



## The Saudis: Which Side Are They On?

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[Robert Spencer](#)

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Saudi officials announced Monday that they had arrested 56 members of Al-Qaeda, who were at an “advanced stage” of planning jihad terror attacks within the Kingdom.

This would seem to support President Bush’s statement from last October, when in order to free up aid from the Saudis he declared: “I hereby certify that Saudi Arabia is cooperating with efforts to combat international terrorism and that the proposed assistance will help facilitate that effort.” As jarring as it may be to contemplate the notion that the United States is providing aid to the oil-rich House of Saud, these arrests indicate that at least it seems to be paying off.

Yet nagging questions remain. Last September, Stuart Levey, the Undersecretary of the Treasury for Terror-

ism and Financial Intelligence, noted that the Saudis had not prosecuted even a single individual who has been identified by the U.S. or the U.N. as a bankroller of jihad terror. “If I could somehow snap my fingers and cut off the funding from one country,” Levey said, “it would be Saudi Arabia.”

What’s more, an undercover reconnaissance survey of mosques and Islamic schools all over the United States has found that as many as seventy-five percent of mosques and Islamic schools in this country preach jihad warfare and Islamic supremacism. Frank Gaffney of the Center for Security Policy, according to a [World Net Daily report](#), “confirmed that ‘the vast majority’ are inciting insurrection and jihad through sermons by Saudi-trained

imams and anti-Western literature, videos and textbooks.”

The Saudis fund a significant number of the mosques in this country. Warith Deen Muhammad, a prominent American Muslim leader and the son of Nation of Islam founder Elijah Muhammad, [explained](#) what’s wrong with the Saudi influence in American mosques: “In Saudi Arabia it’s the Wahhabi school of thought...and they say, ‘We’re gonna give you our money, then we want you to...prefer our school of thought.’ That’s in there whether they say it or not. So there is a problem receiving gifts that seem to have no attachment, no strings attached.”

But why would the Saudis be encouraging jihadist sensibilities among Muslims in the United States while arresting Al-Qaeda operatives inside the Kingdom? Abu Zubaydah, a captured Al-Qaeda operative, [claimed](#) that the House of Saud had made a deal with Al-Qaeda: financing for the jihad around the world, in exchange for immunity from jihadi attacks within Saudi Arabia itself.

The Saudis have denied this, and in any case the deal seems to be off. There have been several jihad attacks inside Saudi Arabia in recent years, but Stuart Levey is not out in left field in thinking that the Saudis continue to support terror in an enthusiastic -- and effective -- manner.

Secret files revealed in Britain several weeks ago show Saudi officials threatening British investigators with another jihad attack on the scale of the July 7, 2005 bombings in London if they didn’t drop inquiries into corruption in their arms deals. Who is supposed to have made these threats? Prince Bandar, head of Saudi Arabia’s national security council and son of its crown prince.

In light of all this, it is likely that the 56 freshly-arrested members of Al-Qaeda are guilty in the eyes of the House of Saud not of waging jihad warfare as such, but simply of waging jihad warfare in the wrong place: inside the Kingdom. And given the Kingdom’s notoriously spotty human rights record, it is also likely that these suspects will not be offered the amenities of the Guantanamo camp about which Saudi authorities have issued complaints. And their arrests should not prevent American officials from asking tough questions about where the Saudis really stand, and what we can realistically expect from their alliance with the United States. When the Saudis refused to cut America a break on oil prices during President Bush’s trip to Riyadh in January, it should have been a wake-up call for anyone who still considered the Saudis a reliable ally in the war on terror. And this latest arrest of Al-Qaeda operatives shouldn’t lead anyone to go back to sleep, either.

*Robert Spencer is a scholar of Islamic history, theology, and law and the director of [Jihad Watch](#). He is the author of five books, seven monographs, and hundreds of articles about jihad and Islamic terrorism, including [Islam Unveiled: Disturbing Ques-](#)*

*tions About the World's Fastest Growing Faith and The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades). He is also an Adjunct Fellow with the Free Congress Foundation.*