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After “60 Minutes” on The 28 Pages, a new call to open up the 9/11 classified records.

By Dan Christensen, FloridaBulldog.org



Former Florida Sen. Bob Graham, left with Steve Kroft of 60 Minutes

The push to declassify the government’s secret 9/11 records got an invigorating jolt Monday with House Democratic Leader Rep. Nancy Pelosi’s call to open up the 28 hidden pages in Congress’s Joint Inquiry report about the terrorist attacks.

Those pages, addressing “specific sources of foreign support” for the hijackers, were the focus of a *60 Minutes* TV report on Sunday featuring former Florida Sen. Bob Graham, co-chairman of the government’s first investigation into 9/11.

“I agree with former Sen. Bob Graham that these documents should be declassified and made public, and that the Bush Administration’s refusal to do so was a mistake,” Pelosi said in a statement Monday. Pelosi served on both the House Intelligence Committee and the Joint Inquiry.

Saudi Arabia also responded to the *60 Minutes* report, calling it “a compilation of myths and erroneous charges.”

Efforts are under way on Capitol Hill and elsewhere to open up the 28 pages and other classified 9/11 records kept out of public view by the Bush and Obama Administrations.

In the House, 41 members from 19 states and both parties have co-sponsored House Resolution 14, which urges President Obama to release the 28 pages as “necessary for

a full public understanding of the events and circumstances surrounding the September 11, 2001 attacks upon the United States.”

A companion measure in the Senate has three co-sponsors.

For three years, the *Florida Bulldog* also has sought to open up the 28 pages through a process known as a Mandatory Declassification Review – an alternative to the Freedom of Information Act that’s used less by reporters and more by historians.

Miami attorney Thomas Julin represents Broward Bulldog Inc., the *Florida Bulldog*’s parent, and 9/11 authors Anthony Summers and Robbyn Swan in the matter.

Waiting for declassification

“We stand where we’ve always stood, waiting for the U.S. to rule and no indication as to when they will rule, but I think Pelosi’s call and the *60 Minutes* report and Graham’s continued work would have some impact,” said Julin of the Hunton & Williams law firm.



Miami attorney Thomas Julin

In July 2014, after the FBI and Justice Department ignored the *Bulldog*’s request for access to the 28 pages, Julin filed an appeal with the Interagency Security Classification Appeals Panel (ISCAP), which makes recommendations to the president after conducting a review of the requested documents. Among other things, the appeal pointed out that declassification would help Americans understand how the September 11 attacks were financed.

The panel consists of senior level representatives appointed by the Departments of State, Defense and Justice, the National Archives, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the National Security Advisor. It is not, however, a rubberstamp. In 2014, the agency decided 48 appeals containing a total of 451 documents. The panel affirmed prior agency decisions in a quarter of those documents, and declassified 75 percent in whole or in part, according to the most recent annual report by the National Archives and Records Administration’s Information Security Oversight Office.

In the summer of 2014, after a relative of a man killed during 9/11 accused President Obama of breaking a promise to make public the 28 pages, the National Security Council announced that the White House had asked the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to review the 28 pages for possible declassification.

CBS News reported Monday that the White House said the declassification review “is under way and that the administration hopes to complete it by the end of Mr. Obama’s presidency.’

A recommendation by ISCAP to declassify the 28 pages would afford political cover for the president to act.

“It certainly would assure the president could tell the Saudis and the American public that all aspects of the national security apparatus has given the matter thorough consideration,” said Julin.

On Monday, Graham said was disappointed that *60 Minutes* did not also report other “important information about 9/11,” including the story of the FBI’s once-secret investigation of a Saudi family living near Sarasota found to have ties to the 9/11 terrorists.

The Sarasota Saudis

The FBI investigation began after neighbors reported that the family of Abdulaziz al-Hijji had moved abruptly out of their home in an upscale, gated community two weeks before the attacks, leaving behind their cars, clothes, furniture and other belongings. Sources on and off the record said agents later used gatehouse log books and license plate photographs to establish that vehicles driven by 9/11 hijack pilots Mohamed Atta, Ziad Jarrah and other hijackers had visited the al-Hijji residence in the Prestancia development.



Abdulaziz al-Hijji, right, in Sarasota prior to 9/11 and leaving his London office in 2012 Photo in London by Warren Allot for The Telegraph

FloridaBulldog.org, working with Irish author and journalist Anthony Summers, was first to report the story in September 2011, and how the FBI had not disclosed it to either Congress's Joint Inquiry or the subsequent 9/11 Commission.

While the FBI acknowledged its investigation, it said that agents had found no evidence connecting the al-Hijjis to the terrorists. Agents declined to elaborate.

The FBI's denial, however, was contradicted three years ago by its own document made public amid ongoing Freedom of Information litigation brought by *Florida Bulldog's* parent company. One FBI report, dated [April 16, 2002](#), said agents had determined that the Sarasota Saudis had "many connections to individuals associated with the terrorist attacks on 9/11/2001." The report was heavily censored, citing national security.

The FBI sought to discredit its own 2002 investigative report last year in findings released by the 9/11 Review Commission – a secretive, three-person entity whose members were paid by the FBI.

The report by the commission, whose members included Reagan-era Attorney General Ed Meese, said the FBI had disavowed the 2002 report, calling it "poorly written and wholly unsubstantiated."

"When questioned later by others in the FBI, the special agent who wrote (it) was unable to provide any basis for the contents of the document or explain why he wrote it as he did," the report says.

The report does not name the agent, but its language suggests the commission accepted the FBI's statements without challenge. The report does not address why the FBI kept its Sarasota investigation a secret from two federal inquiries into 9/11.

Said Bob Graham, "You could do another *60 Minutes* just on Sarasota."