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Memorandum for the Record

Subject: Interview of Mohammad Al-Qudhaieen
(MAQ)
Location: Conference Palace, Riyadh
Interviewed by: S/A Jaqueline Maguire (FBI-Penttbom)
9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy
Dietrich Snell (9-11 Commission) (DS)
9/11 Law Enforcement Privacy
Interpreter: [Redacted]
Also present: Col. Jaber (Mabahith)
Maj. Khalid (Mabahith)
Maj. Habib (Mabahith)
Interview Date: October 25-26, 2003
MFR Date: October 26, 2003
MFR Prepared By: DS

~~(C)~~ The interview commenced at approximately 10:30 pm and lasted for approximately 3 hours. It was led by S/A Maguire, pursuant to an agreement between the Commission and the FBI, which had asked the Mabahith for an interview of MAQ despite MAQ's numerous prior interviews by the Bureau during the summer of 2003, before his deportation in late August. DS withheld his questions until after S/A Maguire had concluded her questioning.

~~(S)~~ Advised of the availability of (and indeed, introduced to) an interpreter, MAQ expressed a preference for the interview to be conducted entirely in English, which he speaks with complete fluency. He appeared to be somewhat guarded in his interaction with the interviewers at first (starting out with short answers and sitting back, arms folded). Later on he seemed almost bored (perhaps because he was hearing lots of the same questions yet again), but he gradually seemed to become more at ease as the interview progressed. His high level of education and intelligence were apparent throughout. His answers were essentially consistent with those given in prior interviews by the FBI. They also were largely consistent with those given by Al-Shalawi on October 22-23; in response to a question by DS, MAQ admitted last speaking with Al-Shalawi "about 3 days ago.")

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Background

(C) After introductions, MAQ described his professional and educational background. Since returning to the KSA two months ago, he has been holding an Assistant Professorship at Imam University, College of Languages and Translation, English Department, where he teaches English linguistics.

(C) After receiving his B.A. from the University, he obtained a scholarship and traveled to the US in 1991, his first trip abroad ever. He spent a couple of nights at a hotel in Washington, DC and then, he and his wife proceeded to San Diego, where he enrolled in SDSU to study English.

(C) Ultimately dissatisfied with the program at SDSU after about 1½ years, MAQ transferred to Colorado State University in Fort Collins, CO, where he received his Masters in 1995. Thereafter, he spent one semester enrolled in the Ph.D. Linguistics program at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, before transferring to the University of Arizona in Tucson in early 1996. He received his Ph.D. in May 2003. All 5 of MAQ's children were born while he and his wife were living in the US.

Income Sources While in Arizona

(C) While at U of A, MAQ was supported by his scholarship and stipend. He also earned some money from a one-year stint as a Teaching Assistant (in 2001-02) and working on development of an Arabic-language computer program for approximately 3 months at the University.

(C) Initially denying that he had any other sources of income, MAQ admitted, when prompted, to participating in a venture involving the resale of Enfamil baby formula, which Hamdan Al-Shalawi introduced him to. MAQ knew Al-Shalawi from Imam University and, more recently, from Tempe, where Al-Shalawi was enrolled at Arizona State University. MAQ's role in the baby formula venture - which started in the early fall of 1999 and lasted about a year - involved buying multiple cases of the formula at stores like Walmart and selling it to Al-Shalawi at a profit of \$5-6 per case. He understands that Al-Shalawi then re-sold the formula to an unidentified person and believes that the formula

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remained in the US for eventual purchase by consumers. MAQ understood from Al-Shalawi that the venture was perfectly legal. MAQ doesn't know anyone else who was involved in buying formula and selling it to Al-Shalawi. [This statement flies in the face of eyewitness testimony, obtained by the FBI, that MAQ was observed accompanying others who also were buying formula.)

(X) MAQ stated that his wife did not work while they lived in Tucson.

Activities in Tucson

(X) MAQ and a slate of 6-7 others were elected to the Board of Trustees of the Islamic Center of Tucson (ICT) in the fall of 1999. As an ICT board member, MAQ was responsible for hiring the ICT's imam, Omar Shahin. The Board also managed various projects at the ICT. MAQ received no compensation for this service. In addition to the Board, the ICT had an Executive Committee of 8-9 people, who were responsible for lining up and approving speakers.

(X) In c. 2000-01, MAQ also served for about 2-2 1/2 years as president of the Saudi Student Club, an organization that had no formal affiliation with the University, but that has branches in various locations throughout the US. In response to a follow-up question asked later by DS, MAQ stated that his previously acknowledged familiarity with the Saudi Student Club of Orange County stemmed from a social event of he attended in Irvine while he was living in San Diego. He recalls as many as 100 people being at the event, but could not recall any of their names.

(X) Asked whom he still has contact with in Tucson, MAQ mentioned only Shahin (but expressed some doubt as to whether he's still in Tucson, noting that he originally was from Phoenix); [redacted] an electrical engineering student; and [redacted] a mechanical engineering student.

Travel

(X) MAQ went to Los Angeles 3-4 times while he was living in San Diego, and "about a couple of times" while in

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Tucson. He invariably went to LA with his family, and denies ever visiting the KSA consulate. He used to know Ibrahim Al-Haber, who was affiliated with (and perhaps imam at) the Islamic Center, before the new KFM was built. MAQ is uncertain whether Al-Haber is still there. He first saw the KFM about 6 months after it opened, having heard about the opening ceremony (which he did not attend).

(C) Although he did not know the imams at the KFM, he did hear about Fahad Al-Thumairy through a Saudi student named [redacted] who came to Tucson from LA and recommended Al-Thumairy as a good speaker who might be invited to the ICT. MAQ claims never to have met or seen Al-Thumairy.

(C) Muhammed Al-Muhanna visited Tucson while on the way from Houston to LA, about 1½ years ago, giving a short speech at the ICT, which [redacted] arranged. Asked to describe the content of Al-Muhanna's speech, MAQ stated that he did not attend the entire speech; he recalled only that Muhanna spoke about Islamic morals. On the evening following his speech, Al-Muhanna attended a meeting of the Tucson Saudi Student Club. MAQ telephoned Al-Muhanna 1-2 weeks after the latter's visit to inquire whether Al-Muhanna might be interested in visiting Tucson again; Al-Muhanna did not respond to this overture.

(C) While residing in Tucson, MAQ and his family also visited Colorado Springs; Detroit (to attend a conference sponsored by the Islamic Association of North America in Dearborn in late 1994; he didn't recall the names of the speakers); and Chicago. Another student, [redacted] and his family accompanied MAQ on the Detroit-Chicago trip. MAQ also visited Phoenix and Tempe.

(C) During his time as a student in the US, MAQ returned to the KSA each summer except 2002, during which he remained at U of A to concentrate on completing his studies. Other than the US, he denies ever traveling to any foreign country, including Pakistan and Afghanistan.

(C) MAQ may have renewed his KSA passport (good for 5 years) while in the United States but does not recall doing so. He never lost his passport or reported it stolen.

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Internet Use

(S) When asked about his use of computers and the internet, MAQ seemed to become more evasive and definitely downplayed his computer access, claiming to have checked his email only 2-3 times since returning to the KSA and not yet to have set up internet service for his own computer.

(C) He maintained that he visits mostly news websites, like CNN and Al-Jazeera, and occasionally some Koranic sites, like Islmaway.net. When asked specifically about other websites that he'd previously admitted to visiting, MAQ said that he also looked at alsahwah.com (for Islamic knowledge), almuslimoon.com (ph) (which he identified as his friend [redacted], and miraserv.com (which he claimed to consult only rarely for news). When later asked by DS about his prior admission to visiting alneda.com and describing the latter as a pro-Taliban site, MAQ agreed, albeit somewhat tentatively, with this description and stated that he used to look at it to obtain news regarding the Afghan war post-9/11.

(S) MAQ identified his email address at U of A as [redacted]. He also admitted to having a hotmail account, [redacted] and a yahoo account, but claimed that they do not receive much use.

(C) With respect to miraserv - which he described as a site where anyone can post anything - MAQ maintained that he visits it solely "out of curiosity" and that he does not agree with or believe the assertions he sees on it. Much of this material is critical of the KSA and, specifically, of US-KSA relations. According to MAQ, he visits miraserv only 1-2 times per week.

(S) Asked about Saad Al-Faqih, MAQ agreed that Al-Faqih is connected with miraserv and recalled seeing him interviewed on CNN and Al-Jazeera. When DS later pressed MAQ specifically about his views on Al-Faqih, MAQ became visibly more nervous and looked over at Colonel Jaber of

(S) According to S/A Magure, AQ's description of his light internet usage conflicts with the FBI's own investigative findings.

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the Mabahith as he denied familiarity with any of Al-Faqih's writings. MAQ's appreciation of the delicacy of this subject matter as far as the Mabahith is concerned was plain.

America West Flight

(Ø) MAQ's description of his experience on and immediately after the November 19, 1999 America West flight from Phoenix to DC tracked the version obtained on October 22-23 from Al-Shalawi and the version provided by MAQ in his numerous prior FBI interviews. He insisted that his visit to the first class cabin had been very brief, that he had been intercepted by the flight attendant and directed to use the lavatory in the rear of the plane, and that he had never gotten anywhere near the cockpit. MAQ emphasized that, after he and Al-Shalawi were released in Columbus, America West's representative explicitly apologized to them for the "overreaction" of the flight crew, upgrading the two travelers to first class and putting them on another flight to DC for arrival later that evening. MAQ and Al-Shalawi were interviewed by the media before boarding the flight to DC. By the time they arrived at the Saudi Embassy, the event they were to have attended had ended.

(Ø) In DC, MAQ and Al-Shalawi spoke with Dr. Mazyd Al-Mazyd from the Embassy and representatives from the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR).

(Ø) During the ensuing lawsuit, MAQ had his deposition taken in Tucson. He seems to harbor some doubt as to his lawyer's dedication to the case, and suggested to us that the lawyer may not really have wanted to pursue the case.

(Ø) During his segment of the questioning, DS summarized the Court's opinion dismissing the America West case and pressed MAQ on the subject whether - contrary to his denials - he hadn't actually approached the cockpit door. DS noted that the case is over and that MAQ would not suffer any adverse consequences if he changed his position on this issue. DS also reminded MAQ of his prior statement to the FBI that he may have "inadvertently" touched the cockpit door. Yet, MAQ continued to insist that he never went near the cockpit, even when DS read him the portion of

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the opinion describing the testimony of a first class passenger who saw MAQ "walk directly to the cockpit and try to get into the cockpit." 267 F. Supp. 2d 841, 844. He claims to have noted "from the beginning" that he and Al-Shalawi were being badly treated by the flight crew, but cannot explain why the crew would have decided to undertake the hassle of having Al-Shalawi and MAQ removed from the plane, with full attendant security measures, out of nothing more than prejudice.

Views on Terrorism

(S) After S/A Maguire concluded her questioning, DS provided MAQ with a more detailed description of the Commission and noted the distinction between the FBI's role as a law enforcement agency and the Commission's much broader mission to find facts in an effort to promote understanding and policy improvements. DS stressed that the Commission appreciated MAQ's cooperation and wished to learn what it could from him. The purpose of this approach was to see whether MAQ - who to this point had been quite terse and guarded in his answers - might become somewhat more expansive.

(Q) MAQ professed to have a common interest with the US and the KSA to fight terrorism in any way possible. He abjured any support for the killing of innocents, and attributed the 9/11 attacks to "the wrong education" about Islam. MAQ claimed to have been shocked by the attacks when they occurred, both because they were contrary to Islam and because they ended up taking so many lives.

(S) In a statement that easily could have been made for the benefit of the Mabahith, MAQ insisted that Islamic education, as practiced by the mainstream within the KSA, should serve as a model for all. MAQ denied knowing where or how Al-Qaeda derives its educational philosophy.

(C) When asked whether he ever knew anyone who had been to Afghanistan, MAQ identified only Al-Shalawi, whose visit to that country during the 1980s MAQ claimed to learn about only during the America West litigation, when his lawyer mentioned an interrogatory asking whether either plaintiff had ever been to Afghanistan. According to MAQ, the lawyer

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told him that he had incorrectly answered the interrogatory in the negative, learning since then that, according to the Department of State, "one of you" had been to Afghanistan. After this conversation with the lawyer, MAQ spoke with Al-Shalawi about the latter's trip to Afghanistan.

(C) DS also asked MAQ about "Ghassan" [Al-Sharbi], a friend of Al-Shalawi's whom he identified in a prior FBI interview as someone he'd met in Arizona. MAQ said that Ghassan is now in GITMO and that Al-Shalawi recently received a postcard from him. The subject came up, according to MAQ, because MAQ had told Al-Shalawi about the FBI's interest in Ghassan. MAQ denied ever hearing anything himself from Ghassan. When asked how he thought Ghassan came to his current predicament, MAQ said he believes Ghassan was arrested in Pakistan and that recalls something about Ghassan's wanting to go to Chechnya.

(C) Asked by DS about Zakaria Soubra (another Arizona associate MAQ had previously identified), MAQ said he saw him in Tempe, at Al-Shalawi's home, and remembers Soubra coming to Tucson once in search of a wife.

(S) MAQ also was asked about [redacted] (also identified in a prior interview) and stated that [redacted] has "good knowledge" of Islam. [redacted] moved from Colorado State to Tucson. [redacted] father-in-law, [redacted] is a member of the "Higher Committee for Arabic Muslims and Scholars," a group of some of the most knowledgeable scholars in the KSA which is responsible for issuing fatwas. [redacted] once was MAQ's teacher and MAQ holds him in high esteem. MAQ appeared very comfortable discussing [redacted] in front of the Mabahith, and indicated that [redacted] religious philosophy is consistent with [redacted]

Cellphone Incidents

(C) DS also asked MAQ about an incident that occurred in late September 2001 when he returned his cellphone to a COTSCO store. Consistent with his prior statements on this subject, MAQ remembers returning to the store after handing in the phone, because he wanted to retrieve numbers stored in the phone's memory; he denies, however, ever trying to

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open the phone or otherwise damaging it physically, and professes bewilderment as to why anyone would make up such a story. According to MAQ, the entire incident lasted no more than 10 minutes.

(C) MAQ also volunteered a rehash of the story he told in a prior interview about the cellphone his daughter allegedly found. According to MAQ, he never used the phone itself, just the battery. He was unable to have AT&T activate the phone because the prior owner (who was now in California) wanted \$40 for the phone, which MAQ was unwilling to pay. Although MAQ denied ever cloning the found phone, it apparently would light up whenever a call came in on his own phone. MAQ conceded that the owner of the phone, who gave him her address in California, may have wanted him to return it to her, but he never did so.

Conclusion

(C) After all questioning was concluded, MAQ made a statement about the terrorism problem, describing himself as very "sad - as a Muslim, a Saudi and a person" - about the deterioration of US-KSA relations, and proclaiming himself "one of the victims" of those who launched the 9/11 attacks. He referred to the 15 Saudis who participated in the attacks as "ignorant." He promised any help he could possibly give to the fight against terrorism. Finally, MAQ asked whether the FBI or the Commission could do anything to improve his chances of obtaining a US visa. DS told him that another branch of the government is responsible for visas.

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