

Who Paid the 9/11 Hijackers? Al-Hawsawi? Mahmoud Ahmad?

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Theme: [Terrorism](#)

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As I reported in the summer of 2003, US and British newspapers briefly alleged that the paymaster for the 9/11 attacks was a well-known agent of the Pakistani intelligence service ISI, Mohammed Sheikh Saeed. There was even a brief period in which it was alleged that the money had been paid at the direction of the then ISI Chief, General Mahmoud Ahmad.[1]

The London Guardian reported on October 1, 2001, that US investigators believe they have found the “smoking gun” linking Osama bin Laden to the September 11 terrorist attacks, ... The man at the centre of the financial web is believed to be Sheikh Saeed, also known as Mustafa Mohamed Ahmad, who worked as a financial manager for Bin Laden when the Saudi exile was based in Sudan, and is still a trusted paymaster in Bin Laden’s al-Qaida organisation.[2]

This story was corroborated by CNN on October 6, citing a “a senior-level U.S. government source” who noted that “Sheik Syed” had been liberated from an Indian prison as a result of an airplane hijacking in December 1999.

The man liberated in this way was Mohammed Omar Saeed Sheikh, a notorious kidnapper raised in England, and widely reported as a probable agent of ISI, the Pakistani military intelligence service.[3] One newspaper, the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, suggested he may even have been a double agent, recruited inside al-Qaeda and ISI by the CIA.[4]

Subsequent newspaper stories reported on the undisputed relationship of Saeed to ISI, to FBI claims that he wired \$100,000 to Atta’s bank account,[5] to a CNN report that these funds came from Pakistan,[6] and the uncontested statement that “Mustafa Ahmed,” having concluded his 9/11 financial business in Dubai, flew on September 11 to Pakistan.[7]

These alarming charges are ignored in the Report. The Appendices note, in a list of names, a “Sheikh Saeed al Masri” as an “Egyptian; head of al Qaeda finance committee.”[8] But the only reference to any Sheikh Saeed in the text says that Sheikh Saeed al Masri “argued that al Qaeda should defer to the Taliban’s wishes” and not attack the United States directly.[9]

Instead, following a previous reversal in the US media, the financial role attributed earlier to Sheikh Saeed is now given to “Mustafa al Hawsawi,” the name (or pseudonym) used for the financial transactions. The Report treats Shaikh Saeed and al-Hawsawi as two people, whereas earlier they had been identified as the same.[10]

(Update, 10/11/04) The arrest of al-Hawsawi was reported in March 2003 in Rawalpindi, along with Khalid Shaikh Mohammed. However as I wrote in Critical Asia Studies, the official

report contained so many problems and convictions that a Guardian reporter commented, "The story appears to be almost entirely fictional" (Guardian, 3/6/03) Problems with the story were summarized by Paul Thompson at <http://www.911review.org/Wget/www.cooperativeresearch.org/timeline/main/essayksmcapture.html>

In an even more bizarre development, <http://www.terrorismcentral.com/Newsletters/2003/033003.html> , reported in its Newsletter of 3/30/03 that "Mustafa al-Hisawai is on bail in Pakistan and will face charges with financing of al Qaida. He was arrested with al Qaeda leader Khalid Sheikh Mohammed."

Al-Hawsawi alias al-Hisawai is supposedly an Arab born in Jeddah, not a Pakistani. It is hard to imagine why the man once considered the "smoking gun" in the al Qaeda/ 9/11 case would be granted bail, when even minor foot-soldiers in al Qaeda have been whisked immediately to Guantanamo.

The alleged financing story is still unfolding, or unraveling.¹⁴

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