

On 9/11 Anniversary, Focus on Iran

by Kenneth R. Timmerman



One of the significant, mostly-untold stories about the 9/11 attacks is the involvement of the Iranian government in assisting the al Qaeda terrorists who killed so many innocent people nineteen years ago.

It's a story that, at times, has invited derision, as when the *New York Times* [blasted Vice President Mike Pence](#) in January for a series of tweets that described the terror-drenched record of Quds Force commander, Qassem Suleymani, just days after a U.S. drone ended his career near the Baghdad airport.

Part of that record, Pence tweeted, was Suleymani's role in assisting "the clandestine travel to Afghanistan" of the muscle hijackers who carried out the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Pence was [referring to a passage](#) from page 240 of the 2004 final report from the 9/11 Commission, which said, “we now have evidence suggesting that 8 to 10 of the 14 Saudi “muscle” operatives traveled into or out of Iran between October 2000 and February 2001.”

At the time the 9/11 Commission report was published, hardly anyone paid attention to this passage (except, ironically, a [lone reporter](#) from the *New York Times*). From my interviews with 9/11 Commissioners and key staff members, I discovered that our intelligence community knew much more than the two pages that made it into the published report, and was eager to keep that information from becoming public, because it revealed their failures.

A six-page report from the National Security Agency quoted 75 separate communication intercepts tracking the travel of the muscle hijackers to Iran, where Quds Force operatives then escorted them across the border into Afghanistan, all without visa stamps.

Why was this so important? Because the hijackers had clean Saudi passports, and had already acquired fresh U.S. entry visas or were about to get them. If they had traveled to Afghanistan through Pakistan and then tried to enter the United States, they knew there was a high probability they would be denied entry. That is precisely what happened to the so-called 20th hijacker, Mohammad al-Qahtani, a Saudi citizen who was [refused entry](#) by an alert U.S. Customs officer at the Orlando International Airport in August 2001.

His failure to join the hijackers meant only three muscle hijackers boarded United Flight 93, giving an opportunity to Todd Beamer and other passengers to overpower them and prevent them from crashing into the White House or another high profile target.

After the 9/11 attacks, I reached out to my Iranian sources

and eventually tracked down a series of defectors from Iranian intelligence organizations who claimed first-hand knowledge of Iran's involvement in the attacks.

One had learned of the hijacking plot years earlier, as well as its secret code name. The CIA and the State Department brushed off his efforts to warn the United States of the impending attacks in August and early September 2001.

Another was a member of an analytical unit working for the Supreme Leader who summarized after-action reports from the Quds Force liaison to the al Qaeda plotters, a Hezbollah thug named Imad Favez Mugniyeh. The CIA called him a fabricator.

A third had served on the security detail that escorted Bin Laden's oldest son, Saad bin Laden, and his successor, Mohammad al-Zawahri, to meetings with Iran's Supreme Leader where they discussed the upcoming attacks on America and where the Iranians pledged their support. The CIA brushed him off in July 2001 after meeting him in Baku, Azerbaijan. Today this defector, Alireza Soleimane-pak, [languishes in solitary confinement](#) in Tbilisi, Georgia, on criminal charges fabricated out of whole cloth by the Iranian ambassador to that country, after he refused to recant his testimony in our case.

I reported their information in [Countdown to Crisis: the Coming Nuclear Showdown with Iran](#), along with details about what the U.S. knew at the time and what was later learned about Iran's involvement in the 9/11 plot. It was a massive intelligence failure, mainly attributable to the CIA's groupthink mentality that Sunni Muslim extremists (al Qaeda) would not cooperate with Shiite Muslim terrorists (Iran).

My reporting attracted the attention of lawyers who represented families of 9/11 victims. After years of investigation, including multiple trips to Europe and the Middle East at considerable personal risk, the attorneys

locked in the testimony of the Iranian defectors, corroborated it through multiple outside sources, and presented it to a U.S. District Court, where they won an [initial judgment](#) worth over \$6 billion. Throughout this effort, CIA operatives [went to great lengths](#) to discredit the defectors and to suborn their perjury.

Fast forward to the second 9/11 attack, in 2012. This time Iranian Quds Force operatives [murdered Americans in Benghazi](#), killing U.S. ambassador to Libya Christopher Stevens, communications officer Sean Smith, and U.S. Navy Seals Ty Woods and Glen Dougherty.

Just as in 2001, the U.S. intelligence community refused to acknowledge the Iranian involvement, which I learned of from U.S. private military contractors on the ground in Benghazi, the head of Ambassador Stevens security detail, U.S. government security personnel, and once again, Iranian defectors.

Thanks to a FOIA request by Judicial Watch, I uncovered [a key intelligence memorandum](#) addressed to then-DIA director Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn that spelled out what his agency knew about the involvement of al Qaeda and the Quds Force in the Benghazi attacks. And it was damning.

My investigation [determined](#) that the intelligence community covered up Iran's involvement in Benghazi to protect President Obama's re-election bid and his ongoing negotiations with the Iranian regime. Obama wasn't seeking an end to the regime's terror spree but a mere pause in their nuclear program, in exchange for unfreezing \$150 billion in Iranian assets. The Obama-Biden White House was also desperate to cover up the U.S. involvement in funneling weapons to al Qaeda-affiliated terrorists in Syria.

Americans don't normally draw the connections between 9/11 and Benghazi. Both attacks were carried out by an Iranian regime

that still chants Death to America, has [killed hundreds](#) of U.S. soldiers using special IEDs in Iraq, and offers rewards to Taliban fighters to kill Americans in Afghanistan.

The Obama-Biden administration sought to appease Iran. The Trump administration has worked to restrict their reign of terror, including [a crackdown](#) on Iranian cyber criminals.

Just like the Communist overlords in Beijing, Iran's clerical elite and the Revolutionary Guards Corps terror-masters are voting for Biden, as their U.S.-based surrogates have [announced](#).

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