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## III. Their Time Is Over

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THEIR TIME IS UP

# The Chilcot Report and the 28 Pages

by Jeffrey Steinberg

July 27—The July 6 publication of the Chilcot Commission report in Britain, followed nine days later by the release of the 28-page suppressed chapter of the original Joint Congressional Inquiry into 9/11 of December 2002, is a watershed that must now lead to the dismantling of the British Empire. Taken together, the two documents are a clear indictment of the policies that have dominated the Anglo-American sphere for the last decade and a half, beginning with the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center.

### The Chilcot Investigation: 2009-2016

Sir John Chilcot was appointed to head an independent investigation into Britain's role in the events from 2001 to 2009, spanning the 9/11 attacks, the joint Anglo-American invasion of Iraq in March 2003, and the events that followed. The appointment was announced on June 15, 2009 by Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who named Sir John Chilcot to head the five-person Privy Council Commission.

When the Privy Counsellors' Report was made public on July 6, 2016, it comprised 12 volumes of more than 6,000 pages, with 2.6 million words. The Executive Summary alone was 145 pages, with 911 separate itemized findings of fact, all condemning the entire war scheme.

Chilcot issued a statement

moments prior to the release, in which he summarized the findings. It was nothing short of a stunning indictment of Tony Blair and his American partners, George W. Bush and Dick Cheney, for going to war before exhausting all of the available diplomatic options, for misrepresenting the actual intelligence to obtain public consent for the invasion and overthrow of Saddam Hussein's government, and for failing to prepare for the aftermath of the invasion.



White House photo/David Bohrer

*Vice President Dick Cheney speaking with British Prime Minister Tony Blair before departing London March 11, 2002, a year before the Blair-orchestrated invasion of Iraq carried out by the George W. Bush Administration.*

Chilcot reported that, although Blair initially cautioned President Bush against taking “hasty action” in Iraq, Blair himself had abandoned any such caution by April 2002, when he traveled to Crawford, Texas to confer with Bush. By that time, the British Joint Intelligence Committee had concluded that “Saddam Hussein could not be removed without an invasion.”

While the world media had characterized Tony Blair as George Bush's “poodle,” loyally following Bush on the path to war, the Chilcot findings were that the British were driving every key decision, from the launching of invasion plans even prior to the April 2002 Crawford war council, to the decision to take the Iraq issue to the United Nations on Sept. 7, 2002, to the issuing of the Sept. 24, 2002 “dodgy dossier” which was used by both Washington and London to make the fraudulent case that



George W. Bush Presidential Library

*President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister speaking at a joint press conference May 2, 2002, after meeting in Crawford, Texas. The meeting was referred to as the Crawford War Council.*

Saddam Hussein was stockpiling and concealing a huge “weapons of mass destruction” inventory and secret research program.

Chilcot also made clear, in his presentation of the Privy Council investigation’s findings, that the post-invasion catastrophe was not “unknowable,” as Blair claimed after the fact. “The risks of internal strife in Iraq, active Iranian pursuit of its interests, regional instability, and Al-Qaeda activity in Iraq, were each explicitly identified before the invasion,” he told reporters July 6.

The Commission concluded that the consequences of the British and American invasion included at least 150,000 Iraqi deaths, “most of them civilians,” and the displacing of more than one million Iraqis.

Many of the thousands of documents included in the report, and the Commission’s own findings, exposed the active hand of Prime Minister Blair in bypassing any parliamentary oversight, in pursuit of a war in violation of the Nuremberg Code and the United Nations Charter, which ban aggressive war as a crime against humanity. Over 170 British soldiers and more than 2,000 American soldiers have been killed in the Iraq War so far. Families of the British soldiers who gave their lives in the illegal war are now suing Tony Blair—and they have called for the convening

of a United Nations tribunal at the International Court of Justice, to try Blair, Bush, and Cheney for their war crimes.

## The 28 Pages

After a 14-year battle, faced with a growing public demand, led by a powerful coalition of current and former elected officials, and survivors and family members of the 2,997 innocent people killed in the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, and with the LaRouche Political Action Committee’s “Manhattan Project” in a key role, President Barack Obama relented on July 15 and approved the declassification of the partially redacted 28-page chapter of the December 2002 report of the Joint Congressional Inquiry.

As to the timing of the release, it is clear that the press conference of Representatives Walter Jones (R-N.C.), Stephen Lynch (D-Mass.), and Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) on July 6, 2016 finally forced the issue. In this press conference, they vowed to make the suppressed chapter public, even if it required invoking the “Gravel Option” of publicly revealing the content of the 28 pages from the floor of the House.

While President Obama, his CIA Director John Brennan, and the Saudi Royal Family attempted, in vain, once the pages were made public, to claim that the 28 pages “vindicated” the Saudis and showed no direct



*One plane of many that returned from Iraq, loaded with flag-draped coffins.*



involvement in the worst terrorist attacks on U.S. soil in history, no sane person reading the released pages could ignore the massive evidence of a direct Saudi government hand in the creation and building up of Al-Qaeda, and in providing direct, material support to some of the 9/11 hijackers.

But a larger context reveals an even more hideous truth: President George W. Bush suppressed the publication of the 28 pages in December 2002, at the height of the U.S. and British preparations for the invasion of Iraq and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. Had those 28 pages been included in the published version of the report of the Joint Inquiry at that time, it would have been impossible for Bush and Blair to go forward with their long-established Iraq invasion plans.

The assault on Iraq, which began March 19-20, 2003, was premised on two Big Lies: First, that Saddam Hussein had an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction; and second, that Saddam Hussein had a hand in 9/11.

Had the 28 pages—showing damning evidence of Saudi support for the 9/11 hijackers—been released to the American public and the world when they were written in December 2002, an invasion of Iraq would have been the moral equivalent of bombing China, instead of Japan, following the attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

### 9/11 ‘Reichstag Fire’ —An Inside Job

From top to bottom, the overwhelming evidence, assembled by the Joint Inquiry staff under enormous limitations, made clear that all trails pointed to Saudi Arabia as the sponsors and pa-



georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov

*President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney en route to a motorcade taking them to 9/11 memorial ceremony at the Pentagon.*

trons of the 9/11 attack. As the direct result of 9/11, George Bush and Dick Cheney brought the United States to war, ripped up major portions of the U.S. Constitution through measures like the Patriot Act, and bankrupted the United States through a war effort that has, so far, cost taxpayers an estimated \$3 trillion—while granting tax cuts to the super-rich at the same time.

In January 2001, Lyndon LaRouche had publicly warned that the Bush-Cheney Administration would move to create a “Reichstag Fire” incident to provide the pretext for ripping up the U.S. Constitution. The Bush Administration’s two closest allies, Great Britain and Saudi Arabia, were both implicated in the crime of 9/11, and as the events were unfolding on September 11, 2001, Lyndon LaRouche told a radio audience that such a coordinated attack was not possible without

some “inside help.”

### Anglo-Saudi Partnership for Terrorism

The 28-page chapter from the Joint Inquiry forms a compelling part of the narrative assembled by the Chilcot Commission. By early 2001, Great Britain was already the target of diplomatic protests from governments around the globe for its protection and financing of terrorist organizations. In 1999, the Russian government fired off a series of diplomatic *démarches* over flagrant British protection of Chechen terrorists who, in some cases, were being given political asylum in the UK, and then safe passage to Afghanistan and Pakistan for training, before returning to Russia to fight in the then raging Second Chechen War. While the Chilcot Report does not



Image from Iraqi state television

*Saddam Hussein on election day, Oct. 16, 2002, five months before the invasion of Iraq.*

raise the issue of British protection of jihadist terrorists, the fact is that the Chechen terrorists who were safe-housed, financed, and protected by the British Crown went on to form a military backbone of Al-Qaeda, and later of the Islamic State (ISIS).

Osama Bin Laden was one of the Al-Qaeda terrorists, who maintained a residence, an office, and an extensive network of supporters and recruiters throughout Britain. Even after the September 11, 2001 attacks, these official British support operations continued, to the point that London became notorious as “Londonistan,” a world center for global jihadist terrorism. At the very moment that Prime Minister Tony Blair was cunningly swearing his allegiance to Bush and Cheney for the Afghan and Iraq war efforts, he was engaging in protecting Saudi-backed jihadist terrorists.

It is a sordid tale of imperial arrogance, cynicism, murder, and mayhem on a global scale.

The centerpiece of the Anglo-Saudi partnership was the oil-for-arms barter deal known as Al-Yamamah, first negotiated in 1985 between Blair’s predecessor, Margaret Thatcher, and Saudi Prince Bandar Bin Sultan, the longstanding Saudi Ambassador to the United States. Blair enthusiastically continued the Al-Yamamah deal when he succeeded the Tories, and expanded its scope.

In 2006, when evidence surfaced that the Al-Yamamah deal had created a string of offshore slush funds for conducting joint Anglo-Saudi black operations—including the funding of the Afghan *mujahideen*, later to spawn Al Qaeda—Blair shut down the probe, invoking British national security interests. By the time that Blair intervened to cover up the truth about the Al-Yamamah program, at least \$100 billion had been amassed in offshore black accounts that exist to this day, and still continue to finance global terrorism.



FEMA News Photo/Michael Rieger

*New York firefighters and rescue workers search for survivors at the site of the destroyed World Trade Center.*

The 28-page chapter, long suppressed, opens a Pandora’s Box of leads on the Saudi support for the 9/11 hijackers. It also opens a window into the “inside job.” The very first conclusion of the chapter, which is titled “Findings, Discussion and Narrative Regarding Certain Sensitive National Security Matters,” is that the FBI and the CIA were asleep at the switch prior to 9/11, and made no effort to probe the Saudi regime’s links to Al-Qaeda. This was itself a stunning indictment, given that Al-Qaeda had already bombed two U.S. embassies in Africa and the USS Cole, a guided-missile destroyer in the harbor of Aden, Yemen—resulting altogether in more than 200 hundred deaths. Washington sources insist that there was a handful of intelligence agents who tirelessly pursued the Saudi/Al-Qaeda threat, but their work

was suppressed as soon as Bush and Cheney came into office.

### **New Information in the 28 Pages**

The 28-page chapter made no claim to be an exhaustive investigation into the Saudi role in 9/11. Indeed, the Joint Inquiry was severely limited by the narrow Congressional mandate, and the lack of time, staffing, and funding to do independent investigations. The staff principally reviewed files from the FBI and CIA, interviewed key personnel, and assembled investigative leads to be pursued by the later 9/11 Commission or by follow-on Congressional probes. The Joint Inquiry chapter stated up front:

Given the serious national security implications of this information [on Saudi sponsorship of Al-Qaeda and the 9/11 hijackers], however, the leadership of the Joint Inquiry is referring the staff’s compilation of relevant information to both the FBI and the CIA for investigative



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*A Chechen fighter near the burned-out ruins of the Presidential Palace in Grozny, January 1995.*

review and appropriate investigative and intelligence action.

Despite those limitations, the Joint Inquiry found that a large number of Saudi government officials, suspected government intelligence officers, and agents of the Saudi Royal Family were in direct contact with at least two of the hijackers from the moment they arrived in the United States in early 2000, having just attended an Al-Qaeda planning session in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where the outlines of the 9/11 attack were first put together.

The chapter went far beyond the details of the Joint Inquiry's work that had already been revealed in Sen. Bob Graham's 2004 book, *Intelligence Matters*. That book identified two Saudi intelligence officers, Osama Basnan and Omar Al-Bayoumi, as contact points for the two original hijackers, Khalid Al-Mihdhar and Nawaf Al-Hazmi. Graham revealed that Prince Bandar and his wife Princess Haifa had regularly provided money to Basnan's wife, and that Al-Bayoumi had also been paid by a Saudi Defense and Aviation Ministry-linked company as a "ghost employee," during the time that he and Basnan were bankrolling and providing logistical support to the hijackers. Al-Bayoumi received \$20,000 from the Saudi Ministry of Finance and worked as "an accountant" for the Saudi Ministry of Defense and Aviation.

During the first five months that the two San Diego-based hijackers were in the United States, under the

sponsorship of Al-Bayoumi and Basnan, Al-Bayoumi made almost one hundred telephone calls to Saudi government officials at the Saudi Embassy in Washington, the Saudi Cultural Mission in Washington, and the Saudi Consulate in Los Angeles.

Furthermore, the 28 pages reveal that the FBI had discovered—after the 9/11 attacks—that Al-Bayoumi worked for Avco Dallah, a Saudi defense contractor with documented ties to Osama Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda. The FBI had information from an informant that Basnan boasted that he and Al-Bayoumi were in contact with the two San Diego hijackers, and that he, Basnan, "had done more" to assist the hijackers than Al-Bayoumi.

Basnan had first come to the attention of the FBI in 1993, when he hosted a party for the "blind sheikh," Omar Abdul Rahman, a key participant in the World Trade Center bombing in February of that year. At that time, Basnan had boasted to FBI informants that he was a loyal follower of Osama Bin Laden, whom he called "the official Khalifate and the ruler of the Islamic world."

### **Saudi Royalty, Saudi Naval Officers**

The report of the Joint Inquiry also links Prince Bandar, the Saudi Ambassador, to a senior Al-Qaeda figure. The authors write,

According to FBI documents, several of the phone numbers found in the phone book of Abu Zubaida, a senior Al-Qaeda operative captured in Pakistan in March 2002, could be linked, at least indirectly, to telephone numbers in the United States. One of those U.S. numbers is subscribed to by the ASPCOL Corporation, which is located in Aspen, Colorado, and manages the affairs of the Colorado residence of the Saudi Ambassador Bandar.<sup>1</sup>

The report then notes that another number in Zubai-

1. The text of the 28-page chapter is at <http://intelligence.house.gov/sites/intelligence.house.gov/files/documents/declasspart4.pdf>. This extract is from pages 418-419 of the report, which are the fourth and fifth pages of the text of the chapter.

da's phone book, confiscated when he was captured, was that of a security guard at the Saudi Embassy in Washington.

Prince Bandar was also suspected of financing the Islamic Assembly of North America (IANA). The 28-page chapter reports that, "according to the FBI, IANA's mission is actually to spread Islamic fundamentalism and Salafist doctrine throughout the United States and the world at large."

The very next paragraph of the chapter reveals that,



videograb from BBC Panorama show

*Saudi Prince Bandar and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.*

FBI documents also indicate that several Saudi Naval officers were in contact with the September 11 hijackers. FBI documents state that the San Diego Field Office opened a counterterrorism investigation on an individual named Osama Nooh, a Saudi Naval officer, due to his association with Nawaf Al-Hazmi and Khalid Al-Mihdhar. In addition, Lafi Al-Harbi, another Saudi Naval officer, was in telephonic contact with flight 77 hijacker Khalid Al-Mihdhar and Nawaf Al-Hazmi on nine occasions from March 11, 2000 to March 27, 2000.

The Jacksonville FBI Field Office is conducting an investigation to determine whether Saleh Ahmed Bedaiwi, a Saudi Naval officer within its territory, was in contact with any of the hijackers.

The next ten lines of the 28-page chapter are redacted.

Immediately after the account of the Saudi Naval officers, and the redactions, the report continues,

... according to the FBI, an individual named Fahad Abdullah Saleh Bakala was close friends with September 11 hijackers Ahmed Al-Ghamdi and Hamza Al-Ghamdi. Bakala previously "worked as a pilot for the Saudi Royal family, flying Osama Bin Laden between Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia during OBL's exile." In addition, an FBI source stated after September 11 that he/she was 50% sure that Al-Mihdhar was a visitor at an apartment in McLean, Virginia that was occupied in July and August 2001 by Hamad

Alotaiba of the Saudi Embassy Military Division. FBI documents also note that September 11 hijacker Saeed Al-Ghamdi may have also visited the address.

The concluding section of the 28-page chapter deals with the failures of the FBI to act on intelligence that they had in their possession, dating back to the mid-1990s, even before the Africa embassy bombings. It is a stunning account of mass incompetence—at best.

What the missing chapter now makes clear is that, as Representatives Jones, Lynch, and Massie emphasized, the FBI top management, starting with Director Robert Mueller, remained willfully clueless about actionable intelligence in their own files against the 9/11 hijackers and their Saudi official sponsors.

## What To Do

September 11 widow Kristen Breitweiser wrote in *Huffington Post*, the day after the release of the 28-page chapter, that Congress must act immediately by reconvening on an emergency basis to vote Saudi Arabia onto the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism.

The United Kingdom should be added to the same list, based on the massive evidence of the Anglo-Saudi offshore funding mechanisms, used to finance actions like 9/11.

Obama must be suspended from his functions under the 25th Amendment and placed on trial for complicity in covering up British-Saudi terrorism, and for launching wars of aggression based on lies, just as Blair, Bush, and Cheney did.