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Democracy Dies in Darkness

Justice Dept. offers 9/11 families new detail about investigation of suspected Saudi accomplices

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The Justice Department said Thursday that it will provide new information to the families of those killed on 9/11 who are suing the government of Saudi Arabia over possible complicity in the 2001 terrorist attacks — but only under a protective order meant to keep the information from becoming public.

Attorney General William P. Barr also will shield additional details of the case by invoking the rarely used state secrets privilege — arguing that some elements of the FBI’s ongoing investigation into the 9/11 attacks would damage national security if they were revealed.

The victims’ families are suing the Saudi government, and as part of that lawsuit have tried to force the FBI to reveal key details of its investigation into possible official support for the plot. They have been battling over a redacted 2012 internal FBI document describing how two individuals linked to the Saudi government are suspected of having helped two of the 9/11 hijackers get settled when they arrived in the United States before the attacks. While most of the al-Qaeda hijackers were Saudi citizens, that country’s government has long denied any complicity in the attacks.

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