

Except one.

George W Bush
2001-?

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Beslan militants 'called Middle East'

Nick Paton Walsh in Moscow
The Guardian, Monday September 27 2004

Two of the militants who took part in the Beslan school hostage siege phoned the Middle East during the drama, a senior source from the Russian security services has said. The official said two calls were made from Beslan in Arabic, and that "one call was to Saudi Arabia by one of the Arabs who was there".

He declined to give further details or say where the second call was placed to, but said one of the calls was made on the second day of the siege, and that the investigation had established there were only two Arabs in the group - not 10 as was first suggested.

The Kremlin has insisted there is a link between inter national terrorist groups sympathetic to al-Qaida and the Chechen separatists, although some analysts have challenged this claim.

Survivors of the Beslan siege, which killed 329 people, have said one of the militants appeared to be of Arab extraction and another of Arab or African descent. While the majority were Russian citizens and at least six were Chechens, the Kremlin has said the attack was fuelled by foreigners.

After the siege, Crown Prince Abdullah, the Saudi leader, phoned Vladimir Putin to promise greater support for the war against terrorism.

The Saudi embassy could not be reached for comment yesterday.

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