

# Complete 911 Timeline

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## **July 28, 1945: Empire State Building Struck by US Army B-25 Bomber**



Crash by a US Army B-25 bomber on July 28, 1945. *[Source: NPR]*A B-25

bomber crashes into the Empire State Building in New York City on July 28, 1945, causing 14 deaths. Lieutenant Colonel William Franklin Smith Jr. is piloting a B-25 Mitchell bomber on a routine personnel transport mission from Boston to LaGuardia Airport. Smith asks for clearance to land, but is advised of zero visibility. Proceeding anyway, he is disoriented by the fog, and starts turning right instead of left after passing the Chrysler Building. At 9:40 a.m., the plane crashes into the north side of the Empire State Building, between the 78th and 80th floors, carving an 18-foot hole in the building where the offices of the National Catholic Welfare Council are located. One engine shoots through the side opposite the impact. It flies as far as the next block where it lands on the roof of a nearby building and starts a fire that destroys a penthouse. The other engine and part of the landing gear plummet down an elevator shaft. The resulting fire is extinguished in 40 minutes. It is the only fire at such a height that is ever successfully controlled. Fourteen people are killed in the incident and one person is injured. Despite the damage and loss of life, the building opens for business on many floors the following Monday. The crash helps spur the passage of the long-pending Federal Tort Claims Act of 1946, allowing people to sue the government for the accident. [NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO, 7/28/2008]

**Entity Tags:** [William Franklin Smith Jr.](#), [Empire State Building](#)

**Category Tags:** [Other Pre-9/11 Events](#)



## **1958-1999: NORAD Reduces Number of Fighters on 'Alert,' Protecting American Airspace**

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[\(53\)Donald](#)

[Rumsfeld](#)

[\(33\)Flight AA 11](#)

[\(145\)Flight AA 77](#)

[\(145\)Flight](#)



The NORAD emblem. [Source: NORAD] The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), the military organization responsible for monitoring and defending US airspace, gradually reduces the number of aircraft it has on “alert”—armed and ready for immediate takeoff—in response to the changing nature of the threats it has to defend against, so that there will be just 14 fighter jets on alert across the continental United States when the 9/11 attacks take place. [JONES, 2011, PP. 7-8]

NORAD Has 1,200 Interceptor Aircraft in 1960 - NORAD is a bi-national organization, established by the US and Canada in 1958 to counter the threat posed by the Soviet Union. [9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 16] It is initially responsible for intercepting any Soviet long-range bombers that might attack the Northern Hemisphere. By 1960, it has about 1,200 interceptor aircraft dedicated to this task. But during the 1960s, the Soviets become less reliant on manned bombers, and shift instead to ballistic missiles. In response to this changed threat and also budget constraints, the number of NORAD interceptor aircraft goes down to about 300 by the mid-1970s.

NORAD's Mission Changes after Cold War Ends - With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in 1991, the threats NORAD has to counter change significantly. During the early 1990s, NORAD’s mission consequently changes from one of air defense to one of maintaining “air sovereignty,” which NORAD defines as “providing surveillance and control of the territorial airspace.” The new mission includes intercepting suspicious aircraft, tracking hijacked aircraft, assisting aircraft in distress, and counterdrug operations. [GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE, 5/3/1994, PP. 14-15; 9/11 COMMISSION, 2/3/2004]; JONES, 2011, PP. 7] As this change takes place, the number of aircraft defending American airspace is reduced. In 1987, there are 52 fighters on alert in the continental United States. [FILSON, 1999, PP. 112-113] But by December 1999, there are just 14 alert fighters remaining around the continental US. [AIRMAN, 12/1999]

Number of Alert Sites Goes Down Prior to 9/11 - The number of NORAD “alert sites”—bases where the alert aircraft are located—is also reduced in the decades prior to 9/11. During the Cold War, there are 26 of these sites. [9/11 COMMISSION, 6/17/2004; 9/11

COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 16] By 1991, there are 19 of them, according to Major General Larry Arnold, the commander of NORAD’s Continental US Region from 1997 to 2002. [FILSON, 2003, PP. V] By 1994, according to a report by the General Accounting Office, there are 14 alert sites around the US. [GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE, 5/3/1994, PP.

1] And by 1996, only 10 alert sites remain. [UTECHT, 4/7/1996, PP. 9-10]

Military Officials Call for Eliminating Alert Sites - In the 1990s, some officials at the Pentagon argue for the alert sites to be eliminated entirely. [9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 16-17]

The Department of Defense’s 1997 Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review indicates that the number of alert sites around the continental US could be reduced to just four, but the idea is successfully blocked by NORAD (see May 19, 1997). [FILSON, 2003, PP. IV-V, 34-36; 9/11 COMMISSION, 2/3/2004] However, three alert sites are subsequently removed from the air sovereignty mission. These are in Atlantic City, New Jersey; Burlington, Vermont; and Great Falls, Montana. [AMERICAN DEFENDER, 4/1998]

Seven Alert Sites Remain - By December 1999, therefore, there are just seven alert sites around the continental US, each with two fighters on alert. These sites are Homestead Air Reserve Base, Florida; Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida; Portland Air National Guard

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Base, Oregon; March Air Reserve Base, California; Ellington Air National Guard Base, Texas; Otis Air National Guard Base, Massachusetts; and Langley Air Force Base, Virginia. Only two of these sites—Otis ANGB and Langley AFB—serve the northeastern United States, where the hijackings on September 11 will take place. [AIRMAN, 12/1999; 9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 17]

**Entity Tags:** [North American Aerospace Defense Command](#), [Larry Arnold](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [9/11 Timeline](#)

**Category Tags:** [US Air Security](#)

**May 2, 1968: Advert in New York Times Warns of WTC Danger, Shows Plane About to Strike One of the Towers**



A 1968 advert with an artist's rendition of a plane hitting the WTC. [Source: Committee for a Reasonable World Trade Center] A civic group opposed to the building of the World Trade Center publishes a nearly full-page advertisement in the New York Times, warning that the new buildings will be so tall that a commercial airliner might crash into them. The group, called the Committee for a Reasonable World Trade Center, is mainly composed of New York real estate developers who are worried that the huge construction project will glut the market. Its leader is Lawrence A. Wien, a real estate mogul who is an owner of the Empire State Building in New York. [NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE, 9/8/2002; NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE, 9/8/2002] In July 1945, a B-25 Army bomber struck the Empire State Building, killing 14 people. [NEW YORK TIMES, 2/26/1981] The committee's advertisement shows an artist's rendition of a large jet plane about to strike one of the proposed towers. [NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE, 9/8/2002; NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE, 9/8/2002]

**Entity Tags:** [Lawrence A. Wien](#)

**Category Tags:** [WTC Investigation](#)

**(Between December 1969 and January 1970): Trainee Army Officer Imagines Scenario of Suicide Pilot Crashing Plane into US Capitol**

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Dan Hill. [Source: Amanda Gordon / Bloomberg] Dan Hill, a US Army Ranger who is undergoing officer training, comes up with a hypothetical plan by which the Soviet Union could start a nuclear war with the United States, which involves a suicide pilot crashing a military transport plane into the US Capitol building in Washington, DC.

Trainees Tasked with Imagining How to Start a World War - After his tour in Vietnam came to an end in mid-1969, Hill was chosen for the career officer training program at Fort Benning, Georgia. He is currently taking a course in nuclear weapons deployment. Toward the end of the semester, he is given the assignment of imagining he is a Soviet premier who wants to start World War III against the US. Hill and his fellow trainees are told to prepare a written plan, describing how they would initiate the war.

Plan Involves Crashing Plane into Capitol Building - Hill comes up with a plan, which he gives the code name "State of the Union." It involves recruiting and training a suicide pilot, obtaining a C-47 transport plane, and filling it with explosives. Then, as journalist and author James B. Stewart will describe: "On the night of the State of the Union, the pilot would fly the plane straight into the Capitol building, through the rotunda, and into the House of Representatives, where the bombs on the plane would be set to explode. He'd take out the president, his cabinet, the members of the Supreme Court, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and most senators and representatives. At that moment, the Soviet Union would unleash its nuclear missiles." According to Hill, everyone in the US would be "watching TV, there's no air defense around the Capitol; by the time anyone realized an aircraft was near, it would be too late."

Commander Questions Hill about His Plan - On the Monday after Hill submits his plan, a lieutenant colonel in intelligence stops him on his way to class and says, "I've got some people who would like to talk to you." Hill is taken to a room where Major General John Carley, the assistant commander of the infantry school, is waiting, along with six men in uniform and several other men who are dressed in dark suits, all of them looking serious. Carley is holding Hill's paper and asks, "How did you come up with this?" Hill replies, "This is my area of expertise," and explains that he has been trained in unconventional warfare, counterterrorism, the use of explosives, and demolition. He is then questioned for almost an hour about his plan. Finally, Carley says, "We'd prefer you forget you ever did this." Hill agrees to do so and is then dismissed.

Hill Informs Friend about His Plan - Hill writes to his friend Rick Rescorla, who has also served in the Army, about the incident. In his reply, Rescorla writes: "You evil-minded bastard! When you have these thoughts, don't publicize them to anyone. The plan is tactically and technically proficient; it makes sense, but only to people like you and me. To the rest of the world, it looks like the workings of a deviant mind. This kind of thing terrifies people." [STEWART, 2002, PP. 152-153] Rescorla will subsequently work as the head of security for a company at the World Trade Center. [NEW YORKER, 2/11/2002] While he is in that position, he will be drawing from Hill's plan when, after the 1993 bombing, he determines that terrorists will likely target the WTC again by crashing a cargo plane into it (see Shortly After February 26, 1993). [STEWART, 2002, PP. 193-194] Hill will learn that, shortly after his meeting with Carley, enhanced air defenses were installed for Washington. He will therefore think that some good may have come from the

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(432)Insider  
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(158)Counterterrorism  
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meeting. [STEWART, 2002, PP. 153]

**Entity Tags:** [Rick Rescorla](#), [John Carley](#), [Daniel J. Hill](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [9/11 Timeline](#)

**Category Tags:** [Warning Signs](#)

### **1973-2002: Saudi Billions Lay Groundwork for Radical Militancy**

In 1973, the price of oil skyrockets, bringing a huge amount of wealth to Saudi Arabia and other oil-rich Middle Eastern countries. The Center for Security Policy (CSP), a Washington think tank, will calculate in 2003 that, between 1975 and 2002, the Saudi government spends over \$70 billion on international aid. More than two thirds of the money goes to Islamic related purposes such as building mosques and religious schools. This money usually supports Wahhabism, a fundamentalist version of Islam dominant in Saudi Arabia but far less popular in most other Islamic nations. CSP scholar Alex Alexiev calls this “the largest worldwide propaganda campaign ever mounted” in the history of the world. In addition, private Saudi citizens donate many billions more for Wahhabi projects overseas through private charities. Some of the biggest charities, such as the Muslim World League and its affiliate, the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), are headed by Saudi government officials and closely tied to the government. The IIRO takes credit for funding 575 new mosques in Indonesia alone. Most of this money is spent on benign purposes with charitable intentions. But US News and World Report will assert in 2003: “Accompanying the money, invariably, was a blizzard of Wahhabist literature.... Critics argue that Wahhabism’s more extreme preachings—mistrust of infidels, branding of rival sects as apostates, and emphasis on violent jihad—laid the groundwork for terrorist groups around the world.” [US NEWS AND

WORLD REPORT, 12/7/2003; US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT, 12/15/2003]

**Entity Tags:** [Saudi Arabia](#), [International Islamic Relief Organization](#), [Center for Security Policy](#), [Muslim World League](#), [Alex Alexiev](#)

**Category Tags:** [Saudi Arabia](#), [Terrorism Financing](#)

### **1976: Faisal Islamic Bank of Egypt Founded, Funds Political Growth of Islamist Movement**

Founded in 1976, Faisal Islamic Bank of Egypt (FIBE) is part of the banking empire built by Saudi Prince Mohammed al-Faisal. Several of the founding members are leading members of the Muslim Brotherhood, including the “Blind Sheikh,” Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman. The growth of Islamic banking directly funds the political growth of the Islamist movement and allows the Saudis to pressure poorer Islamic nations, like Egypt, to shift their policies to the right. The Islamic banking boom is closely associated with the neoliberal free-trade philosophy of the Chicago School of Economics, with the free-trade prescriptions of the International Monetary Fund, and with conservative think-tanks like the Virginia-based Islamic Free Market Institute. FIBE is also closely associated with the infamous Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), which will be found to be deeply implicated in the illegal arms and narcotics trades, and with the funding of terrorist organizations when it collapses in 1991. Investigators will also find that BCCI held \$589 million in “unrecorded deposits,” \$245 million of which were placed with FIBE. [DREYFUSS, 2005, PP. 164 - 175]

**Entity Tags:** [Operation Bright Star](#), [Omar Abdul-Rahman](#), [Mohammed al-Faisal al-Saud](#), [Chicago](#)

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[9/11 Commission](#)  
[\(257\)Role of Philip](#)

School of Economics, Bank of Credit and Commerce International, Faisal Islamic Bank of Egypt, Muslim Brotherhood

**Category Tags:** Terrorism Financing, BCCI

**1976: CIA and Other Intelligence Agencies Use BCCI to Control and Manipulate Criminals and Terrorists Worldwide**



Agha Hasan Abedi. [Source: Terry Kirk / Financial Times]

Investigative journalist Joseph Trento will later report that in 1976, the Safari Club, a newly formed secret cabal of intelligence agencies (see September 1, 1976-Early 1980s), decides it needs a network of banks to help finance its intelligence operations. Saudi Intelligence Minister Kamal Adham is given the task. “With the official blessing of George H. W. Bush as the head of the CIA, Adham transformed a small Pakistani merchant bank, the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), into a world-wide money-laundering machine, buying banks around the world to create the biggest clandestine money network in history.” BCCI was founded in 1972 by a Pakistani named Agha Hasan Abedi, who was an associate of Adham’s. Bush himself has an account at BCCI established while still director of the CIA. French customs will later raid the Paris BCCI branch and discover the account in Bush’s name. [TRENTO, 2005, PP. 104] Bush, Adham, and other intelligence heads work with Abedi to contrive “a plan that seemed too good to be true. The bank would solicit the business of every major terrorist, rebel, and underground organization in the world. The intelligence thus gained would be shared with ‘friends’ of BCCI.” CIA operative Raymond Close works closely with Adham on this. BCCI taps “into the CIA’s stockpile of misfits and malcontents to help man a 1,500-strong group of assassins and enforcers.” [TRENTO, 2005, PP. 104] Soon, BCCI becomes the fastest growing bank in the world. Time magazine will later describe BCCI as not just a bank, but also “a global intelligence operation and a Mafia-like enforcement squad. Operating primarily out of the bank’s offices in Karachi, Pakistan, the 1,500-employee black network has used sophisticated spy equipment and techniques, along with bribery, extortion, kidnapping and even, by some accounts, murder. The black network—so named by its own members—stops at almost nothing to further the bank’s aims the world over.” [TIME, 7/22/1991]

**Entity Tags:** Central Intelligence Agency, Bank of Credit and Commerce International, Safari Club, Agha Hasan Abedi, George Herbert Walker Bush, Raymond Close, Kamal Adham

**Timeline Tags:** War in Afghanistan

**Category Tags:** Soviet-Afghan War, Pakistan and the ISI, Saudi Arabia, Terrorism Financing, BCCI

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**September 1, 1976-Early 1980s: Secret Intelligence Cabal Works with Rogue CIA Elements to Influence Middle East and Africa**



Alexandre de Marenches.[Source: Thierry Orban/ Corbis

*Syigma*]Prince Turki al-Faisal, head of Saudi intelligence from 1979, will say in a 2002 speech in the US, “In 1976, after the Watergate matters took place here, your intelligence community was literally tied up by Congress. It could not do anything. It could not send spies, it could not write reports, and it could not pay money. In order to compensate for that, a group of countries got together in the hope of fighting Communism and established what was called the Safari Club. The Safari Club included France, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Iran.” [SCOTT, 2007, PP. 62] An Egyptian reporter digging through Iranian government archives will later discover that the Safari Club was officially founded on September 1, 1976. Alexandre de Marenches, head of the French external intelligence service SDECE, was the chief instigator of the group. Millions are spent to create staff, offices, communications, and operational capability. Periodic secret conferences are held in Saudi Arabia, France, and Egypt. This group plays a secret role in political intrigues in many countries, mostly in Africa and the Middle East. For instance, a rebellion in Zaire is put down by Moroccan and Egyptian troops, using French air support. It also plays a role in the US-Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of 1979.[COOLEY, 2002, PP. 15-17] Author Joe Trento will later allege that the Safari Club, and especially the Saudi intelligence agency led by Kamal Adham and then his nephew Prince Turki from 1979 onwards, fund off-the-books covert operations for the CIA. But rather than working with the CIA as it is being reformed during the Carter administration, this group prefers to work with a private CIA made up of fired agents close to ex-CIA Director George Bush Sr. and Theodore Shackley, who Trento alleges is at the center of a “private, shadow spy organization within” the CIA until he is fired in 1979. The Safari Club and rogue CIA will play a major role in supporting the mujaheddin in Afghanistan. [SCOTT, 2007, PP. 63-64, 111] It is not clear when the Safari Club disbands, but its existence was exposed not long after the shah was deposed in Iran in 1979, and it seems to have disappeared by the time de Marenches stepped down from being head of French intelligence in 1982.[COOLEY, 2002, PP. 15-17]

**Entity Tags:** [Theodore Shackley](#), [Kamal Adham](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Alexandre de Marenches](#), [Safari Club](#), [Turki al-Faisal](#)

**Category Tags:** [US Dominance](#), [BCCI](#)

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## 1977-1981: Nationalities Working Group Advocates Using Militant Islam Against Soviet Union

In 1977 Zbigniew Brzezinski, as President Carter's National Security Adviser, forms the Nationalities Working Group (NWG) dedicated to the idea of weakening the Soviet Union by inflaming its ethnic tensions. The Islamic populations are regarded as prime targets. Richard Pipes, the father of Daniel Pipes, takes over the leadership of the NWG in 1981. Pipes predicts that with the right encouragement Soviet Muslims will "explode into genocidal fury" against Moscow. According to Richard Cottam, a former CIA official who advised the Carter administration at the time, after the fall of the Shah of Iran in 1978, Brzezinski favored a "de facto alliance with the forces of Islamic resurgence, and with the Republic of Iran." [DREYFUSS, 2005, PP. 241, 251 - 256]

**Entity Tags:** [Richard Pipes](#), [Zbigniew Brzezinski](#), [Nationalities Working Group](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [US International Relations](#), [Neoconservative Influence](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#)

## April 1977: Movie Has Terrorists Attempting to Crash Explosive-Laden Blimp into Super Bowl Stadium



*Black Sunday*. [Source: Paramount Pictures] *Black Sunday*, a big-budget action film, has a storyline centered on a terrorist group trying to hijack the blimp used by television networks to film the Super Bowl football game from the air. The plot by a group of Palestinian terrorists is to load the blimp's cabin with explosives and poisoned shrapnel, and detonate them over the thousands of spectators at the Super Bowl stadium, including the president of the United States who is attending the game. To stop the terrorists, the FBI calls upon a Mossad agent who has received wind of the plot. This film will be recalled after 9/11 for its resemblance to that day's attacks. [NEW YORK TIMES, 4/1/1977; NEW YORK TIMES, 9/13/2001]

**Category Tags:** [Other Pre-9/11 Events](#)

## (1978-9): Bin Laden Visits US, Britain, or Both

Osama Bin Laden visits the US, Britain or both around this time. Author Peter Bergen will later say, "Undoubtedly, bin Laden took his son for medical treatment to a western country and it's either the United States or the [Britain]. There's some kind of controversy about that." Khaled Batarfi, a close childhood friend to bin Laden, will later recall more specifically, "In Washington airport, Dulles Airport, people were surprised at

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the way he dressed, his wife dressed. Some of them were even taking photos and he was kind of joking about it. We were like in a zoo.” [NEW YORKER, 12/5/2005; CNN, 8/23/2006] According to author Lawrence Wright, bin Laden visits London to seek medical advice for his young son, Abdul Rahman. Abdul Rahman was born with hydrocephalus and bin Laden considers the condition so bad that he goes abroad to seek medical advice. However, he does not like what he hears in London and returns home with his son to Saudi Arabia without letting the doctors operate. Bin Laden then treats Abdul Rahman with folk remedy, but the child becomes mildly retarded and requires special attention. [WRIGHT, 2006, PP. 81] Bin Laden is also said to visit London later (see [Early 1990s-Late 1996](#)).

**Entity Tags:** [Osama bin Laden](#)

**Category Tags:** [Osama Bin Laden](#)

### **1978: CIA Begins Covert Action in Afghanistan**

The CIA begins covert action against the Communist government in Afghanistan, which is closely tied to the Soviet Union. Some time this year, the CIA begins training militants in Pakistan and beaming radio propaganda into Afghanistan. By April 1979, US officials are meeting with opponents of the Afghan government to determine their needs. [BLUM, 1995, PP. 344] Robert Gates, who will become CIA Director in the early 1990s, will later recall that in a meeting on March 30, 1979, Under Secretary of Defense Walter Slocumbe wonders aloud whether there is “value in keeping the Afghan insurgency going, ‘sucking the Soviets into a Vietnamese quagmire.’” [GATES, 1996, PP. 145] In March 1979, there is a major revolt in Herat province, and in June and August there are large scale army mutinies. [COOLEY, 2002, PP. 5] President Carter will formally approve covert aid to opponents of the government in July (see [July 3, 1979](#)), which will result in a Russian invasion in December (see [December 8, 1979](#)).

**Entity Tags:** [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Robert M. Gates](#), [Walter Slocumbe](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Counterterrorism Action Before 9/11](#)

### **1978-1982: Criminal BCCI Secretly Buys CIA’s Main US Bank; Even as CIA Uses Bank for Covert Operations**



Kamal Adham. [Source: Adham Center] Beginning in 1978, a group of foreign investors attempt to buy First American Bankshares, the biggest bank in the Washington, D.C., area. This group is fronted by Kamal Adham, the longtime Saudi intelligence minister until 1979. In 1981, the Federal Reserve asks the CIA for

[d Shoe Bombing \(23\)2002 Bali Bombing s \(36\)2004 Madrid Train Bombing s \(82\)2005 7/7 London Bombing s \(87\) Miscellaneous Al-Qaeda Issues Alleged Al-Qaeda Linked Attacks \(89\)Alleged Al-Qaeda Media Statements \(102\)Key Captures and Deaths \(124\) Geopolitics and Islamic Militancy US Dominance \(112\)Alleged Iraq-Al-Qaeda Links \(255\)Iraq War Impact on Counterterrorism \(83\)Israel \(61\)Pakistan and the ISI \(470\)Sau](#)

information about the investors, but the CIA holds back everything they know, including the obvious fact that Adham was intelligence minister. As a result, the sale goes through in 1982. It turns out that Adham and his group were secretly acting on behalf of the criminal Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), and BCCI takes over the bank. [WASHINGTON POST, 7/30/1991; US CONGRESS, SENATE, COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, 12/1992] Time magazine will later report that “the CIA kept some accounts in First American Bank, BCCI’s Washington arm.” But additionally, “Government investigators now have proof that First American had long been the CIA’s principal banker. Some of the more than 50 agency accounts uncovered at the bank date back to the 1950s. BCCI owned the CIA’s bank for a decade.” [TIME, 3/9/1992] The CIA soon learns that BCCI secretly controls the bank, if the CIA didn’t already know this from the very beginning. By 1985, the CIA will secretly inform the Treasury Department on the bank’s control by BCCI, which would be illegal. But no action is taken then or later, until BCCI is shut down. Sen. John Kerry’s BCCI investigation will later conclude, “even when the CIA knew that BCCI was as an institution a fundamentally corrupt criminal enterprise, it used both BCCI and First American, BCCI’s secretly held US subsidiary, for CIA operations. In the latter case, some First American officials actually knew of this use.” [US CONGRESS, SENATE, COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, 12/1992]

**Entity Tags:** US Federal Reserve, First American Bankshares, Central Intelligence Agency, Bank of Credit and Commerce International, Kamal Adham, US Department of the Treasury

**Category Tags:** Terrorism Financing, BCCI

**November 1978-February 1979: Some US Officials Want to Support Radical Muslims to Contain Soviet Union**

In December 1978, President Carter’s National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski says, “An arc of crisis stretches along the shores of the Indian Ocean, with fragile social and political structures in a region of vital importance to us threatened with fragmentation. The resulting political chaos could well be filled by elements hostile to our values and sympathetic to our adversaries.” [TIME, 1/8/1979] There is widespread discontent and rioting in Iran at the time. State Department official Henry Precht will later recall that Brzezinski had the idea “that Islamic forces could be used against the Soviet Union. The theory was, there was an arc of crisis, and so an arc of Islam could be mobilized to contain the Soviets.” [SCOTT, 2007, PP. 67] In November 1978, President Carter appointed George Ball head of a special White House Iran task force under Brzezinski. Ball recommends the US should drop support for the Shah of Iran and support the radical Islamist opposition of Ayatollah Khomeini. This idea is based on ideas from British Islamic expert Dr. Bernard Lewis, who advocates the balkanization of the entire Muslim Near East along tribal and religious lines. The chaos would spread in what he also calls an “arc of crisis” and ultimately destabilize the Muslim regions of the Soviet Union. The Shah will later comment in exile, “I did not know it then, perhaps I did not want to know? But it is clear to me now that the Americans wanted me out. Clearly this is what the human rights advocates in the State Department wanted. What was I to make of the Administration’s sudden decision to call former Under Secretary of State George Ball to the White House as an adviser on Iran? Ball was among those Americans who wanted to abandon me and ultimately my country.” [ENGD AHL, 1992] While there is later debate about US policy towards Iran actually is at this time, it will be noted that the Carter



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administration had “no clear policy” due to internal divisions and confusion.<sup>[KEDDIE, 2003]</sup> The Shah abdicates on January 16, 1979, and Ayatollah Khomeini returns from exile to Iran on February 1, 1979, taking over the government. Brzezinski will attempt to create a de facto alliance with Khomeini’s new fundamentalist government, but his efforts will come to a half with the Iranian hostage crisis in November 1979 (see [February-November 4, 1979](#)).

**Entity Tags:** [Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi](#), [James Earl “Jimmy” Carter, Jr.](#), [George Ball](#), [Zbigniew Brzezinski](#), [Bernard Lewis](#), [Henry Precht](#), [Seyyed Ruhollah Khomeini](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Counterterrorism Policy/Politics](#), [US Dominance](#), [US Intel Links to Islamic Militancy](#)

### **1979-1991: Criminal BCCI Bank Repeatedly Saves Pakistan from Financial Ruin**

By 1979, Pakistan’s economy is on the brink of collapse. Pakistan owes large debts to international organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), but lacks the money to pay off its loans. The criminal BCCI bank led by Agha Hasan Abedi comes up with a scheme to save Pakistan’s economy. In 1979, the IMF says that if Pakistan increases its hard currency reserves by at least \$50 million for 90 days, Pakistan’s State Bank can raise the lending limits for commercial banks. With banks able to make more loans, the economy will be able to perform better. BCCI secretly loans the State Bank the hard currency until the 90 days are over and then takes it back. Having established this system, BCCI helps Pakistan’s State Bank numerous times in subsequent years to avoid financial limitations placed on Pakistan. BCCI will finally collapse in 1991 (see [July 5, 1991](#)). <sup>[BEATY AND GWYNNE, 1993, PP. 292-293]</sup>

**Entity Tags:** [Bank of Credit and Commerce International](#), [International Monetary Fund](#), [Pakistan State Bank](#), [World Bank](#)

**Category Tags:** [Pakistan and the ISI](#), [BCCI](#)

### **1979-1991: US Government Ignores Over 700 Tips about BCCI’s Criminal Activities**

According to a 1992 Congressional investigation led by Congressman Charles Schumer (D-NY), between 1979 and 1991, federal law enforcement agencies receive more than 700 tips about BCCI’s criminal activities. The criminal BCCI bank will finally be shut down in 1991 (see [July 5, 1991](#)). The tips include BCCI involvement in:

- Promoting political unrest in Pakistan.
- Smuggling arms to various countries, including Syria, Libya, and Iran.
- Financing terrorist groups.
- Links to organized crime in the US and Italy.

Time magazine reporters Jonathan Beaty and S.C. Gwynne will later comment in a book: “Too many people knew too much about BCCI, and they knew it long before the bank spun itself into bankruptcy and scandal.... That [CIA Deputy Director] Robert Gates could jokingly refer to it in a conversation with Customs chief William von Raab as the “bank of crooks and criminals” three years before the scandal broke merely reflects the run of knowledge around Washington. Indeed, it would probably have been difficult to find very many people with real power who did not know about the bank, based on the wide distribution of CIA reports.” Schumer will later conclude: “At the very least, there

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was nobody putting together all the pieces.... You could make a credible case that somebody told them not to do anything about BCCI.” [BEATY AND GWYNNE, 1993, PP. 346]

**Entity Tags:** [William von Raab](#), [Bank of Credit and Commerce International](#), [Charles Schumer](#), [Robert M. Gates](#)

**Category Tags:** [BCCI](#)

### **1979-February 22, 2003: Al-Qaeda Affiliate in Southeast Asia Deeply Penetrated by Indonesian Government Mole**



A young Fauzi Hasbi. [Source: SBS Dateline] Fauzi Hasbi, the son of a

separatist leader in the Indonesian province of Aceh, is captured by an Indonesian military special forces unit in 1979 and soon becomes a mole for the Indonesian government. Hasbi becomes a leader in the separatist Free Aceh Movement (GAM), and he also plays a long-time role in Jemaah Islamiyah, an al-Qaeda affiliate. For many years, he literally lives next door to Jemaah Islamiyah leaders Abu Bakar Bashir and Hambali (see [April 1991-Late 2000](#)). In 2005, the Australian television program *SBS Dateline* will present documents that it claims “prove beyond doubt that Fauzi Hasbi had a long association with the [Indonesian] military.” For instance, military documents dating from 1990 and 1995 give him specific spying tasks. [SBS DATELINE, 10/12/2005] In February 2001, the Indonesian magazine *Tempo* documents some of Hasbi’s links to the Indonesian military, after he has been linked to a major role the Christmas bombings in Indonesia two months earlier (see [December 24-30, 2000](#) and [February 20, 2001](#)). He admits to having some ties to certain high-ranking military figures and says he has had a falling out with GAM, but denies being a traitor to any militant group. [TEMPO,

[2/20/2001](#); [TEMPO, 2/27/2001](#)] Yet even after this partial exposure, he continues to pose as an Islamist militant for the military. A 2002 document shows that he is even assigned the job of special agent for BIN, Indonesia’s intelligence agency. [SBS DATELINE, 10/12/2005] A December 2002 report by a US think tank, the International Crisis Group, details his role as a government mole. He and two of his associates are abducted and killed in mysterious circumstances in the Indonesian city of Ambon on February 22, 2003. Seven suspects, including an Indonesian policeman, later admit to the killings but their motive for doing so remains murky. [AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, 5/22/2003]

**Entity Tags:** [Tentara Nasional Indonesia](#), [Jemaah Islamiyah](#), [Free Aceh Movement](#), [Badan Intelijen Negara](#), [Fauzi Hasbi](#)

**Category Tags:** [Other Possible Moles or Informants](#), [Al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia](#), [2002 Bali Bombings](#), [Indonesian Militant Collusion](#)

### **February-November 4, 1979: US Attempt to Create De Facto Alliance with Khomeini’s**

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## **Iranian Government Ends Disastrously**

After the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi is deposed in Iran and Ayatollah Khomeini takes over as Iran's new leader in February 1979, the US is interested in continuing to work with the Iranian government. At first the US is taken aback by the new fundamentalist Islamic government, and National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski contemplates fomenting a military coup to stop Khomeini. But Khomeini is fiercely anti-communist, and Brzezinski soon decides that Iran's new government can become part of an effective anti-Soviet alliance he calls the "arc of crisis" (see [November 1978-February 1979](#)). The US embassy in Teheran, Iran, remains open, and more US officials come to Iran and begin tentative talks there. [DREYFUSS, 2005, PP. 236-243] The CIA in particular begins secretly collaborating with Iranian intelligence, providing information about the Soviet Union, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The CIA and Iran both covertly work to destabilize the pro-Soviet government in Afghanistan. [DREYFUSS, 2005, PP. 264-265] In early November 1979, Brzezinski secretly meets with Iranian Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, as well as Iran's foreign minister and defense minister, in Algiers, Algeria. But shortly before the meeting, the US agrees to allow the Shah, dying with cancer, to come to the US for medical treatment. Khomeini is enraged, and on November 4, just three days after the Algeria meeting begins, Khomeini arranges for students to take over the US embassy in Teheran and seize hostages. This realigns political forces in Iran and allows Khomeini to sideline Bazargan and other others meeting in Algeria, rendering the negotiations there moot. Brzezinski's attempts to create a de facto alliance with Iran collapse. The US hostages will be held for over a year before finally being freed. [DREYFUSS, 2005, PP. 240-243]

**Entity Tags:** [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi](#), [Mehdi Bazargan](#), [Seyyed Ruhollah Khomeini](#), [Zbigniew Brzezinski](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [US confrontation with Iran](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Counterterrorism Policy/Politics](#)

## **May 1979: CIA Begins Working with Hekmatyar and Other Mujaheddin Leaders Chosen by ISI**

As the US mobilizes for covert war in Afghanistan (see [1978](#) and [July 3, 1979](#)), a CIA special envoy meets Afghan mujaheddin leaders at Peshawar, Pakistan, near the border to Afghanistan. All of them have been carefully selected by the Pakistani ISI and do not represent a broad spectrum of the resistance movement. One of them is Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a drug dealer with little support in Afghanistan, but who is loyal to the ISI. The US will begin working with Hekmatyar and over the next 10 years over half of all US aid to the mujaheddin will go to his faction (see [1983](#)). Hekmatyar is already known as brutal, corrupt, and incompetent. [MCCOY, 2003, PP. 475] His extreme ruthlessness, for instance, his reputation for skinning prisoners alive, is considered a plus, as it is thought he will use that ruthlessness to kill Russians. [DREYFUSS, 2005, PP. 267-268]

**Entity Tags:** [Gulbuddin Hekmatyar](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Pakistan and the ISI](#)

## **Shortly After November 20, 1979: Bin Laden Brother Arrested over Medina Mosque Siege, Osama Also Possibly Arrested**



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Juhayman al-Otaibi. [Source: Public domain] One or two of the bin Laden brothers are arrested over the attempted takeover of the Grand Mosque in Medina. One of the brothers is Mahrous, the other is, according to author Steve Coll, “probably Osama.”

Inside Job? - The mosque had been seized by about five hundred rebels opposed to the Saudi royal family, led by a militant named Juhayman al-Otaibi. The rebels had apparently used Bin Laden company vehicles to stock ammunition and food in the mosque prior to its seizure, indicating some people at the company were sympathetic to them. According to one account, the two brothers are not held for long; a bin Laden company employee will say the arrest is a mistake as the arresting policemen wrongly think the two brothers are conspirators just because they are monitoring police radio traffic. [COLL, 2008, PP. 225-228]

Mahrous bin Laden - Other accounts say that Mahrous, who joined a rebel group opposed to the Saudi government in the 1960s, is held for longer and only eventually released from prison because of the close ties between the bin Ladens and the Saudi royal family. Mahrous will abandon the rebel cause and join the family business, eventually being made a head of the Medina branch and a member of the board. He will still hold these positions on 9/11, although a newspaper will report that “his past [is] not forgiven and most important decisions in the [bin Laden family business] are made without Mahrous’ input.” [SUNDAY HERALD (GLASGOW), 10/7/2001; NEW YORKER, 11/5/2001; HA’ARETZ, 12/18/2002]

Later Comment by Osama - Osama’s position on the seizure of the mosque at this time is not known, although he will later criticize the Saudi king for not negotiating a surrender. Coll will suggest that, although he is one of the most devout members of the bin Laden family at this time, he is not in league with the rebels as he is more concerned with his own material wellbeing. [COLL, 2008, PP. 229]

Older Bin Ladens Assist Besiegers - In contrast to Osama, several other family members, including Salem, Mustafa, Yahya, and Yeslam, work extremely hard to take back the mosque. As the bin Ladens actually renovated the mosque, they are able to provide the Saudi government with detailed plans to help their assault. After the rebels retreat underground, the family brings in equipment to drill holes in the floor, so that government troops can drop grenades down on holdouts. [COLL, 2008, PP. 225-226]

**Entity Tags:** Yahya bin Laden, Steve Coll, Saudi Binladin Group, Mustafa bin Laden, Osama bin Laden, Mahrous bin Laden, Salem bin Laden, Yeslam bin Laden

**Category Tags:** Osama Bin Laden, Saudi Arabia, Bin Laden Family

## **December 8, 1979: Soviet Forces, Lured in by the CIA, Invade Afghanistan**



Soviet tanks entering Afghanistan in

late 1979. [Source: *Banded Artists Productions*] The Soviet Union invades Afghanistan. The Russians were initially invited in by the Afghan government to deal with rising instability and army mutinies, and they start crossing the border on December 8. But on December 26, Russian troops storm the presidential palace, kill the country's leader, Haizullah Amin, and the invitation turns into an invasion. [BLUM, 1995, PP. 342] Later declassified high-level Russian documents will show that the Russian leadership believed that Amin, who took power in a violent coup from another pro-Soviet leader two months before, had secret contacts with the US embassy and was probably a US agent. Further, one document from this month claims that "the right wing Muslim opposition" has "practically established their control in many provinces... using foreign support." [COOLEY, 2002, PP. 8] It has been commonly believed that the invasion was unprovoked, but the Russians will later be proven largely correct. In a 1998 interview, Zbigniew Brzezinski, President Jimmy Carter's National Security Adviser, will reveal that earlier in the year Carter authorized the CIA to destabilize the government, provoking the Russians to invade (see [July 3, 1979](#)). [LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR (PARIS), 1/1998; MIRROR, 1/29/2002] Further, CIA covert action in the country actually began in 1978 (see [1978](#)), if not earlier (see [1973-1979](#)). The US and Saudi Arabia will give a huge amount of money (estimates range up to \$40 billion total for the war) to support the mujaheddin guerrilla fighters opposing the Russians, and a decade-long war will ensue. [NATION, 2/15/1999]

**Entity Tags:** [United States](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), [Haizullah Amin](#), [Zbigniew Brzezinski](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [9/11 Timeline](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Pakistan and the ISI](#), [Saudi Arabia](#)

## **December 26, 1979: Memo to President Carter Gives Pakistan Green Light to Pursue Nuclear Weapons Program**





Front row: Pakistani President Muhammad Zia ul-Haq (left) and President Carter (right). Zbigniew Brzezinski is in the center of the back row. [Source: Wally McNamee / Corbis] National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski writes a memo to President Jimmy Carter about the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which has just begun (see [December 8, 1979](#)). Brzezinski focuses on fears that success in Afghanistan could give the Soviets access to the Indian Ocean, even though Afghanistan is a landlocked country. He suggests the US should continue aid to the Afghan mujaheddin, which actually began before the war and spurred the Soviets to invade (see [1978](#) and [July 3, 1979](#)). He says, “This means more money as well as arms shipments to the rebels and some technical advice.” He does not give any warning that such aid will strengthen Islamic fundamentalism. He also concludes, “[W]e must both reassure Pakistan and encourage it to help the rebels. This will require a review of our policy toward Pakistan, more guarantees to it, more arms aid, and alas, a decision that our security problem toward Pakistan cannot be dictated by our nonproliferation policy.” Carter apparently accepts Brzezinski’s advice. Author Joe Trento will later comment, “With that, the United States agreed to let a country admittedly in turmoil proceed to develop nuclear weapons.” [TRENTO, 2005, PP. 167-168] Trento and fellow author David Armstrong will add: “Once [Pakistan] became a partner in the anti-Soviet Afghan campaign and the Carter administration adopted a more lenient view of Pakistan’s nuclear activities, the [procurement] network [run by A. Q. Khan] expanded its operations dramatically. It would soon evolve into a truly global enterprise, obtaining the vast array of sophisticated equipment with which Pakistan would eventually build a bomb.” [ARMSTRONG AND TRENTO, 2007, PP. 99]

**Entity Tags:** [James Earl “Jimmy” Carter, Jr.](#), [David Armstrong](#), [Joseph Trento](#), [Zbigniew Brzezinski](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#)

### **1980: Afghan Fighters Begin Training in US**



Some fighters opposing the Soviets in Afghanistan begin training in the US. According to journalist John Cooley, the training is done by Navy Seals and Green Beret officers who have taken draconian secrecy oaths. Key Pakistani officers are trained, as well as some senior Afghan mujaheddin. Much of the training takes place in Camp Peary, near Williamsburg, Virginia, which is said to be the CIA’s main location for training spies and assets. Other training takes place at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Harvey Point, North



Carolina, and Fort A. P. Hill, Virginia. Subjects are trained in how to detect explosives, surveillance, how to recruit new agents, how to run paramilitary operations, and more. They are taught to use many different weapons as well, including remote-controlled mines and bombs, and sophisticated timers and explosives. Cooley claims that “apparently [no] Arab or other foreign volunteers” are trained in the US. [COOLEY, 2002, PP. 70-72] However, in the late 1980s, US consular official Michael Springmann will notice fighters from many Middle Eastern nations are getting US visas, apparently to train in the US for the Afghan war (see September 1987-March 1989). Additionally, more training takes place in other countries. For instance, Cooley will note, “By the end of 1980, US military trainers were sent to Egypt to impart the skills of the US Special Forces to those Egyptians who would, in turn, pass on the training to the Egyptian volunteers flying to the aid of the mujaheddin in Afghanistan.” Cooley will further note, “Time and time again, these same techniques reappear among the Islamist insurgents in Upper Egypt and Algeria, since the ‘Afghani’ Arab veterans began returning there in the late 1980s and early 1990s.” [COOLEY, 2002, PP. 70-72] It is not known how long these training programs continue.

**Entity Tags:** Green Berets, Central Intelligence Agency, Michael Springmann, Navy Seals

**Timeline Tags:** War in Afghanistan

**Category Tags:** Soviet-Afghan War, US Intel Links to Islamic Militancy

### **1980-1989: \$600 Million for Afghan War Passes through Bin Laden Charity Fronts**



From 1980 to 1989, about \$600 million is passed through Osama bin Laden’s charity fronts, according to Michael Scheuer, head of the CIA’s first bin Laden unit. Most of it goes through the charity front Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK), also known as Al-Kifah. The money generally comes from donors in Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf, and is used to arm and supply the mujaheddin fighting in Afghanistan. Mohammad Yousaf, a high ranking ISI official, will later say, “It was largely Arab money that saved the system,” since so much of the aid given by the CIA and Saudi Arabia was siphoned away before it got to Afghanistan. “By this I mean cash from rich individuals or private organizations in the Arab world, not Saudi government funds. Without those extra millions the flow of arms actually getting to the mujaheddin would have been cut to a trickle.” [DREYFUSS, 2005, PP. 279-280] Future CIA Director Robert Gates will later claim that in 1985 and 1986, the CIA became aware of Arabs assisting and fighting with the Afghan mujaheddin, and the CIA “examined ways to increase their participation, perhaps in the form of some sort of ‘international brigade,’ but nothing came of it.” [COLL, 2004, PP. 146] However, a CIA official involved in the Afghan war will claim that the CIA directly funded MAK (see 1984 and After).

**Entity Tags:** Maktab al-Khidamat, Robert M. Gates, Osama bin Laden, Michael Scheuer, Central Intelligence Agency, Mohammad Yousaf

**Timeline Tags:** War in Afghanistan

**Category Tags:** Soviet-Afghan War, Terrorism Financing, Al-Kifah/MAK

### **1980-1989: CIA and British Train Mujaheddin in Afghanistan and Help Arm Bin Laden**



Fearing a diplomatic incident, CIA and other US agents rarely venture into Afghanistan. Generally speaking, soldiers from the British elite Special Air Service (SAS) work with

and train the mujaheddin instead. The SAS provides weapons training in Afghanistan until 1982 when Russian soldiers find the passports of two British instructors in a training camp. After that, mujaheddin are trained in secret camps in remote parts of Scotland. When the US decides to supply Stinger missiles to the mujaheddin in 1986, it is the SAS who provide the training in how to use them (see [September 1986](#)). But the SAS is taking orders from the CIA. The CIA also indirectly gives weapons to Osama bin Laden and other mujaheddin leaders. One former US intelligence official will say in 1999, “[US agents] armed [bin Laden’s] men by letting him pay rock-bottom prices for basic weapons.” But this person notes the relationship will later prove to be embarrassing to bin Laden and the CIA. “Of course it’s not something they want to talk about.” [\[REEVE, 1999, PP. 168\]](#)

**Entity Tags:** [Special Air Service](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Osama bin Laden](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Osama Bin Laden](#)

### **1980-1990: Two Yemeni Sheikhs Serve as Bin Laden Advisers During Soviet-Afghan War**

Sheikh Mohammed Ali Hassan al-Moayad serves as Osama bin Laden’s “spiritual adviser” during the war between the Soviet Union and the US-backed mujaheddin in Afghanistan, according to a statement made by Sheikh al-Moayad at his trial in 2004-2005. [\[CNN NEWS, 8/2/2005\]](#) Al-Moayad’s trial in the United States will cause resentment in Yemen because he is a highly-esteemed cleric and member of the influential Islah party. [\[ASSOCIATED PRESS, 3/10/2005\]](#) Another of bin Laden’s “mentors” at this time is Abdul Mejid al-Zindani, a dynamic mujaheddin recruiter who becomes a leader of the Islah party. Yemeni President Ali Abdallah Saleh’s half-brother and military commander Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar also recruits mujaheddin fighters for Bin Laden. These fighters will later establish training camps in Yemen. [\[WORLD PRESS, 5/28/2005\]](#)

**Entity Tags:** [Al-Qaeda](#), [Abdul Mejid al-Zindani](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar](#), [Mohammed Ali Hassan al-Moayad](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Yemeni Militant Collusion](#)

### **Early 1980: Osama Bin Laden, with Saudi Backing, Supports Afghan Rebels**



Bin Laden, dressed in combat fatigues, in Afghanistan during the 1980’s. (Note the image has been digitally altered to brighten the shadow on his face.) [\[Source: CNN\]](#) Osama bin Laden begins providing financial, organizational,

and engineering aid for the mujaheddin in Afghanistan, with the advice and support of the Saudi royal family. [NEW YORKER, 11/5/2001] Some, including Richard Clarke, counterterrorism “tsar” during the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations, believe he was handpicked for the job by Prince Turki al-Faisal, head of Saudi intelligence (see Early 1980 and After). [NEW YORKER, 11/5/2001; SUNDAY TIMES (LONDON), 8/25/2002] The Pakistani ISI want a Saudi prince as a public demonstration of the commitment of the Saudi royal family and as a way to ensure royal funds for the anti-Soviet forces. The agency fails to get royalty, but bin Laden, with his family’s influential ties, is good enough for the ISI. [MIAMI HERALD, 9/24/2001] (Clarke will argue later that the Saudis and other Muslim governments used the Afghan war in an attempt to get rid of their own misfits and troublemakers.) This multinational force later coalesces into al-Qaeda. [CLARKE, 2004, PP. 52]

**Entity Tags:** Turki al-Faisal, Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence, Osama bin Laden, Al-Qaeda, Richard A. Clarke, Saudi General Intelligence Presidency

**Timeline Tags:** War in Afghanistan

**Category Tags:** Soviet-Afghan War, Osama Bin Laden, Saudi Arabia

### **Early 1980: Pakistan Turns to Islamic Fundamentalism after Invasion of Afghanistan**



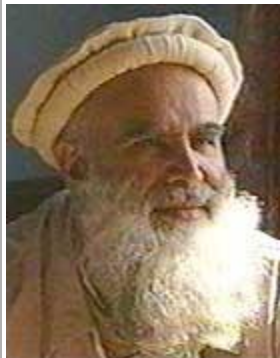
Muhammad Zia ul-Haq. [Source: Associated Press] General Muhammad

Zia ul-Haq seized power in Pakistan in a 1977 coup and declared himself president. The US stopped all economic and military aid to Pakistan as a result of the coup and Zia ruled cautiously in an attempt to win international approval. But immediately after the Russian invasion of Afghanistan (see December 8, 1979), the US allies with Zia and resumes aid. This allows Zia to use Islam to consolidate his power without worrying about the international reaction. He passes pro-Islamic legislation, introduces Islamic banking systems, and creates Islamic courts. Most importantly, he creates a new religious tax which is used to create tens of thousands of madrassas, or religious boarding schools. These schools will indoctrinate a large portion of future Islamic militants for decades to come. [GANNON, 2005, PP. 138-142] Zia also promotes military officers on the basis of religious devotion. The Koran and other religious material becomes compulsory reading material in army training courses. “Radical Islamist ideology began to permeate the military and the influence of the most extreme groups crept into the army,” journalist Kathy Gannon will write in her book *I is for Infidel*. [GANNON, 2005, PP. 138-142] The BBC will later comment that Zia’s self-declared “Islamization” policies created a “culture of jihad” within Pakistan that continues until present day. [BBC, 8/5/2002]

**Entity Tags:** Muhammad Zia ul-Haq

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Pakistan and the ISI](#)

### **Early 1980 and After: Bin Laden Serves as Middleman between Saudi Intelligence and Afghan Warlords**



Abdul Rasul Sayyaf. [Source: BBC] As Osama bin Laden gets involved with the mujaheddin resistance in Afghanistan, he also develops close ties to the Saudi intelligence agency, the GIP. Some believe that Saudi Intelligence Minister Prince Turki al-Faisal plays a middleman role between Saudi intelligence and mujaheddin groups (see [Early 1980](#)). Turki's chief of staff is Ahmed Badeeb, and Badeeb had been one of bin Laden's teachers when bin Laden was in high school. Badeeb will later say, "I loved Osama and considered him a good citizen of Saudi Arabia." Journalist Steve Coll will later comment that while the Saudi government denies bin Laden is ever a Saudi intelligence agent, and the exact nature of his connections with the GIP remains murky, "it seems clear that bin Laden did have a substantial relationship with Saudi intelligence." [COLL, 2004, PP. 72, 86-87] The GIP's favorite Afghan warlord is Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, while Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is the Pakistani ISI's favorite warlord. Bin Laden quickly becomes close to both Sayyaf and Hekmatyar, even though the two warlords are not allies with each other. [DREYFUSS, 2005, PP. 268] Some CIA officers will later say that bin Laden serves as a semi-official liaison between the GIP and warlords like Sayyaf. Bin Laden meets regularly with Prince Turki and Saudi Interior Minister Prince Naif. Badeeb will later say bin Laden developed "strong relations with the Saudi intelligence and with our embassy in Pakistan... We were happy with him. He was our man. He was doing all what we ask him." Bin Laden also develops good relations with the ISI. [COLL, 2004, PP. 72, 87-88] Bin Laden will begin clashing with the Saudi government in the early 1990s (see [August 2, 1990-March 1991](#)).

**Entity Tags:** [Gulbuddin Hekmatyar](#), [Turki al-Faisal](#), [Steve Coll](#), [Saudi General Intelligence Presidency](#), [Ahmed Badeeb](#), [Nayef bin Abdul-Aziz](#), [Abdul Rasul Sayyaf](#), [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Osama Bin Laden](#), [Pakistan and the ISI](#), [Saudi Arabia](#)

### **Early 1980s: FBI Encounters Problems Passing Intelligence Information to Criminal Prosecutors, 'Wall' Arises**

Due to apparent problems with the use of intelligence information in criminal proceedings, a set of procedures that later becomes known as the "wall" begins to take shape. The FBI, which performs both criminal and counterintelligence functions,

normally obtains two types of warrants: criminal warrants and warrants under the recently passed Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA). FISA warrants are thought to be easier to obtain, as the FBI only has to show that there is probable cause to believe the subject is a foreign power or an agent of one. Sometimes a case begins as an intelligence investigation, but results in a criminal prosecution. In court the defense can then argue that the government has abused FISA and obtained evidence by improperly using the lower standard, so any evidence obtained under FISA should not be allowed in court. Although the government can use information it happens to obtain under a FISA warrant for a criminal prosecution, if the purpose of obtaining information under a FISA warrant is for a criminal prosecution, this is in violation of the Fourth Amendment's prohibition against warrantless searches. To combat this apparent problem, the special FISA Court decides that for a warrant under FISA to be granted, collecting intelligence information must be the primary purpose, although such information can be used in a criminal investigation provided the criminal investigation does not become the primary purpose of the surveillance or search. As a result of these procedures, when the FBI is conducting an intelligence investigation and uncovers evidence of criminal activity, it no longer consults local United States Attorneys' Offices, but prosecutors within the Justice Department's Criminal Division. The prosecutors then decide when the local attorney's office should become involved. [US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, 11/2004, PP. 21-24] The wall will be extended in the 1990s (see [July 19, 1995](#)) and will be much criticized before and after 9/11 (see [July 1999](#) and [April 13, 2004](#)).

**Entity Tags:** [Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [US Department of Justice](#), [Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court](#)

**Category Tags:** [Counterterrorism Policy/Politics](#)

### **January 23, 1980: Invasion of Afghanistan Leads to Build Up of US Forces in Persian Gulf**

In the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (see [December 8, 1979](#)), President Carter declares in his annual State of the Union address, "An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force." This will become known as the Carter Doctrine. [SCOTT, 2007, PP. 69, 303] The US immediately follows up with a massive build up of military forces in the region. New military arrangements are made with Kenya, Oman, Somalia, Egypt, and Pakistan. In March 1980, a Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force is created, which will be renamed US Central Command (or Centcom) several years later. [SCOTT, 2007, PP. 78-79, 308-309]

**Entity Tags:** [James Earl "Jimmy" Carter, Jr.](#), [US Central Command](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [US Military](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [US Dominance](#)

### **April 1980: New Leader of Lebanese Militia Forms Alliances with Hezbollah, US Agencies, and Others**



Nabih Berri in 1982. [Source: Reza / Corbis]

Nabih Berri takes over the Amal Militia, a Shi'a Lebanese paramilitary organization, and tries to build it up as a power base for himself. Although not a fundamentalist Muslim, Berri allies himself with the new regime in Iran and Hezbollah, a fundamentalist Lebanese Shi'a party backed by Iran. Berri also manages to convince Syrian authorities that he will represent their interests in Lebanon and comes to a similar arrangement with the Ba'ath party in Iraq. This is a difficult balance for Berri to keep, as journalists Joe and Susan Trento will later point out, "If he displeased the Iranian mullahs who controlled the supply of money to Hezbollah in Lebanon, he would lose his grip on power." Former intelligence officer Michael Pilgrim will comment, "Berri was targeted for CIA recruitment and so were members of his militia... I think it's safe to say we financed his early trips to Iran." He also commences relationships with the Drug Enforcement Agency and Defense Intelligence Agency. Unsurprisingly, some of the consequences of this are bad for the US, and the Trentos will comment: "The relationship would end in a series of deadly disasters for members of our armed services and the CIA. According to US intelligence officials who served in Lebanon at the time, Berri kept the peace with [Iran] and the Shi'a by allowing them to attack Westerners in his Amal-controlled territory. To prove his loyalty to the Shi'a and keep the alliance that was essential to his power base, he failed to pass on intelligence to the United States." Based on interviews with former intelligence officers and associates of Berri, the Trentos will conclude that he facilitated attacks on the US by Hezbollah by allowing their operatives to pass Amal checkpoints without warning the US, for example before attacks on the US embassy and Marine barracks in 1983 in which hundreds die (see [April 18-October 23, 1983](#)). [TRENTO AND TRENTO, 2006, PP. 74-77]

**Entity Tags:** [Nabih Berri](#), [Michael Pilgrim](#), [Drug Enforcement Administration](#), [Hezbollah](#), [Amal](#), [Defense Intelligence Agency](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [US confrontation with Iran](#)

**Category Tags:** [US Intel Links to Islamic Militancy](#)

**October 1980: Osama's Oldest Brother Allegedly Involved in 'October Surprise'**





Salem bin Laden in 1975. [Source: Corbis]

Salem bin Laden, Osama's oldest brother, described by a French secret intelligence report as one of two closest friends of Saudi Arabia's King Fahd who often performs important missions for Saudi Arabia, is involved in secret Paris meetings between US and Iranian emissaries this month, according to a French report. Frontline, which published the French report, notes that such meetings have never been confirmed. Rumors of these meetings have been called the "October Surprise" and some have speculated that in these meetings, George H. W. Bush negotiated a delay to the release of the US hostages in Iran, thus helping Ronald Reagan and Bush win the 1980 Presidential election. All of this is highly speculative, but if the French report is correct, it points to a long-standing connection of highly improper behavior between the Bush and bin Laden families. [PBS FRONTLINE, 2001]

**Entity Tags:** [Salem bin Laden](#), [Ronald Reagan](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [Iran-Contra Affair](#)

**Category Tags:** [Saudi Arabia](#), [Bin Laden Family](#), [US Intel Links to Islamic Militancy](#)

### **1981-1992: Cheney and Rumsfeld Practice Secret Continuity of Government Plan, Later Activated on 9/11**



Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney, along with then-President Gerald Ford, April 28, 1975. [Source: David Hume Kennerly / Gerald R. Ford Library] (click image to enlarge) Throughout the 1980s, Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld are key players in one of the most highly classified programs of the Reagan administration. Presently, Cheney is working as a Republican congressman, while Rumsfeld is head of the pharmaceutical company G. D. Searle. At least once per year, they both leave their day jobs for periods of three or four days. They head to Andrews Air Force Base, near Washington, DC, and along with 40 to 60 federal officials and one member of the Reagan Cabinet are taken to a remote location within the US, such as an underground bunker. While they are gone, none of their work colleagues, or even their wives, knows where they are. They are participating in detailed planning exercises for keeping government running during and after a nuclear war with the Soviet Union.

Unconstitutional 'Continuity of Government' - This highly secret “Continuity of Government” (COG) program is known as Project 908. The idea is that if the US were under a nuclear attack, three teams would be sent from Washington to separate locations around the US to prepare to take leadership of the country. If somehow one team was located and hit with a nuclear weapon, the second or third team could take its place. Each of the three teams includes representatives from the State Department, Defense Department, CIA, and various domestic-policy agencies. The program is run by a new government agency called the National Program Office. Based in the Washington area, it has a budget of hundreds of million dollars a year, which grows to \$1 billion per year by the end of Reagan’s first term in office. Within the National Security Council, the “action officer” involved in the COG program is Oliver North, who is a key figure in the mid-1980s Iran-Contra scandal. Reagan’s Vice President, George H. W. Bush, also supervises some of the program’s efforts. As well as Cheney and Rumsfeld, other known figures involved in the COG exercises include Kenneth Duberstein, who serves for a time as President Reagan’s chief of staff, and future CIA Director James Woolsey. Another regular participant is Richard Clarke, who on 9/11 will be the White House chief of counterterrorism (see [\(1984-2004\)](#)). The program, though, is extraconstitutional, as it establishes a process for designating a new US president that is nowhere authorized in the US Constitution or federal law. After George H. W. Bush is elected president in 1988 and the effective end of the Soviet Union in 1989, the exercises continue. They will go on after Bill Clinton is elected president, but will then be based around the threat posed by terrorists, rather than the Soviet Union (see [1992-2000](#)). According to journalist James Mann, the participation of Rumsfeld and Cheney in these exercises demonstrates a broader truth about them: “Over three decades, from the Ford administration onward, even when they were out of the executive branch of government, they were never too far away; they stayed in touch with its defense, military, and intelligence officials and were regularly called upon by those officials. Cheney and Rumsfeld were, in a sense, a part of the permanent, though hidden, national security apparatus of the United States.” [[MANN, 2004, PP. 138-145; ATLANTIC MONTHLY, 3/2004; WASHINGTON POST, 4/7/2004; COCKBURN, 2007, PP. 85](#)]

No Role for Congress - According to one participant, “One of the awkward questions we faced was whether to reconstitute Congress after a nuclear attack. It was decided that no, it would be easier to operate without them.” Thus the decision is made to abandon the Constitutional framework of the nation’s government if this plan is ever activated. [[DUBOSE AND BERNSTEIN, 2006, PP. 198](#)]

Reactivated after 9/11 - The plan they rehearse for in the COG exercises will be activated, supposedly for the first time, in the hours during and after the 9/11 attacks (see [\(Between 9:45 a.m. and 9:56 a.m.\) September 11, 2001](#)). [[WASHINGTON POST, 3/1/2002](#)] Mann subsequently comments, “The program is of particular interest today because it helps to explain the thinking and behavior of the second Bush Administration in the hours, days, and months after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.” [[ATLANTIC MONTHLY, 3/2004](#)]

**Entity Tags:** [Richard A. Clarke](#), [Richard \(“Dick”\) Cheney](#), [Oliver North](#), [National Program Office](#), [James Woolsey](#), [Kenneth Duberstein](#), [Donald Rumsfeld](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [9/11 Timeline](#), [Civil Liberties](#)

**Category Tags:** [Military Exercises](#)



### **1981: Bin Laden Visits Chicago to Recruit American-Trained Engineers, Meets Yassin Kadi**



Yassin Kadi, a Saudi working for a Chicago architectural firm, will say in 2008 that he first met Osama bin Laden in Chicago in 1981. He will further state that the purpose of bin Laden's visit is to recruit American-trained engineers for his family's construction business. Kadi says that he puts bin Laden in touch with a group of engineers, several of whom are eventually hired. [NEW YORK TIMES, 12/12/2008]

**Entity Tags:** [Osama bin Laden](#), [Yassin Kadi](#)

**Category Tags:** [Osama Bin Laden](#)

### **1980s: Much US and Saudi Aid Meant for Afghan Fighters Goes to ISI and A. Q. Khan Network**



Much of the billions of dollars in aid from Saudi Arabia and the CIA to the Afghan mujaheddin actually gets siphoned off by the Pakistani ISI. Melvin Goodman, a CIA analyst in the 1980s, will later say, "They were funding the wrong groups, and had little idea where the money was going or how it was being spent." Sarkis Soghanalian, a middleman profiting from the aid, will later say, "The US did not want to get its hands dirty. So the Saudis' money and the US money was handled by the ISI. I can tell you that more than three quarters of the money was skimmed off the top. What went to buy weapons for the Afghan fighters was peanuts." Soghanalian claims that most of the money went through various accounts held at the notoriously corrupt BCCI bank, then was distributed to the ISI and the A. Q. Khan nuclear network. [TRENTO, 2005, PP. 318] Robert Crowley, a CIA associate director from the 1960s until the 1980s, will also refer to the aid money going to Khan's network, commenting, "Unfortunately, the Pakistanis knew exactly where their cut of the money was to go." An early 1990s congressional investigation led by Sen. John Kerry (D-MA) will also come to the same conclusion. [TRENTO, 2005, PP. 314, 384]

**Entity Tags:** [Robert Crowley](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), [Bank of Credit and Commerce International](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Melvin A. Goodman](#), [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#), [Sarkis Soghanalian](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Pakistan and the ISI](#), [Pakistani Nukes & Islamic Militancy](#), [BCCI](#)

### **1981-1991: CIA Uses BCCI Bank to Pay 500 British Informants**



In 1991, the Guardian will report that for at least the past ten years, the CIA has secretly had nearly 500 Britons on its payroll and has been paying them through accounts at the criminal BCCI bank. Some are in senior positions, although no specific individuals are named. Some of these informants have told the CIA details about British arms sales and other overseas business deals, sometimes before the contracts are finalized. According to intelligence sources, the informants include:

- 124 people in government or politics.
- 53 in commerce, industry, and banking.
- 75 in academia.

- 24 scientists.
- 124 in communications.
- 90 in the media. [GUARDIAN, 7/26/1991]

There will be no report of these informant contacts stopping after the BCCI scandal in 1991.

**Entity Tags:** Bank of Credit and Commerce International, Central Intelligence Agency  
**Category Tags:** BCCI

### **1981-1983: NSC Gains a Clear Picture of BCCI's Criminal Activities from CIA Reports**

Norman Bailey, a member of the National Security Council (NSC) whose specialty is monitoring terrorism by tracking finances, will later reveal that in the early 1980s the NSC learns that BCCI is not just a bank but is engaged in widespread criminal activity. "We were aware that BCCI was involved in drug-money transactions," he will later say. "We were also aware that BCCI was involved with terrorists, technology transfers—including the unapproved transfer of US technology to the Soviet bloc—weapons dealing, the manipulation of financial markets, and other activities." The main source for the NSC about this are reports from the CIA. From 1981 on, the NSC learns of BCCI's role in illegal technology deals for Pakistan, Iraq, Libya, Iran, and other countries. A clear picture has emerged by the start of 1984. But neither the CIA nor the NSC take any action against the bank. [BEATY AND GWYNNE, 1993, PP. 291, 315]

**Entity Tags:** Bank of Credit and Commerce International, Norman Bailey, National Security Council, Central Intelligence Agency  
**Category Tags:** Soviet-Afghan War, BCCI, Drugs

### **1981 and After: BCCI Charity Front Funnels Money to A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Program**



Pakistani finance minister Ghulam Ishaq Khan (left) and A. Q. Khan. [Source: Adrian Levy and Catherine Scott-Clarke] In 1981, the criminal BCCI bank sets up a charity called the BCCI Foundation. Pakistani Finance Minister Ghulam Ishaq Khan grants it tax-free status, and it supposedly spends millions on charitable purposes. Khan serves as the chairman of the foundation while also running the books for A. Q. Khan's Kahuta Research Laboratories. Ghulam Ishaq Khan will be president of Pakistan from 1988 to 1993. [LEVY AND SCOTT-CLARK, 2007, PP. 126-127] BCCI founder Agha Hasan Abedi announces that he will donate up to 90% of BCCI's profits to charity through the foundation, and he develops a positive reputation from a few well-publicized charitable donations. But the charity is actually used to shelter BCCI profits. Most of the money it raises goes to A. Q. Khan's nuclear program and not to charitable causes. For

instance, in 1987 it gives a single \$10 million donation to an institute headed by A. Q. Khan. Millions more go to investments in a front company owned by BCCI figure Ghaith Pharaon. [BEATY AND GWYNNE, 1993, PP. 290-291] An investigation by the Los Angeles Times will reveal that less than 10% of the money went to charity. [LOS ANGELES TIMES, 8/9/1991] BCCI uses other means to funnel even more money into A. Q. Khan's nuclear program (see 1980s).

**Entity Tags:** [Ghaith Pharaon](#), [Bank of Credit and Commerce International](#), [Kahuta Research Laboratories](#), [Ghulam Ishaq Khan](#), [Abdul Qadeer Khan](#), [Agha Hasan Abedi](#), [BCCI Foundation](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)

**Category Tags:** [Pakistan and the ISI](#), [Pakistani Nukes & Islamic Militancy](#), [BCCI](#)

### **1981 and After: US Advocacy Group Trains Fighters in Afghanistan; Alleged to Be CIA Front**



The Committee for a Free Afghanistan (CFA) is established to support the mujaheddin in Afghanistan in their struggle against the Soviet Union. Ostensibly, it is meant to support the Afghans by non-violent means, such as by providing medicine and seeds, as well as arranging publicity. [LOS ANGELES TIMES, 5/12/1986] However, it will be alleged that the CFA is "widely known as cover for the CIA." [TASS, 6/20/1986; BUSINESS LINE, 4/27/2000] The person responsible for coordinating the aid in Pakistan is CFA Field Director Theodore Mataxis, who makes seven trips lasting between one and three months each to Peshawar, a staging point on the Pakistani side of the border. Mataxis, who reached the rank of Brigadier General in the US army before retiring, is an expert in guerrilla warfare, having fought in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. He also supported Iran-based Kurdish irregulars in Iraq in 1968-70. [GRAU AND GRESS, 2002, PP. XI-XV] Mataxis helps train the mujaheddin. He is also aware of US arms shipments to fighters, some of which are diverted by "the group that was to become the Taliban... for their own purposes." [THE PILOT (SOUTHERN PINES), 11/23/2001]

**Entity Tags:** [Committee for a Free Afghanistan](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Theodore Mataxis](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#)

### **February 20, 1981: Boeing 707 Nearly Hits Television Mast atop World Trade Center**



A Boeing 707 belonging to an Argentine airline comes close to hitting the television mast atop the World Trade Center's North Tower. The plane is flying in clouds at 1,500 feet, instead of at its assigned altitude of 3,000 feet, and descending toward Kennedy Airport. About four miles, or less than 90 seconds, from the WTC, the Terminal Radar Approach Control (TRACON) in Hempstead, Long Island, becomes aware of the situation thanks to a new automated alarm system and is able to radio the pilot with the order to climb. The alarm system that sounds, called Minimum Safe Altitude Warning, has been in operation for about a year. When radar shows a plane at an altitude within 500 feet of the highest obstruction in a particular area and 30 seconds away, a buzzer sounds repeatedly at the TRACON. At the same time, the letters LA (for low altitude) flash on the radar scope next to the plane's blip. [NEW YORK TIMES, 2/26/1981]

**Entity Tags:** [New York Terminal Radar Approach Control](#), [World Trade Center](#)

**Category Tags:** [Other Pre-9/11 Events](#)

## **1982: Pakistani ISI Begins Recruiting Arab Fundamentalists to Fight in Afghanistan**



Pakistan's intelligence agency, the ISI, begins its program to recruit Arab fundamentalists fighters from across the Arab world to fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan. [RASHID, 2001, PP. 129]

**Entity Tags:** Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence

**Timeline Tags:** War in Afghanistan

**Category Tags:** Soviet-Afghan War, Pakistan and the ISI

## **Between 1981 and 1989: Officials Airborne in 'Doomsday' Plane for Three Days during Exercise**



An E-4B Airborne Command

Post. [Source: US Air Force] (click image to enlarge) During the 1980s, top-secret exercises are regularly held, testing a program called Continuity of Government (COG) that would keep the federal government functioning during and after a nuclear war (see 1981-1992). The program includes a special plane called the National Emergency Airborne Command Post (NEACP). This is a modified Boeing 747, based at Andrews Air Force Base, near Washington, DC that has its own conference room and special communications gear. Nicknamed the "Doomsday" plane, it could act as an airborne command post from where a president could run the country during a nuclear war. One of the COG exercises run by the Reagan administration involves a team of officials actually staying aloft in the NEACP for three days straight. The team cruises across the US, and up and down the coasts, periodically being refueled in mid-air. [SCHWARTZ, 1998; MANN, 2004, PP. 144] Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld participate in the COG exercises, though whether they are aboard the NEACP in this particular one is unknown. [ATLANTIC MONTHLY, 3/2004] The plan that is being rehearsed for in the exercises will be activated in response to the 9/11 attacks (see Between 9:45 a.m. and 9:56 a.m. September 11, 2001). Also on 9/11, three Doomsday planes (then known as "National Airborne Operations Center" planes) will be in the air, due to an exercise taking place that morning called Global Guardian (see Before 9:00 a.m. September 11, 2001). [SCHWARTZ, 1998; OMAHA WORLD-HERALD, 2/27/2002]

**Entity Tags:** Donald Rumsfeld, Richard ("Dick") Cheney

**Timeline Tags:** 9/11 Timeline, Civil Liberties

**Category Tags:** Military Exercises

## **1982-1989: US Turns Blind Eye to BCCI and Pakistani Government Involvement in Heroin Trade**



CIA covert weapons shipments are sent by the Pakistani army and the ISI to rebel camps

in the North West Frontier province near the Afghanistan border. The governor of the province is Lieutenant General Fazle Haq, who author Alfred McCoy calls Pakistani President Muhammad Zia ul-Haq's "closest confidant and the de facto overlord of the mujaheddin guerrillas." Haq allows hundreds of heroin refineries to set up in his province. Beginning around 1982, Pakistani army trucks carrying CIA weapons from Karachi often pick up heroin in Haq's province and return loaded with heroin. They are protected from police search by ISI papers. [MCCOY, 2003, PP. 477] By 1982, Haq is listed with Interpol as an international drug trafficker. But Haq also becomes known as a CIA asset. Despite his worsening reputation, visiting US politicians such as CIA Director William Casey and Vice President George H. W. Bush continue to meet with him when they visit Pakistan. Haq then moves his heroin money through the criminal Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI). A highly placed US official will later say that Haq "was our man... everybody knew that Haq was also running the drug trade" and that "BCCI was completely involved." [SCOTT, 2007, PP. 73-75] Both European and Pakistani police complain that investigations of heroin trafficking in the province are "aborted at the highest level." [MCCOY, 2003, PP. 477] In 1989, shortly after Benazir Bhutto takes over as the new ruler of Pakistan, Pakistani police arrest Haq and charge him with murder. He is considered a multi-billionaire by this time. But Haq will be gunned down and killed in 1991, apparently before he is tried. [MCCOY, 2003, PP. 483] Even President Zia is implied in the drug trade. In 1985, a Norwegian government investigation will lead to the arrest of a Pakistani drug dealer who also is President Zia's personal finance manager. When arrested, his briefcase contains Zia's personal banking records. The manager will be sentenced to a long prison term. [MCCOY, 2003, PP. 481-482]

**Entity Tags:** [Bank of Credit and Commerce International](#), [Muhammad Zia ul-Haq](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#), [Fazle Haq](#), [William Casey](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Pakistani Army](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Pakistan and the ISI](#), [BCCI](#), [Drugs](#)

### **February 11, 1982: CIA Is Given Green Light to Take Part in Illegal Drug Trade in Afghanistan**



CIA Director William Casey gets a legal exemption sparing the CIA for a requirement that they report on drug smuggling by CIA officers, agents, or assets. Attorney General William French Smith grants the exemption in a secret memorandum. On March 2, Casey thanks Smith for the exemption, saying it will help protect intelligence sources and methods. [COOLEY, 2002, PP. 110-111] There are allegations that in 1981 President Reagan approved a covert program to weaken Soviet soldiers fighting in Afghanistan by addicting them to illegal drugs (see [February 1981 and After](#)). A book cowritten by two Time magazine reporters will even allege that "a few American intelligence operatives were deeply emeshed in the drug trade" during the war. [SCOTT, 2007, PP. 124-125] President Clinton will rescind the exemption in 1995. [COOLEY, 2002, PP. 111]

**Entity Tags:** [William French Smith](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [William Casey](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Pakistan and the ISI](#), [BCCI](#), [Drugs](#)

### **After June 16, 1982: Arrest of 'Rogue' Agent Leads US to Divert Blame for Terrorist Acts from Iran to Libya**



According to investigative journalists Joe and Susan Trento, the arrest of former CIA agent Edwin Wilson, who was involved in business dealings with Libya, has serious consequences for US terrorism policy: “Throughout the 1980s the United States used its intelligence services to divert blame from Iran and Hezbollah onto Libya as part of its entanglement in Iran-Contra with the so-called moderate Iranians with whom the Reagan administration dealt. Ever since international arms dealer Edwin Wilson had been captured and imprisoned in the early 1980s, American intelligence and the White House had labeled Libya a rogue nation, and Libyan dictator Mu’ammur al-Qadhafi a terrorist leader. The intelligence operation went so far that the United States actually recruited a gang of Lebanese criminals to pretend to be a cell of Libyan-backed terrorists conducting violent acts around the world... These activities, all choreographed by the CIA, were fed to allies such as West Germany as authentic intelligence that implicated Libya for terrorists acts that were either fake or were, in reality, authorized by Iran and carried out by Hezbollah and other surrogate groups.”

Benefit to Iran - This policy apparently benefits Iran: “The Reagan administration had given the Iranians plenty of cards to play. The biggest card was the help it had provided making Libya seem like the ultimate source of all terrorist acts.... When the Reagan administration turned Libya into a vicious terrorist nation operating throughout Europe, that gave Iran the perfect opening for retribution.”

No action against Hezbollah - In addition, it prevents the US from taking action against Hezbollah, even though Hezbollah is killing Americans: “Because of the Iran-Contra scandal—the selling of weapons to Iran to fund the war in Central America—the Reagan administration ended up protecting Iran’s number one terrorist proxy, Hezbollah, while at the same time Hezbollah’s terrorists were killing and kidnapping hundreds of Americans. While secretly working with the Iranian government, the Reagan administration manipulated intelligence to blame Libya for terrorist attacks for which Hezbollah was responsible. During the 1980s Hezbollah killed and terrorized hundreds of Americans in Beirut, bombing the US Marine barracks, blowing up the CIA station, and killing State Department employees in a bomb attack on the US embassy. Hezbollah did all this with the help of local militia leaders whom the United States relied on as its secret conduits to Iran for its sale of weapons.” [TRENTO AND TRENTO, 2006, PP. XVI, 64-5]

Entity Tags: [Joseph Trento](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Edwin Wilson](#), [Iran](#), [Susan Trento](#), [Hezbollah](#), [Mu’ammur al-Qadhafi](#)

Timeline Tags: [US confrontation with Iran](#), [Iran-Contra Affair](#)

Category Tags: [Counterterrorism Policy/Politics](#)

### **November-December 1982: Rep. Charlie Wilson Pushes for Expansion of US Support for Anti-Soviet Forces in Afghanistan**



In November 1982, US Representative Charlie Wilson (D-TX) travels to Islamabad, Pakistan, and meets with President Muhammad Zia ul-Haq. He promises Zia to deliver a crucial weapons system that has so far been denied by the US—the latest radar systems for Pakistan’s F-16 fighter planes. Wilson also meets with CIA Station Chief Howard Hart, who is in charge of providing support for the Afghan resistance to the Soviets. He urges Hart to expand the program and stresses that vast amounts of money can be made available. [CRILE, 2003, PP. 106-129] The next month, President Zia comes to the US to meet

with President Reagan. Zia first meets with Wilson in Houston and expresses his gratitude for helping Pakistan acquire F-16 radar systems (see [November-December 1982](#)). Wilson then broaches the subject of Pakistan secretly purchasing arms from Israel for the Afghan War. Zia agrees to this in principle. [CRILE, 2003, PP. 131-132]

**Entity Tags:** [Ronald Reagan](#), [Charlie Wilson](#), [Howard Hart](#), [Muhammad Zia ul-Haq](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#)

### **November 7, 1982: Port Authority Practices for Plane Crashing into the WTC**



The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey holds a drill at the World Trade Center based on the scenario of a plane crashing into one of the Twin Towers. Numerous agencies participate in the drill, which is held on a Sunday. As well as the Port Authority, these include the New York City Fire Department, the New York City Police Department, and the Emergency Medical Services. Guy Tozzoli, the director of the Port Authority's World Trade Department, will describe the drill during a legislative hearing in 1993 (see [March 29, 1993](#)). He will recall that the Port Authority simulates the "total disaster" of "the airplane hitting the building" and participants simulate "blood coming out of people." He will add that the drill is "a real preparation for a disaster." [NEWSDAY, 11/12/2001; DWYER AND FLYNN, 2005, PP. 58-59] (During the hearing, Tozzoli will mistakenly recall the drill being conducted in the late 1970s, but it is in fact held in November 1982. [DWYER AND FLYNN, 2005, PP. 274] ) The drill follows an incident in 1981, when an Argentine aircraft came within 90 seconds of crashing into the WTC's North Tower as a result of having problems communicating with air traffic controllers (see [February 20, 1981](#)). Asked about the drill shortly after 9/11, Tozzoli will say it was held "just to have people trained within the city for that particular scenario [of a plane hitting the WTC]." The 1982 exercise appears to be the last "joint drill involving all the emergency responders" held at the WTC prior to the 9/11 attacks, 19 years later, according to New York Times reporters Jim Dwyer and Kevin Flynn. [NEWSDAY, 11/12/2001; DWYER AND FLYNN, 2005, PP. 59]

**Entity Tags:** [Guy Tozzoli](#), [New York City Police Department](#), [Port Authority of New York and New Jersey](#), [New York City Fire Department](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [9/11 Timeline](#)

**Category Tags:** [Military Exercises](#)

### **December 1982: Muslim Brotherhood Project to Infiltrate and Defeat the West**



Youssef Nada. [Source: Zuma Press/ NewsCom] In November 2001, Swiss investigators will search the home of Youssef Nada, the leader of Al Taqwa Bank, a Swiss bank that had just been shut down by the US and the UN for alleged ties to al-

Qaeda, Hamas, and other radical militant groups (see [November 7, 2001](#)). Nada and other Al Taqwa directors are prominent members of the Muslim Brotherhood. Newsweek will say, “The Brotherhood, founded in Egypt in 1928 as a religious and quasi-political counterweight to the corrupt and increasingly decadent royalist and colonial governments dominating the Islamic world, always has had two faces: one a peaceful public, proselytizing and social-welfare oriented wing; the other a clandestine, paramilitary wing. . . . Intelligence and law-enforcement officials say that while some branches and elements of the Brotherhood, such as the offshoots now operating in Egypt and Syria, have pledged to work for their goal of a worldwide Islamic caliphate using peaceful means and electoral politics, the Brotherhood has also spun off many—if not most—of the more violent local and international groups devoted to the cause of Islamic holy war.” Such offshoots will include al-Qaeda and Hamas. [NEWSWEEK, 12/24/2004] Swiss investigators discover a 14-page document from December 1982 entitled “The Project.” Nada claims not to know who wrote the document or how he came to have it, and he says he disagrees with most of the contents. The document details a strategic plan whose ultimate goal is “the establishment of the reign of God over the entire world.” The document begins, “This report presents a global vision of an international strategy of Islamic policy.” It recommends to “study of the centers of power locally and worldwide, and the possibilities of placing them under influence,” to contact and support new holy war movements anywhere in the world, to support holy war in Palestine, and “nurtur[e] the sentiment of rancor with regard to Jews.” Swiss investigators who analyze the document will later write that the strategy aims to achieve “a growing influence over the Muslim world. It is pointed out that the [Muslim Brotherhood] doesn’t have to act in the name of the Brotherhood, but can infiltrate existing entities. They can thus avoid being located and neutralized.” The document also advocates creating a network of religious, educational, and charitable institutions in Europe and the US to increase influence there.[UNKNOWN, 12/1982; LE TEMPS (GENEVA), 10/6/2005]

**Entity Tags:** [Muslim Brotherhood](#)

**Category Tags:** [Al Taqwa Bank](#), [Terrorism Financing](#)

### **1983: Gulbuddin Hekmatyar Emerges as Most Powerful ISI Client**



A young Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. [Source: Public domain] Afghan warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar emerges as the most powerful of ISI’s mujaheddin clients, just as Rep. Charlie Wilson (D-TX) and CIA Director William Casey, along with Saudi Intelligence Minister Prince Turki al-Faisal, are pouring “hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth of new and more lethal supplies into ISI warehouses” (see [1983](#)).



Hekmatyar is among the most ruthless and extreme of the Afghan Islamic warlords. [COLL, 2004, PP. 119] Casey is said to particularly like Hekmatyar because they share a goal of extending the fighting beyond Afghanistan into the Soviet Union itself. [DREYFUSS, 2005, PP. 268] Hekmatyar receives about half of all the CIA's covert weapons directed at Afghanistan despite being a known major drug trafficker (see 1982-1991). He develops close ties with bin Laden by 1984 while continuing to receive large amounts of assistance from the CIA and ISI (see 1984).

**Entity Tags:** Charlie Wilson, William Casey, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Turki al-Faisal

**Timeline Tags:** War in Afghanistan

**Category Tags:** Soviet-Afghan War

### **1983: Pakistani Government Allows Drug Traffickers to Deposit Profits in BCCI Bank**



According to Alfred W. McCoy, author of *The Politics of Heroin*, in 1983 Pakistani President Muhammad Zia ul-Haq allows Pakistani drug traffickers to deposit their drug profits in the BCCI bank without getting punished. The criminal BCCI bank has close ties to the Pakistani government and the US funding of the Afghan war. It will be shut down in 1991. BCCI also plays a critical role in facilitating the movement of Pakistan's heroin money. By 1989, Pakistan's heroin trade will be valued at \$4 billion a year, more than all of Pakistan's legal exports. [MCCOY, 2003, PP. 480]

**Entity Tags:** Muhammad Zia ul-Haq, Alfred McCoy, Bank of Credit and Commerce International

**Category Tags:** Soviet-Afghan War, Pakistan and the ISI, BCCI, Drugs

### **1983: Rep. Charlie Wilson Brokers Weapons Sale Between Pakistan and Israel for Use in Afghan War**



Representative Charlie Wilson (D-TX) travels to Israel where he meets with Zvi Rafiah and other Israeli officials. From Israel he travels to Egypt and then Pakistan, where he secretly negotiates a major weapons deal with Pakistan (see November-December 1982) on behalf of the Israelis in support of the mujaheddin fighting Soviets in Afghanistan. Among other things, the deal includes the delivery of T-55 tanks. Author George Crile will later comment, "The Israelis were hoping this deal would serve as the beginning of a range of under-the-table understandings with Pakistan that the congressman would continue to quietly negotiate for them." [CRILE, 2003, PP. 141]

**Entity Tags:** Charlie Wilson, Muhammad Zia ul-Haq

**Timeline Tags:** War in Afghanistan

**Category Tags:** Soviet-Afghan War

### **1983-July 2008: 9/11 Hijacker's Two Cousins Allegedly Work as Israeli Spies**





Ali al-Jarrah. [Source: Lebanese Military/Public Domain] Starting in 1983, a Lebanese man named Ali al-Jarrah, cousin of 9/11 hijacker Ziad Jarrah, allegedly works as a spy for the Israeli government. Living in rural Lebanon as a school administrator, it is claimed he also is a valued spy, sending reports and taking clandestine photos of Palestinians and Hezbollah in Syria and south Lebanon, near the Israeli border. He is said to have been paid at least \$300,000 over the years by Israel. Ali's brother Yusuf al-Jarrah is said to have helped him spy, but few details of his case have been reported. Ali and Yusuf will be arrested by Hezbollah in July 2008 and then handed to the Lebanese military for trial by a military court. Ali will allegedly confess, but his wife will claim he has been tortured. He is also suspected of involvement in the assassination of Imad Mugniyah, a Hezbollah commander killed in Damascus in February 2008. Cases of such prolonged and involved spying have been very rare in Lebanon, and news of his arrest is said to have shocked the country. Ali and Ziad Jarrah were "20 years apart in age and do not appear to have known each other well." [JERUSALEM POST, 11/3/2008; LONDON TIMES, 11/9/2008; INDEPENDENT, 11/13/2008; NEW YORK TIMES, 2/19/2009] Curiously, Ziad Jarrah had another relative who has been accused of spying for three governments since the 1980s (see [September 16, 2002](#)).

**Entity Tags:** [Imad Mugniyah](#), [Yusuf al-Jarrah](#), [Ali al-Jarrah](#), [Ziad Jarrah](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [9/11 Timeline](#)

**Category Tags:** [Ziad Jarrah](#), [Israel](#)

### **1983-1987: CIA Assets in Afghanistan Push Agency's Interests within ISI**

According to Mohammad Yousaf, director of the Pakistani ISI's Afghan Bureau during this period, the CIA has many paid assets among the Afghan mujaheddin during this period. One function of these CIA assets is to lobby the ISI for the CIA's policies, especially with regard to weapons procurement. [YOUSAF AND ADKIN, 1992, PP. 91-92]

**Entity Tags:** [Mohammad Yousaf](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Pakistan and the ISI](#)

### **Early 1983-Late 1984: Afghan Arab Purchases Equipment for Mujaheddin in US and Britain**

After being recruited by Abdullah Azzam, an Arab Afghan leader and Osama bin Laden's mentor, Essam al Ridi travels to Pakistan to join the mujaheddin fight against

the Soviets in Afghanistan. He works for the mujaheddin for about 18 months, mostly as a purchaser of equipment abroad. He buys two sets of scuba diving equipment and six range finders in Britain, as well as night vision goggles and six night vision scopes from the US. He also purchases video equipment and batteries, and acquires equipment in Japan, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. Al Ridi will later say, as a witness in a US trial, that he travels “extensively almost every 15 days to 20 days” and that he has so many stamps his passport is nearly full by 1985. Al Ridi leaves Asia to return to the US in late 1984 or early 1985, apparently due to an argument about Osama bin Laden’s role in the jihad, but he will continue to send equipment to the mujaheddin. For example, he will later purchase assassination rifles for the jihad, apparently with the CIA’s knowledge, but it is unclear whether the CIA knows about these earlier transactions (see [Early 1989](#)). [UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, 1/14/2001]

**Entity Tags:** [Abdullah Azzam](#), [Essam al Ridi](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#)

### **April 18-October 23, 1983: Beirut Bombings Begin Era of Suicide Attacks**



The October 1983 bombing of US Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon. [Source: *US Marine Corps*.] In June 1982, Israel invaded Lebanon, and US Marines were sent to Lebanon as a peacekeeping force in September 1982. On April 18, 1983, the US embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, is bombed by a suicide truck attack, killing 63 people. On October 23, 1983, a Marine barracks in Beirut is bombed by another suicide truck attack, killing 241 Marines. In February 1984, the US military will depart Lebanon. The radical militant group Islamic Jihad will take credit for both attacks (note that this not the group led by Ayman al-Zawahiri). The group is believed to be linked to Hezbollah. Prior to this year, attacks of this type were rare. But the perceived success of these attacks in getting the US to leave Lebanon will usher in a new era of suicide attacks around the world. The next two years in particular will see a wave of such attacks in the Middle East, many of them committed by the radical militant group Hezbollah. [US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003; US CONGRESS, 7/24/2003

The Beirut bombings will also inspire bin Laden to believe that the US can be defeated by suicide attacks. For instance, he will say in a 1998 interview, “We have seen in the last decade the decline of the American government and the weakness of the American soldier who is ready to wage Cold Wars and unprepared to fight long wars. This was proven in Beirut when the Marines fled after

two explosions.” [ABC NEWS, 5/28/1998] In 1994, bin Laden will hold a meeting with a top Hezbollah leader (see Shortly After February 1994), and arrange for some of his operatives to be trained in the truck bombing techniques that had been used in Beirut. [9/11 COMMISSION, 7/24/2004, PP. 48]

**Entity Tags:** Osama bin Laden, Islamic Jihad Organization, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Hezbollah  
**Category Tags:** Warning Signs, Ayman Al-Zawahiri

### **July 29, 1983: SAAR Network Is Founded**



555 Grove Street, Herndon, Virginia. This is the location of the SAAR Foundation/Safa Group and many related businesses. [Source: Paul Sperry] The SAAR Foundation is incorporated in Herndon, Virginia, just outside Washington. It will become an umbrella organization for a cluster of over 100 charities, think tanks, and businesses known as the SAAR network. In 2002, the US government will raid the SAAR network looking for ties to the Al Taqwa Bank and the Muslim Brotherhood (see March 20, 2002). [FARAH, 2004, PP. 153]

**Entity Tags:** SAAR Foundation

**Category Tags:** Terrorism Financing

### **1984: Bin Laden Develops Ties with Pakistani ISI and Afghan Warlord**



Bin Laden first works for Maktab al-Khidamat from this building in Peshawar, a former British government guesthouse. [Source: PBS] Bin Laden moves to Peshawar, a Pakistani town bordering Afghanistan, and helps run a front organization for the mujaheddin known as Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK), which funnels money, arms, and fighters from the outside world into the Afghan war. [NEW YORKER, 1/24/2000] “MAK [is] nurtured by Pakistan’s state security services, the Inter-Services Intelligence agency, or ISI, the CIA’s primary conduit for conducting the covert war against Moscow’s occupation.” [MSNBC, 8/24/1998] Bin Laden becomes closely

ted to the warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, and greatly strengthens Hekmatyar's opium smuggling operations. [LE MONDE (PARIS), 9/14/2001] Hekmatyar, who also has ties with bin Laden, the CIA, and drug running, has been called "an ISI stooge and creation." [ASIA TIMES, 11/15/2001] MAK is also known as Al-Kifah and its branch in New York is called the Al-Kifah Refugee Center. This branch will play a pivotal role in the 1993 WTC bombing and also has CIA ties (see January 24, 1994).


**Entity Tags:** Osama bin Laden, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Central Intelligence Agency, Maktab al-Khidamat, Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence

**Timeline Tags:** War in Afghanistan

**Category Tags:** Soviet-Afghan War, Pakistan and the ISI, Al-Kifah/MAK, Drugs

### **(1984-2004): Richard Clarke Participates in Secret Continuity of Government Exercises**



Richard Clarke, who will be the counterterrorism "tsar" on 9/11, regularly participates in a series of highly secret "Continuity of Government" (COG) exercises. [WASHINGTON POST, 4/7/2004] Throughout the 1980s, the COG exercises rehearse how to keep the federal government running during and after a nuclear war with the Soviet Union (see 1981-1992). After the fall of the Soviet Union, the exercises continue, but based instead around a possible terrorist attack on the United States (see 1992-2000). [ATLANTIC MONTHLY, 3/2004] In 2004, Clarke will reveal that he has participated regularly in these exercises over the previous 20 years. He recalls that he had "gone off into caves in mountains in remote locations and spent days on end in miserable conditions, pretending that the rest of the world had blown up, and going through the questions, going through the drill." He adds: "Everyone there play acts that it's really happened. You can't go outside because of the radioactivity. You can't use the phones because they're not connected to anything." He also describes the COG plan requiring coded communications, saying: "There's an elaborate system for the people in this network, first of all, to verify each other's identity. That person on the other end has a certain password and information that they have to pass for us to believe that they're who they say they are." [WASHINGTON POST, 4/7/2004; ABC NEWS, 4/25/2004] Clarke was a senior analyst at the State Department since 1979, and rises to prominence during the Reagan administration when he becomes deputy assistant secretary of state for intelligence. [WASHINGTON POST, 3/13/2003; BBC, 3/22/2004] After being a member of the National Security Council since 1992, in 1998 he is appointed as counterterrorism "tsar" (see May 22, 1998). [9/11 COMMISSION, 3/24/2004  NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS, 5/13/2004; INDEPENDENT, 6/14/2004] According to journalist James Mann, the COG program is of particular interest because it helps explain the thinking and behavior of the Bush administration "in the hours, days, and months after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001." [ATLANTIC MONTHLY, 3/2004] On the morning of 9/11, Clarke is in fact responsible for activating the COG plan, the first time it is ever implemented (see (Between 9:45 a.m. and 9:56 a.m.) September 11, 2001). [CLARKE, 2004, PP. 8; ABC NEWS, 4/25/2004] Also participating in the COG exercises, at least throughout at 1980s, are Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld, who on 9/11 are the vice president and secretary of defense, respectively. [ATLANTIC MONTHLY, 3/2004]

**Entity Tags:** Richard A. Clarke

**Timeline Tags:** 9/11 Timeline

**Category Tags:** [Military Exercises](#)

### **1984: Bin Laden and Other Mujaheddin Leaders Meet Mysterious Europeans in Pakistan**



Osama bin Laden, his mentor Abdullah Azzam, and Afghan warlord Abdul Rasul Sayyaf meet two unnamed men in Peshawar, Pakistan. The two men are “supposed to be from somewhere in Europe” and cannot speak Arabic. As a result, Essam al Ridi, an Egyptian who has lived in the US, attends the meeting as a translator. Al Ridi will later say that the two men speak English “with an accent” and that he was invited to the meeting to translate between the men on the one hand and Sayyaf and Azzam on the other, indicating that bin Laden did not need a translator and could speak English. This is the first of several meetings between bin Laden and al Ridi, who purchases equipment for anti-Soviet fighters (see [Early 1983-Late 1984](#) and [Early 1989](#)). [UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, 1/14/2001]

**Entity Tags:** [Abdul Rasul Sayyaf](#), [Abdullah Azzam](#), [Essam al Ridi](#), [Osama bin Laden](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Osama Bin Laden](#)

### **1984: US Agencies Keep US Senator in Dark about BCCI's Criminal Activities**



Paula Hawkins. [Source: Public domain]

In 1984, Senator Paula Hawkins (R-FL) meets with Pakistani President Muhammad Zia ul-Haq in Pakistan. During the meeting, she mentions that she is concerned about a Pakistani bank that is laundering money out of the Cayman Islands. Her staff later clarifies to Zia that she was referring to BCCI (which technically is not a Pakistani bank, but almost all of its top officials are Pakistani). As a result, Abdur Sakhia, the top BCCI official in the US, meets with Hawkins in the US a short time later and assures her that BCCI is not laundering money out of the Cayman Islands. Then officials from the Justice Department, State Department, and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) meet with Hawkins's staffers and assure them that BCCI is not the subject of any investigation. Weeks later, the State Department formally notifies the Pakistani government that BCCI is not under investigation. As a result, Hawkins drops her brief interest in BCCI. However, by this time the State Department, Justice Department, and DEA have all been briefed by the CIA about BCCI's many criminal activities. Apparently, this information is deliberately kept from the senator. [BEATY AND GWYNNE, 1993, PP. 324-325]

**Entity Tags:** [US Department of Justice](#), [Drug Enforcement Administration](#), [Muhammad Zia ul-Haq](#), [Paula Hawkins](#), [Abdur Sakhia](#), [US Department of State](#), [Bank of Credit and Commerce International](#)

Category Tags: [BCCI](#)

### **1984: Ali Mohamed Works Briefly with CIA; Then Let Go Because of Connections to Islamic Fundamentalist Groups**



Egyptian militants open fire on Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. [Source: Public domain] Ali Mohamed is a major in the Egyptian army. He is highly educated, speaking several languages and possessing two bachelor's degrees and a master's degree. In 1981 he was taking part in a special program for foreign officers at the US Army Special Forces school at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, while soldiers with radical Islamic beliefs from his Egyptian army unit assassinated Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. He is forced to quit in early 1984 on suspicions of becoming too religious. He approaches the CIA in Egypt and volunteers to be a spy. The CIA accepts, and he makes contact in Germany with a branch of Hezbollah, the Middle Eastern militant group. The CIA has claimed that Mohamed secretly tells Hezbollah members that he is working with the CIA, but the CIA quickly discovers this. The CIA supposedly suspects he wanted to help Hezbollah spy on the CIA and cuts off all further ties with him and tries to stop him from coming to the US. [NEW YORK TIMES, 12/1/1998; SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, 11/4/2001; WALL STREET JOURNAL, 11/26/2001] But there will be claims that Mohamed then will come to the US through a secret CIA program. If true, this would cast doubt on the CIA's account of their interaction with Mohamed (see [September 1985](#)).

Entity Tags: [Hezbollah](#), [Ali Mohamed](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

Category Tags: [Ali Mohamed](#), [US Intel Links to Islamic Militancy](#)

### **1984-1994: CIA Funds Militant Textbooks for Afghanistan**

The US, through USAID and the University of Nebraska, spends millions of dollars developing and printing textbooks for Afghan schoolchildren. The textbooks are "filled with violent images and militant Islamic teachings, part of covert attempts to spur resistance to the Soviet occupation." For instance, children are "taught to count with illustrations showing tanks, missiles, and land mines." Lacking any alternative, millions of these textbooks are used long after 1994; the Taliban will still be using them in 2001. In 2002, the US will start producing less violent versions of the same books, which President Bush says will have "respect for human dignity, instead of indoctrinating students with fanaticism and bigotry." (He will fail to mention who created those earlier books.) [WASHINGTON POST, 3/23/2002; CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION, 5/6/2002] A

University of Nebraska academic named Thomas Gouttierre leads the textbook program. Journalist Robert Dreyfuss will later reveal that although funding for Gouttierre's work went through USAID, it was actually paid for by the CIA. Unocal will pay Gouttierre to work with the Taliban (see [December 1997](#)) and he will host visits of Taliban leaders to the US, including trips in 1997 and 1999 (see [December 4, 1997](#) and [July-August 1999](#)). [DREYFUSS, 2005, PP. 328]

**Entity Tags:** [USAID](#), [University of Nebraska](#), [Taliban](#), [George W. Bush](#), [Thomas Gouttierre](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [Domestic Propaganda](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [US Intel Links to Islamic Militancy](#)

### **1984-1986: CIA Reveals BCCI's Drug and Terrorist Links to Other US Agencies, but No Action Taken**



The CIA sends a report on the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) and its drug-related activities to other US government departments. It follows up with a report about BCCI's links to notorious terrorists such as Abu Nidal, the most wanted man in the world at the time. Similar reports follow in 1986. However, the Justice Department, Treasury Department, and other departments keep silent about what they know and no action is taken against the bank. [US CONGRESS, SENATE, COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, 12/1992; COOLEY, 2002, PP. 93]

**Entity Tags:** [US Department of the Treasury](#), [US Department of Justice](#), [Bank of Credit and Commerce International](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

**Category Tags:** [Terrorism Financing](#), [BCCI](#)

### **1984-1986: CIA Director Repeatedly Meets with Head of Criminal BCCI Bank, Funding of Afghan War Is Discussed**



An ailing Agha Hasan Abedi in 1991. [Source: Associated Press]NBC

News later reports that CIA Director William Casey secretly meets with the head of the criminal Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) from 1984 until 1986, shortly before Casey's death. The NBC report, quoting unnamed BCCI sources, will claim that Casey met with BCCI head Agha Hasan Abedi every few months in a luxury suite at the Madison Hotel in Washington. The two men allegedly discussed the Iran-Contra arms-for-hostages transactions and CIA weapons shipments to the mujaheddin in Afghanistan. The CIA denies all the allegations. [ASSOCIATED PRESS, 2/21/1992] But books by Time magazine and Wall Street Journal reporters will corroborate that Casey repeatedly met with Abedi. [SCOTT, 2007, PP. 116] Casey also meets with Asaf Ali, a BCCI-connected



arms dealer, in Washington, DC, and in Pakistan. On one occasion, Casey has a meeting in Washington with Abedi, Ali, and Pakistani President Muhammad Zia ul-Haq. [BEATY AND GWYNNE, 1993, PP. 308]

**Entity Tags:** [Asaf Ali](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Bank of Credit and Commerce International](#), [Agha Hasan Abedi](#), [Muhammad Zia ul-Haq](#), [William Casey](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [Iran-Contra Affair](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Terrorism Financing](#), [US Intel Links to Islamic Militancy](#), [BCCI](#)

### **1984 and After: BCCI Dominates Supply Chain of CIA Supplies and Weapons Meant for Mujaheddin**



By 1984, huge amounts of arms and ammunition for the mujaheddin fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan are pouring into Pakistan. These weapons are funded by the CIA and Saudi government, and generally come into the port of Karachi. The criminal BCCI bank has an enforcement arm nicknamed the “Black Network.” Time magazine reporters Jonathan Beaty and S.C. Gwynne will later describe it as “a Karachi-based cadre of bank operatives, paramilitary units, spies, and enforcers who handled BCCI’s darkest operations around the globe and trafficked in bribery and corruption.” By 1984, BCCI and its Black Network takes effective control of Karachi’s port, dominating Pakistan’s customs service there with bribery and intimidation. BCCI is thus in a position to dominate the flow of supplies to the mujaheddin. Pakistan’s military handles the flow of weapons from Karachi to the Afghan border, but once there the supplies have to be carried by mules to reach the mujaheddin fighting in remote Afghan mountain ranges. BCCI controls this part of the supply chain as well. Sometimes BCCI personnel simply transport the supplies across Afghanistan to Iran and then sell them there for a profit. [BEATY AND GWYNNE, 1993, PP. 66, 315-316] The US government is aware of BCCI’s support role and cooperates with it. For instance, in 1987 USAID asks BCCI to buy 1,000 more mules to help the mujaheddin. [LOS ANGELES TIMES, 9/3/1991] At almost every step of the way, BCCI takes a cut of the profits and often steals some of the supplies. [BEATY AND GWYNNE, 1993, PP. 66, 315-316]

**Entity Tags:** [Black Network](#), [Bank of Credit and Commerce International](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [USAID](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Pakistan and the ISI](#), [BCCI](#)

### **1984 and After: US and British Intelligence Are Aware that Terrorist Abu Nidal Is Using BCCI in London, but Take No Action**





Abu Ndal circa 1982.[Source: Reuters / Corbis]

The BBC will later suggest that US intelligence actually becomes aware of specific Abu Nidal accounts held in the criminal BCCI bank in 1984. This is because the FBI busts an illegal arms deal in New York City that involved Nidal's BCCI accounts in London and a Nidal front company in Poland called SAS Trade at this time. [HERALD SUN (MELBOURNE), 8/2/1991] In the 1980s, Nidal is considered the world's most wanted terrorist. In December 1985, for instance, his network launches simultaneous attacks in Rome and Vienna, killing or wounding dozens. In 1986, the CIA tells the State Department in detail about the criminal BCCI bank's links with Nidal and his terrorist network. They reveal that Nidal has multiple accounts at BCCI branches in Europe. [BEATY AND GWYNNE, 1993, PP. 328] In July 1987, Ghassan Qassem, manager of one of BCCI's London branches, is contacted by the British intelligence agencies MI5 and MI6. They tell him that they know SAS Trade has many millions of dollars worth of accounts in his branch and that the company is an Abu Nidal front. Qassem agrees to be an informant. [OBSERVER, 1/18/2004] Nidal first opened a BCCI account in London in 1980, depositing \$50 million using an alias. In addition to being a terrorist, Nidal is an illegal arms dealer and BCCI helps him buy and sell weapons, oftentimes involving British companies. [LOS ANGELES TIMES, 9/30/1991] Qassem will later claim that he saw Nidal in Britain on three separate occasions and went shopping with him. In 1983, Nidal was interviewed by police, who took him straight to the airport and put him on a plane to leave the country. [GUARDIAN, 7/30/1991; OBSERVER, 1/18/2004] Qassem recognizes Nidal as a terrorist from a photograph in a magazine in 1987 and tells this to his BCCI superior, but he is told to keep quiet. The CIA and British intelligence use their knowledge of Nidal's BCCI accounts to force SAS Trade to shut down in 1986, but usually they merely monitor terrorist activity. For instance, Nidal's group teaches urban terrorist tactics to Peru's Maoist Shining Path guerrillas in 1988. Shining Path pays Nidal \$4 million for this work through his BCCI account and then attempts to bomb the US embassy in Lima later that year. Intelligence agencies also merely watch as Middle Eastern governments give tens of millions to Nidal through his BCCI accounts (see 1987-1990). In December 1989, Qassem tells his BCCI superiors that he is working with British intelligence. He is quickly fired. [LOS ANGELES TIMES, 9/30/1991] Nidal learns of the surveillance and empties the accounts before they can be frozen. [GUARDIAN, 7/30/1991; OBSERVER, 1/18/2004]

**Entity Tags:** UK Security Service (MI5), SAS Trade, Abu Nidal Organization, Central Intelligence Agency, US Department of State, Abu Nidal, UK Secret Intelligence Service (MI6)  
**Category Tags:** BCCI

**1984-March 1985: US and Pakistan Begin Training Afghans to Attack Inside Soviet Union**



Following a March 1985 directive signed by President Reagan that sharply escalates US covert action in Afghanistan, the Pakistani ISI begins training Afghans to launch strikes directly into Soviet territory. Apparently the idea originated with CIA Director William Casey who first proposed harassing Soviet territory in 1984 (see [October 1984](#)).

According to Graham Fuller, a senior US intelligence official, most top US officials consider such military raids “an incredible escalation” and fear a large-scale Soviet response if they are carried out. The Reagan administration decides not to give Pakistan detailed satellite photographs of military targets inside the Soviet Union. [[WASHINGTON POST, 7/19/1992](#)] Mohammad Yousaf, a high-ranking ISI officer, will later claim that the training actually began in 1984. “During this period we were specifically to train and dispatch hundreds of mujaheddin up to 25 kilometers deep inside the Soviet Union. They were probably the most secret and sensitive operations of the war.” He notes that, “By 1985, it became obvious that the United States had got cold feet. Somebody at the top in the American administration was getting frightened.” But, he claims, “the CIA, and others, gave us every encouragement unofficially to take the war into the Soviet Union.” [[DREYFUSS, 2005, PP. 286-287](#)] Casey will approve of such attacks and the first attack inside the Soviet Union will take place in 1985 (see [1985-1987](#)).

**Entity Tags:** [William Casey](#), [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#), [Graham Fuller](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Mohammad Yousaf](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Pakistan and the ISI](#)

### **January 4, 1984: Alleged Terrorist Plot to Bomb WTC Uncovered**



Peter Caram. [[Source: SRR Training](#)] The New York Port Authority, which owns the World Trade Center, is aware of terrorism occurring around the world and that the WTC is vulnerable to attack. It has therefore created the Terrorist Intelligence Unit within its police department, headed by Detective Sergeant Peter Caram, to gather information about terrorist groups and assess the vulnerability of its numerous facilities to attack. On this day, Caram writes a memo to the assistant superintendent of the Port Authority Police Department, reporting that the FBI has uncovered a terrorist threat: Two supporters of Ayatollah Khomeini are allegedly planning to bomb the WTC in the near future. Although the attack never occurs, this is the first of numerous occasions during the 1980s where the WTC is considered a potential target for a terrorist attack. [[CARAM, 2001, PP. 4-5](#); [NEW YORK COUNTY SUPREME COURT, 1/20/2004](#)]

**Entity Tags:** [World Trade Center](#), [Peter Caram](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [9/11 Timeline](#)

Category Tags: [1993 WTC Bombing](#)

### **January 17, 1984: Port Authority Terrorist Intelligence Unit Issues Report on WTC Security**

Detective Sergeant Peter Caram, the head of the New York Port Authority's Terrorist Intelligence Unit, has been directed by the assistant superintendent of the Port Authority Police Department to compile a report on the vulnerability of the WTC to a terrorist attack. Having previously worked at the WTC Command, Caram has exclusive knowledge of some of the center's security weaknesses. On this day he issues his four-page report, titled "Terrorist Threat and Targeting Assessment: World Trade Center." It looks at the reasoning behind why the WTC might be singled out for attack, and identifies three areas of particular vulnerability: the perimeter of the WTC complex, the truck dock entrance, and the subgrade area (the lower floors below ground level). Caram specifically mentions that terrorists could use a car bomb in the subgrade area—a situation similar to what occurs in the 1993 bombing (see [February 26, 1993](#)). [[CARAM, 2001, PP. 5, 84-85; NEW YORK COUNTY SUPREME COURT, 1/20/2004](#)] This is the first of several reports during the 1980s, identifying the WTC as a potential terrorist target.

Entity Tags: [World Trade Center](#), [Peter Caram](#)

Timeline Tags: [9/11 Timeline](#)

Category Tags: [1993 WTC Bombing](#)

### **Early 1984: Port Authority Establishes Office of Special Planning**



Peter Goldmark. [[Source: Environmental Defense Fund](#)] Peter Goldmark, the executive director of the New York Port Authority, is concerned that, in light of terrorist attacks occurring around the world (see [April 18-October 23, 1983](#)), Port Authority facilities, including the World Trade Center, could become terrorist targets. [[ASSOCIATED PRESS, 9/28/2005; NEW YORK TIMES, 10/27/2005](#)] He therefore creates a unit called the Office of Special Planning (OSP) to evaluate the vulnerabilities of all Port Authority facilities and present recommendations to minimize the risks of attack. The OSP is staffed by Port Authority police and civilian workers, and is headed by Edward O'Sullivan, who has experience in counterterrorism from earlier careers in the Navy and Marine Corps. In carrying out its work, the OSP will consult with such US agencies as the FBI, CIA, Secret Service, NSA, and Defense Department. It will also consult with security officials from other countries that have gained expertise in combating terrorism, such as England, France, Italy, and Israel. [[GLANZ AND LIPTON, 2004, PP. 226; NEW YORK COUNTY SUPREME COURT, 1/20/2004](#)] According to Peter Caram, head of the Port Authority's

Terrorist Intelligence Unit, the OSP will develop “an expertise unmatched in the United States.” [CARAM, 2001, PP. 12] In 1985 it will issue a report called “Counter-Terrorism Perspectives: The World Trade Center” (see [November 1985](#)). [NEW YORK COURT OF APPEALS, 2/16/1999] It will exist until 1987. [VILLAGE VOICE, 1/5/2000]

**Entity Tags:** [Office of Special Planning](#), [Peter Goldmark](#), [Port Authority of New York and New Jersey](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [9/11 Timeline](#)

**Category Tags:** [1993 WTC Bombing](#)

**(Between Early 1984 and October 1985): Office of Special Planning Studies Vulnerability of WTC to Terrorist Attack**



The Office of Special Planning (OSP), a unit set up by the New York Port Authority to assess the security of its facilities against terrorist attacks (see [Early 1984](#)), spends four to six months studying the World Trade Center. It examines the center’s design through looking at photographs, blueprints, and plans. It brings in experts such as the builders of the center, plus experts in sabotage and explosives, and has them walk through the WTC to identify any areas of vulnerability. According to New York Times reporters James Glanz and Eric Lipton, when Edward O’Sullivan, head of the OSP, looks at WTC security, he finds “one vulnerability after another. Explosive charges could be placed at key locations in the power system. Chemical or biological agents could be dropped into the coolant system. The Hudson River water intake could be blown up. Someone might even try to infiltrate the large and vulnerable subterranean realms of the World Trade Center site.” In particular, “There was no control at all over access to the underground, two-thousand-car parking garage.” However, O’Sullivan consults “one of the trade center’s original structural engineers, Les Robertson, on whether the towers would collapse because of a bomb or a collision with a slow-moving airplane.” He is told there is “little likelihood of a collapse no matter how the building was attacked.” [GLANZ AND LIPTON, 2004, PP. 227; NEW YORK COUNTY SUPREME COURT, 1/20/2004] The OSP will issue its report called “Counter-Terrorism Perspectives: The World Trade Center” late in 1985 (see [November 1985](#)).

**Entity Tags:** [Office of Special Planning](#), [Leslie Robertson](#), [Edward O’Sullivan](#), [World Trade Center](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [9/11 Timeline](#)

**Category Tags:** [1993 WTC Bombing](#)

**October 1984: CIA Afghan Covert Operations Budget Increases**





Rep. Charlie Wilson. [Source: Sam Houston State University]

Primarily due to the pressure from Rep. Charlie Wilson (D-TX), the CIA's budget for the Afghan covert operations is tripled in a matter of a few weeks. The CIA initially resisted accepting the funds, but according to William Casey's executive assistant Robert Gates, "Wilson just steamrolled [CIA Near East Division Chief Charles]—and the CIA for that matter." [CRILE, 2003, PP. 102] Richard Clarke, a State Department analyst who later will become counterterrorism "tsar" for Presidents Clinton and George W. Bush, will claim, "Unclassified studies show that [covert aid] grew from \$35 million in 1982 to \$600 million in 1987. With few exceptions, the funds bought materiel that was given to Afghan fighters by [the ISI]. CIA personnel were not authorized to enter Afghanistan, except rarely." [CLARKE, 2004, PP. 50]

**Entity Tags:** [Robert M. Gates](#), [Charlie Wilson](#), [Richard A. Clarke](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Charles Cogen](#), [William Casey](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#)

### **October 1984: CIA Director Secretly Visits Afghan Training Camps; Urges Spread of Violence into Soviet Union**



William Casey (left, with glasses) and General Akhtar Abdur Rahman (center) touring Afghan training camps in the 1980s. [Source: Associated Press] CIA Director William Casey makes a secret visit to Pakistan to plan a strategy to defeat Soviet forces in Afghanistan. Casey is flown to secret training camps near the Afghan border where he watches trainees fire weapons and make bombs. According to the Washington Post: "During the visit, Casey startled his Pakistani hosts by proposing that they take the Afghan war into enemy territory—into the Soviet Union itself. Casey

wanted to ship subversive propaganda through Afghanistan to the Soviet Union's predominantly Muslim southern republics." The Pakistanis agree to the plan and soon the CIA begins sending subversive literature and thousands of Korans to Soviet republics such as Uzbekistan. Mohammad Yousaf, a Pakistani general who attends the meeting, will later say that Casey said, "We can do a lot of damage to the Soviet Union." [WASHINGTON POST, 7/19/1992] This will eventually evolve into CIA and ISI sponsored Afghan attacks inside the Soviet Union (see 1984-March 1985 and 1985-1987).

**Entity Tags:** Central Intelligence Agency, Akhtar Abdur Rahman, William Casey, Mohammad Yousaf, Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence

**Timeline Tags:** War in Afghanistan

**Category Tags:** Soviet-Afghan War

### **Late 1984: Bin Laden and His Mentor Azzam Set Up Precursor Organization to Al-Qaeda**



Sheikh Abdullah Azzam and his son-in-law Abdullah Anas in Afghanistan during the 1980s. [Source: History Channel] Osama bin Laden, Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, bin Laden's mentor, and Abdullah Anas, Azzam's son-in-law, create an organization called Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK), known in English as the Services Office. It is also known as Al-Kifah. This organization will become a key node in the private funding network for the Afghan war. [BERGEN, 2006, PP. 28-30] The US government will later call it the "precursor organization to al-Qaeda." [9/11 COMMISSION, 8/21/2004, PP. 89] Initially, Azzam runs it while bin Laden funds it. They create a guesthouse in Peshawar, Pakistan, to help foreign volunteers connect with rebel forces in Afghanistan. Prior to this time, the number of such volunteers is very small, perhaps only several dozen. But the number begins to dramatically expand. [NEW YORK TIMES, 1/14/2001; BERGEN, 2006, PP. 28-30] Donors will include the Saudi intelligence agency, the Saudi Red Crescent, the Muslim World League, and private donors, including Saudi princes. [PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE, 9/23/2001] MAK/Al-Kifah begins fundraising in the US one year later (see 1985-1989).

**Entity Tags:** Maktab al-Khidamat, Abdullah Anas, Abdullah Azzam, Osama bin Laden

**Timeline Tags:** War in Afghanistan

**Category Tags:** Soviet-Afghan War, Al-Kifah/MAK

### **1984 and After: CIA Allegedly Funds Bin Laden's Main Charity Front**

Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK), also known as Al-Kifah, is Osama bin Laden's main

charity front in the 1980s. The US government will later call it the “precursor organization to al-Qaeda” (see [Late 1984](#)). In 2005, investigative journalist Joe Trento will write, “CIA money was actually funneled to MAK, since it was recruiting young men to come join the jihad in Afghanistan.” Trento will explain this information comes from “a former CIA officer who actually filed these reports” but who cannot be identified because he still works in Afghanistan. MAK was founded in 1984 (see [Late 1984](#)) and was disbanded around 1996 (see [Shortly After November 19, 1995](#)). However, Trento will not specify exactly when CIA aid to MAK began or how long it lasted. [[TRENTO, 2005, PP. 342](#)] Bin Laden appears to have other at least indirect contact with the CIA around this time (see [1986](#)).

**Entity Tags:** [Joseph Trento](#), [Maktab al-Khidamat](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [US Intel Links to Islamic Militancy](#), [Terrorism Financing](#), [Al-Kifah/MAK](#)

### **1985: Arrest of Pakistan Proliferator Endangers Program of US Aid to Mujaheddin**



The arrest of a Pakistani agent attempting to buy components for Pakistan’s nuclear weapons program in the US starts a crisis that could potentially lead to the cutting off of US aid to Pakistan, and an end to US support for the mujaheddin in the Soviet-Afghan War. When Stephen Solarz (D-NY), chairman of the House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs and an opponent of Pakistan, learns of the attempted purchase—of Kryton high-speed triggers that are used to fire nuclear weapons—he calls for hearings to look into the affair. The crisis passes, but it is unclear exactly how. Author George Crile will attribute the resolution to threats made to Solarz by Congressman Charlie Wilson (D-TX), a strong supporter of US involvement in the war: “Wilson understood that this was a battle that could not be won with debating points; reportedly, he went to Solarz armed with certain classified intelligence about India’s nuclear program. He is said to have suggested that India might be more exposed than Pakistan when it came to the issue of the bomb.” [[CRILE, 2003, PP. 463-4](#)]

**Entity Tags:** [Charlie Wilson](#), [Stephen Solarz](#), [House Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs](#), [George Crile](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#), [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#)

### **Mid-1980s: US Officials Allegedly Meet Directly with Bin Laden**



Journalist Simon Reeve will claim in the 1999 book *The New Jackals* that US officials directly met with bin Laden in Afghanistan in the 1980s. He will write, “American emissaries are understood to have traveled to Pakistan for meetings with mujaheddin leaders... [A former CIA official] even suggests the US emissaries met directly with bin Laden, and that it was bin Laden, acting on advice from his friends in Saudi intelligence, who first suggested the mujaheddin should be given Stingers.” [[REEVE, 1999, PP. 167,](#)

[176](#)] The CIA begins supplying Stinger missiles to the mujaheddin in 1986

(see [September 1986](#)). After 9/11, the CIA will state, “Numerous comments in the media recently have reiterated a widely circulated but incorrect notion that the CIA once had a relationship with Osama bin Laden. For the record, you should know that the CIA never



employed, paid, or maintained any relationship whatsoever with bin Laden.” [US STATE DEPARTMENT, 1/14/2005]

**Entity Tags:** [Osama bin Laden](#), [United States](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Osama Bin Laden](#), [US Intel Links to Islamic Militancy](#)

### **(1985): CIA Agent Proposes False Flag Attacks in Europe in Name of Hezbollah; Modified Proposal Is Implemented**



CIA agent Robert Baer proposes a series of false flag attacks in Europe to drive a wedge between Syria and Iran, which he hopes will lead to the freeing of Western hostages held in Lebanon. Although his superiors ban the use of real explosives, the proposal is implemented in altered form. Baer is aware that the current secular Syrian government is nervous about the tendency of Iran, one of its allies, to support numerous Islamic movements, including ones generally opposed to Syria. He plans to make the Syrians think that Iran has turned against it by carrying out a series of car bombings against Syrian diplomats in Europe and then claiming them in a statement issued by the CIA pretending to be the Lebanon-based and Iran-backed terror group Hezbollah. Baer thinks that Syria would then break with Hezbollah and the hostages would be freed. Although the plan is for the bombs to misfire and the diplomats not to be killed, his superior says that the use of any bombs in Europe is beyond the pale for the CIA. Baer will later comment: “Eventually we did get an operation through the bureaucracy. The CIA has asked me not to describe it. I can say, though, that while it managed to irritate [Syrian president] Hafiz al-Asad—sort of like a twenty-four hour diaper rash—it wasn’t enough for him to shut down Hezbollah.” [BAER, 2002, PP. 140-2]

**Entity Tags:** [Hezbollah](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Robert Baer](#), [Syria](#), [Iran](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [Alleged Use of False Flag Attacks](#), [US confrontation with Iran](#)

**Category Tags:** [US Intel Links to Islamic Militancy](#)

### **1985-1986: CIA Becomes Unhappy with Afghan Fighters, Begins Supporting Islamist Volunteers from Other Countries**



The Central Intelligence Agency, which has been supporting indigenous Afghan groups fighting occupying Soviet forces, becomes unhappy with them due to infighting, and searches for alternative anti-Soviet allies. MSNBC will later comment: “[T]he CIA, concerned about the factionalism of Afghanistan made famous by Rudyard Kipling, found that Arab zealots who flocked to aid the Afghans were easier to ‘read’ than the rivalry-ridden natives. While the Arab volunteers might well prove troublesome later, the agency reasoned, they at least were one-dimensionally anti-Soviet for now. So [Osama] bin Laden, along with a small group of Islamic militants from Egypt, Pakistan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestinian refugee camps all over the Middle East, became the ‘reliable’ partners of the CIA in its war against Moscow.” The CIA does not usually deal with the Afghan Arabs directly, but through an intermediary, Pakistan’s ISI, which helps the Arabs through the Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK) run by Abdullah Azzam. [MSNBC, 8/24/1998] The agreement is sealed during a secret visit to Pakistan, where CIA Director William Casey commits the agency to support the ISI program of recruiting radical Muslims for the Afghan war from other Muslim countries around the world. In addition to the Gulf States, these include Turkey, the Philippines, and China. The ISI started their

recruitment of radicals from other countries in 1982 (see [1982](#)). This CIA cooperation is part of a joint CIA-ISI plan begun the year before to expand the “Jihad” beyond Afghanistan (see [1984-March 1985](#)). [[RASHID, 2001, PP. 128-129](#)] Thousands of militant Arabs are trained under this program (see [1986-1992](#)).

**Entity Tags:** [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Maktab al-Khidamat](#), [Abdullah Azzam](#), [William Casey](#), [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Pakistan and the ISI](#), [Philippine Militant Collusion](#), [US Intel Links to Islamic Militancy](#)

### **1985-1989: Precursor to Al-Qaeda Puts Down US Roots**



Maktab al-Khidamat offices in the US in the late 1980s. Some of the offices in fact were represented by single individuals. [[Source: National Geographic](#)] (click image to enlarge) Sheikh Abdullah Azzam, bin Laden’s mentor, makes repeated trips to the US and other countries, building up his Pakistan-based organization, Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK), or “Services Office” in English. It is also known as Al-Kifah, which means “struggle.” Azzam founded the Al-Kifah/MAK in 1984 (see [Late 1984](#)). Branches open in over 30 US cities, as Muslim-Americans donate millions of dollars to support the Afghan war against the Soviet Union. The most important branch, called the Al-Kifah Refugee Center, opens in Brooklyn, New York (see [1986-1993](#)). Azzam is assassinated in a car bomb attack in late 1989 (see [November 24, 1989](#)). Bin Laden soon takes over the organization, which effectively morphs into al-Qaeda. His followers take over the US offices and they become financial conduits for al-Qaeda operations. [[LANCE, 2003, PP. 40-41](#)]

**Entity Tags:** [Osama bin Laden](#), [Al-Kifah Refugee Center](#), [Maktab al-Khidamat](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Abdullah Azzam](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Al-Kifah/MAK](#), [US Intel Links to Islamic Militancy](#)

### **1985-1989: Bin Laden’s Mentor Azzam Recruits Fighters All Over World with Apparent CIA Support**



Sheikh Abdullah Azzam giving a speech in the US in February 1988. [Source: CNN] Bin Laden's mentor Abdullah Azzam frequently travels all over the world with the apparent support of the CIA. Slate will later write, "Azzam trotted the globe during the 1980s to promote the Afghan jihad against the Soviets. By the time of his death in 1989, he had recruited between 16,000 and 20,000 mujaheddin from 20 countries to Afghanistan, visited 50 American cities to advance his cause, and dispatched acolytes to spread the gospel in 26 US states, not to mention across the Middle East and Europe." Slate calls him "the Lenin of international jihad," noting that he "didn't invent his movement's ideas, but he furthered them and put them into practice around the world." [SLATE, 4/16/2002] At the time, the US is supporting the Afghans fighting the Soviets and it will later be alleged that the CIA supported Azzam as part of this effort. Barnett Rubin, a Columbia University professor and senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, will claim in 1995 that sources told him Azzam was "enlisted" by the CIA to help unite the fractious Afghan rebel groups. Rubin claims Azzam was considered a prime asset because of his "close connections to the Muslim Brotherhood, Saudi intelligence, and the Muslim World League." But Azzam made no secret of his desire for a no compromise jihad to conquer the entire world. In 1988 in New Jersey, he says, "Blood and martyrdom are the only way to create a Muslim society" and he wants "to ignite the spark that may one day burn Western interests all over the world." He is frequently accompanied on his US lecture tours by El-Sayyid Nosair and Clement Rodney Hampton-El, both of whom will later be convicted of al-Qaeda-linked attacks in the US. [NEW YORK MAGAZINE, 3/17/1995] CAIR (Council on American-Islamic Relations) Executive Director Nihad Awad is a leader in the IAP (Islamic Association for Palestine) at this time. ISNA (Islamic Society of North America) affiliates, such as IAP and the MAYA (Muslim Arab Youth Association), host Azzam and arrange his visits to Islamic centers throughout the US. [NEW REPUBLIC, 2/27/2007]

**Entity Tags:** [Islamic Association for Palestine](#), [Barnett Rubin](#), [Abdullah Azzam](#), [Clement Rodney Hampton-El](#), [El Sayyid Nosair](#), [Muslim World League](#), [Nihad Awad](#), [Muslim Arab Youth Association](#), [Muslim Brotherhood](#), [Council on American-Islamic Relations](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Al-Kifah/MAK](#), [US Intel Links to Islamic Militancy](#)

### **1985-1987: US Helps Afghan Allies Launch Attacks into Soviet Union**



In 1985, the CIA, MI6 (Britain's intelligence agency), and the Pakistani ISI agree to launch guerrilla attacks from Afghanistan into then Soviet-controlled Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, attacking military installations, factories, and storage depots within Soviet

territory. Some Afghans have been trained for this purpose since 1984 (see [1984-March 1985](#)). The task is given to Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, an Afghan warlord closely linked to the ISI. According to an account in the Washington Post, in March 1987, small units cross from bases in northern Afghanistan into Tajikistan and launched their first rocket attacks against villages there. [\[WASHINGTON POST, 7/19/1992; PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE, 9/23/2001\]](#) However, Mohammad Yousaf, a high-ranking ISI officer at the time, will later write a well regarded book about the Soviet-Afghan war and will give a different account. He will claim the attacks in the Soviet Union actually begin in 1985 and are much more numerous. He says, “These cross-border strikes were at their peak in 1986. Scores of attacks were made across the Amu (River)... Sometimes Soviet citizens joined in these operations, or came back into Afghanistan to join the mujaheddin... That we were hitting a sore spot was confirmed by the ferocity of the Soviets’ reaction. Virtually every incursion provoked massive aerial bombing and gunship attacks on all villages south of the river in the vicinity of our strike.” [\[DREYFUSS, 2005, PP. 286\]](#) By all accounts, these secret attacks are strongly backed by CIA Director William Casey and come to an end when he dies later in 1987. [\[WASHINGTON POST, 7/19/1992;DREYFUSS, 2005, PP. 285-286\]](#)

**Entity Tags:** [UK Secret Intelligence Service \(MI6\)](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Gulbuddin Hekmatyar](#), [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#), [William Casey](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Pakistan and the ISI](#)

### **Mid-1980s: Pakistani ISI and CIA Gain from Drug Production**



ISI headquarters in Islamabad,

Pakistan. [\[Source: Banded Artists Productions\]](#) The Pakistani ISI starts a special cell of agents who use profits from heroin production for covert actions “at the insistence of the CIA.” “This cell promotes the cultivation of opium, the extraction of heroin in Pakistani and Afghan territories under mujaheddin control. The heroin is then smuggled into the Soviet controlled areas, in an attempt to turn the Soviet troops into heroin addicts. After the withdrawal of the Soviet troops, the ISI’s heroin cell started using its network of refineries and smugglers for smuggling heroin to the Western countries and using the money as a supplement to its legitimate economy. But for these heroin dollars, Pakistan’s legitimate economy must have collapsed many years ago.” [\[FINANCIAL TIMES, 8/10/2001\]](#) The ISI grows so powerful on this money, that “even by the shadowy standards of spy agencies, the ISI is notorious. It is commonly branded ‘a state within the state,’ or Pakistan’s ‘invisible government.’” [\[TIME, 5/6/2002\]](#)

**Entity Tags:** [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Pakistan and the ISI](#), [Drugs](#)

### **Early 1985: Salem Bin Laden Says Brother Osama Is Liaison between US, Afghan Rebels, and Saudi Government**



Salem bin Laden tells one of his employees, George Harrington, that his brother Osama, is, according to a later account by Harrington, “the liaison between the US, the Saudi government, and the Afghan rebels.” Salem, head of the bin Laden family, also says that he must visit Osama in Peshawar, a base inside Pakistan for the anti-Soviet mujaheddin, to check on what equipment the Saudi government is funneling to him. The two men fly up together with another employee, Bengt Johansson, and meet Osama that day. Osama also gives his brother and the two employees a tour of some facilities in Peshawar, including refugee camps, a hospital and an orphanage, and Salem films them to publicize his brother’s charitable work. [COLL, 2008, PP. 7-9]

**Entity Tags:** [Salem bin Laden](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Bengt Johansson](#), [George Harrington](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Osama Bin Laden](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), [US Intel Links to Islamic Militancy](#), [Bin Laden Family](#)

### **January 1985: Treasury Secretary Regan Reads ‘Dynamite’ CIA Report on BCCI Crimes, But Takes No Action**



In January 1985, the CIA delivers a secret report about the criminal BCCI back to the Treasury Department. In an extraordinary departure from standard procedure, the report is hand-delivered by a CIA agent and printed on plain paper with no markings to indicate it came from the CIA. The report is given to Douglas Mulholland, a Treasury official serving as the CIA’s main link to that department. Mulholland then hand-delivers the report to Treasury Secretary Donald Regan, and calls its contents “dynamite.” It is not known what is in the report, but the Treasury Department sends back word that it wants to know more. However, as Time magazine reporters Jonathan Beaty and S. C. Gwynne will later relate: “Suddenly, and for no apparent reason, Treasury lost all interest in BCCI... Someone had... gotten to Regan and Mulholland, and the message had been unambiguous: back off.” The Treasury Department takes no action against BCCI, even though the evidence of the bank’s involvement in money laundering by this time is overwhelming. [BEATY AND GWYNNE, 1993, PP. 325-328]

**Entity Tags:** [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Douglas Mulholland](#), [US Department of the Treasury](#), [Donald Regan](#)

**Category Tags:** [BCCI](#)

### **Mid-1980s: Osama Bin Laden’s Brother Is Allegedly Involved in the Iran-Contra Affair**



Quoting a French intelligence report posted by PBS Frontline, The New Yorker reports, “During the nineteen-eighties, when the Reagan administration secretly arranged for an estimated \$34 million to be funneled through Saudi Arabia to the Contras in Nicaragua, [Osama’s eldest brother] Salem bin Laden aided in this cause.” [PBS FRONTLINE, 2001; NEW YORKER, 11/5/2001]

**Entity Tags:** [Salem bin Laden](#), [Contras](#), [Reagan administration](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [Iran-Contra Affair](#)

**Category Tags:** [Saudi Arabia](#), [US Intel Links to Islamic Militancy](#), [Bin Laden Family](#)

### **Mid-1980s: ISI Head Regularly Meets with Bin Laden**



According to controversial author Gerald Posner, ex-CIA officials claim that General Akhtar Abdur Rahman, Pakistani ISI's head from 1980 to 1987, regularly meets bin Laden in Peshawar, Pakistan. The ISI and bin Laden form a partnership that forces Afghan tribal warlords to pay a "tax" on the opium trade. By 1985, bin Laden and the ISI are splitting annual profits of up to \$100 million a year. [POSNER, 2003, PP. 29]

**Entity Tags:** [Osama bin Laden](#), [Pakistan Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence](#), [Akhtar Abdur Rahman](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Pakistan and the ISI](#), [Drugs](#)

### **Mid 1980s: MI6 Agent Gets to Know Future Al-Qaeda Leaders**



Alastair Crooke. [Source: *Conflicts Forum*] Alastair Crooke, an agent for the British intelligence service MI6, helps out with the anti-Soviet jihad and gets "to know some of the militants who would become leaders of al-Qaeda." [NEW STATESMAN, 4/11/2005] He also spends "years during the 1980s with Osama Bin Laden's henchmen in Afghanistan." [SUNDAY EXPRESS, 6/12/2005] Crooke, whose role is to coordinate British assistance to the mujaheddin, will later be described by CIA officer Milton Bearden as "a natural on the frontier" and "a British agent straight out of the Great Game." Details of exactly which future al-Qaeda leaders he gets to know are not available. In the 1990s, Crooke will move to Palestine, where he will come into contact with Hamas leaders. [NEW STATESMAN, 4/11/2005]

**Entity Tags:** [UK Secret Intelligence Service \(MI6\)](#), [Milton Bearden](#), [Al-Qaeda](#), [Alastair Crooke](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Londonistan - UK Counterterrorism](#), [US Intel Links to Islamic Militancy](#)

### **February 1985: Reagan Possibly Views Afghan Video Made by Bin Laden Brothers**



According to author Steve Coll, US President Ronald Reagan may be given a briefing about Osama bin Laden's charitable work in the Soviet-Afghan War, and may also see a video showing aspects of the work. If this is true, the briefing and video would come from Salem bin Laden, head of the bin Laden family, who made the video recently when visiting his brother Osama (see [Early 1985](#)).

**Summit** - Salem is in Washington at this time to attend a summit between Reagan and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. It is unclear what Salem's role is at the summit, although one of the key areas of co-operation between the US and Saudi Arabia is support for the

Afghan mujaheddin, and his brother Osama is a key figure who frequently travels between Saudi Arabia and mujaheddin bases in Pakistan. An attorney will later recall seeing a photograph of Salem and Reagan together at the meeting, but the photo will apparently be destroyed before it can be published.

Possible Briefing - Coll will comment: "It seems probable that when Salem reached Washington that winter, he would have passed to King Fahd, if not directly to the White House, the video evidence he had just gathered documenting Osama's humanitarian work on the Afghan frontier." Coll will add that Reagan takes pains to acknowledge Saudi Arabia's efforts to support Afghan refugees on the Pakistani frontier, saying: "Their many humanitarian contributions touch us deeply.... Saudi aid to refugees uprooted from their homes in Afghanistan has not gone unnoticed here." Coll will point out that the leading Saudi provider of such aid is Osama bin Laden, and that "Reagan's language suggested that he had been given at least a general briefing about Osama's work." [COLL, 2008, PP. 11-12]

**Entity Tags:** [Steve Coll](#), [Osama bin Laden](#), [Ronald Reagan](#), [Salem bin Laden](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), [US Intel Links to Islamic Militancy](#), [Bin Laden Family](#)

### **March 1985: Reagan Sharply Increases Covert Support to Afghan Rebels**



Ronald Reagan with Afghan mujaheddin leaders. [Source: Ronald Reagan Presidential Library] (click image to enlarge) President Reagan issues a secret National Security Decision Directive to sharply escalate US covert action in Afghanistan. No longer content to simply help harass Soviet forces in Afghanistan, the directive leads to sharp increase in military and other aid to the mujaheddin to completely defeat the Soviets. The CIA begins supplying mujaheddin rebels with "extensive satellite reconnaissance data of Soviet targets on the Afghan battlefield, plans for military operations based on the satellite intelligence, intercepts of Soviet communications, secret communications networks for the rebels, delayed timing devices for tons of C-4 plastic explosives for urban sabotage and sophisticated guerrilla attacks, long-range sniper rifles, a targeting device for mortars that was linked to a US Navy satellite, wire-guided anti-tank missiles, and other equipment." CIA Director William Casey also sees the directive as an opportunity to launch attacks inside the Soviet Union itself (see [1984-March 1985](#) and [1985-1987](#)). [WASHINGTON POST, 7/19/1992]

**Entity Tags:** [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Ronald Reagan](#), [William Casey](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#)

### **July 1985: Report Outlines Terrorism Threat to WTC**



Charles Schnabolk. [Source: *Institute for Design Professionals*] While the Office of Special Planning is still working on its report about the vulnerability of the World Trade Center to terrorist attack, the New York Port Authority hired security consultant Charles Schnabolk to also review the center's security systems. [UEXPRESS (.COM), 10/12/2001; NEW YORK COUNTY SUPREME COURT, 1/20/2004] Schnabolk was involved in designing the original security system when the WTC complex was built. [INSTITUTE FOR DESIGN PROFESSIONALS, 2009; THE SECURITY DESIGN GROUP, 2010] This month his secret report, titled "Terrorism Threat Perspective and Proposed Response for the World Trade Center" is released. It sets out four levels of possible terrorism against the center, and gives examples of each: "(1) PREDICTABLE—Bomb threats; (2) PROBABLE—Bombing attempts, computer crime; (3) POSSIBLE—Hostage taking; (4) CATASTROPHIC—Aerial bombing, chemical agents in water supply or air conditioning (caused by agents of a foreign government or a programmed suicide)." Similar to other reports in the mid-1980s, it also warns that the WTC "is highly vulnerable through the parking lot." [UEXPRESS (.COM), 10/12/2001; NEW YORK COUNTY SUPREME COURT, 1/20/2004]

**Entity Tags:** [Charles Schnabolk](#), [World Trade Center](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [9/11 Timeline](#)

**Category Tags:** [1993 WTC Bombing](#)

### **August 1985: Solarz Amendment Passed Penalizing Nations Exporting Nuclear Materials from US**



Congressman Stephen Solarz. [Source: AP] The "Solarz Amendment" to the Foreign Assistance Act is passed by the US Congress and becomes law. The amendment, championed by Congressman Stephen Solarz (D-NY), cuts off all military and economic aid to purportedly non-nuclear nations that illegally export or attempt to export nuclear-related materials from the US. [NEW YORKER, 3/29/1993] There are subsequently several examples of Pakistan exporting nuclear weapons technology from



the US, but they are not punished until the end of the Soviet-Afghan War (see [August 1985-October 1990](#)).

**Entity Tags:** [Foreign Assistance Act](#), [Stephen Solarz](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#)

### **August 1985: Pressler Amendment Passed, Requiring Yearly Certification that Pakistan Does Not Have Nuclear Weapons**



Senator Larry Pressler. [Source: Public domain] The US Congress passes the “Pressler Amendment,” requiring the president to certify that Pakistan does not have nuclear weapons every year. The amendment was championed by Senator Larry Pressler (R-SD). If the president does not issue such certification, Pakistan cannot not get any foreign aid from the US. Presidents Reagan and Bush will falsely certify Pakistan does not have nuclear weapons several times (see [August 1985-October 1990](#)). Journalist Seymour Hersh will later comment: “There is indisputable evidence that Pakistan has been able to escape public scrutiny for its violations of the law because senior officials of the Reagan and the Bush administrations chose not to share the intelligence about nuclear purchases with Congress. The two Republican administrations obviously feared that the legislators, who had voted for the Solarz (see [August 1985](#)) and Pressler Amendments, would cut off funds for the war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. It was yet another clash between a much desired foreign-policy goal and the law.” [NEW YORKER, 3/29/1993]

**Entity Tags:** [Seymour Hersh](#), [Larry Pressler](#), [George Herbert Walker Bush](#), [Ronald Reagan](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#)

### **August 1985-October 1990: White House Defies Congress and Allows Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons Program to Progress**



In 1985, US Congress passes legislation requiring US economic sanctions on Pakistan unless the White House can certify that Pakistan has not embarked on a nuclear weapons program (see [August 1985](#) and [August 1985](#)). The White House certifies this every year until 1990 (see [1987-1989](#)). However, it is known all the time that Pakistan does have a continuing nuclear program. For instance, in 1983 a State Department memo said Pakistan clearly has a nuclear weapons program that relies on stolen European technology. Pakistan successfully builds a nuclear bomb in 1987 but does not test it to keep it a secret (see [1987](#)). With the Soviet-Afghan war ending in 1989, the US no longer relies on Pakistan to contain the Soviet Union. So in 1990 the Pakistani nuclear

program is finally recognized and sweeping sanctions are applied (see [June 1989](#)). [[GANNON, 2005](#)] Journalist Seymour Hersh will comment, “The certification process became farcical in the last years of the Reagan Administration, whose yearly certification—despite explicit American intelligence about Pakistan’s nuclear-weapons program—was seen as little more than a payoff to the Pakistani leadership for its support in Afghanistan.” [[NEW YORKER, 3/29/1993](#)] The government of Pakistan will keep their nuclear program a secret until they successfully test a nuclear weapon in 1998 (see [May 28, 1998](#)).

**Entity Tags:** [US Congress](#), [White House](#), [Pakistan](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [A. Q. Khan's Nuclear Network](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Pakistan and the ISI](#), [Pakistani Nukes & Islamic Militancy](#)

### **September 1985: Ali Mohamed Moves to US; CIA Role Is Disputed**



Ali Mohamed, pictured in a US army video. [*Source: US Army*]The CIA claims to have put Ali Mohamed on a terrorist watch list to prevent him from coming to the US (see [1984](#)). Somehow, Mohamed gets a US visa anyway. After learning that he has been given a visa, the CIA supposedly issues a warning to other Federal agencies that a suspicious character might be traveling to the US. Mohamed is able to move to the US nonetheless. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 12/1/1998](#); [SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, 11/4/2001](#)] The State Department will not explain how he is able to move to the US despite such warnings. [[NEW YORK TIMES, 12/1/1998](#)] In 1995, after Mohamed’s name publicly surfaces at the trial of Sheikh Omar Abdul-Rahman, the Boston Globe will report that Mohamed had been admitted to the US under a special visa program controlled by the CIA’s clandestine service. This will contradict the CIA’s later claims of disassociating themselves from Mohamed and attempting to stop him from entering the US. [[BOSTON GLOBE, 2/3/1995](#); [NEW YORK TIMES, 10/30/1998](#)] Mohamed befriends an American woman he meets on the airplane flight to the US. They get married less than two months later, and he moves to her residence in Santa Clara, California. The marriage will help him to become a US citizen in 1989. [[SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, 9/21/2001](#)]

**Entity Tags:** [US Department of State](#), [Ali Mohamed](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#)

**Category Tags:** [Ali Mohamed](#), [US Intel Links to Islamic Militancy](#)

### **September 16, 1985: Presidential Directive Lays Out Government Plan for Responding to National Emergencies**



President Ronald Reagan signs a directive that contributes to the modern era of “continuity planning,” which will ensure the maintenance of a functioning government in the event of a catastrophic attack on Washington, DC. This Continuity of Government (COG) plan will be activated for the first time on 9/11, in response to the terrorist attacks that day (see [\(Between 9:45 a.m. and 9:56 a.m.\) September 11, 2001](#)). [[WASHINGTON POST, 3/1/2002](#); [ABC NEWS, 4/25/2004](#)] National Security Decision Directive 188 (NSDD 188), “Government Coordination for National Security Emergency Preparedness,” states that it is the policy of the United States to have capabilities at all levels of government to respond to a range of national security emergencies, “from major natural calamities to hostile attacks on the nation.” The US policy “includes an emergency mobilization preparedness program which provides an effective capability to meet defense and essential civilian needs during those emergencies.” The National Security Council (NSC) is assigned as the “principal forum” where the national security emergency preparedness policy will be considered, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is to “assist in the implementation of this policy through a coordinating role with the other federal agencies.” NSDD 188 also assigns responsibility for continuity planning to an interagency panel that includes the Office of Management and Budget, and the Defense, Treasury, and Justice Departments. [[US PRESIDENT, 9/16/1985](#); [WASHINGTON POST, 3/1/2002](#)] A subsequent executive order in 1988 will apply the COG plan to “any national security emergency situation that might confront the nation” (see [November 18, 1988](#)), and a presidential directive in 1998 will update it to specifically deal with the emerging threat posed by terrorists (see [Early 1998](#) and [October 21, 1998](#)). [[US PRESIDENT, 11/18/1988](#); [CLARKE, 2004, PP. 166-167 AND 170](#); [WASHINGTON POST, 6/4/2006](#)]

**Entity Tags:** [Ronald Reagan](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [9/11 Timeline](#)

**Category Tags:** [Other Pre-9/11 Events](#)

### **November 1985: Office of Special Planning Report Calls WTC a ‘Most Attractive Terrorist Target’**



After assessing the security of New York Port Authority facilities, the Office of Special Planning (OSP), the Port Authority’s own antiterrorist task force, releases a report called “Counter-Terrorism Perspectives: The World Trade Center.” For security purposes, only seven copies are made, being hand-delivered and signed for by its various recipients, including the executive director of the Port Authority, the superintendent of the Port Authority Police, and the director of the World Trade Department. [[NEW YORK COURT OF APPEALS, 2/16/1999](#); [VILLAGE VOICE, 1/5/2000](#)] Because of the WTC’s visibility, symbolic value, and it being immediately recognizable to people from around the world, the report concludes that the center is a “most attractive terrorist target.” [[NEW YORK COUNTY SUPREME COURT, 1/20/2004](#)] The report, which is 120 pages long, lists various possible methods of attacking the center. [[NEW YORK COURT OF APPEALS, 2/16/1999](#); [CARAM, 2001, PP. 103](#); [BARRETT AND COLLINS, 2006, PP. 87](#)] One of these is that a “time bomb-laden vehicle could be driven into the WTC and parked in the public parking area.... At a predetermined time, the bomb could be exploded in the basement.” [[GLANZ AND LIPTON, 2004, PP. 227](#)] As a Senate Committee Report will find in August 1993, “The specifics of the February 26, 1993 bombing at the World Trade Center garage were almost identical to those envisioned in the [OSP] report.” [[NEW YORK COURT OF APPEALS, 2/16/1999](#)] Due to the Port Authority’s

failure to adequately implement the OSP's recommendations, the report will be crucial evidence in a successful civil trial against it in October 2005, charging negligence in failing to prevent the 1993 bombing. [BLOOMBERG, 10/26/2005; NEW YORK TIMES, 10/27/2005; NEW YORK TIMES, 2/18/2006] As of mid-2006, the other possible methods of attacking the WTC listed in the report remain undisclosed.

**Entity Tags:** [Office of Special Planning](#), [World Trade Center](#), [World Trade Department](#), [Port Authority of New York and New Jersey](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [9/11 Timeline](#)

**Category Tags:** [1993 WTC Bombing](#)

### **Late 1985: Slush Funds Enable Cash to Be Siphoned Off from Huge Arms Deal to Afghan Mujaheddin**



After the governments of Saudi Arabia and Britain sign the massive Al Yamamah arms deal, “unconventional aspects” of the deal mean that money can be diverted for a variety of purposes. The arms being purchased by Saudi Arabia are paid for not in cash, but in oil, with between four and six hundred thousand barrels a day being bartered to finance the weapons. This enables the Saudis to evade production caps put in place by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Although most of the money realized from the oil should theoretically go to the British as payment for the arms, some of it apparently finds its way back to Saudi Arabians. It is then used to support a number of covert programs to arm anti-Communists supported by Saudi Arabia, such as the purchase of weapons in Egypt that are then sent to the mujaheddin in Afghanistan. [COLL. 2008, PP. 289] It is possible that some of the money is used to finance a missile purchase by the bin Laden brothers for Arabs fighting in the Soviet-Afghan War (see [Mid-1986](#)).

**Timeline Tags:** [War in Afghanistan](#)

**Category Tags:** [Soviet-Afghan War](#), [Saudi Arabia](#)

### **December 12, 1985: Plane Crash in Canada Kills 256; Evidence Suggests Links to Iran-Contra and BCCI Covert Operations**



Wreckage from the Gander crash. [Source: *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*] On December 12, 1985, shortly after takeoff from Gander, Newfoundland, Arrow Air Flight 1285 stalls and crashes about half a mile from the runway. All 256 passengers and crew on board are killed, including 248 US soldiers. The plane was coming from Egypt and refueling in Newfoundland before continuing on

to the US. At the time, the crash is widely reported to be an accident, caused by icing on the airplane wings. Official US and Canadian investigations will also support that conclusion. However, information will later come out suggesting the crash was not an accident:

- Members of Islamic Jihad, a branch of the Hezbollah militant group (and not to be confused with the Islamic Jihad group headed by Ayman al-Zawahiri), immediately take credit for the crash. In one call to the Reuters news agency in Beirut, the caller knows details of the plane flight not yet mentioned in the press.

- Within hours of the crash, Maj. Gen. John Crosby arrives at the crash site and reportedly tells maintenance workers he wants to “bulldoze over the crash site immediately.” The White House also quickly publicly claims there is “no evidence of sabotage or an explosion in flight,” despite the fact that Hezbollah had just taken credit for the crash and the investigation is just beginning. While the site is not bulldozed, there is no effort to meticulously sift the wreckage for clues, which is standard procedure for such air crashes.

- An FBI forensic team flies to Newfoundland within hours of the crash, but then merely sits in a hotel room. After 36 hours, the team accepts a declaration that terrorism was not involved and returns home. The FBI will later claim the Canadian government did not allow their team to visit the site. [TIME, 4/27/1992]

- In 1988, the nine-member Canadian Aviation Safety Board will issue a split verdict. Five members will attribute the crash to ice formation, and four members claim it was an explosion. A former Canadian supreme court justice is appointed to decide if there should be a new investigation. He concludes that the available evidence does not support ice on the wings as being a cause, let alone a probable cause, of the crash. But he also rules against a new investigation, saying it would cause more pain to the victims’ families. [TIME, 4/27/1992; CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION, 12/12/2005]

- Later declassified autopsy reports show that soldiers had inhaled smoke in the moments before they died, indicating there had been a fire on board before the plane hit the ground. [CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION, 12/12/2005]

- Five witnesses in the remote location where the plane crash will sign sworn statements that they saw the plane burning before it fell.

- An examination of the fuselage will show outward holes, indicating an explosion from within.

- Four members of the refueling crew will later assert there was no icing problem before the plane took off. The plane crashed about one minute after take off.

- Six heavy crates had been loaded into the plane’s cargo bay in Egypt without military customs clearance. Witnesses will later claim that weapons, including TOW antitank missiles, were being stockpiled in Egypt near where the plane took off. At the time, the US was secretly selling these types of missiles to Iran as part of an arms for hostages deal.

- In the wake of public exposure of the Iran-Contra Affair, it will be revealed that Arrow Air is a CIA front company and was regularly used by Lt. Col. Oliver North to ship arms.

- Most of the crash victims were US Airborne troops returning from multinational peacekeeping duties in Egypt, but more than 20 Special Forces personnel were also on board. They were from elite counterterrorist units often used on hostage rescue

missions.

- Just days before the crash, Iranian officials threatened to retaliate after North sent them a shipment of the wrong missiles. North wrote three days earlier that he was determined to continue to arms shipments. “To stop now in midstream, would ignite Iranian fire. Hostages would be our minimum losses.” One theory is that Iran used militant surrogates connected to Hezbollah to punish North for sending the wrong missiles. [TIME, 4/27/1992]
- Gene Wheaton, a private investigator hired by victims’ relatives unsatisfied with the official explanation, later claims that a duffel bag stuffed with US currency was found in the wreckage. Two men in civilian clothes, who other personnel at the crash cite believe were from the CIA, took custody of the money. Neither the money nor the heavy crates will be mentioned by the official investigation.
- In the early 1990s, two Time magazine reporters will be writing a book about the BCCI bank scandal. They will develop a reliable source, a private arms dealer using the alias Heinrich. Heinrich tells the reporters that a large amount of cash was on the Gander flight, and he tells them this before any accounts of cash being on the plane are reported in the media. Heinrich, who takes part in numerous arms deals with high-level BCCI officials, will tell the reporters: “This money on the plane was money that [BCCI founder Agha Hasan] Abedi, money that the bank had provided US intelligence for covert operations. The money was being used by the American military. I have no idea what for. You don’t ask these kinds of questions of these people.... One of the bank men—perhaps I should call him an associate of the bank men—was a little angry about this money. He believed it was being, ah, appropriated, by some of the special forces soldiers. Someone else thought perhaps it was being diverted to another operation. I only know that the subject of the Gander crash came up, and these people talked about BCCI money going down with it.” [BEATY AND GWYNNE, 1993, PP. 231-233]

**Entity Tags:** [Oliver North](#), [John Crosby](#), [“Heinrich”](#), [Gene Wheaton](#), [Agha Hasan Abedi](#), [Hezbollah](#), [Bank of Credit and Commerce International](#), [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), [Central Intelligence Agency](#), [Islamic Jihad Organization](#)

**Timeline Tags:** [Iran-Contra Affair](#)

**Category Tags:** [US Intel Links to Islamic Militancy](#), [BCCI](#)

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