

## *Special Report*

### **The spinning of the smoking guns**

**More pre-9/11 US intelligence connections to al-Qaeda exposed and spun**

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August 24, 2005—In recent weeks, two “revelations” of pre-9/11 US military-intelligence relationships with al-Qaeda “terrorists” and Osama bin Laden are being used as cannon fodder in an intensifying power struggle between rival political factions vying to seize the “war on terrorism” agenda for their own, and deepen the cover-up of 9/11.

The furor over new stories involving alleged 9/11 hijacker Mohammed Atta and US-bin Laden go-between Tarik Hamdi pits spinmasters against other spinmasters—Kean 9/11 Commission supporters versus hawkish Bush-linked 9/11 Commission attackers, neocons versus neoliberals, and intelligence and law enforcement agencies are at each other’s throats again over “intelligence failures.”

While the spin has dwelled exclusively around “anti-terrorism” and various red herrings, and the supposed frustration over the tracking and arrest of al-Qaeda members, the true evidence trail continues to be purposely ignored. This trail leads directly to high-level US government officials and US intelligence agencies themselves (and US intelligence branches such as Pakistan’s [ISI](#)), for their nurturing, guiding and placement of “Islamic terrorist” intelligence assets (including Atta, Hamdi, bin Laden and al-Qaeda), and US complicity in 9/11.

#### **Osama’s US Contact**

[Newly unsealed court papers](#) charge that Tarik A. Hamdi, an Iraqi-born American citizen and a former resident of Herndon, Virginia (a suburb of Washington, DC, and a hotbed of intelligence-connected groups), and a direct and key American contact for Osama bin Laden, is now a [member of the Iraqi Foreign Ministry](#) in Ankara, Turkey.

According to the affidavit from Customs Agent David Kane, and facts confirmed by US authorities (including the FBI), Hamdi supplied a satellite telephone battery to bin Laden, who was in Afghanistan in 1998.

Hamdi, former CIA counter-terrorism chief Vince Cannistraro, and Pakistani journalist (and [ISI](#) “favorite”) Rahimullah Yusufszai were among the few go-betweens with bin Laden who set up interviews with bin Laden for American journalists, such as [John Miller](#) (now a Commanding Officer in the Los Angeles Police Department’s Counter-Terrorism Bureau). During this period, Cannistraro, Miller and Yusufszai worked for ABC News. Hamdi also had a working relationship with recently deceased ABC anchorman Peter Jennings, who tapped Hamdi as a Middle East expert more than once.

As noted by [Chaim Kupferberg](#), “Cannistraro, a former CIA counterterrorism chief, provided covert aid to the Afghani mujahadeen in the late 80s, as well as supervised CIA operations with the contras. He was also a point man in the notoriously circumspect investigation at Lockerbie.”

Hamdi has also been indicted on fraud and immigration charges. Federal agents have also held Hamdi under scrutiny since 2002 for his involvement with the [International Institute of Islamic Thought](#) (IIIT) think

tank in northern Virginia, and ties to other alleged members of al-Qaeda. The IIIT itself has been suspected of ties to Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Interestingly, the IIIT is one of many Saudi/Islamic fronts under investigation (see ["Role of Charities and NGOs In the Financing of Terrorist Activities"](#)), but also [deeply connected to the Republican Party apparatus](#) and [Bush/Rove](#), via Grover Norquist.

The relationship Hamdi enjoyed with ABC, Miller, and Cannistraro leads to deeper issues that go to the heart of the 9/11 operation, as detailed by Kupferberg in ["The Propaganda Preparation for 9/11"](#).

Kupferberg points out that “. . . if the bin Laden threat was, pre-9/11, a close-knit propaganda campaign, one would expect to find the same names showing up repeatedly in combination with one another.” Among the short list of “same names” who managed the flow of available information on bin Laden, we find Miller and Cannistraro.

Specifically regarding ABC and bin Laden, Kupferberg said:

“. . . it is my contention that al-Qaida and bin Laden are elaborate ‘legends’ set up to promote a plausibly sophisticated and ferocious enemy to stand against American interests. I am not, however, implying that bin Laden himself is a total fabrication. Rather, it is my contention that confederates, believing themselves to act on behalf of bin Laden, are being set up in a ‘false flag operation’ to perform operations as their controllers see fit.

“If [9/11] were an ‘inside job,’ the first thing to do was to look at who conveyed specific information on bin Laden before—and I stress, before—9/11, for they were most likely involved wittingly or not with those who masterminded it.

“Yusufszai . . . moonlighted as an ABC News producer, charged with guiding ABC News correspondent John Miller through the Afghani marshes to bin Laden’s cave—one of the very few American journalists to be accorded such an honour (and also, as it happens, a good friend of bin Laden arch-foe John O’Neill . . . )

“Yusufszai’s ABC colleague, John Miller, mused about running into his buddy John O’Neill in Yemen while reporting on the U.S.S. Cole bombing the year before.

“Miller, one of the very few Americans who can give a first-hand account of bin Laden, bumps into his friend, bin Laden’s chief investigator, while both are investigating a bombing in Yemen that will later be tagged onto bin Laden—and only a year before O’Neill dies at the hands of . . . allegedly . . . bin Laden.

“. . . Vincent Cannistraro, the ABC News analyst who also escorted John Miller to his bin Laden interview, as well as provided running commentary in the days immediately following 9/11. Cannistraro, a former CIA counterterrorism chief, provided covert aid to the Afghani mujahadeen in the late 80s, as well as supervised CIA operations with the contras. He was also a point man in the notoriously circumspect investigation at Lockerbie. In the above noted [*Washington Post* reporter Vernon] Loeb and [*Washington Post’s* Walter] Pincus article—in which bin Laden is quoted from the ABC News Miller and Yusufszai interview—Cannistraro weighs in with his assessment of the embassy bombings: ‘I believe Osama bin Laden is the sponsor of this operation, and I think all of the indications are pointing that way.’”

As the man who “had contacts with the contacts” and helped Cannistraro lead Miller to bin Laden, Hamdi is at the center of the network that created the al-Qaeda “terror” legend. And that may be the tip of the iceberg. Over the past decade, Hamdi has served Anglo-American intelligence interests. He has gone from being a key bin Laden go-between, to becoming an official in the new Iraqi government, right under the nose of the authorities of several nations, including the CIA, the FBI, US law enforcement, the State Department, and the US occupation in Baghdad.

At the time of this writing, no information is available to explain how Hamdi secured his Iraqi government post. Cannistraro remains in contact with Hamdi, and believes that Hamdi is being unfairly harassed by federal authorities who, he believes, have failed to make their case.

### **Able Danger/Mohammed Atta: How Many Ways Can You Spell and Spin, "Foreknowledge?"**

Over the past month, Washington political circles and major media organs ([Washington Post](#), the *New York Times*, etc.) have been galvanized over what appears to be a new claim that yet another US intelligence unit "knew."

Army intelligence officer Lt. Col. Anthony Shaffer, and Congressman Curt Weldon (R-Pa), have gone public with the charge that a Special Operations Command data mining program run by a secret US intelligence unit, code named Able Danger, had identified alleged 9/11 lead hijacker Mohammed Atta and three other al-Qaeda operatives operating in the United States, as early as 1999.

The Able Danger team, with whom Shaffer worked as a liaison, claims it sought but failed to persuade the Defense Department and the Tampa, Florida-based Special Operations Command to share this information, that the unit believes could have stopped 9/11, with the FBI. They further charge that this information was [rejected by the 9/11 Commission](#), even after repeated overtures from both Weldon and Shaffer, which included meetings with commission members and document exchanges.

The 9/11 Commission has defended itself, claiming that the charges of Shaffer and Weldon are unreliable. In a statement, Commission Chairman Thomas Kean and Vice Chairman Lee Hamilton stated that the Able Danger program was not "historically significant, set against the larger context of US policy and intelligence efforts." Shaffer considers this charge absurd: Able Danger was created specifically to target al-Qaeda.

As this controversy continues to unfold, it would seem that Shaffer/Able Danger thoroughly vindicates what legions of critics of the official version of 9/11 have been documenting and exposing for the past four years. In "[9/11 Commission told of Atta cover-up](#)", Patrick Martin of the *World Socialist Website* wrote that the Shaffer statements "shatter the official story of the September 11 attacks, as devised by the Bush administration, endorsed by the entire Washington political establishment, and parroted obediently by the media.

"It is now clear that those who have rejected [the official account of 9/11] have been proven right," writes Martin. "The future hijackers were detected by US government agencies, including the CIA and military intelligence, yet nothing was done either to arrest them or disrupt their activities . . . There is only one politically serious explanation of this now-indisputable fact: powerful forces within the US military/intelligence complex wanted a terrorist incident on US soil in order to create the needed shift in public opinion required to embark on a long-planned campaign of military intervention in Central Asia and the Middle East."

From a deeper perspective, however, the new Atta/Able Danger information is not a "revelation." In fact, it is old news, and an original 9/11 red herring, warmed over. In short, it shows that a US intelligence unit "knew, and were prevented from acting on what they knew" and perhaps "stopping 9/11." While the newly disclosed source—Able Danger and the DIA—is relevant and interesting for many reasons, as is the timing and political game unfolding, nothing has been added to the actual Atta evidence. More importantly, the al-Qaeda's network's connection to US military-intelligence, the evidence that 9/11 was a false flag operation, is not addressed at all. Atta and company are assumed foreign terrorists responsible for attacking America, fully consistent with the core of the official and original 9/11 lie.

Able Danger/Atta adds little to what independent researchers and analysts ([Center for Research on Globalization/Global Outlook](#), [From The Wilderness, Online Journal](#), and [Center for Cooperative Research](#) to name just a handful) already know:

- We know that the “Islamic terrorism” is a creation and tool of Anglo-American geostrategy, [created by the US government in the 1970s, fully utilized during the Clinton administration](#), and nurtured [from the Reagan-Bush administrations to the present Bush administrations](#).
- We know who [Osama bin Laden](#) is (or was). In *Crossing The Rubicon*, Mike Ruppert noted:
 

“The *Washington Post* explicitly suggested that the real relationship between the United States government [USG] and Osama bin Laden may be quite the opposite of what it seems. ‘As early as March 1996, the government of Sudan offered to extradite bin Laden to the United States. US officials turned down the offer, perhaps preferring to use him ‘as a combatant in an underground war.’” In other words, as a US government agent. In a footnote, Ruppert analyzes the above passage, and cuts to the core of 9/11, and the deception that the world has faced for the past four years:

“If this means that OBL is to be ‘used as a combatant’ on the USG side, it strongly suggests that he is a willing participant in such an effort and that his CIA affiliation from the Mujahadeen war of the 1980s has persisted. If the same locution means that OBL is to be ‘used’ as a combatant on the anti-USG terrorist side of the supposed war on terror, it strongly suggests that the USG is engaged in the business of supplying itself with enemies. That practice is called ‘false flag’ operation, and 9/11 is the greatest exemplar in history.”
- We know that al-Qaeda is connected to the [ISI](#), which, in turn is a virtual branch of the CIA, and involved in US [covert operations](#).
- We know that numerous intelligence agencies had [monitored](#), penetrated, and guided al-Qaeda assets. Notwithstanding the denials of Washington’s law enforcement and intelligence agencies, al-Qaeda and its operatives were under scrutiny years before 9/11, and completely penetrated.
- According to Ruppert, who exhaustively broke down this penetration over several chapters of his book, *Crossing the Rubicon*, “based on what is known about successful intelligence penetrations for years prior to the attacks of 9/11, Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda could not have sneezed without the CIA or the NSA knowing about it.”
- We know that it is standard intelligence procedure to create intelligence legends and multiple layers of plausible deniability around their operatives.
- We know who, and what, Atta was. Investigative journalist [Daniel Hopsicker](#) exposed the backgrounds and movements of the Atta cell and the “hijackers” prior to 9/11. Members of the Atta cell received military training, and had connections to intelligence and intelligence-connected Floridians with direct Bush family ties.
- We know that various US intelligence and law enforcement agencies, agents, and officers had information—and were systematically blocked from reporting the information and acting on it by gatekeepers of the 9/11 false flag operation.
- We know that Atta [received funding from the ISI](#) for 9/11, and that then-ISI Chief Mahmoud Ahmad [wired \\$100,000 directly to Atta](#), and [met with Washington lawmakers on the morning of 9/11](#) (including the current director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Porter Goss).
- We know that there were and are 9/11 gatekeepers in the government, the FBI, the CIA, and all over the world.
- We know that 9/11 was not an “intelligence failure,” but an “intelligence success” that included the use of guided al-Qaeda assets, and “hijacker” intelligence legends.

- We know that the Kean 9/11 Commission has been a massive [cover-up](#), from its inception [to the very end](#).

What is somewhat “revelatory” is how US intelligence and law enforcement agents, and politicians, seem to be stumbling over themselves to blow the whistle now, four years after the fact, and they are being (selectively) permitted to do so. As Martin points out: “That a serving intelligence of Shaffer’s rank should come forward publicly is a sign of intense and deepening crisis within the US intelligence apparatus . . . Within military/intelligence circles, the knives are out.”

Similarly, we see the new parameters of media treatment of the “war on terrorism” and Bush. Damning evidence that would have been blocked from public dissemination immediately following 9/11 (through various forms of censorship and intimidation) is now permissible mainstream news fodder.

What this suggests is that the Bush regime has lost its grip over the “management” of the 9/11 legend. Indeed, this administration [is losing the war it created](#), in all of the most important ways.

Worse, as Martin writes, “the 9/11 Commission report is now discredited as a bipartisan cover-up, in which Democrats and Republicans joined forces to protect the key institutions of the state.” This is forcing competing elite factions of various agendas into a new struggle put the “war on terrorism” and the 9/11 story “back on track,” lest Anglo-American geostrategy lose its central pretext.

### **Right-Wing Distortion**

Patrick Martin astutely points out, “The representatives of the extreme right—Fox, the Murdoch press, Rush Limbaugh and other right-wing talk radio hosts, and an array of bloggers—have made more noise about Able Danger, but only on the service of a political diversion. They have sought to use Shaffer’s account to indict the Clinton administration and shift responsibility for the 9/11 security failure from Bush to his Democratic predecessor.” While Republicans involved with the Kean Commission, such as Phil Zelikow, have gotten a free pass from the right wing, Democrats have been smeared, from Jamie Gorelick, to former National Security Advisor [Sandy Berger](#), who was accused of stealing 9/11-related documents (he was later cleared over this still-questionable activity).

Congressman Curt Weldon, who has been spearheading the Able Danger case in Washington, is pushing a right-wing agenda. Weldon, the number one critic of the 9/11 Commission, has a reputation as a loose cannon. His book *Countdown to Terror* not only pushes for more aggressive anti-terrorism, but also goes after Iran (Iran-as-terrorist, Iran-targeting-nuclear-facilities, etc.). Weldon has been criticized by Dana Priest of the *Washington Post*, and the *New York Times*. The bottom line: Weldon’s bias and goals must be questioned.

A more disgusting example can be seen in Iran-Contra thug-turned-media pundit [Oliver North's leap on to the Able Danger bandwagon](#). North, one of the most shameless political criminals in modern history, is predictably carrying water for his old narco-trafficking war criminal-infested [Iran-Contra network](#), and still playing and profiting from post 9/11 war and covert operations. Lest anyone forget who North is:

[CIA IG Report, Volume II](#)

[Contra-Intelligence on Oliver North](#) (by Federal Drug Agent Celerino Castillo)

[Iran-Contra connections to 9/11](#)  
[Bush-Bin Laden connections](#)

[Oliver North in Fallujah](#)

["Torture Inc.: Oliver North Joins the Party"](#)

Need anyone be reminded that the two Bush administrations have been cesspools of Iran-Contra, from the Bushes themselves to Dick Cheney, Elliot Abrams, John Negroponte, John Bolton, Richard Armitage, etc.?

It does without saying that North's word is utterly worthless, as is his attempt to distract from the fact that corruption, political crime, and "terrorism" are *bipartisan* products that the Bush regime happens to be (momentarily) stewarding.

### **Shifting Deck Chairs on Bush's Titanic**

The "criminalization of the state" is when war criminals legitimately occupy positions of authority, which enable them to decide "who are the criminals," when in fact *they* are the criminals.

As pointed out by Michel Chossudovsky in *War and Globalisation: The Truth Behind September 11*, the media's incessant spotlight on "lapses" and "foreknowledge" distracts public attention away from what is important.

"Of course they knew," wrote Chossudovsky. "The foreknowledge issue is a red herring. The 'Islamic Militant Network' is a creation of the CIA. In standard CIA jargon, al-Qaeda is categorized as an 'intelligence asset.' Support to terrorist organizations is an integral part of U.S. foreign policy. Al-Qaeda continues to this date . . . to participate in CIA covert operations in different parts of the world." (Add this August 2005 [disclosure from Turkish intelligence](#) to the documented evidence pointing to the likelihood that al-Qaeda is a CIA-run operation.)

From the 9/11 Commission's cover-up, to the selective new releases of "terror" fact and spin, this criminalization and deception continues unabated. The Hamdi case is interesting because it places a direct US-al-Qaeda contact in a continuous role, serving US intelligence interests. The new Atta information itself is not new, although the apparent whistle-blowing contest, and the struggle for control of this information, is.

The political agenda behind this crusade is not the truth, but the co-opting, re-strengthening and intensification of Bush's "war on terrorism" based on the 9/11 pretext. The most aggressive skills pushing both the Hamdi and Atta/Able Danger stories want more "anti-terrorism," and more justifications to expand the war throughout the world. To again quote [Chossudovsky](#): "Revealing more lies is not the same thing as establishing the truth."

Despite what appears to be another round of deck chairs being rearranged on Bush's Titanic, criminals remain at the controls. Only if and when the full truth about 9/11 and the "war on terrorism" is exposed, and understood on a massive scale, can these criminals be stripped of their power.