

# Does the FBI Stop Terrorism, Or Create It? A Brief History

by Edward Spannaus

April 28—While the American people are being bombarded every day with news reports about the investigation of the Boston Marathon bombings—most of which reports are based on deliberate FBI and law-enforcement leaks spoon-fed to the news media—important lessons can be drawn from FBI terrorism cases going back 20 years, at least as far as 1993.

Furthermore, the FBI's long history of infiltration, incitement to violence, and entrapment, is little known to Americans today. But what the Bureau has done against labor, radicals, and other perceived adversaries for over nine decades, it is doing still today, particularly against Muslim communities and organizations.

## 1993: A Cautionary Tale

After the first World Trade Center bombing, on Feb. 26, 1993, the news media breathlessly reported detail after detail of the FBI's painstaking investigation. Sifting through bomb debris, investigators found an axle with a VIN (vehicle identification number). That led them to a truck rental outlet in New Jersey. When one of the alleged bombers, Mohammed Salameh, returned to the rental store to report that the van he had rented had been stolen, and to get his deposit back(!), he was arrested. Good police work led to other conspirators, and eventually the case was cracked through methodical detective work.

The reality was quite different. Three months after the bombing, in May 1993, it was revealed that an FBI informant had taught Salameh how to drive the van, two days before the bombing. In June, it was disclosed that a former Egyptian military officer,

Emad Salem, had penetrated the alleged bomb conspiracy for the FBI, and had helped test explosives, and had rented the apartment where explosives were mixed. Even as more reports came out over the Summer, the FBI maintained that its informant Salem did not know in advance about the plans to bomb the World Trade Center.

Eight months after the bombing, on Oct. 28, 1993, the *New York Times* published a blockbuster story revealing the existence of tapes that Salem had made while talking with FBI agents, which showed that some agents and supervisors had known all along about the bomb-making plans. The *Times* reported:

“Law-enforcement officials were told that terrorists were building a bomb that was eventually used to blow up the World Trade Center, and they planned to thwart the plotters by secretly substituting harmless powder for the explosives, an informer said after the blast.

“The informer was to have helped the plotters build the bomb and supply the fake powder, but the plan was called off by an FBI supervisor who had other ideas about how the informer, Emad A. Salem, should be used, the informer said.

“The account, which is given in the transcript of hundreds of hours of tape recordings Mr. Salem secretly made of his talks with law-enforcement agents, portrays the authorities as in a far better position than previously known to foil the Feb. 26 bombing of New York City's tallest towers....”

The Bureau's role in the 1993 bombing was raised on April 16, 2013, the day after the Boston Marathon bombings, by Fox TV's Ben Swann, on a “Reality Check” segment. Swann





Bureau of ATF

*The 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center left this damage underground. Some people in the FBI knew about the bomb plot in advance—in fact, they had recruited agents to drive the van that carried the bomb, among other things.*

asked directly, whether the Boston bombings were the product of an FBI entrapment operation gone awry. He described the 1993 New York bombing, and then said: “So the question tonight must be asked, did the FBI have any knowledge of this plot before it happened?” and, “Is the practice of the FBI creating terror plots only to break them up before they can actually happen, really making us safer? What happened here?”

As we shall see, the 1993 World Trade Center bombing was not the last time that FBI informants played a crucial role in planning terrorist attacks. Indeed, the Bureau has a long history, going back almost 100 years, of using informants and agent provocateurs to incite violence.

But first, let us look at its more recent history.

### **After 9/11: an American MI5**

The day after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, then-President George W. Bush famously told his Attorney General, John Ashcroft: “Don’t let this happen again.” The “shackles” that had allegedly hindered the FBI from discovering the 9/11 plot came off. The Patriot Act gave the FBI new powers of surveillance and information-gathering, the alleged “wall” between law enforcement and intelligence gathering (always a fiction anyway) was dismantled, and there was a huge escalation in the use of informants and sting operations.

(Never mind that the 9/11 hijackers were “hiding in plain sight,” with an extensive Saudi support network

in place which was covered up during the official 9/11 investigations. To this day, the 28 pages of the Joint Congressional Inquiry which discuss the Saudi role in the 9/11 attacks, are still being suppressed at the insistence of the Bush and now, the Obama administrations.)

The “unleashing” of the FBI in the post-9/11 period meant that the Bureau’s mission was now defined as *prevention* of terrorist attacks, not investigating them after the fact. The Bureau’s top priorities were now gathering intelligence and preempting terror.

The FBI’s new model was Britain’s domestic intelligence service, MI5. *New York Times* reporter Eric Lichtblau says that within the 9/11 Commission, there was “close to consensus” among the Commission members and senior staffers, that they should consider the creation of a new domestic intelligence agency modeled after MI5, which would take over anti-terror operations within the United States. The head of MI5 was brought to the U.S. to brief the 9/11 Commission on how to create the new agency. When FBI Director Robert Mueller met with the Commission in 2004, he pleaded the case for keeping counterterrorism within the FBI, and promised that he would reform the Bureau along the lines indicated.<sup>1</sup>

The Commission’s final report in 2004 thus pulled back from recommending the creation of a new MI5-type agency, but it warned that the FBI’s shift to counterterrorism intelligence collection required “an all-out effort to institutionalize change,” and that it had to be done in a manner so that it would survive beyond Mueller’s tenure (which was supposed to end on Sept. 4, 2011, at which point Obama extended it for two additional years).

### **An Army of Informants**

The result is that over the past decade, the FBI’s force of registered informants is now estimated at over 15,000, according to Trevor Aaronson, author of the new book *The Terror Factory*. That number itself is ten times the number of informants that the FBI ran in the 1960s during the infamous COINTELPRO (Counter-Intelligence Program) days. If unofficial informants and other confidential sources are added in, the number

1. Eric Lichtblau, *Bush’s Law: The Remaking of American Justice* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2008), pp. 100-102.

is three to four times that, Aaronson says, citing a former top FBI official. These informants are heavily targeted on the Muslim community, and they run the gamut from convicted criminals, to imams and professionals within the Islamic community itself.

(Intelligence community sources tell *EIR* that the Bureau has informants in virtually every mosque in the country. The idea that somehow Tamerlan Tsarnaev could repeatedly disrupt events in the Boston mosque he attended before being thrown out, and yet not come to the FBI's attention, defies belief.)

Under the FBI's new mission of "prevention, pre-emption, and disruption," the Bureau has carried out numerous entrapment operations, to the extent that most of the major terrorist prosecutions in the U.S. over past ten years actually involved plots *created* by the FBI. According to a report issued last Summer by the Center on National Security at Fordham Law School, "there have been 138 terrorism or national security prosecutions involving informants since 2001," and these informants have usually crossed the line "from merely observing potential criminal behavior to encouraging and assisting people to participate in plots that are largely scripted by the FBI itself."

Aaronson reported in 2011, that under the Obama Administration, sting-related prosecutions are being conducted "at an even faster clip than under the Bush Administration."<sup>2</sup>

### **'Investigate Crime, Don't Invent It'**

Former FBI Special Agent Michael German recently reviewed Aaronson's book for *Reason* magazine.<sup>3</sup> German writes that many of the terrorist conspiracies reported as being broken up by the Bureau,

2. Trevor Aaronson, "The Informants," *Mother Jones*, July 29, 2011.

3. Michael German, "Manufacturing Terrorists: How FBI sting operations make jihadists out of hapless malcontents," *Reason Magazine*, April 2013, reviewing Trevor Aaronson, *The Terror Factory: Inside the FBI's Manufactured War on Terrorism* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Ig Publishing, 2013).



*The FBI is carefully orchestrating what is released to the public about the alleged Boston Marathon bombers (shown here). Fox TV's Ben Swann asked: "Is the practice of the FBI creating terror plots only to break them up before they can actually happen, really making us safer? What happened here?"*

"were almost entirely concocted and engineered by the FBI itself, using corrupt *agents provocateurs* who often posed a far more serious criminal threat than the dimwitted saps the investigations ultimately netted."

The FBI recruits informants with extensive criminal records, pays them tens of thousands of dollars "to ensare dupes in terrorist plots," German points out. Most of these targets posed little if any threat; they rarely had weapons of their own, or the financial resources to carry out violent acts. "Yet the government provided them with military hardware worth thousands of dollars that would be extremely difficult for even sophisticated criminal organizations to obtain, only to bust them in a staged finale."

German says that when he worked undercover investigations for the FBI, prior to 9/11, "if an agent had suggested opening a terrorism case against someone who was not a member of a terrorist group, who had not attempted to acquire weapons, and who didn't have the means to obtain them, he would have been gently encouraged to look for a more serious threat." Moreover, German observes: An agent who suggested giving such a person a stinger missile or a car full of military-grade plastic explosives would have been sent to counseling.

Yet in Aaronson's telling, such techniques are now becoming commonplace.

German's conclusion: "The FBI should be investigating crime, not inventing it."

## Incitement and Entrapment

Here are some examples of recent FBI sting operations compiled by *EIR*; many more can be found in Aaronson's book and in other sources. It should be noted, that every element of the recent Boston case—including incitement to "jihad," and the testing and planting of live explosives which killed people—can be found in these earlier cases, including the 1993 World Trade Center case.

- One of the most egregious of these cases is the so-called "Newburgh Four" in New York State, in which an informant in 2008-09 offered the defendants \$250,000, as well as weapons, to carry out a terrorist plot. The New York University Center for Human Rights and Justice reviewed this case and two others, and concluded: "The government's informants introduced and aggressively pushed ideas about violent jihad and, moreover, actually encouraged the defendants to believe it was their duty to take action against the United States."

The Federal judge presiding over the Newburgh case, Colleen McMahon, declared that it was "beyond question that the government created the crime here," and criticized the Bureau for sending informants "trolling among the citizens of a troubled community, offering very poor people money if they will play some role—any role—in criminal activity."

- In Portland, Ore., it was disclosed during the trial of the "Christmas Tree bomber" earlier this year, that the FBI had actually produced its own terrorist training video, which was shown to the defendant, depicting men with covered faces shooting guns and setting off bombs using a cell phone as a detonator. The FBI operative also traveled with the target to a remote location where *they detonated an actual bomb concealed in a backpack* as a trial run for the planned attack.

- In Brooklyn, N.Y., in 2012, an FBI agent posing as an al-Qaeda operative supplied a target with fake explosives for a 1,000-pound bomb, which the FBI's victim then attempted to detonate outside the Federal Reserve building in Manhattan.

- In Irvine, Calif., in 2007, an FBI informant was so blatant in attempting to entrap members of the local Is-



*Young Abdella Ahmad Tounisi, arrested by the FBI on April 19 in Chicago, was recruited to an al-Qaeda-linked group by a website constructed and controlled by the FBI.*

lamic Center into violent jihadi actions, that the mosque went to court and got a restraining order against the informant.

- In Pittsburgh, Khalifa Ali al-Akili became so suspicious of two "jihadi" FBI informants who were trying to recruit him to buy a gun and to go to Pakistan for training, that he contacted both the London *Guardian* and the Washington-based National Coalition to Protect Civil Freedoms, and told them that he feared the FBI was trying to entrap him. The National Coalition scheduled a press conference for March 16, 2012, at which al-Akili was to speak and identify the informants, but the day before the scheduled press conference, the FBI arrested al-Akili, charging him not with terrorism, but with illegal possession of a firearm.

The chief informant trying to entrap al-Akili turned out to be Shaden Hussain, a longtime FBI informant who had set up two earlier terrorism cases: the above-cited Newburgh, N.Y., case for which he was paid \$100,000, and another in Albany, N.Y., for which his payments are not known.

This practice continues to the present day.

- On April 19, 2013, the FBI arrested a 19-year-old from Aurora, Ill., Abdella Ahmad Tounisi, as he attempted to board a flight from Chicago's O'Hare Airport to Turkey, where he hoped to join the Syrian al-Qaeda-linked opposition group Jabhat al-Nusrah.

How was young Tounisi recruited? By a site that exhorted its viewers: "A Call for Jihad in Syria: Come and join your lion brothers ... fighting under the true banner of Islam." In fact, the website was constructed and entirely controlled by the FBI! When Tounisi sent an e-mail to the website, he was answered by an under-

cover FBI agent posing as “Brother Abdullah,” a recruiter for al-Nusra, who even provided Tounisi with a bus ticket that would take him from Istanbul to the Syrian border.

“They could entrap anybody, they could send anybody anything, and when you’re young and impressionable, you’re gonna believe it,” Tounisi’s father said on April 21, according to AP and the *Chicago Sun-Times*. “I am just generalizing this issue right now because a lot of kids in the Muslim community have been entrapped just like this; anybody that goes to the mosque five times a day and he’s holding onto his religion really good, he is a red flag.”

### **Boston FBI, Too**

The Boston FBI office has its own history in this kind of activity. In the 2011 case of Rezwan Ferdaus, an American citizen and Northeastern University graduate, accused of planning to send miniature planes carrying explosives crashing into the U.S. Capitol and the Pentagon, the Bureau went even further. According to various accounts, the FBI, using a drug-addicted informant posing as an al-Qaeda operative, provided money to Ferdaus to travel to Washington and to buy an F-86 Sabre miniature plane for the attack. “The prosecution case also reveals how Ferdaus ordered the plane and rented a storage facility in which to keep it, and then *took delivery from the FBI of 25 pounds of C-4 explosives, three grenades, and six AK-47 rifles,*” the London *Guardian* reported on Sept. 29, 2011 (emphasis added). The FBI press release, issued on Sept. 29, 2011, acknowledged that the FBI provided Ferdaus with “approximately 1.25 pounds of actual C-4 explosives.”<sup>4</sup>

At the time, this operation—which included providing live explosives—was publicly defended by both Richard DesLauriers, the head of the Boston FBI office, and Carmen Ortiz, the United States Attorney, both of whom are still in place, currently overseeing the Marathon bombing case.

Not to be overlooked, is that the Boston FBI office was running this entrapment operation against Ferdaus,



Library of Congress

*J. Edgar Hoover got his start during the “Palmer Raids” of 1919, which involved extensive use of undercover agents, informers, and provocateurs. He later became the FBI Director.*

at the same time that it supposedly investigated Tamerlan Tsarnaev and determined that it could not make any further inquiry, because he did not pose a threat. That bespeaks either absolute incompetence, or that the FBI is lying and covering up what they actually did with Tsarnaev.

### **A Long History of Provocations**

The irony was, that the numbskulls who demanded after 9/11 that the FBI must make intelligence-gathering and prevention its priority, were in fact reviving a corrupt tradition in the FBI, which Congress had tried to shut down after the scandals that emerged during Congressional investigations in the 1970s. The generic name for the FBI’s unconstitutional use of its intelligence and investigative powers was COINTELPRO.

4. FBI Boston press release, “Ferdaus Indicted for Allegedly Plotting Attack on Pentagon and U.S. Capitol and Attempting to Provide Material Support to Foreign Terrorist Organization,” Sept. 29, 2011.

The FBI certainly *had* done intelligence and counter-intelligence before, and these programs were shut down not just once, but twice, for their wholesale violations of the constitutional rights of Americans.

### Hoover and the Palmer Raids

The first incarnation of the strategy of “prevention, preemption, and disruption” was the Justice Department’s General Intelligence Division (GID)—created at the height of the post-World War I “Red scare,” and involving extensive use of undercover agents, informants, and provocateurs.

The GID was created by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer—whose name has gone down in history for the “Palmer Raids”—in 1919, in preparation for series of brutal raids targetting aliens (immigrants), anarchists, and “Bolsheviks,” first launched in a dozen cities on Nov. 7, 1919. The then-young and enthusiastic J. Edgar Hoover was put in charge of the GID.

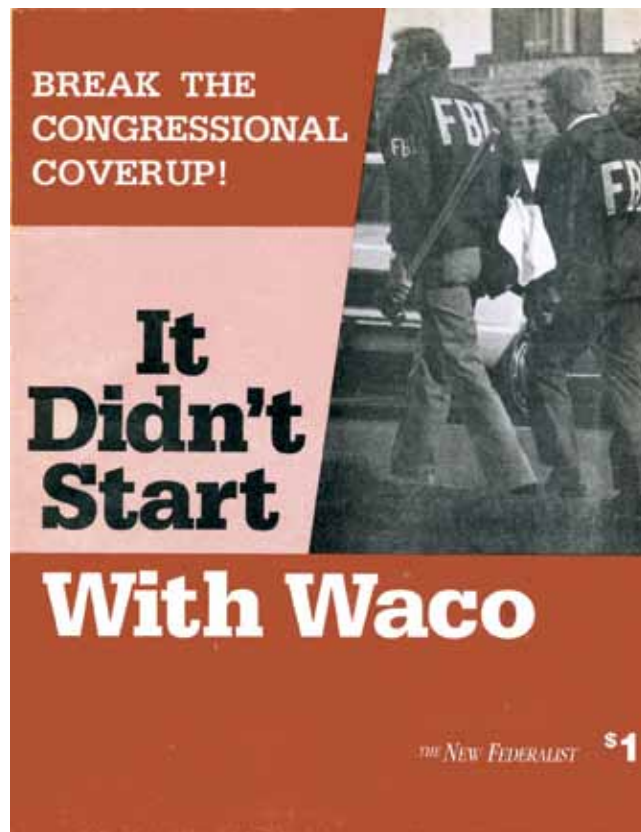
A second series of raids was carried out against what were then the two Communist parties in the U.S., in 33 cities on Jan. 2, 1920. Already at this time, the GID had enough high-level undercover agents in the Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party, that they were able to schedule party meetings at the same time across the country, so that raids could be executed simultaneously. There were no constitutional rights for the more than 10,000 persons arrested and detained in these raids.

Hoover and the GID were moved into the (Federal) Bureau of Investigation in 1921—which had been created by that Anglophile President, Teddy Roosevelt, in 1907. In 1924, the GID was shut down by Attorney General Harlan Fiske Stone, but Hoover and his massive card files remained in place in the FBI.

### Division Five

The FBI’s counter-intelligence functions were revived in the 1930s, to keep track of the growing fascist and communist movements. With the outbreak of World War II, the FBI was reorganized with the creation of Division Five, responsible for internal security and counter-intelligence.

Collaborating with British Intelligence agents operating in the United States during World War II, the Bureau mastered the arts of warrantless wiretaps, opening of personal mail, and “black bag jobs” (surrepti-



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*The LaRouche movement’s newspaper, New Federalist, issued this pamphlet in August 1995. The photo shows FBI and other Federal agents in the 1986 raid against LaRouche in Virginia, which led to his unjust incarceration, along with that of numerous associates.*

tious entries or burglaries)—which methods were carried seamlessly into peacetime surveillance and disruption of domestic radicals and “subversives” in the 1950s and ’60s.

During the investigations known as the Church Committee (Senate) and Pike Commission (House) in the 1970s, the public learned how the FBI had used infiltrators and provocateurs to foment violence within and between targetted organizations, to the point of encouraging suicide (e.g., Martin Luther King), and murders and assassinations (e.g., Black Panther Party, Martin Luther King, and Lyndon LaRouche; see below).

One favored FBI technique was to falsely label someone as a police or FBI informant, putting that person at risk of injury or death, while protecting its informants. Another method was blackmail—widely used by Hoover against his actual or potential oppo-

nents (but also, according to some accounts, used by British Intelligence against Hoover himself).<sup>5</sup>

Related to this were the “Abscam” and “Brilab” operations of the late 1970s and early 1980s, targeting elected officials and labor leaders, respectively. FBI provocateurs, many of whom were hardened criminals, such as Mel Weinberg (used to frame up Sen. Harrison Williams of New Jersey), would put words in a politician’s mouth to give the appearance of bribe-taking, even when there was no such intention or conduct. The conduct of the Bureau’s undercover agents in these cases, is eerily similar to its use of provocateurs in the “terrorism” entrapments described in the first section of this article. Similar tactics were used against African-American elected officials in the operations known as “Fruhmenschen” and “Lost Trust.”

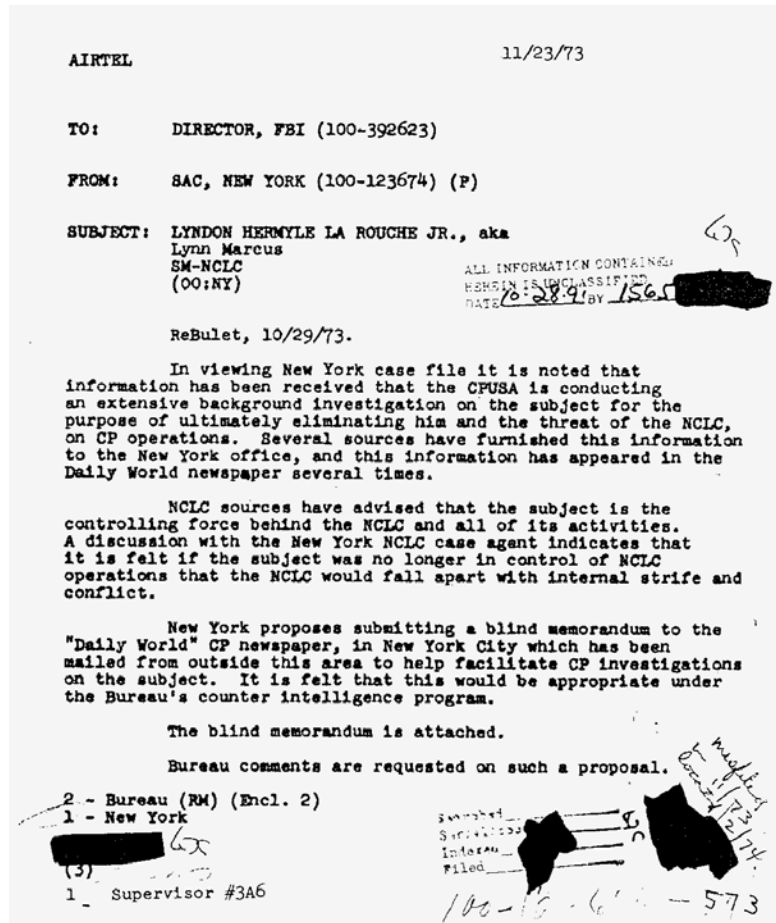
### Provocations Against LaRouche

The political movement organized by Lyndon LaRouche has been repeatedly targeted by the FBI and Justice Department, going back to the late 1960s, when LaRouche first gathered around him a circle of students who had come out of the “New Left.” In May 1969, the FBI anonymously mailed a leaflet to student activists at Columbia University, trying to mobilize Mark Rudd’s anarchists and proto-terrorists (later the “Weatherman” terrorists) against advocates of LaRouche’s pro-labor policies.

In 1973, the Bureau used its well-entrenched assets in the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) to launch violent attacks on the LaRouche-organized association, the National Caucus of Labor Committees. FBI documents show that it used the CP and other left-wing groups to label the NCLC as “right-wing terrorists,” and “a front either for the local police or the CIA.”

Most egregious, was the documented attempt by the FBI to incite the CPUSA to carry out the “elimination” of LaRouche. A Nov. 23, 1973 FBI memo stated:

5. Curt Gentry, “J. Edgar Hoover: The Man and the Secrets” (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), pp. 296-297.



The FBI's 1973 memorandum on inciting the Communist Party to carry out the “elimination” of LaRouche.

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI  
FROM: SAC, NEW YORK  
SUBJECT: LYNDON HERMYLE  
LAROUCHE, JR.

In reviewing New York case file it is noted that information has been received that the CPUSA is conducting an extensive background investigation on the subject for the purpose of ultimately eliminating him and the threat of the NCLC, on CP operations. . . .

[S]ources have advised that the subject is the controlling force behind the NCLC and all of its activities. A discussion with the New York NCLC case agent indicates that it is felt if the subject was no longer in control of NCLC operations that the NCLC would fall apart with internal strife and conflict.

New York proposes submitting a blind memorandum to the 'Daily World' CP newspaper, in New York City, which has been mailed from outside this area to help facilitate CP investigations of the subject. It is felt that this would be appropriate under the Bureau's counter intelligence program.

Otherwise, unable to find any pretext under which LaRouche and his associates could be prosecuted in Federal courts, the FBI orchestrated hundreds of harassing arrests of LaRouche movement organizers by state and local police. An FBI agent in New Haven, Conn. wrote a memorandum on a June 13, 1975 call from a supervisor "from Division 5 at the Bureau," who asked about cooking up some bogus Federal charges. "He further stated that some [FBI] offices have had considerable success in having local authorities proceed under local statutes against NCLC members. . . ."

Around 1983, at the instigation of British agent Henry Kissinger, and corrupt circles in the Soviet Union, the Justice Department and FBI launched a new COINTELPRO-type operation against LaRouche. Kissinger had written to FBI Director William Webster

in August 1982, complaining about LaRouche; in January 1983, Kissinger's lawyer Edward Bennett Williams got the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board (PFIAB) to ask the FBI to investigate the sources of LaRouche's funding. This led to an all-out public/private operation against LaRouche, designed to culminate with armed raids on the LaRouche movement offices; an intended, but averted, Waco-style raid on LaRouche's residence planned to kill him. (FBI documents show that the planning of the 1986 raid involved the Pentagon's Joint Special Operations Command—little known then, but better known today, for its activities including killer drone strikes in Afghanistan and Pakistan.)

Six months later after the raid, the Justice Department carried out an unprecedented involuntary bankruptcy proceeding against publishing companies operated by LaRouche's associates, which was later determined by a Federal court to have constituted "a constructive fraud on the court." Under conditions of the bankruptcy, the Justice Department then railroaded LaRouche and a number of associates into prison. Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark characterized the LaRouche case as having "represented a broader range of deliberate cunning and systematic misconduct over a longer period of time utilizing the power of the federal government than any other prosecution by the U.S. government in my time, or to my knowledge."

### Clean-Up Is Long Overdue

Now, in light of this sordid history, look again at the FBI's handling of the Boston Marathon bombings. Is it just incompetence, that the Bureau somehow overlooked the Tsarnaev brothers? Or were there other operations going on—provocations, entrapment, etc., by the FBI or other agencies—which the government is now scrambling to cover up? As *EIR* pointed out in its editorial in the last issue, it has been decades since the FBI has been subject to any serious scrutiny—but look what came pouring out during the Church Committee and other investigations of the early and mid-1970s.

And now, with the world on the verge of World War III, and the British-Saudi wielding of terror as a detonator for war and dictatorship, it is essential that we find out exactly who is responsible for such terrorism today—in a manner which was never done around the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. Such a thorough investigation and housecleaning are long overdue.



## The Al-Qaeda Executive

Financed and deployed by the British-Saudi Empire, al-Qaeda has been protected by the Obama Administration to accomplish the Empire's global war. In this feature [video](#), LaRouchePAC documents President Obama's use of the al-Qaeda networks to overthrow Qaddafi in Libya, and to carry out bloody regime-change against Assad in Syria, by the same forces who attacked the U.S. consulate in Benghazi.

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