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June 21, 2001 3:00 pm EST

# 14 INDICTED IN 1996 SAUDI ARABIA BOMBING

**Attorney General John Ashcroft said Saudi members of the terrorist group Hizbollah planned and executed the attack that killed 19 U.S. airmen.**



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The federal indictment charged 13 Saudis and a Lebanese citizen with murder, attempted murder, conspiracy and other charges.

U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft said the attack was "inspired, supported, and supervised" by elements of the Iranian government.

"The indictment explains that elements of the Iranian government inspired, supported and supervised members of Saudi Hizbollah" engaged in preparing the attack, Ashcroft told a news conference. No Iranian individuals were named in the indictment, however.

The truck bomb explosion injured more than 370 people in the Khobar Towers military housing complex and left a 30-foot crater in front of the shattered building.

The indictment charges that as early as 1993 members of Saudi Hizbollah began extensive surveillance in search of a U.S. target, settling two years later on the American military housing high-rise near Dhahran.

"This indictment serves to underscore the commitment of the Bush administration and the Justice Department to bringing terrorists to account," Ashcroft said. "Americans are a high-priority target for terrorists and our nation will vigorously fight to preserve justice for our citizens both here at home as well as

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abroad."

Ashcroft said the United States is charging that certain unspecified Iranian figures "inspired, supported and supervised" the activities of the terrorists. He suggested that prosecutors lacked sufficient evidence to indict individuals in Iran.



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