believe so many Saudis were involved. We weren't used to this.

The problem didn't start in the 1970s but in the mid-1950s. We were a primitive country. We needed help in all spheres of life, building a state. In the 1960s we stood for Islamism against Arabism and Nasser. In the 1970s came the great oil wealth. Everyone came to us from across the Arab world. We had little political experience and few teachers. Contrast this with the depth of thinking in Egypt, where Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928 and where Nasser had been in power since 1952. Their ideas flowed into our society.

Funding. We are not the greatest power. We had to find a way to preserve our system. We donated huge sums of money to help others. I think, for example, of my elderly mother. She cannot read. She watches TV. She sees the scenes of Palestinians struggling and it makes her cry. She wants to give money to some woman - her husband [redacted] a good man who needs help. Or there is a woman whose son wants to help the Palestinians. It is hard to tell my mother she cannot do this.

We used our money. But we did not want our money to be used to attack the USA, or to be turned against us. Of course this was not our purpose. We gave away \$80-90 billion in less than 20 years. This money helped many people. We weren't prepared to cope with our wealth. We are still just a developing state. Since 9/11 we have tried to view this in a historical perspective.

#### Saudi Society and Saudi Terrorists



[redacted] It was not just the 15 hijackers. After the May 12 bombing in Riyadh, our agencies interrogated hundreds of people. 92 have been indicted. It may seem naïve to you, but I was shocked. I didn't think this was possible. Now it is hard to know.

The major issue is, did our society produce this? We're not perfect. We cooperated with the US for fifty years against communism and radicalism. We did not fight for democracy but for conservative Islam. Afghanistan was a turning point.

After the Afghan victory the US picked up and left Afghanistan in total disarray. Saudi Arabia tried to bring the parties together and get them to make peace. It was impossible. Saudis who had fought in Afghanistan and bonded with others became obvious recruits for terrorist organizations. This violent ideology is foreign to our society. It arises in a non-Saudi context.

[redacted] Before the shock of 9/11 there was a state of denial. People were wondering whether the Japanese Red Army or Colombians might have done this. Then came the realization and the shock.

Even those who had been sympathetic to the war in Afghanistan were shocked. Then the questions started. This was not just a problem of culture and education. The key was the socialization of these people in Afghanistan. In the future we must not leave groups like this alone, like the Americans did with the Koresh cult in Texas.

[redacted] This came from outside Saudi Arabia. It came from the Arabs who had been in Afghanistan. We have been working on changing our curriculum too. It is hard to make all the changes needed in 1 or 2 years.

[redacted] There is terrorist violence in all countries. But it was never a problem here until 1995-1996. What is new? Sure there are grievances. But systematic training - no. Afghanistan was critical.

America is highly regarded in Saudi Arabia. 80-90,000 Saudis have been educated in America; they are everywhere in our elite. Almost all of them like America. Members of my family have been going there since 1968. Everyone has good things to say about the country and the people.

But there is a contradiction to them with American policy. You don't see what you are doing to yourselves with your policies in the region.

#### Saudi Cooperation Against Terrorism

[redacted] Don't know much about this. From what I hear, the cooperation has been there. We are neither unwilling nor unable. But sometimes the Kingdom wants to conduct investigations itself, with its own authorities.

[redacted] If there was hesitancy, it was probably from a concern for our sovereignty. You need to trust us. It hurts our pride.

US-Saudi Cooperation in Shaping the Future of the Muslim World

[redacted] Once over the shock that the Saudis were the culprits, we believed UBL selected Saudis in order to destroy the relationship with the USA. (Zelikow made the point about ease of getting visas.) Agree, but consistent with this factor too.

This is a clash within Muslim civilization for our future. The victory of the moderates will be an international public good. So what do we do?

The Palestinian issue was important, but would not be a panacea. A solution to that would not bring manna from heaven. Most important is mutual respect, mutual support, and dialogue.

Now Saudis are being demonized. This makes dialogue almost impossible. Differences must be discussed. In the US there are debates over many emotional issues – abortion, euthanasia, same-sex marriages, etc. But the sides rarely demonize each other. There are few fanatics. There are serious questions we should discuss. All we seek is equal treatment.

On Iraq, we agreed on the problem. Our concern was whether you had a plan for what would replace Saddam, a carefully constructed arrangement to do it.

Jihad is 'haraba' – a seditious act to disrupt civil, normal society. The concept of jihad in Islam is complex, and UBL is no scholar. UBL is not interested in being a good Muslim. He is like Lenin, interested in power and revolution. We have a chance to win with moderation. Muslim countries have the responsibility to do their part. But we need mutual respect, understanding, and support.

[redacted] The jihadis were strengthened, first, by a split between two schools of Islam. Al Qa'ida quotes the early ulema. But they go well beyond even them. They are fond of Ibn Taymiyya. [redacted] Taymiyya was facing war from the Moghuls and the Crusaders and still, even then, he wrote against the killing of innocents, even in the heat of battle.

The Mufti of Saudi Arabia made a fatwa in April 2000 making this clear: Suicide attackers are not martyrs. Hijacking is wrong. We see the tapes that Steven Emerson shows. Much more can be done to address that problem. We can use the true portions of Taymiyya and the fatwa. The Kingdom can play a key role in the Muslim world in making these arguments because of our place and respect for tradition.

The other aid to jihad was the Palestinian cause. It was easy to pick on the US as an outlet for this resentment. The Saudi role on the Middle East peace process has been

constructive, even though US policies have hurt our national interests. There is some fear about America.

Again the role of Saudi Arabia can be for our ulema to speak out against terrorism, to state clearly that these people are not Muslims. But we are demonized in the USA. It would help if there was more appreciation of the Saudi position, if we could talk to members of Congress.

[redacted] It would help if America would help answer some of the accusations made against Saudi Arabia.

[redacted] Many of the Saudi elite were educated in the US. But all are Saudi nationalists. They are hounded by radicals. When we are demonized by leaks to the American press, it gives ammunition to the radicals who accuse us of being lackeys to the US. We were friends of the US when it wasn't fashionable, so this hurts.

[redacted] Many believe Saudi Arabia is now a main enemy of the US. They see Afghanistan, Iraq, and emotions run high. We need more exchanges, for more Americans to come here and know us better.

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**Memorandum for the Record**

Subject: Interview of Mohammad Al-Qudhaieen  
(MAQ)  
Location: Conference Palace, Riyadh  
Interviewed by: S/A Jaqueline Maguire (FBI-Penttbom)  
9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy  
Dietrich Snell (9-11 Commission) (DS)  
9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy  
Interpreter: 9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy  
Also present: Col. Jaber (Mabahith)  
Maj. Khalid (Mabahith)  
Maj. Habib (Mabahith)  
Interview Date: October 25-26, 2003  
MFR Date: October 26, 2003  
MFR Prepared By: DS

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~~(C)~~ The interview commenced at approximately 10:30 pm and lasted for approximately 3 hours. It was led by S/A Maguire, pursuant to an agreement between the Commission and the FBI, which had asked the Mabahith for an interview of MAQ despite MAQ's numerous prior interviews by the Bureau during the summer of 2003, before his deportation in late August. DS withheld his questions until after S/A Maguire had concluded her questioning.

~~(S)~~ Advised of the availability of (and indeed, introduced to) an interpreter, MAQ expressed a preference for the interview to be conducted entirely in English, which he speaks with complete fluency. He appeared to be somewhat guarded in his interaction with the interviewers at first (starting out with short answers and sitting back, arms folded). Later on he seemed almost bored (perhaps because he was hearing lots of the same questions yet again), but he gradually seemed to become more at ease as the interview progressed. His high level of education and intelligence were apparent throughout. His answers were essentially consistent with those given in prior interviews by the FBI. They also were largely consistent with those given by Al-Shalawi on October 22-23; in response to a question by DS, MAQ admitted last speaking with Al-Shalawi "about 3 days ago.")

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Background

(C) After introductions, MAQ described his professional and educational background. Since returning to the KSA two months ago, he has been holding an Assistant Professorship at Imam University, College of Languages and Translation, English Department, where he teaches English linguistics.

(C) After receiving his B.A. from the University, he obtained a scholarship and traveled to the US in 1991, his first trip abroad ever. He spent a couple of nights at a hotel in Washington, DC and then, he and his wife proceeded to San Diego, where he enrolled in SDSU to study English.

(C) Ultimately dissatisfied with the program at SDSU after about 1½ years, MAQ transferred to Colorado State University in Fort Collins, CO, where he received his Masters in 1995. Thereafter, he spent one semester enrolled in the Ph.D. Linguistics program at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, before transferring to the University of Arizona in Tucson in early 1996. He received his Ph.D. in May 2003. All 5 of MAQ's children were born while he and his wife were living in the US.

Income Sources While in Arizona

(C) While at U of A, MAQ was supported by his scholarship and stipend. He also earned some money from a one-year stint as a Teaching Assistant (in 2001-02) and working on development of an Arabic-language computer program for approximately 3 months at the University.

(C) Initially denying that he had any other sources of income, MAQ admitted, when prompted, to participating in a venture involving the resale of Enfamil baby formula, which Hamdan Al-Shalawi introduced him to. MAQ knew Al-Shalawi from Imam University and, more recently, from Tempe, where Al-Shalawi was enrolled at Arizona State University. MAQ's role in the baby formula venture - which started in the early fall of 1999 and lasted about a year - involved buying multiple cases of the formula at stores like Walmart and selling it to Al-Shalawi at a profit of \$5-6 per case. He understands that Al-Shalawi then re-sold the formula to an unidentified person and believes that the formula

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remained in the US for eventual purchase by consumers. MAQ understood from Al-Shalawi that the venture was perfectly legal. MAQ doesn't know anyone else who was involved in buying formula and selling it to Al-Shalawi. [This statement flies in the face of eyewitness testimony, obtained by the FBI, that MAQ was observed accompanying others who also were buying formula.)

(X) MAQ stated that his wife did not work while they lived in Tucson.

Activities in Tucson

(X) MAQ and a slate of 6-7 others were elected to the Board of Trustees of the Islamic Center of Tucson (ICT) in the fall of 1999. As an ICT board member, MAQ was responsible for hiring the ICT's imam, Omar Shahin. The Board also managed various projects at the ICT. MAQ received no compensation for this service. In addition to the Board, the ICT had an Executive Committee of 8-9 people, who were responsible for lining up and approving speakers.

(X) In c. 2000-01, MAQ also served for about 2-2 1/2 years as president of the Saudi Student Club, an organization that had no formal affiliation with the University, but that has branches in various locations throughout the US. In response to a follow-up question asked later by DS, MAQ stated that his previously acknowledged familiarity with the Saudi Student Club of Orange County stemmed from a social event of he attended in Irvine while he was living in San Diego. He recalls as many as 100 people being at the event, but could not recall any of their names.

(X) Asked whom he still has contact with in Tucson, MAQ mentioned only Shahin (but expressed some doubt as to whether he's still in Tucson, noting that he originally was from Phoenix); [redacted] an electrical engineering student; and [redacted] a mechanical engineering student.

Travel

(X) MAQ went to Los Angeles 3-4 times while he was living in San Diego, and "about a couple of times" while in

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Tucson. He invariably went to LA with his family, and denies ever visiting the KSA consulate. He used to know Ibrahim Al-Haber, who was affiliated with (and perhaps imam at) the Islamic Center, before the new KFM was built. MAQ is uncertain whether Al-Haber is still there. He first saw the KFM about 6 months after it opened, having heard about the opening ceremony (which he did not attend).

(C) Although he did not know the imams at the KFM, he did hear about Fahad Al-Thumairy through a Saudi student named [redacted] who came to Tucson from LA and recommended Al-Thumairy as a good speaker who might be invited to the ICT. MAQ claims never to have met or seen Al-Thumairy.

(C) Muhammed Al-Muhanna visited Tucson while on the way from Houston to LA, about 1½ years ago, giving a short speech at the ICT, which [redacted] arranged. Asked to describe the content of Al-Muhanna's speech, MAQ stated that he did not attend the entire speech; he recalled only that Muhanna spoke about Islamic morals. On the evening following his speech, Al-Muhanna attended a meeting of the Tucson Saudi Student Club. MAQ telephoned Al-Muhanna 1-2 weeks after the latter's visit to inquire whether Al-Muhanna might be interested in visiting Tucson again; Al-Muhanna did not respond to this overture.

(C) While residing in Tucson, MAQ and his family also visited Colorado Springs; Detroit (to attend a conference sponsored by the Islamic Association of North America in Dearborn in late 1994; he didn't recall the names of the speakers); and Chicago. Another student, [redacted] and his family accompanied MAQ on the Detroit-Chicago trip. MAQ also visited Phoenix and Tempe.

(C) During his time as a student in the US, MAQ returned to the KSA each summer except 2002, during which he remained at U of A to concentrate on completing his studies. Other than the US, he denies ever traveling to any foreign country, including Pakistan and Afghanistan.

(C) MAQ may have renewed his KSA passport (good for 5 years) while in the United States but does not recall doing so. He never lost his passport or reported it stolen.

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Internet Use

(S) When asked about his use of computers and the internet, MAQ seemed to become more evasive and definitely downplayed his computer access, claiming to have checked his email only 2-3 times since returning to the KSA and not yet to have set up internet service for his own computer.

(C) He maintained that he visits mostly news websites, like CNN and Al-Jazeera, and occasionally some Koranic sites, like Islmaway.net. When asked specifically about other websites that he'd previously admitted to visiting, MAQ said that he also looked at alsahwah.com (for Islamic knowledge), almuslimoon.com (ph) (which he identified as his friend [redacted], and miraserv.com (which he claimed to consult only rarely for news). When later asked by DS about his prior admission to visiting alneda.com and describing the latter as a pro-Taliban site, MAQ agreed, albeit somewhat tentatively, with this description and stated that he used to look at it to obtain news regarding the Afghan war post-9/11.

(S) MAQ identified his email address at U of A as [redacted]. He also admitted to having a hotmail account, [redacted] and a yahoo account, but claimed that they do not receive much use.

(C) With respect to miraserv - which he described as a site where anyone can post anything - MAQ maintained that he visits it solely "out of curiosity" and that he does not agree with or believe the assertions he sees on it. Much of this material is critical of the KSA and, specifically, of US-KSA relations. According to MAQ, he visits miraserv only 1-2 times per week.

(S) Asked about Saad Al-Faqih, MAQ agreed that Al-Faqih is connected with miraserv and recalled seeing him interviewed on CNN and Al-Jazeera. When DS later pressed MAQ specifically about his views on Al-Faqih, MAQ became visibly more nervous and looked over at Colonel Jaber of

(S) According to S/A Magure, AQ's description of his light internet usage conflicts with the FBI's own investigative findings.

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the Mabahith as he denied familiarity with any of Al-Faqih's writings. MAQ's appreciation of the delicacy of this subject matter as far as the Mabahith is concerned was plain.

America West Flight

(Ø) MAQ's description of his experience on and immediately after the November 19, 1999 America West flight from Phoenix to DC tracked the version obtained on October 22-23 from Al-Shalawi and the version provided by MAQ in his numerous prior FBI interviews. He insisted that his visit to the first class cabin had been very brief, that he had been intercepted by the flight attendant and directed to use the lavatory in the rear of the plane, and that he had never gotten anywhere near the cockpit. MAQ emphasized that, after he and Al-Shalawi were released in Columbus, America West's representative explicitly apologized to them for the "overreaction" of the flight crew, upgrading the two travelers to first class and putting them on another flight to DC for arrival later that evening. MAQ and Al-Shalawi were interviewed by the media before boarding the flight to DC. By the time they arrived at the Saudi Embassy, the event they were to have attended had ended.

(Ø) In DC, MAQ and Al-Shalawi spoke with Dr. Mazyd Al-Mazyd from the Embassy and representatives from the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR).

(Ø) During the ensuing lawsuit, MAQ had his deposition taken in Tucson. He seems to harbor some doubt as to his lawyer's dedication to the case, and suggested to us that the lawyer may not really have wanted to pursue the case.

(Ø) During his segment of the questioning, DS summarized the Court's opinion dismissing the America West case and pressed MAQ on the subject whether - contrary to his denials - he hadn't actually approached the cockpit door. DS noted that the case is over and that MAQ would not suffer any adverse consequences if he changed his position on this issue. DS also reminded MAQ of his prior statement to the FBI that he may have "inadvertently" touched the cockpit door. Yet, MAQ continued to insist that he never went near the cockpit, even when DS read him the portion of

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the opinion describing the testimony of a first class passenger who saw MAQ "walk directly to the cockpit and try to get into the cockpit." 267 F. Supp. 2d 841, 844. He claims to have noted "from the beginning" that he and Al-Shalawi were being badly treated by the flight crew, but cannot explain why the crew would have decided to undertake the hassle of having Al-Shalawi and MAQ removed from the plane, with full attendant security measures, out of nothing more than prejudice.

Views on Terrorism

(S) After S/A Maguire concluded her questioning, DS provided MAQ with a more detailed description of the Commission and noted the distinction between the FBI's role as a law enforcement agency and the Commission's much broader mission to find facts in an effort to promote understanding and policy improvements. DS stressed that the Commission appreciated MAQ's cooperation and wished to learn what it could from him. The purpose of this approach was to see whether MAQ - who to this point had been quite terse and guarded in his answers - might become somewhat more expansive.

(Q) MAQ professed to have a common interest with the US and the KSA to fight terrorism in any way possible. He abjured any support for the killing of innocents, and attributed the 9/11 attacks to "the wrong education" about Islam. MAQ claimed to have been shocked by the attacks when they occurred, both because they were contrary to Islam and because they ended up taking so many lives.

(S) In a statement that easily could have been made for the benefit of the Mabahith, MAQ insisted that Islamic education, as practiced by the mainstream within the KSA, should serve as a model for all. MAQ denied knowing where or how Al-Qaeda derives its educational philosophy.

(C) When asked whether he ever knew anyone who had been to Afghanistan, MAQ identified only Al-Shalawi, whose visit to that country during the 1980s MAQ claimed to learn about only during the America West litigation, when his lawyer mentioned an interrogatory asking whether either plaintiff had ever been to Afghanistan. According to MAQ, the lawyer

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told him that he had incorrectly answered the interrogatory in the negative, learning since then that, according to the Department of State, "one of you" had been to Afghanistan. After this conversation with the lawyer, MAQ spoke with Al-Shalawi about the latter's trip to Afghanistan.

(C) DS also asked MAQ about "Ghassan" [Al-Sharbi], a friend of Al-Shalawi's whom he identified in a prior FBI interview as someone he'd met in Arizona. MAQ said that Ghassan is now in GITMO and that Al-Shalawi recently received a postcard from him. The subject came up, according to MAQ, because MAQ had told Al-Shalawi about the FBI's interest in Ghassan. MAQ denied ever hearing anything himself from Ghassan. When asked how he thought Ghassan came to his current predicament, MAQ said he believes Ghassan was arrested in Pakistan and that recalls something about Ghassan's wanting to go to Chechnya.

(C) Asked by DS about Zakaria Soubra (another Arizona associate MAQ had previously identified), MAQ said he saw him in Tempe, at Al-Shalawi's home, and remembers Soubra coming to Tucson once in search of a wife.

(S) MAQ also was asked about [redacted] (also identified in a prior interview) and stated that [redacted] has "good knowledge" of Islam. [redacted] moved from Colorado State to Tucson. [redacted] father-in-law, [redacted] is a member of the "Higher Committee for Arabic Muslims and Scholars," a group of some of the most knowledgeable scholars in the KSA which is responsible for issuing fatwas. [redacted] once was MAQ's teacher and MAQ holds him in high esteem. MAQ appeared very comfortable discussing [redacted] in front of the Mabahith, and indicated that [redacted] religious philosophy is consistent with [redacted]

Cellphone Incidents

(C) DS also asked MAQ about an incident that occurred in late September 2001 when he returned his cellphone to a COTSCO store. Consistent with his prior statements on this subject, MAQ remembers returning to the store after handing in the phone, because he wanted to retrieve numbers stored in the phone's memory; he denies, however, ever trying to

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open the phone or otherwise damaging it physically, and professes bewilderment as to why anyone would make up such a story. According to MAQ, the entire incident lasted no more than 10 minutes.

(C) MAQ also volunteered a rehash of the story he told in a prior interview about the cellphone his daughter allegedly found. According to MAQ, he never used the phone itself, just the battery. He was unable to have AT&T activate the phone because the prior owner (who was now in California) wanted \$40 for the phone, which MAQ was unwilling to pay. Although MAQ denied ever cloning the found phone, it apparently would light up whenever a call came in on his own phone. MAQ conceded that the owner of the phone, who gave him her address in California, may have wanted him to return it to her, but he never did so.

Conclusion

(C) After all questioning was concluded, MAQ made a statement about the terrorism problem, describing himself as very "sad - as a Muslim, a Saudi and a person" - about the deterioration of US-KSA relations, and proclaiming himself "one of the victims" of those who launched the 9/11 attacks. He referred to the 15 Saudis who participated in the attacks as "ignorant." He promised any help he could possibly give to the fight against terrorism. Finally, MAQ asked whether the FBI or the Commission could do anything to improve his chances of obtaining a US visa. DS told him that another branch of the government is responsible for visas.

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**Memorandum for the Record**

Subject: Interview of Muhammad Jabber Hassan Fakihi  
Location: Conference Palace, Riyadh  
Interviewed by: Dietrich Snell (9-11 Commission) (DS)  
Interpreter: [REDACTED] 9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy  
Also present: S/A Jacqueline Maguire (FBI - Penttbon)  
[REDACTED] 9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy  
Col. Jaber (Mabahith)  
Maj. Khalid (Mabahith)  
Maj. Habib (Mabahith)  
Interview Date: October 20-21, 2003  
MFR Date: October 21, 2003

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The interview commenced at approximately 10:10 pm with introductions and a brief explanation by DS of the Commission's mandate and mission, plus an expression of appreciation by DS to the interviewee, Muhammad Jaber Hassan Fakihi (Fakihi), for his willingness to be interviewed by the Commission. Fakihi - who was wearing traditional Saudi garb without headband (*iqbal*) - acknowledged DS's remarks in a cordial, though reserved and somewhat distant, fashion that persisted throughout most of the interview.

**Background**

Fakihi was born in Jizan, Saudi Arabia, in c. 1971 and attended primary and high school in Riyadh. Thereafter, he enrolled in the college of Business Administration of King Saud University, where he majored in Law, and from which he received his degree in c. 1995 (Hijra 1415).

Eight months after graduating from college, Fakihi obtained a job as a payroll accountant with the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Call, and Guidance in Riyadh. He still holds the same position with the Ministry.

**Employment at KSA Embassy in Berlin**

In c. June 2000, Fakihi was assigned to work at the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Bonn, where he remained for approximately one month until relocating to Berlin with the rest of the Embassy staff. His duties with the Embassy involved administering the payroll of employees of the Ministry, including imams located in Germany (5), Holland,

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Vienna, and Denmark (2). He also was responsible for distributing korans and other printed materials to mosques within those countries. All told, the payroll for which he was responsible amounted to 18,000-25,000 SR (4800-6667 USD) per month and included a total of 15 mosque employees.

Fakihi didn't remember the names of all of the mosques for which he was responsible in Germany. While his practice was to do his payroll business by mail, he dealt in person with the imam of Al-Nur Mosque, the only mosque he visited, because it was located in Berlin.

Fakihi had no discretion to decide on the payment amounts he distributed; rather, he received a payment schedule from Riyadh and simply dispensed the required amounts and collected corresponding receipts for the imams. Most of his time was occupied by performing this payroll responsibility.

Fakihi's immediate supervisor was the Saudi ambassador. Within the Ministry, reported to Deputy Minister Abdul Aziz Al-Ammar in Riyadh. Al-Ammar, in turn, reported to Saleh Al-Ashaikh, the Minister, whom Fakihi has met in Riyadh on a couple of occasions.

Although Al-Nur Mosque, located in the Neukoelln section of Berlin, was about 30-45 minutes from Fakihi's home by car (Fakihi had his own vehicle and used to drive himself), he went to the mosque fairly regularly on Fridays to pray. The mosque itself was small when Fakihi arrived in Berlin, but moved into a larger facility close by shortly thereafter.

Fakihi first met the imam of Al-Nur, Salem El Rafei, about a month after arriving in Berlin. According to Fakihi, Al-Rafei did not publish any writings; nor did the imam make politically oriented statements. Rather, El Rafei would give lessons on Koranic interpretations in sessions held on Saturdays, some of which Fakihi himself attended, as did 150-300 other congregation members. Fakihi insisted that the lessons were not political in nature.

When asked about his involvement in supporting Islamic charities such as Al-Haramain, Fakihi smiled and said he was astonished at the notion that anyone would think that he could be responsible for supporting such an enormous entity, which, he said, supports itself without any

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government money. He denied having any duties at all in connection with charities.

Al-Haramain made a large contribution to Al-Nur Mosque about 2 years ago, defraying two thirds of the cost of the mosque's 2,700,000 DM purchase price for its new building. Fakihi heard about the contribution after the fact from El Rafei.

Fakihi's duties didn't extend to the development of mosques. During the course of his tenure in Berlin, many Islamic centers approached him with requests for assistance, and he would examine those requests, but could only provide them with printed materials. Fakihi fielded requests from mosques in such major German cities as Bonn, Frankfurt, Muenster, and Stuttgart.

When asked about reporting in the press that he had written Saleh Al-Ashaikh a letter advocating the development of mosques in Europe, Fakihi responded that he lacked authority to skirt the chain of command and write such a letter directly to the Minister. He does not remember writing any letter to the Minister. Specifically, Fakihi categorically denied the allegations in the following paragraph in the September 10, 2003 Wall Street Journal article by David Crawford as "totally untrue:"

Mr. Fakihi had big plans for Al-Nur. Shortly after arriving in Berlin in June 2000, he wrote a letter to the Saudi Minister of Islamic Affairs in Riyadh, Saleh bin Abdulaziz Al-Ashaikh, proposing to turn the mosque into a center for Islamic missionary activity aimed at 'ethnic European' populations in Eastern Europe. The Journal reviewed a copy of the letter in Arabic and had it translated. Mr. Fakihi, who envisioned moving his office to the mosque, proposed that Al-Nur carry the word of Islam to Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, the last of "which once belonged to the Islamic Caliphate under Ottoman empire rule."

Fakihi heard about the letter attributed to him from colleagues in Riyadh and was familiar with its contents from the Internet. His claim of having nothing to do with the letter did not appear credible.

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He also denied allegations in the press accusing him of assisting charitable organizations sympathetic to the cause of UBL. He doesn't suspect anyone of fabricating these charges against him, and is at a loss to explain their origin, claiming to be unaware of anyone who might wish him ill.

Asked specifically what he thinks of UBL, Fakihi stated that he considers UBL's actions "criminal" and "a defamation" of Islam. He claims not to know anyone who sympathizes with UBL.

According to Fakihi, he didn't socialize with people at Al-Nur Mosque. Politics occasionally would be discussed there, including some matters and incidents involving the US, but he denies participating in those discussions and maintains that he never paid much attention to what people involved those conversations would say.

During the bombing of Afghanistan, an Islamic country, people were especially displeased. He understands that the US was responding to the 9/11 attacks and professes to deplore the loss of many lives in those attacks. When asked whom he considers responsible for the 9/11 attacks, Fakihi appeared to become somewhat less at ease (frequent hand movements to mouth) and stated that he did not know. He said he did not see the video of UBL talking about the attacks with the "crippled Sheikh") a couple of months afterwards but read about it in the newspaper.

Fakihi was called back to Riyadh on March 22, 2003. On that Saturday, he was summoned by phone to see the Charge d'Affaires, Judai bin Hadal, while having coffee at a restaurant in the Embassy with Ahmad Al-Dubayan (see below). The Charge told him, without further explanation, to return to Riyadh the following day, and Fakihi complied. This was the first time he had ever been called back to Riyadh without any stated reason.

Two-three days after his return to Riyadh, Fakihi appeared at the Ministry and reported to Al-Ammar, the Deputy Minister, who told him to see Al-Ashaikh, the Minister. In his conference with the latter, Fakihi was told only to "sit still" for the time being. Fakihi did not ask any questions and took vacation for the next couple of months.



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Fakihi has been suspended from further work abroad. He remains very surprised by this action, which he considers unfair, and still has not received any official explanation for it. He does not believe he did anything wrong. He appears to hold the newspapers, especially Der Spiegel, responsible for his fate and considers himself the victim of journalistic fabrication. He has no idea who might want to harm him by making up stories such as those that have appeared in the press. Fakihi doesn't know if his recall originated from the Ministry or from the German government.

Meeting with Motassadeq

When the interview turned to Fakihi's relationship with Mounir El Motassadeq, Fakihi became more animated, increasing the number and duration of hand movements to his beard and face. Clearly having anticipated this subject, he, for the first time in the interview, gave an extended narrative answer to the question whether he knew Motassadeq. He first met Motassadeq<sup>\*</sup> in Berlin at an *iftar* (Ramadan fast-breaking) held at the home of Abu Ayman, a friend from the mosque, on December 23, 2001. Fakihi had been to Abu Ayman's house previously.

Motassadeq arrived at the *iftar* in the company of El Rafei and one or two others (including El Rafei's brother), while the meal was already in progress. Fakihi emphasized that, unlike El Rafei and himself, Motassadeq had not been invited by Abu Ayman to the *iftar*, which some 10-13 people attended.

After the meal concluded, El Rafei introduced Fakihi to Motassadeq as being from the Embassy. Fakihi recalls hearing Motassadeq's first name, Mounir (which he thought was Lebanese, like El Rafei), but claims he was not really paying much attention during their brief conversation. Understanding from El Rafei that Motassadeq was interested in obtaining korans for his own mosque, Fakihi provided Motassadeq with his business card and said that Motassadeq should fax him a letter setting forth his needs. Fakihi denies that his encounter with Motassadeq had anything to do with any attempt by the latter to leave Germany.

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\* Fakihi identified, albeit somewhat tentatively, a photograph of Motassadeq (#8), noting that he believes Motassadeq had a beard when they met. In the photo shown Fakihi, Motassadeq is cleanshaven.

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Following Motassadeq's arrest -- which Fakihi read about in *Der Spiegel* - El Rafei explained to him that Motassadeq had been living in Hamburg and had come to Berlin for only a couple of days.

Other Associates

Fakihi denies ever meeting a Tunisian named Ihsan Garnooui, although he recalls hearing at the mosque about an "Ihsan" who previously lived in Berlin and who supposedly was returning to Germany.\* Fakihi read in the press - either Der Spiegel or an Arabic publication -- about Ihsan's arrest after returning to Riyadh.

Fakihi described Ahmad Al-Dubayan as someone he knew well. Al-Dubayan helped Fakihi learn his job when Fakihi arrived in Bonn. After the Embassy was moved to Berlin, Al-Dubayan was promoted to the position of Director of the Islamic Center in London. Al-Dubayan occupies a Grade 12 position, whereas Fakihi is only a Grade 6. Although Al-Dubayan, like Fakihi, is responsible for payroll administration in London, he is affiliated with Imam University rather than the Ministry. Fakihi last saw him the day before returning to Riyadh last March. He does not recall whether he spoke to Al-Dubayan about being recalled.

Miscellany

Fakihi denies ever being convicted of embezzlement, as alleged in Der Spiegel.

His foreign travel includes trips to Denmark, Prague, India (vacation and uncle's business recruiting nurses to come to the KSA - 1995-96), Indonesia (vacation, since 1996), the UAE, and Bahrain. He denies ever traveling to Pakistan or Afghanistan.

At the conclusion of the interview, Fakihi was shown photographs of Said Bahaji (2), Abdelghani Mzoudi, Ziad Jarrah, Ramzi Binaslhibh (2), Zakaria Essabara, Marwan Al-Shehhi, and Muhammed Atta. He denies ever having met any of these individuals, and recognized the photos of Binalshibh, Essabar (whom he mis-identified as Binalshibh),

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\* At this point in the interview, Fakihi appeared to become a bit more nervous, crossing his arms for the first time.

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Al-Shehhi, Bahaji, and Atta only from seeing them in the newspapers.

The interview concluded at approximately 1:30 am. The FBI representatives asked no questions, but supplied all of the photographs shown Fakihi. The Mabath officers occasionally engaged in brief exchanges with Fakihi in Arabic during the interview.

**Memorandum for the Record**

Subject: Interview of Omar Al-Bayoumi  
Location: Conference Palace, Riyadh  
Interviewers: Dietrich Snell  
Philip Zelikow

Also present: 9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy  
Col. Ahmed (Mabahith)  
Interview Date: October 16-17, 2003  
MFR Date: October 18, 2003

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**Background**

Omar Al-Bayoumi (OAB) appeared for an interview by Commission Staff at the Conference Palace in Riyadh, having been contacted by the Mabahith at the request of the Commission and the FBI.\* At the outset of the interview the interviewers introduced themselves and described the makeup and mission of the Commission to OAB, who was told that the Commission was familiar with his case and, in particular, the report of his interview with the FBI this past August. OAB responded by expressing his willingness to be interviewed and his desire to be clear about everything.

OAB first came to the US around August 1994 to enroll in an ELS (English as a Second Language) program at San Diego State University, which had no TOEFL requirement. After completing the course at SDSU he enrolled in an MBA program at West Coast University and subsequently transferred to United States International University when WCU closed. Both schools were recommended to him by friends. He received his degree in 1997, after which he decided to study accounting at Keller Graduate School. Despite the large demand in Saudi Arabia for accountants, OAB did not enjoy this field and left the program after 6-9 months.

He considered entering a Ph.D. program at Case Western Reserve but could not afford the \$24,000 tuition. Thereafter, he enrolled in a George Washington University program in Project Management, which he pursued both in San

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\* The interview was conducted entirely in English, commenced at approximately 8:25 pm and lasted until approximately 1:00 am, but was interrupted by a multi-course dinner hosted by the Mabahith. The witness did not attend the dinner.

Diego and Washington, DC, and from which he received a certificate in c. 2000.

After spending approximately 2 months in Saudi Arabia, OAB returned to San Diego on a tourist visa. He then decided to pursue a Ph.D. in the United Kingdom, based on the shorter expected duration of such programs (2-3 years) in that country. He was accepted into the Business Ethics Ph.D. program at Aston University in Birmingham.

OAB stressed he very much enjoys being a student, despite his relatively advanced age. He was selected to participate in further education by his employer (PCA) based on his knowledge of English and his ability to teach accounting, and was able to afford further education because he already had worked so many years at PCA. OAB's education program was approved by his boss, a Turkish-American named Alb Karli, who worked in Jiddah in a PCA unit responsible for finances and contracts in the field of aviation services within Saudi Arabia. According to OAB, Karli was impressed by OAB's background and by his commitment to education.

OAB volunteered that he still has many friends in the US, and that while living there, his children were immersed in American culture, his son playing football. He further stated (as he would repeatedly during the interview) that he is very much against violence and that he feels for the American victims of the 9/11 attacks. He noted that he spent a lot of money in the US and that the cost of raising four kids there eventually became too high for him to sustain.

His salary increased over time, depending on the degrees he achieved. Initially, he received approximately 11,000 SR per month from PCA, but would receive 20,000-25,000 SR per month with a degree. During periods of budget difficulties, his monthly salary was reduced to approximately 13,000 SR. PCA also paid his tuition and education-related fees and expenses. As to other sources of income, OAB mentioned a piece of real estate in Saudi Arabia, which he sold in c. 2000 for approximately 250,000 SR before embarking on the Ph.D. program.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~Early 2000 Trip to LA

OAB needed to apply for new passports for his family. When he contacted the Saudi Consulate, he was advised by the secretary to bring 3 photographs of himself to the Consulate. While at the Islamic Center of San Diego (ICSD) on the day he was to travel to Los Angeles, he discovered that he had only 2 photos with him. He mentioned this discovery to "Osama" [i.e. Isamu Dyson], an American convert to Islam whom he'd known for 2-3 months, and Osama recalled a studio near the Consulate where one could obtain passport photos. (According to OAB, his friendship with Osama stemmed from discussions between them that included problems Osama was having with his wife.) OAB stated that, while living in San Diego, he took his family to LA once every few months. He also went there with Dr. Joe (an American of Italian extraction who was a podiatrist) and [redacted] taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the trip to talk with these friends.

After arriving at the Consulate, OAB met with the secretary, who may have been Iraqi. Most of his contacts with the Consulate involved obtaining English-language books and curriculum materials for his mosque. Upon completing his passport business during his trip to the Consulate with Osama, OAB picked up some books from someone in the Islamic Affairs section. While uncertain as to who provided him with the printed material, he recalled dealing in such matters with a young man named Sa'ad, who had no beard and was somewhat shorter than 168 cm. OAB didn't really know people in Islamic Affairs and would contact Sa'ad when he needed some books. Claiming that Sa'ad and the secretary were the only Consulate personnel he knew, OAB said he did not recognize the names Ismael Mana and Sami Al-Ibrahim. He stated that he paid only 2 or 3 visits to the Consulate during 1999 and 2000.

OAB repeated the saga of how, after mid-day prayer at the Consulate, he and Osama went to Venice Boulevard to eat, found the restaurant he had in mind was closed, but promptly found another restaurant practically next door, noting the photographs of dishes in the window. This restaurant was very small.

During their meal, OAB got up to get something (perhaps a drink from the refrigerated case) and overheard two men, Nawaf Al-Hazmi (NAH) and Khalid Al-Mihdhar (KAM), speaking

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Arabic with accents that, he thought, indicated they came from the Gulf area. OAB introduced himself to NAH and KAM and engaged them in conversation. They joined him and Osama and indicated that they had spent some period of time (no longer recalled by OAB) in LA. OAB thinks they stated they wanted to study English and expressed interest in going to San Diego, especially after hearing OAB's description of the weather there. OAB was uncertain whether NAH and KAM asked for his home and cell phone numbers; he may have written the numbers down for them. The entire encounter lasted only a few minutes. All four men left the restaurant at the same time, but OAB doesn't recall in which direction NAH and KAM went.

After leaving the restaurant, OAB tried to find the KFM, which Osama was interested in seeing, but they could not find it, and returned to San Diego without ever visiting the KFM.

OAB doesn't know who owns the restaurant where he and Osama ate, and is not familiar with anyone by the name of Khalid Cherif.

#### NAH and KAM in San Diego

OAB next saw NAH and KAM at the ICSD after prayer, after the Imam pointed them out to him and said they had been asking for him. NAH and KAM said they needed to find a place to stay in San Diego, so OAB took them to the Parkwood Apartments rental office. NAH and KAM stated that the apartments were very expensive, but they would like to rent one for now. OAB doesn't know where they stayed immediately following their arrival in San Diego.

When asked about a man named "Neenu" who kept an RV in the mosque parking lot, OAB smiled and explained that Neenu was crazy, having accidentally killed his own daughter with a car and having undergone years of rehabilitation. Neenu also used drugs, and had a long history of problems. As an example of Neenu's lack of mental stability, OAB recounted how Neenu gave him a jacket and, later, demanded \$100 as payment. OAB doesn't know whether NAH and KAM ever stayed in Neenu's RV.

OAB explained that he used [redacted] as a reference on the rental application of NAH and KAM because [redacted] had been OAB's reference. [redacted] had permitted OAB to make similar

use of his name for such transactions as school the registrations of OAB's children. Another name OAB used in this manner was that of a fiend named Forge Hammerman.

After learning that Parkwood wouldn't accept cash from NAH and KAM, the three of them followed the rental agent's suggestion and proceeded to OAB's Bank of America branch, which was located right next to the apartment complex office. OAB doesn't know why the bank insisted on issuing a cashier's check only to him, instead of allowing NAH and KAM to purchase one with their cash. He denies ever receiving any money for facilitating the apartment rental transaction, and stressed his desire at the time to finish the transaction quickly. So great was his haste that he signed the paperwork without even reading it.

When NAH and KAM moved into their apartment - right next door to OAB's family - they had no furniture and no possessions OAB can recall.

With respect to the dinner OAB held for Sheikh Barzanjee shortly after NAH and KAM arrived in San Diego, OAB said that many sheikhs came to the ICSD and that Barzanjee was paid to lead the congregation at this time. OAB was familiar with videos of lectures given by Barzanjee on ethics and Muslim behavior, and emphasized the great respect that the Kurdish community harbored for this religious figure. OAB believes that Amir, the Imam of the Al-Medina mosque, may know Barzanjee. OAB gave the dinner to honor Barzanjee and used the apartment of NAH and KAM because Neenu brought his wife, who therefore had to stay with OAB's wife in OAB's apartment while the men ate together next door. At this point, NAH and KAM still had no furniture, so all of the diners sat on the floor.

According to OAB, he was neighbors with NAH and KAM for only a few days and rarely saw them. An incident in which he and his son saw them roughhousing with each other made OAB very uncomfortable, and after that he no longer particularly wished to associate with them. The only other sighting of NAH or KAM that OAB recalls is seeing NAH work out on a stationary bike in the fitness center of the apartment complex.

NAH and KAM did not tell OAB when they moved to Hashim Al-Attas' apartment. OAB believes this occurred while he was in Washington, DC, and that NAH and KAM may have thought



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that El Cajon would be cheaper than Claremont. OAB did not introduce NAH and KAM to Al-Attas, whom OAB originally met at the ELS course at SDSU. OAB doesn't consider Al-Attas, who had a live-in girlfriend, to be religious.

#### Contact with Fahad Al-Thumairy and Anwar Aulaqi

When asked about Fahad Al-Thumairy, OAB immediately identified him as an Imam at the King Fahad Mosque (KFM), but expressed surprise that he might have held a position at the Consulate. OAB first visited the KFM during the trip with Dr. Joe and [redacted] who were showing him around the mosque. All 3 of them met Al-Thumairy at that time, and OAB would see him again on a couple of occasions when he visited the KFM subsequently.

OAB agreed that he had some telephone contact with Al-Thumairy, which involved discussion of OAB's questions on religious matters. OAB considered Al-Thumairy his religious advisor. He recalls seeing Al-Thumairy at a post-Ramadan "Eid" festival for Saudi students, which was held at the Saudi Student Club's house in San Diego.

OAB denies that Al-Thumairy was ever his teacher, noting the considerable age discrepancy between them and OAB's own superior education.

Similarly, OAB conceded having had contact with Anwar Aulaqi, with whom he discussed religious matters and ideas similar to those he would discuss with other imams. OAB did not claim to know Aulaqi very well.

#### Involvement in San Diego Mosques

OAB became involved with the Al-Medina Mosque in c. 1998, when a group from the Kurdish community in San Diego approached the ICSD for help establishing their own mosque. A friend in Saudi Arabia, Saad Al-Habib -- who formerly lived in San Diego and attended the ICSD -- was familiar with the Kurdish group's situation and asked OAB to provide assistance regarding the financial transactions necessary to acquire a building and secure its title. Al-Habib contributed \$30,000 toward the purchase and OAB agreed to help with the transaction filings.

After the Al-Medina Mosque was completed, OAB occupied an office there and helped administer it, although he did not

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hold any formal position. A congregation of approximately 50 people generally attended services at the mosque. OAB would worship there once every month or so, not more often because it was 20 minutes from his residence at the Parkwood Apartments while the much larger ICSD was only 3-5 minutes away. As part of his administrative duties, he banned all disputes -- particularly those involving politics -- from the mosque, insisting that they be taken outside. The Imam of the Al-Medina mosque was named Amir.

When asked about Mohdhar Abdullah, OAB (who pronounced his name "Mekhtar") said he believes him to be Yemeni and described him as one of numerous people who would appear at the Al-Medina Mosque and offer to help out in various (generally menial) respects. Characterizing Mohdhar as more of an acquaintance than a close friend, OAB claimed not to know where Mohdhar worked and did not associate him with any gas station. He recalls Mohdhar coming around the mosque at Ramadan for food.

The first time OAB saw NAH and KAM in San Diego, they were at the ICSD. When confronted with Mohdhar's claim that OAB had tasked Mohdhar to help NAH and KAM settle in San Diego by driving them around and helping the enroll in classes, OAB firmly denied that any such thing occurred. He was at a loss to explain why Mohdhar would finger him in such fashion, especially since OAB never gave Mohdhar assignments of any sort.

OAB also says he didn't know any gas station manager named Eyad Kreiwesh.

Asked about Bakarbashat, OAB described him as heavyset and delusional, plagued by psychological problems that caused him to think himself possessed by demons.

#### OAB's Religious Philosophy

When questioned about his own attitudes towards religion, OAB described himself as "very tolerant of others" and "peaceful." In this context, he cited his participation in the activities of a toastmaster club in San Diego, in which people of all religious creeds participated. OAB also maintained that he refuses to discuss violent jihad with anyone and rejects insult and accusation as unacceptable practices, just as he rejects killing and stealing. He claimed to have lots of respect for Americans and to strive

to combine East and West and to adhere to his parents' teaching that violence is not just wrong, but forbidden.

As an example of his non-violent philosophy, OAB described an incident involving his young son, who reacted to an imam's complaint about late-arriving congregation members by attacking such late arrivals at a subsequent service. OAB made sure his son understood that this behavior was not acceptable.

OAB claimed not to know of any takfiri imams in the US. He agreed that there might have been some discussion of politics by some (unidentified) individuals at the ICSD, but he would not participate in such talk.

#### Osama Basnan

During the course of the interview, OAB also was asked about his relationship with Osama Basnan. OAB denied having any relationship at all with Basnan, although he volunteered that their wives were close to each other because of their children. With respect to Basnan himself, OAB said that he didn't like him (while hastening to add that he really doesn't dislike anybody). In this regard, OAB observed that one tends to like the way some people talk, others not. He never heard Basnan discuss politics but did overhear him talking about the proper way to pray, in a way that struck OAB as opinionated and argumentative.

#### Response to Pitch

The last portion of the interview involved an effort to have OAB reconsider his contention that no one ever asked him to help NAH and KAM, either in LA or San Diego. The damning appearance of the circumstances surrounding OAB's relationship with NAH and KAM was highlighted for him, as were the tragedy of the 9/11 and subsequent terrorist attacks and the importance of averting any repetition of such attacks anywhere in the future. OAB was told that no one believes he knowingly helped the hijackers carry out their terrorist mission.

OAB responded by insisting that no one ever suggested to him that he provide the hijackers with assistance, and that he would disclose the identity of such person to us if any such person existed. Once again, he emphasized his rejection of the "way" pursued by the hijackers, whose

description of him as a "Saudi spy" hurt him very much. Upon seeing the first plane hit the WTC on September 11 on TV, he initially assumed, he remembers, that he was viewing some sort of horror or disaster movie.

He also complained about becoming "a victim of the victims." As OAB put it, his goal of finishing his studies by December 2003 has been destroyed.

Asked whether it wasn't possible that someone used him without his knowledge, OAB adamantly maintained that he would never have let this occur. He cited his successful career to this point and his prominent stature in his community.

OAB also complained that the Mabahith watches him "every day," and that he had to wait for 7 months after his arrest in Britain before his computers were returned to him.

OAB also professed his feelings for the victims of the 9/11 attacks, citing his daughter's US citizenship and the many friends he has in the US. Describing himself as "a patient person," OAB nonetheless voiced his determination "to clear my name."

Finally, OAB was reminded of the FBI's earlier inquiry as to his willingness to take a polygraph. As in the case of his August 2003 interview, OAB stated that he would need to consult with his lawyer before he could agree to do this. It was explained to him that, merely by agreeing to take the test, OAB could enhance his own credibility and take an important step toward putting all this behind him. OAB said he would consider the request further.

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**Memorandum for the Record**

Subject: Interview of Osama Basnan  
Location: Conference Palace, Riyadh  
Interviewed by: Dietrich Snell (9-11 Commission) (DS)  
Interpreter: 9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy  
Also present: S/A Jacqueline Maguire (FBI - Penttbom)  
9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy  
Col. Jaber (Mabahith)  
Maj. Khalid (Mabahith)  
Maj. Habib (Mabahith)  
Interview Date: October 21-22, 2003  
MFR Date: October 22, 2003  
MFR Prepared By: DS

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(C) The interview commenced at approximately 10:00 pm. At the outset, DS established that the witness, Osama Basnan, wished to use an Arabic-English interpreter for the interview. Throughout the interview, Basnan demonstrated that he understood the questions being asked of him in English and, for the most part, responded immediately before waiting for any translation. Although he responded primarily in Arabic early in the interview, he increasingly answered in English as the interview progressed.

(S) The interview failed to yield any new information of note. Instead, in the writer's opinion, it established beyond cavil the witness' utter lack of credibility on virtually every material subject. This assessment is based on: the witness' demeanor, which engendered a combination of confrontation, evasiveness, and speechmaking, presumably for the benefit of his Mabahith audience; his repudiation of statements made by him on prior occasions; and the inherent incredibility of many of his assertions when viewed in light of the totality of the available evidence. Accordingly, this MFR contains only a general summary of his statements, and, in the writer's judgment, should not be used the basis for any factual assertion by the Commission.

The witness decided to use an interpreter despite having declined this option in his prior interviews by US law enforcement authorities on August 22, August 23, October 11, and November 20, 2002.

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(2) DS began by expressing appreciation to Basnan for his voluntary appearance for an interview. DS then described the Commission - its statute and mission - for Basnan and asked whether Basnan had any questions on this subject. Basnan responded by asking whether the Commission's report would "tell how I've been mistreated" and recount exactly what he told the Commission. DS responded by stating that the Commission would listen to what he had to say, but that his statements would have to be considered in light of all of the other evidence amassed during the Commission's investigation before any decision could be made as to what would appear in the report. Basnan stated that he understood and was willing to proceed with the interview.

(2) Background

Born in Mecca, Basnan worked for several years at a Saudi Arabian airline, starting while he was still in high school. Thereafter, he worked for 9 months to a year for SAPTCO, a bus company in Saudi Arabia.

In 1981, he went to the US to pursue further education, having missed the opportunity to attend medical school in Jeddah due to a botched hernia operation (in Saudi Arabia). In the US, he attended Housatonic Community College in Bridgeport, CT; Consement (ph) College in Worcester, MA; Sacramento City College; and California State University in Los Angeles. His studies included art, graphic design, and computer science. Although initially without any scholarship, he eventually received funding from the Saudi government when he achieved sufficiently high grades.

In the 1980s, he resided in the Falls Church/Alexandria, VA area and established his own used car business, which consisted of buying cars at auction and shipping them to Saudi Arabia for re-sale at a handsome profit. His business declined when larger players entered and dominated the used car market. He returned to Saudi Arabia after Saddam invaded Kuwait and remained there for the duration of the Gulf War.

When Basnan returned to Virginia following the war, he married Majeda Dweikat, his third marriage. (Basnan's two prior marriages were both brief. The first was to a Saudi

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Arabian woman; the second to a US citizen, with whom he had a son.) Repeatedly during the interview, Basnan cited Dweikat's health problems [REDACTED] a preoccupation for him.

(C) 1992 Fairfax County Car Seizure

When asked about his ties to the contents of a car found in 1992 by the Fairfax County Sheriff's office, Basnan claimed that the car was part of the inventory of his used car business and that he was not responsible for the materials it contained. Confusingly, he insisted that the car became an issue only because it had been parked on Wisconsin Avenue near the residence of the then Secretary of State. He claimed to have parked the car in that location because it was near a friend's clothing business, where he provided assistance from time to time. He denies familiarity with any of the jihadist literature found in the car.

DS called to Basnan's attention the fact that the car was seized by the Fairfax County Sheriff, and asked whether it might have been parked in Virginia. Basnan replied that this was possible, since he sometimes parked cars at the old community center for Saudi students.

He said he was first confronted with the contents of the car during his interviews with law enforcement in 2002.

(C) 1992 Sheikh Rahman Party

With respect to the reporting of Basnan's having hosted a party in Washington, DC in 1992 for Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman (the "Blind Sheikh"), Basnan maintained (as in his final law enforcement interview in the US, on November 17, 2002) that this was a case of mistaken identity. Specifically, he claimed to have employed the services of a sheikh - selected at random from a list of over a dozen Al-Azzar graduates (all of whom dressed alike and wore dark glasses) - to preside at a party marking the 7<sup>th</sup> day of his son's birth, and that the sheikh who performed the ceremony was not Sheikh Omar at all and could see. Basnan contends that a CIA agent came to his house shortly after the party and agreed with him that the sheikh who had attended was not Sheikh Omar.

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(C) San Diego

When Basnan's wife (Majder Dweikat) developed a severe  
9/11 Personal Privacy Basnan could not afford proper treatment  
and, because he "knows the system," approached the "health  
attache" in the Saudi Embassy for assistance. He received  
a number of referrals and ultimately selected a Dr. Bolvet  
(sp?) at the University of California at San Diego. Basnan  
moved his family to San Diego, staying first at a hotel and  
then moving into an apartment on Beadnell Way. Thereafter,  
Basnan divided his time between San Diego and Virginia,  
where he maintained an office near Walter Reed Boulevard  
for his car business. While in Virginia, Basnan attended  
the Dar Al-Hijra Mosque.

Basnan denies that he was involved with the Islamic Center  
of San Diego (ICSD), and expressed marked resentment toward  
the ICSD leaders for failing to welcome him to the  
community. He claims to have had much closer community  
ties in Virginia, where the leaders were an elderly  
Egyptian and then a Moroccan, both of whose names Basnan  
said he does not remember.

When asked about reporting that he was considered to be the  
informal mayor ("omda") of the Islamic community in San  
Diego, Basnan at first purported not to understand the  
question and then allowed as how the title stemmed from his  
reputation in the community for never cheating anyone and  
for being "so adorable" [sic]. He then, however, claimed  
not to have any friends at all in San Diego and insisted  
that he devoted himself to caring for his wife and extended  
family when not spending time smoking a hukka pipe at a  
shop called Fumari.

Basnan at denied knowing Mohdar Abdullah at all and claimed  
to have identified his photograph in jail only as someone  
he had seen at the ICSD. Basnan likewise claimed not to be  
familiar with Omer Bakarbashat, while conceding to know who  
he is.

At this point (approximately 11:45 pm), a break was taken,  
in part to permit Basnan to obtain some refreshments.

When the interview resumed, DS spent several minutes  
explaining to Basnan that he should not attempt to distance

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himself from or minimize his prior contact with individuals whom he knew while in San Diego. He was told repeatedly that the Commission was not accusing him of complicity in the 9/11 conspiracy, but rather that his assistance was being sought to improve the Commission's understanding of the circumstances surrounding the San Diego phase of the plot. DS explained further that Basnan's refusal to acknowledge firmly established facts appeared to indicate that he had something to hide, and only made him look guilty.

Basnan said that he grasped DS's message, and finally conceded the possibility that Bakarbashat may have called him from prison after 9/11, although that "doesn't mean I talked to him."

With ever mounting hostility, Basnan then launched into an extended speech about how shabbily he believes himself to have been treated by the US, which he claims he "loves." In Basnan's words, "I helped America more than I got from it." He also insisted that he helped build the community, and that he could name 25 "high level Americans" of all races who would vouch for him; yet, he failed to provide any names of such individuals.

When asked about Omar Al-Bayoumi, Basnan volunteered that their only link was through telephone records documenting frequent contact between their wives. Claiming not to know Al-Bayoumi at all, he blamed him for failing to uphold the Arab tradition of staging a welcome feast to celebrate Basnan's arrival to San Diego.

In one of the many contradictions that pervaded the interview, Basnan professed to have been too busy with his assorted wife's health problems to deal with the community in San Diego. This "ailment" theme eventually carried over to Basnan himself, as he complained bitterly about the way he was treated at the time of his arrest and attributed some unspecified nerve problem in his leg to the tribulations he claimed to have suffered as a result of his arrest and incarceration. His tirade included the statement "I lost my human rights in that jail." In response to a question whether he had a lawsuit pending on this issue, Basnan replied, "I'm not going to tell you."

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When asked about his observation of Nawaf Al-Hazmi and Khalid Al-Mihdhar in San Diego in early 2000, Basnan said he didn't remember ever seeing them or ever telling anyone that he had seen them.

Finally, after another speech by Basnan about the injustice he claims to have suffered, DS read the following statement, verbatim, from the FD-302 reporting on the FBI's August 23, 2003 interrogation of Basnan:

Basnan also positively identified photographs of Nawaf Al-Hazmi and Khalid Al-Mihdar [sic] as the two hijackers who lived in San Diego, California, near Basnan and Basnan personally observed attending the Mosque (known to the agents to be located at 7050 Eckstrom, San Diego, California) with Bakarbashat. Basnan denied ever meeting either Al-Hazmi or Al-Mihdar.

Asked whether the above statement was true, Basnan categorically denied ever saying what was attributed to him in the report.

At this point, DS told Basnan that he saw no point in continuing the interview and thanked him for his time. The interview concluded at approximately 12:30 am.

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MFR 04019367

**Memorandum for the Record**

Event: Interview of Saud al-Rasheed

Location: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Date: 24 February 2004

Access Restrictions: None

Commission Participants: Dieter Snell  
Raj De

Non-Commission Participants: 9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy

Foreign Representatives: Major Habib (Mabahith)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Mabahith)

Interpreter: 9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy

Prepared By: Raj De

Reviewed By: Dieter Snell

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The interview of Saud al-Rasheed commenced at about 3:40 pm and concluded at about 6:50 pm. The interview took place at the Conference Palace in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Because the FBI had an interview request pending for al-Rasheed, Det. Sassok took the lead during this interview. Commission staff followed-up with additional questions as needed. Al-Rasheed used an interpreter for the entire interview (for both questions and answers).

After the introductions, al-Rasheed confirmed that his full name is Saud Abdul Aziz al-Rasheed and that he was born in Riyadh in Hijra 1401. When asked if he had any other names, al-Rasheed said he also was known as Abdul Aziz. Although he initially denied having any other names, when asked specifically whether he was referred to as "Faruq" or "Faruq al-Najdi," al-Rasheed confirmed that he used those names too. Al-Rasheed said his father's name is Abdul Aziz al-Rasheed, and his mother's name is Noura.

Al-Rasheed completed his education up to the ninth grade. He said that he stopped going to school as a result of the divorce of his parents. He later applied to the military, but was not accepted. He enrolled in computer courses for approximately six months. Ultimately he obtained a job as a typist at the Education Ministry. He stayed with this job for about one year, while he was 17-18 years old, before leaving for Afghanistan in early 2000.

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Al-Rasheed said that he had no stability in his living situation while growing up. After the divorce of his parents, he sometimes lived with his maternal uncles. Often, however, he would move from place to place. He said that he initially got religious by listening to tapes and by talking to people about death and the grave while he was living by the side of the road (akin to camping). Al-Rasheed became interested specifically in jihad after watching a videotape about Chechnya. He said that his desire to participate in jihad was most influenced by the killing and raping of Muslims on the videotape. The name of the particular tape was "The Russian Hell."

Al-Rasheed said that although he wanted to participate in jihad to protect the honor of Muslims after watching the videotape, he had no specific destination in mind. He said that he called an acquaintance of his cousin (the son of an aunt from his father's side), [redacted] who instructed both of them on how to travel to Afghanistan. The name of this acquaintance is [redacted]

[redacted] told al-Rasheed and his cousin that the most important thing for them to do was to get to Pakistan, because from there they could be smuggled into Afghanistan. Al-Rasheed and his cousin both made plane reservations in Riyadh to travel from Bahrain to Karachi. The two of them traveled by taxi to Bahrain. Al-Rasheed said that he had 5000 riyals with him at the time, and that [redacted] may have given him as much as 3000 of that amount before he left. He and his cousin stayed in Bahrain for about five hours and then flew to Karachi via either Gulf Airways or Emirates Air.

Al-Rasheed said he and his cousin were not met by anybody upon arriving in Pakistan. They first went to a rat-hole of a hotel (al-Rasheed could not remember a name) before moving to a five-star hotel called the Regent Plaza. Al-Rasheed said they stayed at the Regent for two or three days, and that they made no telephone calls and had no visitors. He claimed that he was simply having fun at the hotel and was totally unaware of what arrangements were made for him and his cousin to go to Afghanistan. According to al-Rasheed, they were picked up at the hotel by either an Afghan Arab or a Pakistani man, who took them to Quetta. Al-Rasheed claimed he could not remember this man's name. When asked how he thought this pick-up had been arranged, he guessed that maybe [redacted] had made the arrangement.

Al-Rasheed claimed they traveled via public bus to Quetta, from where they crossed the border into Afghanistan. He said they stayed in furnished apartments at a guesthouse in Quetta, but were there for a day or less. Al-Rasheed did not remember the name of this guesthouse, but he said that nobody met them there. At this point he was still with only his cousin and the Afghan/Pakistani man. The three of them traveled to Afghanistan by car without any problem. Al-Rasheed could not recall how long this drive was, or when it occurred, but he remembered that it was quite hot.

[redacted] showed al-Rasheed a photocopy of the latter's passport, and al-Rasheed confirmed that it was the passport with which he made the trip to Afghanistan. Al-Rasheed said he obtained this passport about a week before traveling and that he had gotten it specifically for the purpose of making this trip - in fact, he had never traveled

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outside Saudi Arabia before. Al-Rasheed said that his passport was stamped in Bahrain and Pakistan. While he still had his passport upon crossing the border into Afghanistan, there was no immigration checkpoint and no official stopped him, so his passport would not have been stamped for this entry.

Upon entering Afghanistan, al-Rasheed said he went to a guesthouse in Kandahar, but he could not remember the name. Neither he nor his cousin saw the man who brought them from Karachi again. Al-Rasheed thought that he may have been known by the name Abu Niama. Both al-Rasheed and his cousin became sick at the guesthouse. Al-Rasheed said he had numerous ailments, including some kind of skin disease. He claimed to have been sick for about three to four months, during which time he stayed in a clinic that was at the guesthouse. Al-Rasheed said his cousin went home after about a week.

After leaving the clinic, Al-Rasheed said he stayed only briefly in Kandahar before he went to Kabul with the others from the guesthouse. He claimed he did not attend any formal training camp, but rather went straight to the front line where the fighting was going on. There he received light weapons training, with a machine gun. Al-Rasheed claimed he did not have a hand gun or receive any explosives training (he even made a joke about the fact that he was afraid of electrical wires, let alone explosives). Though the battle was going on, al-Rasheed said that he remained in the rear. He did not really have any friends there. He said that a lot of people talked about him and even accused him of being an FBI informant. He also said that because he was so young, often times the other men would stop talking when he approached. When asked who was in charge of these men, al-Rasheed said he was not sure but maybe a person called "Abu Salman" or "Abu Sulama."

During this entire discussion, al-Rasheed constantly looked down and scribbled furiously on the notepad in front of him (he was not writing, just doodling). Moreover, often when he was asked about particular details he would claim that he could not remember because his brain was "gone."

Al-Rasheed said that he also spent time in the clinic in Kabul because he was still sick. He claimed he never saw Usama bin Laden (UBL) there, and that he never heard of him visiting Kabul while he was there. Al-Rasheed denied that he ever met UBL at any time. When [redacted] confronted al-Rasheed with the fact that the U.S. has information that he in fact did meet UBL, and had shared that information with the Saudi government, al-Rasheed continued to deny any such meeting - why would UBL want to meet with a 17 year old, he asked rhetorically.

Al-Rasheed denied ever hearing of anything called al Qaeda until after 9/11 when he was back in Saudi Arabia. He also denied ever meeting Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (KSM). When confronted with information that KSM (and Mustapha al-Hawsawi) identified him as one of the potential muscle operatives for the 9/11 operation, and asked how and why KSM would lie about such a thing, al-Rasheed claimed that KSM could have seen what al-Rasheed looked like from the picture on his passport and KSM might have heard his name because there were rumors floating around that al-Rasheed was [redacted] Al-

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Rasheed said that his passport was taken when he arrived at the guesthouse in Kabul. Al-Rasheed denied that at any time anyone had ever spoken to him about being a martyr. He said his idea of being a martyr would be to die fighting with a weapon, not to blow himself up.

When asked why others would be saying the things about him that he is now denying, al-Rasheed guessed that others could be angry with him and thus may be trying to get him in trouble. He said he was viewed unfavorably while in Afghanistan because, unlike the other men, he could not grow a beard. He asserted that the whole trip had simply been an adventure for him, and he would not boast about himself if the grand allegations made by others about him were not true. If he in fact had been involved in the type of things that have been alleged, he said, he would not have turned himself into the authorities. Indeed, if he were just lying now, he would not have come to this interview in the first place. Al-Rasheed claimed that his whole reason for going to Afghanistan to fight in the jihad was not primarily religious, but rather was to escape reality.

Al-Rasheed said he spent a total of about eight to nine months in Afghanistan. He said he did not tell anybody when he decided to leave, but just went to the property/security place where his passport was kept and asked for it back. He said that anybody could ask for his passport back at any time without any problem. Al-Rasheed could not recall the name of the person who returned his passport. The person in charge of the guesthouse was named [redacted] a fat guy whom everybody knew.

Al-Rasheed said he was known at the guesthouse as a clown and that he cooked food there. He said he met [redacted] at the guesthouse once or twice. They mostly joked around, and al-Rasheed said they never discussed any special operation, Saudi Arabia, or travel. Al-Rasheed denied ever meeting any of the other 9/11 hijackers in person, and said he had only seen their pictures in the newspaper.

Al-Rasheed claimed to have used only his own personal money for his return trip from Afghanistan. He said he did not spend much money in Afghanistan, so he still had much of the money he had initially brought with him. Al-Rasheed insisted that he had traveled alone on the way back, leaving the guesthouse by taxi. He claimed that although he had bought a round-trip ticket from Bahrain to Karachi before he traveled to Afghanistan, the ticket had now expired. He therefore bought a new ticket to return home, which took him via Dubai rather than Karachi, as his original ticket had. Al-Rasheed claimed he partied in Dubai for one or two weeks before he returned to Saudi Arabia. He repeatedly denied meeting anybody in Dubai. When confronted with information that KSM had known he traveled to Dubai after he left Afghanistan and when asked how KSM would have known that, al-Rasheed said that because some individuals in Afghanistan had thought he was a spy, KSM may have inquired at the airport about al-Rasheed's travel route. When asked how he could have partied in Dubai for one or two weeks after buying his plane ticket, when he started with less than 5000 riyals, al-Rasheed simply affirmed his story.

At this point, the interview was stopped for the evening prayer.

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Al-Rasheed said he is not currently employed. Although he initially returned to his job as a typist at the Ministry of Education after returning from Afghanistan, he said that he was fired when he once again left for an extended period of time. Al-Rasheed explained that soon after he came back from Afghanistan, he traveled to Syria for three to six months to visit with his cousin. He said that before he traveled he cleansed his passport to hide any evidence of his travel to Afghanistan. In addition to visiting Syria, al-Rasheed said that he had also traveled to Egypt in order to get married (a sham wedding performed under Islamic law for the purpose of having sex). Before he got married, however, al-Rasheed said he saw his picture on the television and he turned himself into the authorities.

When confronted with information that his passport photo was found on a recovered disk with photos of some of the 9/11 hijackers, al-Rasheed had no explanation. He denied that he was ever part of the operation or that he ever changed his mind about participating in the operation. Al-Rasheed denied that at any point during his time in Afghanistan he ever heard a threat against Americans or American interests. Although al-Rasheed admitted he felt a bit of joy when he first heard of the 9/11 attacks, he said that he has since come to disapprove of the attacks because that is the position taken by religious scholars whom he follows.

Al-Rasheed denied that he was lying about anything and if he had intended just to lie, he would never have agreed to meet for an interview. He said that he had a right to say no to our questions, and if he was guilty of anything he could have escaped by now. When asked why he backed out of the previous interview in October, al-Rasheed said he was not comfortable talking to Americans but had decided to do it anyway this time around.

Al-Rasheed was asked to look through the Penttbom photo book. He claimed not to recognize any individuals other than from the media.

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Memorandum of Interview

Interviewee: Shaikh Saleh bin Abdulaziz Al Ashaikh  
Interview Date: October 13, 2003  
Interview Location: Ministry of Islamic Affairs,  
Endowments, Islamic Call, and Guidance;  
Riyadh  
Treat as: Commission Sensitive  
Interview write-up: Dieter Snell  
Reviewed by: Philip Zelikow

On October 13, 2003 at approximately 7:00 pm, Philip Zelikow and Dietrich Snell met with Shaikh Saleh bin Abdulaziz Al Ashaikh (Ashaikh), Saudi Arabian Minister for Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Islamic Call, and Guidance, at his offices in Riyadh. Also in attendance was Matthew H. Tueller, Political Counselor of the United States Embassy, plus two officials from the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Dr. FNU Maqbani served as Arabic-English interpreter for the entire interview.

After brief welcoming remarks, Ashaikh provided an overview of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Call, and Guidance (MIA) which was created by King Fahd in or about 1993 (1414 in the Islamic calendar) in the wake of the war in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union. The Ministry was established as part of an effort by the Saudi government to consolidate its various offices with responsibility for the administration of matters involving Islam outside the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The following year, the government formed the Supreme Council on Religious Affairs to assist the MIA in organizing its work. In addition to Ashaikh, the Council includes the heads of other leading governmental branches, such as the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior, and Intelligence, and is chaired by Minister of Defense Prince Sultan. The Council is responsible for approving work done abroad on Islamic matters, and the MIA helps effectuate policies adopted in this area.

In this regard, Ashaikh cited conferences sponsored by the MIA, in Denmark (3-4 days before 9/11) and more recently in Johannesburg, which Nelson Mandela attended. Ashaikh also mentioned a recent MIA conference on Islam and minorities in the West, which stressed the importance of recognizing that Islam can and should adapt to the environment it

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encounters in any particular society. The conference  
resulted in a paper published by MIA.

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Ashaikh stated that combating terrorism is not just the work of the United States. He highlighted the toll terrorism has taken within the KSA, where terrorists have killed Muslims at the Grand Mosque itself. Since 1979, the KSA has managed, in large part, to control terrorism internally, but the problem has gained severity following the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan.

In conclusion, Ashaikh stated that he was very pleased with our meeting and emphasized the desire of the Saudi government and its people for enhanced understanding and partnership with the US in tending the "garden" of Islam and ridding it of the pests that now plague it. He predicted a long but ultimately victorious struggle against terrorism.

The meeting concluded at approximately 8:40 pm.

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Memorandum for the Record

Event: Interview of [redacted]  
Location: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia  
Date: 23-24 February 2004  
Access Restrictions: D.S.M.  
Commission Participant: Raj De  
Non-Commission Participant : [redacted] 9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy  
Foreign Representative: Major Khalid (Mabahith)  
Interpreter: [redacted] 9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy  
Prepared By: Raj De  
Reviewed By: Dieter Snell

The interview of [redacted] commenced at approximately 12:15 am on the morning of 24 February 2004, and concluded at about 1:30 am. The interview was conducted at the Conference Palace in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Because the FBI had an interview request pending for [redacted] [redacted] took the lead during the interview. Commission staff followed-up with additional questions as needed.

As an initial matter, [redacted] was asked whether he could proceed with the interview in English or whether he would prefer an interpreter. [redacted] said he would probably be fine answering in English, but that on occasion he may make use of the interpreter. The interview continued almost entirely in English.

[redacted] stated that he is currently a [redacted]. He said that he has been with the navy for almost 20 years. He said that he completed a two-part course in the U.S. a few years ago, which lasted about 10-11 months. This was the first time he had ever been to the U.S. The first part of the course took place in San Diego, CA, and the second part in Newport, RI. [redacted] said he arrived in San Diego in October 1999 for the first part of the training. His station was located in Coronado, where the training involved amphibious and anti-submarine courses.

[redacted] said he came to the U.S. for this training together with five other officers from the Saudi navy. Only one of the officers did not bring family to the U.S. [redacted] came to the U.S. with his wife, two daughters, and one son. Although he now has six children, [redacted] said he only had three at the time. [redacted] said they took an apartment in San

Diego close to the Islamic Center of San Diego (ICSD) on Balboa Avenue. They did not live in Coronado because it was too expensive and no other Arabs seemed to live in that area. [redacted] looked for a Muslim/Arab community in which to live, particularly for the benefit of his wife. Because Muslim women are generally restricted in their actions, he wanted his wife to be around other Muslim women with whom she could interact.

Before he could even be asked, [redacted] on his own initiative began to describe the first time he met future 9/11 hijacker Nawaf al-Hazmi. He said he first met him on the Muslim holiday of Eid in early 2000. This meeting occurred about three months after [redacted] had arrived in the U.S. [redacted] qualified this statement by noting that to the best of his recollection, this was the first time he had met al-Hazmi. He said it certainly was the first time he had any conversation with him. [redacted] could not remember if he initially met al-Hazmi one or two weeks earlier after a Friday prayer at the ICSD; he said that after prayer, people who attended the service would often linger and introduce themselves to each other. [redacted] said he may have met al-Hazmi on one such occasion, but he reiterated that the first time they had a conversation was the Eid celebration.

[redacted] said that there were one or two thousand people in the parking lot of the ICSD at the Eid celebration. Everybody shook hands and said "Happy Eid" to each other. [redacted] said that al-Hazmi introduced himself only as "Nawaf." He and al-Hazmi chatted only briefly. Although [redacted] said he was not told where al-Hazmi had come from, al-Hazmi said he had just arrived in the U.S. and was here to learn English. Al-Hazmi also told him that he lived with another person, but [redacted] said he did not meet al-Hazmi's roommate. [redacted] said he and al-Hazmi did not have any substantive conversation at this meeting, but they exchanged phone numbers and [redacted] told al-Hazmi to call him if he needed help with anything. [redacted] said there was nothing particularly special or unique about his offer, and it was just a matter of courtesy in his culture to offer to assist another Saudi who had just arrived in a foreign land.

[redacted] said that he was only in San Diego for about one month after this encounter, at which point the second part of his training began in Newport, RI. He noted that he had a phone conversation with al-Hazmi during that month, but he could not recall who called whom. [redacted] said he and al-Hazmi did not talk about anything significant or personal during their phone conversation. For instance, he said that al-Hazmi asked for his advice about living with an American family to learn better English, told him about a free school in San Diego where he was thinking of taking classes, and said that he was thinking about buying a car. [redacted] said that he could not remember whether al-Hazmi had mentioned wanting to buy a car to him on the phone or in person). He said that al-Hazmi never told him about an interest in flight training or anything more personal than the types of things he described. According to [redacted] al-Hazmi did "not like to be free with me" because he knew that [redacted] was part of the Saudi military. [redacted] said that this reaction was common among other Saudis as well).

[redacted] said that after he moved to Rhode Island (although the station was in Newport, RI, [redacted] clarified that he actually moved his residence to nearby Fall River, MA), he

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attempted to call al-Hazmi on one occasion to check in with him and to see how he was doing. [redacted] said he could not get through because the phone number that al-Hazmi had provided was disconnected and out of service. This final attempt was the end of [redacted] association with al-Hazmi. When asked whether he ever tried to contact other people he had met in San Diego after he moved, [redacted] said he did not keep in touch with anybody else, but his wife did.

Although he could not remember whether his phone contact with al-Hazmi was from his home phone or his cell phone, [redacted] said that he usually used his landline if he was at home. [redacted] asked whether he recognized the number [redacted]. [redacted] said it could have been one of his numbers, but he was not really sure. [redacted] confirmed that he had only one cell phone during his time in the U.S. [redacted] also confirmed that he never had any e-mail contact with al-Hazmi.

[redacted] said that he did not attend any other mosques in San Diego other than the ICSD. He, like the other Saudi military officers with whom he came to the U.S., usually visited the ICSD only on Fridays. He said that the officers and their wives most often socialized among themselves. [redacted] said he did not think that any of the other officers ever met al-Hazmi. He said that he himself only saw al-Hazmi at the ICSD a few times, and never outside the mosque. [redacted] said he lived near the ICSD, and confirmed that he lived at an apartment complex named Barclay Square when he was reminded about the name. He recalled that al-Hazmi lived nearby in an apartment complex right across Balboa Avenue, behind the Burger King. [redacted] said he never visited al-Hazmi in his apartment, noting that families usually only have other families over to their houses (i.e. it would have been unusual for a family man like himself to visit the apartment of a bachelor like al-Hazmi). [redacted] said that he had a friend who lived in the same apartment complex as al-Hazmi. This friend was also in the Saudi military. His name is [redacted] only lived in that apartment complex for a few months because his wife did not like it.

[redacted] showed [redacted] photographs of several individuals and asked [redacted] if he recognized any of them. [redacted] did not identify a photo of Ahmed Mustafa. [redacted] did not identify a photo of Osama Nooh. However, when told the name of the individual in the photo, [redacted] said he recognized the name as somebody also in the Saudi navy. [redacted] said he heard that Nooh had died a few months ago in an operation (after a bit of confusion, [redacted] clarified that he meant a medical "operation" in a hospital, not a military "operation"). [redacted] said he had been told by his instructors in San Diego that Nooh had taken the same course one or two years ahead of him.

[redacted] did not recognize a photo of Osama Basnan. He did recognize a photo of Omar al-Bayoumi. [redacted] said he had seen al-Bayoumi in San Diego and had shaken hands with him at the ICSD. [redacted] said everyone in the local community knew al-Bayoumi. When shown a photo of Hani Hanjour, [redacted] did not think he recognized him but said he may have seen him on the news. Al-Harbi recognized a photo of Nawaf al-Hazmi as the person he knew as "Nawaf" from the ICSD. He said he was surprised when he saw the photos of al-Hazmi on the news after the 9/11 attacks.

When asked whether he knew somebody named [redacted] said he was good friends with [redacted]. He described [redacted] as a senior officer, whom he does not think ever met al-Hazmi. Elaborating, [redacted] said that he does not believe a senior officer like [redacted] would have been social with a young, relatively uneducated person like al-Hazmi. [redacted] also does not think that anyone else, including [redacted] would have ever used his phone. Moreover, [redacted] does not remember ever using [redacted] phone to speak with al-Hazmi.

Returning to the question of his phone contact with al-Hazmi in San Diego, [redacted] recalled his wife once telling him that al-Hazmi had called when he was not available. [redacted] then suggested that he may in fact have had as many as two or three phone conversations with al-Hazmi, but he was not exactly sure. He said that we could easily check with Pac Bell to get the details of how often he may have spoken with al-Hazmi. In any event, [redacted] claimed never to have had any substantive discussion with al-Hazmi during any conversation, noting that they merely spoke about the superficial matters he discussed earlier. [redacted] said that al-Hazmi usually called after sunset, maybe around 9:00 pm.

When asked whether he had been to any other places in the U.S. other than San Diego and Newport, where he was stationed, [redacted] said that he and his family drove across the country when he moved from California. He remembered driving from San Diego through Phoenix and across the south, spending a day in Virginia Beach. Although he did not have any friends in Virginia Beach, [redacted] said that he had a cousin [redacted] [redacted] was studying at [redacted] at the time, and finished his studies about five or six months ago. When [redacted] departed the U.S., about six to eight months prior to 9/11, he asked to use his cousin's address to receive any leftover mail, bills, etc.

[redacted] concluded by saying that Saudi officers like himself are sent to the U.S. to help foster good relations and that he would never want to harm those relations. He said he is currently involved in planning some joint anti-terrorism operations with the U.S. military. [redacted] also wanted to note that just because an individual may have had contact with a bad person, that does not make him a bad person too.

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