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U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20536

November 22, 2011

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This responds to your letter to Attorney General Holder and FBI Director Mueller dated September 14, 2011, seeking information about alleged links between a Saudi family living in Florida and the 9/11 hijackers. Specifically, your letter asks whether this matter was investigated by the FBI and whether information developed by the FBI was disclosed to Congress and to the 9/11 Commission's inquiry. This letter supplements information provided orally by the FBI to your staff last month.

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the FBI received a large number of calls from the public reporting suspicious activity. Among those, the FBI received at least three calls regarding the alleged abrupt departure of residents of a specific address in Sarasota, Florida shortly before the 9/11 attacks. During the course of its investigation of the attacks, known as the PENTTBOM investigation, the FBI followed up on these calls but found no credible evidence of any contact between the hijackers and the family; nor did the investigation find any evidence whatsoever of any physical visits or telephone, email or financial contact between the hijackers and family. Members of the Saudi family were subsequently located and interviewed. Contrary to suggestions in media reports, the FBI did not develop any evidence that connected the family members to any of the 9/11 hijackers or to the 9/11 plot.

During the course of the Joint Congressional Inquiry into the events of 9/11, congressional investigators were granted access to virtually all PENTTBOM-related documents, with the exception of material protected by Rule 6(e) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure. The records concerning the Sarasota matter are not protected by Rule 6(c) and were therefore available to congressional investigators. During the eight-month period of the inquiry, the Joint Inquiry staff reviewed tens of thousands of documents in the FBI's possession and the FBI formally produced records to staff investigators upon request. In total, the FBI produced more than 24,000 pages of records through this process. The records of the Joint Congressional Inquiry were subsequently transferred to the 9/11 Commission. As a result of their review of FBI records, congressional investigators focused on several aspects of the PENTTBOM investigation originating in Florida, but the FBI is unable to ascertain whether these investigators

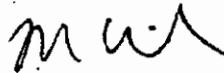
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reviewed records concerning the Sarasota family. The FBI also has not identified any specific requests made by the investigators concerning the Sarasota family.

We very much appreciate the concern that prompted your inquiry. We can assure you that the FBI's response to the 9/11 attacks was comprehensive and unprecedented. Special agents responded to more than 500,000 investigative leads, collected and processed more than 150,000 pieces of evidence and conducted more than 167,000 interviews in order to find out everything possible about the attack. In addition, the investigations conducted by the Joint Congressional Inquiry and the 9/11 Commission were exhaustive efforts to understand the events leading up to the attacks. The FBI cooperated fully with those efforts and provided voluminous information to congressional and Commission staff.

We hope this information is helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact this office if we may be of further assistance in this or any other matter.

Sincerely,



Ronald Weich
Assistant Attorney General

cc: The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member