Evolution of the Lawsuit

The liability case Cozen O'Connor has brought against the Saudi government and other defendants on behalf of U.S. and global insurance companies is the biggest and most complex the firm has ever filed. It draws on events that arise from the 9/11 attacks.

Sept. 11, 2001
Three hijacked planes hit the World Trade Center and the Pentagon; another crashes in Western Pennsylvania.

Sept. 23 and 24, 2001
President Bush designates two Islamic charities, the Pakistan-based al-Rashid Trust, and a precursor group to al-Qaeda, Makhtab al-Khidamat, as terrorism supporters.

Dec. 21, 2001
Cozen seeks a declaratory judgment in federal District Court in Manhattan limiting the exposure of the Federal Insurance Co. for damages at the World Trade Center to the face value of its policy.

March 11, 2002
The U.S. Treasury Department designates the Bosnia branch of al-Haramain Foundation, a charity with ties to the Saudi government, as a terrorism supporter.

Nov. 11, 2002
Treasury designates the Benevolence International Foundation, a Chicago-based charity that was founded in Saudi Arabia, as a terrorism supporter. A March 2002 raid by the FBI and Bosnian authorities on its office in Sarajevo uncovered documents allegedly linking the charity's executive director, Enaam Arnaout, to al-Qaeda.

Sept. 10, 2003
Cozen files a lawsuit on behalf of U.S. and global insurers against Saudi Arabia, members of the royal family, and more than 400 other defendants.

July 22, 2004
The 9/11 Commission issues its exhaustive report. It finds that various Islamic charities based in Persian Gulf countries provided money and logistical support to al-Qaeda. But it absolves the Saudi government and senior Saudi officials of complicity.

September through November 2004
Hearings are held before U.S. District Judge Richard Conway Casey in which defendants argue they should be dismissed from the case.

Jan. 18, 2005
Casey dismisses the lawsuit against the kingdom and Saudi royals, finding they are protected by the U.S. Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act.

Sept. 21, 2005
Casey rules that the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act also protects the Saudi High Commission for Relief of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a Saudi government agency, from being sued.

He finds, however, that the case can proceed against the International Islamic Relief Organization, a major Saudi charity with ties to the government.

Jan. 5, 2007
Cozen appeals Casey's ruling to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

Jan. 18, 2008
A three-judge panel of the Second Circuit, led by Chief Judge Dennis Jacobs, hears arguments from Cozen and other plaintiffs' lawyers to reinstate Saudi defendants.

SOURCES: U.S. Treasury Department; court documents

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