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### Terrorists: Swimming in Saudi Money

By Lt. Col. Gordon Cucullu

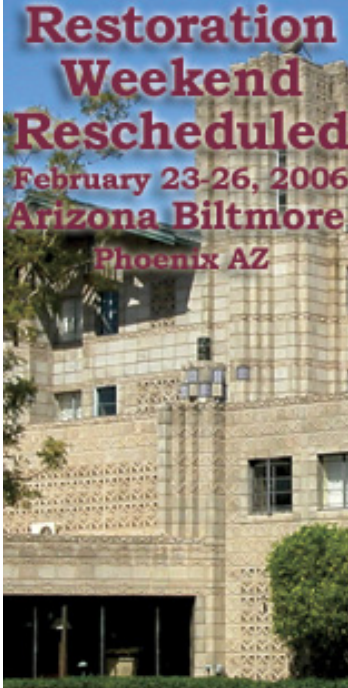
FrontPageMagazine.com | November 8, 2005

In describing his guerrilla army, Mao Tse-tung used an aquatic analogy: "Guerrillas are the fish, and the population is the sea in which they swim." He realized that a neutral, if not supportive populace was essential to guerrilla success. Once the majority was swayed to at least tolerate the guerrillas, then only a small portion need be committed to the cause to achieve victory. Today's Islamofascist terrorists are ignoring Mao's dictum in dealing with populations – witness the atrocities committed against Iraqi civilians by terrorists occupying Fallujah and Tal Afar – and in so doing have alienated themselves from the populations in Afghanistan and Iraq. This arrogance will in time contribute to their failure.

But the terrorists have applied his metaphor assiduously to the financial sphere, for the modern Islamofascist terrorist movement swims in the rich waters of international finance. Far from being poor, ignorant peasants as many in the West fancifully envision the terrorists, these men and their organizations are highly sophisticated, technologically aware, and extraordinarily adept at moving money within the intricate web of international financial institutions. Perhaps one of the most misunderstood aspects of these terrorists is that many of the most virulently anti-Western have matriculated in British and American institutions of higher learning. More than one detainee in Guantanamo has an advanced degree in international finance from schools such as the London School of Economics. Admission standards may have changed, but one does not reasonably expect to find a simple Afghani opium farmer conscripted by

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the Taliban to be on the roster of distinguished graduates.

So for the modern terrorist money – and lots of it – is the ocean in which they swim and without which they will cease to live. Post-9/11, one of President Bush’s stated objectives was to dry up that ocean and deny the terrorists the funding needed to carry out their horrific attacks. These sorts of financial tracking operations are done by analysts in front of computer screens pouring over endless printout sheets. It is mostly thankless work that is conducted in the back offices of CIA, Treasury, FBI, and Homeland Security. Information is obtained by liaison to foreign countries intelligence agencies and banking establishments – thus bringing in State Department, and though signal and information intercepts - that means the Pentagon and National Security Agency.

The vast majority of money transfers are accomplished by electronic means. In the early days, these systems were relatively unsophisticated and vulnerable. No longer. Today’s systems are under constant attack, but are protected by sophisticated, complex security software. It is a constant war of bits and bytes as hackers fight guardians in cyberspace. But so far sophisticated technology has been good news for the terrorists and those who support their cause, because it means that transfers are extraordinarily difficult to track. Tom Clancy’s new novel, *Teeth of the Tiger*, discusses electronic intercept and offers an optimistic view of American capabilities. We are not there yet. Highly encrypted software, multiple accounts in a myriad of international banking and financial institutions, and covert tradecraft, such as use of electronic “cut-outs,” can preclude any but the most persistent, careful analyst from finding the money trail. This is the challenge faced by our financial specialists who try to find walk the cat backwards to the lairs of leading al-Qaeda operational leaders.

Terrorists get funding everywhere imaginable. Some fundraisers are academics or private citizens – the Sami al-Arian case in Florida is one example – but by far the largest contributors are worldwide Muslim charities. These so-called charities are significant providers to al-Qaeda. Some of the largest and most generous are in the U.S. It was only a few years ago that the charities have been identified as the terror support groups they are. They have been legally challenged, investigated, and in some cases prosecuted, for funneling money illegally to al-Qaeda and terrorist accounts. The country behind most of the charities is Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi infiltration of American Islam has been as frighteningly quiet as it has been pervasive. Virtually every imam at an American mosque is a Wahhabi – Saudi trained, funded, and vetted – a religious leader who promotes a virulent brand of fundamentalist Islam with the ultimate aim of imposing *Shari’a* law upon the non-Moslem world. Even more frightening, our prison system is staffed by Moslem chaplains who are products of Saudi training. As a consequence, anti-American Islamofascist ideology is

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being taught to some of the most dangerous, unstable, and violent members of American society. Meanwhile, the mosques continue to beat the drums for anti-Israeli causes including fundraising for groups like Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and other terror outfits.

Al-Qaeda also has its tentacles into many other fields that generate money: semi-precious gems, opium and heroin, illegal traffic in birds of prey, and money laundering at an international level. Tanzanite, a semi-precious stone originating in East Africa, has been handled by an informal consortium of Muslim African distributors. While Osama bin Laden was based in Sudan and Somalia he and his henchmen moved in on the Tanzanite dealers and pressured them to provide protection money for his organization. Similarly, after relocating to Afghanistan bin Laden took over the lapis lazuli mines (many of which later became the legendary “caves” in mountain redoubts) and controlled export sales of the stones. Many of these channels of funding remain open today despite serious setbacks to al-Qaeda.

Similarly, bin Laden’s gangs, along with the fanatical Taliban, controlled opium production, distribution, and sale outside of Afghanistan. This operation also included manufacture into morphine base and ultimately into heroin. The Afghanistan poppy fields were the origin of much of the world’s heroin. The local farmers, while ostensibly under the thumbs of regional “warlords” were in effect working for bin Laden and his cronies, helping to fund the terrorists.

Meanwhile, across the Middle East and Central Asia strange, exotic gatherings are taking place. In what the Union for the Conservation of Raptors calls the “money camps,” elaborate, ultra-luxurious temporary facilities are periodically set up in remote places in the region for gathering of the rich Arab sheiks from Saudi, the Gulf States, and other Arab countries. These people meet and indulge themselves in many of their favorite activities, including sale of protected species of falcons and eagles that are used in sport hunting. Hunting with birds of prey is a traditional Arab male activity, essential to the macho image they like to portray, along with rhino horn-handled knives, and a bevy of wives and concubines.

At these money camps, huge amounts of money are exchanged for such trinkets, including the birds. Some of these illegal birds bring payments in the hundreds of thousands of dollars into the millions for the very rare. During the social sessions at the camps funding is also arranged for some of the sheiks pet projects, including the promotion of Wahhabi Islam and support for terrorist organizations like bin Laden’s al-Qaeda. It is a way of both salving their Moslem consciences and paying off the wolf that may turn on them if neglected. Read more of the story at [www.savethefalcons.org](http://www.savethefalcons.org).

**UCR Editor:** While it is true that the 'Money Camps' are a venue for terrorists to traffic and sell priceless black market falcons, **the primary liability** of these royal 'Money Camps' is that they serve as al-Qaeda's 'Board Room'. Every year, al-Qaeda's leadership convenes in remote desert falconry camps across Pakistan and Central Asia, hosted by Gulf Arab leaders who claim to be allies of the United States. The 911 Report explains how Osama bin Laden spent one month in Afghanistan, hunting with several UAE Sheikhs. UCR has identified the UAE Sheikhs, and the real reasons why that camp wasn't bombed. Full disclosures will be forthcoming in **'The Money Camps'** at [www.SaveTheFalcons.org](http://www.SaveTheFalcons.org)

The US State Department erroneously characterizes al-Qaeda's 'training camps' as the epicenter of terror. But relative to the 'Money Camps', al-Qaeda's training camps are of minimal significance. That is, at the terror-training camps, UBL and other high-level terrorists only made brief marquis appearances. i.e. al-Qaeda's training camps are comparable to jungle gyms in the wilderness, inhabited by low-level terrorists.

In contrast to this, the falconry 'Money Camps', are where Osama bin Laden, Zawahiri, et. al. arrive to reinforce tribal alliances with Saudi and UAE princes and sheikhs. It is in these falconry camps, where bin Laden has received hundreds of millions of dollars, cars, weapons, and transport services on private courier aircraft. Thus, the royal falconry camps are al-Qaeda's Board Room, permitted to continue through obsequious advocacy by corrupted and/or headstrong officials representing the United Nations and the U.S. State Department.

All of these operations – the charities, gems, drugs, payoffs from the money camps, and other shakedown scams – eventually result in substantial sums of money put into terrorist coffers. Even larger than that, however, is the support – direct and indirect – that the terrorists receive from legitimate corporate business interests. These are investors who, according to Center for Security Policy President Frank Gaffney, “hold hundreds of billions of dollars worth of stocks in companies that partner with Iran, the other Islamofascist regimes and their friends.” This, in fact, is where huge, below-the-radar support for terrorism is largest.

Gaffney and his Center are sponsoring a “[divest terror](#)” initiative modeled on the South Africa divestment campaign that helped bring down apartheid. This is an issue most Americans are unaware of but need to know. By pressuring investment houses and other organizations such as endowments and trusts to divest from organizations that deal with terror states, Gaffney thinks “real pressure for change can be brought to bear.”

It is time that we accept the fact that our enemies are sophisticated and deadly in more than suicide attacks. We need to fight terrorists and those who support them on all fronts including the financial battles. Responsible Americans – acting as individuals and pressuring larger organizations – can make a critical difference in this war for survival.

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[Lt. Col. Gordon Cucullu](#) has been an Army Green Beret lieutenant colonel, as well as a writer, popular speaker, business executive and farmer. His most recent book is [Separated at Birth](#), about North and South Korea.

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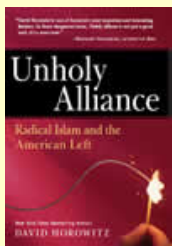


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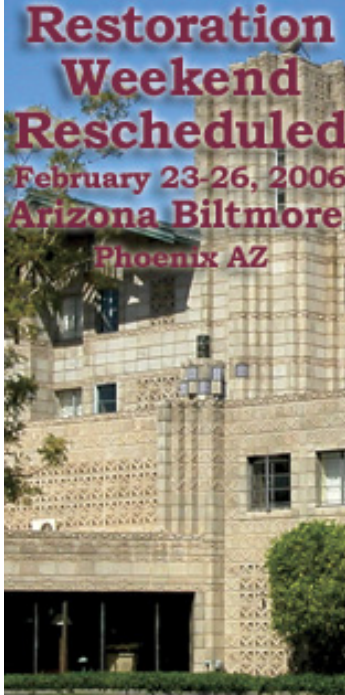
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