

## *Another look at 9/11*

by Rutherford

In 1997, many prominent members of the present administration (including Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz and Lewis Libby) as well as Zalmay Khalilzad (special U.S. envoy to Afghanistan and to the pre-war Iraqi opposition) and Jeb Bush signed a statement calling for a significant increase in defence spending “to shape a new century favourable to American interests”<sup>1</sup> to be imposed when necessary by a military not subject to international law.<sup>2</sup> Calling themselves the PROJECT FOR THE NEW AMERICAN CENTURY (PNAC), this group also argued for ‘regime change’ in the Middle East in order to control the region’s oil reserves<sup>3</sup>.

Reflecting on the striking parallels between the stated objectives of PNAC and events since 9/11, an unpleasant suspicion has lodged in my mind like a splinter: Is it possible that a small group within the current White House might have anticipated the attacks, but withheld the information and let a number of citizens ‘take one for the team’ in order to ensure public support this agenda under the pretence of “fighting terrorism”?

Certainly the suggestion is outrageous. But is it impossible?

While I am aware of the similarities between my suspicions and some of the 20th century’s more colourful conspiracy theories, I believe that this scenario is unthinkable only because its implications are too frightening to consider. Although much of the intelligence remains classified, the following facts have been reported in the media that suggest the administration could have known about the attack in advance:

- In 1999, the government was warned that al-Qaeda might be planning to fly a hijacked airliner into the Pentagon.<sup>4</sup>
- In July 2001, the FBI received a report from their Phoenix bureau that explicitly warned about al-Qaeda operatives enrolled in flying schools – and another from their Minneapolis bureau about a suspect who wanted to learn to fly jumbo jets, but not how to take-off or land.<sup>5</sup>
- In July 2001, senior government officials warned that bin Laden “will launch a significant terrorist attack against the US in the coming weeks”.<sup>6</sup>
- In August 2001, President Bush was warned that bin Laden might be planning an attack on domestic targets using hijacked aircraft.<sup>7</sup>
- Although unreported in the US media, the (normally conservative) *Le Figaro* reported that, in July 2001, bin Laden flew to Dubai for treatment at the American hospital where he met with the head of Saudi intelligence and the local CIA bureau chief.<sup>8</sup>
- If, as we have been repeatedly assured, no one in the administration had connected the dots and anticipated the attacks on New York and Washington, how was it that, within hours of the attacks, bin Laden was known to have been the perpetrator?
- While all flights were suspended in the days following 9/11, why were members of the bin Laden family (with whom the Bush family has had longstanding and lucrative financial dealings<sup>9</sup>) permitted to leave the country by private jet before they could be interviewed?<sup>10</sup>

If a small group knew of the impending attack on US territory, is it conceivable that they might have let it happen to achieve realpolitik objectives? Consider the following:

- History has shown that previous US administrations have knowingly misled the public about the circumstances behind other ‘unprovoked’ attacks (*the USS Maine, the Lusitania* and the *Tonkin Gulf* incident) in order to generate public support for military action against other states. There is even credible evidence<sup>11</sup> to suggest that the Roosevelt White House had advance warning of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor – but withheld the information in order to maximise public outrage in support of Roosevelt’s desire to involve the US in the war against Japan and Germany.
- During the Reagan-Bush administration, National Security Advisor Admiral John Poindexter ran a ‘rogue’ operation out of the White House that supplied a terrorist group in Nicaragua with money and weapons – actions that resulted in the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians. When the actions of Poindexter’s operation (including Col. Oliver North) were discovered and its members brought up on criminal charges, they claimed allegiance to a ‘higher authority’.
- Although George H.W. Bush claimed that the invasion of Panama was to oust the “drug indicted dictator” Manuel Noriega, the invasion led to the nullification of the treaty signed by President Carter under which the Panama Canal was set to revert to Panamanian jurisdiction and to the installation of a new, more favourable government (under whom, according to the GAO, drug exports to the US have doubled.<sup>12</sup>) Within six months, Order 39 (September 2003) opened Iraqi markets, giving “great scope for foreign investment”<sup>13</sup>.

Groups dreaming of world domination have come and gone, but when the group controls the world’s most powerful military, lies to the public about their reasons for employing it and fulfils their pledge to take control of the world’s second largest oil reserves, there is reason to take a closer look.

Look at what has happened since 9/11:

- The search for bin Laden was halted before he was captured, and according to G.W. Bush, (13 March 2002): “*I don't know where bin Laden is. I have no idea and really don't care. It's not that important. It's not our priority*”.
- The US has invaded Iraq under false pretences, taken control of the oil fields, and announced the privatisation of the Iraqi economy.
- The US military budget has been increased to \$376.3bn<sup>14</sup> (not including \$87 billion in “rebuilding” contracts for Iraq and Afghanistan – most of which was awarded without competition to companies such as Halliburton allied with the administration).
- At home, The Patriot Act has gutted civil rights and given the administration unprecedented powers to silence any opposition.

Someone once said that freedom is never permanently achieved but must be fought for every day. We may sometimes be afraid of the truth, but if democracy means anything more than a flag and an empty slogan, we must sometimes be prepared to ask – and to insist on answers to – difficult questions.

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