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August 20, 2003

U.S. Links Islamic Charities, Terrorist Funding

by Douglas Farah
The Washington Post

Islamic charities based in Northern Virginia and sponsored by the government of Saudi Arabia invested millions of dollars in a company suspected of funding al Qaeda and the Islamic Resistance Movement, the government alleged for the first time yesterday.

An affidavit made public in federal court in Virginia contends that the Muslim charities gave \$3.7 million to BMI Inc., a private Islamic investment company in New Jersey that may have passed the money to terrorist groups. The money was part of a \$10 million endowment from unnamed donors in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, according to the affidavit filed by David Kane of the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

"My investigation demonstrates that BMI and its affiliates may have transferred funds to or for terrorists," Kane said. "I am aware that BMI made or conducted financial transactions with persons" who were designated terrorists by the United States and the United Nations, Kane said in the affidavit.

The government has been investigating for several years allegations of money laundering, tax evasion and other financial improprieties against the cluster of Herndon-based organizations. But yesterday was the first time any government agency publicly tied the investigations to support of terrorists.

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