

Court Ups Pressure On Saudis Over 9/11

July 7—While the Obama Administration continues to do everything in its power to prevent the Saudi role in the 9/11 terrorist attacks from coming to light, the pressure on the Saudi Kingdom is slowly increasing on a number of fronts. This includes a recent Supreme Court action, a Freedom of Information lawsuit in Florida, and growing pressure in Congress to force the Obama Administration to declassify the suppressed 28 pages on Saudi involvement, from the 2003 Joint Congressional Inquiry into the 9/11 attacks. We highlight here recent developments on the first two fronts.

9/11 Families vs. Saudis

On June 30, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal brought by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, thus allowing a lawsuit by 9/11 families and insurance companies to proceed against the kingdom. At the same time, the court refused to hear an appeal brought by 9/11 families involving another lower court ruling, which barred them from suing banks and individuals that provided support to al-Qaeda and the 9/11 terrorists. In both cases, outrageously, the Obama Administration had intervened on the side of the Saudis against U.S. citizens and 9/11 victims.

In the first case, *Kingdom of Saudi Arabia v. Federal Insurance Corp.*, the Supreme Court declined a petition for review filed by Saudi Arabia, a number of Saudi princes, and the Saudi High Commission (an alleged charity), of a December ruling of the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals. By refusing to review the case, the High Court let the appeals court ruling stand, permitting the suit against the Saudis to proceed in U.S. District Court in Manhattan, where litigation has been ongoing for years against other entities.

“From our perspective, we are looking forward to having the opportunity to finally conduct an inquiry into the financing of the Sept. 11 attacks,” said Sean Carter, a partner at the Philadelphia law firm Cozen O’Connor. Carter said he expected that discovery of

Saudi government documents and depositions would begin shortly, according to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

The Sarasota Saudis

The second case pertains to a wealthy Saudi family living in Sarasota, Fla., who were known to have been in regular contact with a number of the 9/11 pilots and hijackers, and who fled the country shortly before Sept. 11, 2001—a fact which the Bush and Obama administrations have systematically covered up.

On June 30, the *Broward Bulldog* online newspaper, which is suing the Department of Justice and the FBI under FOIA, received 11 additional, heavily redacted pages of FBI reports concerning the Saudi Ghazzawi and al-Hijjii families. Most of the information in the documents was only classified in early June, to prevent its release, although such documents are supposed to be classified when they are created.

Among other things, the Justice Department asserts that classification is necessary because the censored information pertains to foreign relations or foreign activities, including confidential sources. “This could be about information considered embarrassing to Saudi Arabia,” said *Bulldog* attorney Tom Julin, as reported in the *Bulldog* and the *Miami Herald*.

The 11 pages released on June 30 contain statements reiterating that the al-Hijjiis had departed the U.S. in haste shortly before 9/11, and that further investigation had revealed “many connections” between them and persons associated with the 9/11 attacks—statements that flatly contradict the FBI’s earlier public statements that its agents had found no connection between the families and the 9/11 plot.

“This release suggests that the FBI has covered up information that is vitally important to public safety,” said Julin. “It’s startling that after initially denying they had any documents, they continue to find new documents as the weeks and months roll by. Each new batch suggests there are many, many more documents. There needs to be a full-scale explanation of what’s going on here.”

The judge in the FOIA case is still in the process of examining the full 80,000 pages of the FBI’s Tampa field office investigation of 9/11 to determine if other documents are relevant to the investigation of the Sarasota Saudis and their links to the 9/11 hijackers.