

*corpus* petition, or seek judicial review (an appeal) of a detention order, so that it can be brought only in Federal court in Washington, D.C., no matter where the person is detained.

A number of the above provisions are made all the more dangerous, because of the expansion of the definition of “terrorism” under current law—which could now include civil disobedience, or any act of violence, or threatened violence, not carried out for financial gain.

### ‘Homeland Security’

Another part of the administration’s overall response to Sept. 11, is the proposal to create a Cabinet-level Office of Homeland Security, to coordinate both preventive counter-terrorist measures, and responses to any terrorist attack.

The *New York Times* reported on Sept. 28, that the administration wants to give the new agency powers to match those of the existing National Security Council. The new “Homeland Security Council” would include the Secretaries of the Justice, Defense, Treasury, and Health and Human

Services Departments, as well as the heads of the FBI and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

At this point, the new agency appears to be more of a coordination focal point, rather than a new command structure. But, potentially, such a structure could combine two of the worst features of the Reagan-Bush crisis-management structure which ran what is known as “Iran-Contra” and other covert operations.

These were 1) the National Security Council staff structure, typified by Lt. Col. Oliver North, which ran a “parallel and secret government,” and, 2) the “continuity of government,” or “emergency preparedness” program, responsible for contingency planning for nuclear war, disaster, or mass civil unrest. (This was actually Ollie North’s first assignment in the NSC.) It was reported at the time, that contingency plans existed under this program, to *suspend the Constitution* in a period of national emergency. This program also incorporated the Defense Department’s Civil Disturbance Plan, known as “Operation Garden Plot,” which dates from the 1960s, and is still in effect today.

## Who Dunit? Unknown After Two Weeks

Scrap the Sherlock Holmes method of investigation. Scrap the “Clash of Civilizations” mass media targetting of Islamic and other foreign nationals. Such ideological and methodological obsessions have left the United States in a state of confusion about the Sept. 11 attacks, and vulnerable to new ones.

At least seven of the “19 hijacking suspects”—all of whom reportedly died in the four Sept. 11 plane crashes—are possibly *fake or stolen identities*. Protests from some of these still-alive “suspects” has not deterred the FBI, nor the news media, from reporting over and over that these are the suspects. And, since Sept. 27, the release of the photos of the 19 suspects by Attorney General John Ashcroft has only compounded the travesty.

Take the case of “Waleed M. Al Shehri,” whose picture appears on the front page of many U.S. newspapers, as the suspect in the American Airlines Flight 11 that crashed into the World Trade Center. On Sunday, Sept. 23, BBC published statements from Mr. Al Shehri, alive and well, and living in Casablanca, Morocco—and published the *same photo* of him, as released by the FBI days later. Mr. Al Shehri, a Saudi Arabian pilot, protested his innocence, and noted that he left the United States more than one year ago. Another “suspect” is Abdulaziz Al Omari, an engineer

with Saudi Telecoms, who lost his passport in Denver, Colorado.

FBI Director Robert Mueller acknowledged that he *knows* that many of the identities are in question. But the photos were released, creating an atmosphere of what some fear is a deliberate attempt to create a “witch-hunt” in the United States. Indeed, there have already been dozens of anti-Arab attacks, and even a fatal shooting of an Indian Sikh gas station attendant who was mistaken for an Arab.

Accusations in Germany are also creating a scandalous blowback. On Sept. 24, again with great fanfare, the Bush Administration announced a new list of bin Laden-connected groups and individuals whose bank accounts were immediately to be blocked. Prominent on the list was the Hamburg-based import/export firm head Mamoun Darkazanli, who promptly went to the police, explained who he was, and was permitted to go home—there was no basis to arrest him, according to the police.

In Texas, Dr. Al Badr Mohomammad Al-Hamzi was held “on suspicion” for a week by the FBI as press accounts linked him to other “suspects” and to credit card charges linked to the Sept. 11 hijackings. Dr. Al-Hamzi had had his credit card number stolen. But the hysteria is rampant.

Highly placed Washington intelligence sources say that the United States—after more than two weeks—does not know who perpetrated this attack, and that the string of false identities, establishing a cover in some cases for years, is a sign of sophistication beyond Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden.—*Michele Steinberg*