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Bin Laden family allowed 9/11 leave

by *United Press International*

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NEW YORK, Sept. 2 (*UPI*) -- The bin Laden family were granted extraordinary White House privileges to fly out of U.S. airspace following the attacks of Sept. 11th, 2001.

Former White House counter terrorism expert Richard Clarke told *Vanity Fair* the Bush administration decided to allow a group of Saudis to fly out of U.S. airspace just after Sept. 11 -- a time when access to the United States was still restricted and required special government approval.

According to the magazine's sources, at least four flights with about 140 Saudis, including roughly two-dozen members of the bin Laden family, flew to Saudi Arabia that week without even being interviewed or interrogated by the FBI.

Clarke, who headed the counter terrorism security group of the National Security Council, said he does not now recall who initiated the request for approval. He said it was probably either the FBI or the State Department, both of which have denied playing any such role.

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