

America's "Deep State". From the JFK Assassination to 9/11

Interview with Prof. Peter Dale Scott

By [Prof Peter Dale Scott](#) and [Lars Schall](#)

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Peter Dale Scott, one of the most perceptive and provocative political-historical thinkers of our time, addresses in this podcast interview the Deep State in the United States and the common patterns of the two great events in American history in the last fifty years that were deep events and had constitutional changes as consequences – the JFK assassination '63 and the terror attacks of 9/11.

Peter Dale Scott is a former Canadian diplomat and English Professor at the University of California, Berkeley. The son of noted Canadian poet and constitutional lawyer F.R. Scott and painter Marian Dale Scott, who was born in Montreal, Canada on January 11th, 1929, has attracted a lot of attention throughout the years for his transparent and heavily-footnoted political writings.

Scott studied at McGill University, Montreal and University College, Oxford. His dissertation was written on "The Social and Political Ideas of T.S. Eliot." He first taught at Sedbergh School and McGill University. Afterwards he joined the Canadian Department of External Affairs (1957-1961) and the Canadian Embassy in Warsaw, Poland (1959-1961). Returning to academic life, Peter Dale Scott taught at the University of California for over thirty years, before he retired from the UC Berkeley faculty in 1994.

His prose books include:

The War Conspiracy (1972)

The Assassinations: Dallas and Beyond (in collaboration, 1976)

Crime and Cover-Up: The CIA, the Mafia, and the Dallas-Watergate Connection (1977)

Introduction to Henrik Kruger's The Great Heroin Coup: Drugs, Intelligence, & International Fascism (1980)

The Iran-Contra Connection (in collaboration, 1987)

Cocaine Politics: Drugs, Armies, and the CIA in Central America (in collaboration, 1991, 1998)

Deep Politics and the Death of JFK (1993, 1996)

Deep Politics Two: Essays on Oswald, Mexico, and Cuba (1995, 2007)

Drugs, Oil and War (2003)

The Road to 9/11: Wealth, Empire and the Future of America (September 2007)

The War Conspiracy: JFK, 911, and the Deep Politics of War (2008 reissue and expansion of the 1972 edition)

American War Machine: Deep Politics, the CIA Global Drug Connection, and the Road to Afghanistan (2010).

His chief poetry books are the three volumes of his trilogy "Seculum":

Coming to Jakarta: A Poem About Terror (1989)

Listening to the Candle: A Poem on Impulse (1992)

Minding the Darkness: A Poem for the Year 2000 (2000)

Furthermore, he has published:

Crossing Borders: Selected Shorter Poems (1994)

Mosaic Orpheus (2009)

In his prose books, Scott is particularly interested in examining "Deep Politics." He defines "Deep Politics" this way: "All those political practices and arrangements, deliberate or not, that are usually repressed in public discourse rather than acknowledged."

Peter Dale Scott's personal website is: www.peterdalescott.net.

In addition to the following interview, we would like to recommend two other interviews that Lars Schall conducted with Peter Dale Scott in the past - [America, Would You Please Wake Up!](#), and [Why JFK's Death Still Matters](#).

Let's Talk About the American Deep State

Lars Schall: Peter, we decided to talk this time about the Deep State, and the first question I would like to ask you is, why would you say it is still relevant to talk about 9/11?

Peter Dale Scott: Well, 9/11 was the occasion for major changes both in American foreign and domestic policy, it is the reason we went almost immediately into Afghanistan and it is also why we began planning almost immediately to invade Iraq, which was based on the false assumption that Saddam Hussein had some connection with Al-Qaeda. Where evidence had been provided it was false evidence but the administration chose to believe it. From an American point of view the changes in foreign policy are perhaps not as serious as the implementation on that day of what we call continuity of government (COG) procedures, which have radically altered the status of the American constitution in this country. They had been planning for 20 years what to do in the case of a major emergency like 9/11, and the plans were worked on for two decades by Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney, who were also the two men who implemented them on 9/11.

We don't know in detail the plans but I think we can safely sum them up under three headings; one of them is warrantless surveillance, Edward Snowden has proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that it is massive in the country, and it is because of this COG implementation. One is warrantless detention; we had more than a thousand Muslims rounded up without a warrant and held. We have something called 'habeas corpus' in our common law: You are not supposed to hold people for very long without charging them. But more than a thousand people were detained and not charged, and some of them were tortured. That is a huge, huge change in the domestic condition of America.

And then finally the involvement of the military in what we call homeland security. The military now play a police role, and that too is something new. You would occasionally have the army called in briefly to deal with a crisis like the rioting we had in the inner cities in the 1960s. But to have a permanent army command for North America that is called

NORTHCOM – that is very new; it is a radical change in the role of the army. And above all this is what I talk about in ‘Deep State’. We now have institutions, which are aiming to operate in America without being controlled by the American constitution. I don’t see how you could have a more radical change than that.

LS: What is the Deep State, what are Deep Events and what has 9/11 to do with both?

PDS: You know, let me get somebody else’s definition of the deep state. A Washington Post reporter called Dana Priest wrote a book ‘Top Secret America’, and in it she said, we now have “two governments: the one its citizens were familiar with, operated more or less in the open: the other a parallel top secret government whose parts had mushroomed in less than a decade into a gigantic, sprawling universe of its own...” (1)

Well, in the sense that second level, the deep state, has been ruling over decades, but it is true that it has mushroomed in the last decade when she was writing. And it is exactly because of 9/11 and the COG changes, which were authorized, implemented before the last of the four planes had gone down. They implemented COG, then they proclaimed an emergency three days later, and since then we have been living in this state of emergency, which means that in effect the constitution does not rule the way it used to. Now you asked about deep events. 9/11 I call a deep event because from the very beginning it was not very clear exactly what happened. Even journalists commented on the confusion and the inaccuracy of reports, it became so bad that congress had to press ... it was a fight to get an investigation.

This is the largest criminal act that was ever committed in America and the White House tried not to investigate it. There was a crime scene that was dismantled almost immediately; some people would say that was illegal. They said they were looking for corpses, and that is why they carried away all steel. But now scientists are very interested to know what residues were in that steel to see if the buildings were perhaps blown up or not. Most of the steel was shipped out of the country very quickly, and so it is a deep event, and we had the commission to investigate it.

The two great events that are deep events are first the Kennedy assassination ’63, then 9/11, there are more – some of them could be very small. You know I think I have had some deep events in my personal life: I described one in ‘The American War Machine’. But the ones which had constitutional consequences were the Kennedy assassination – the consequences were pretty invisible in that one but they were real: they changed the role of the CIA and its relationship to the FBI and to local police. Much more important were the changes after 9/11. Just take the one that Edward Snowden has so completely documented, warrantless surveillance. That I think of the big three is perhaps the least important, but it is the only one that we are really talking about in this country.

And in both cases you had commissions to investigate, and they came out with findings which were demonstrably not true. Now that is the real test of a big deep event – when they investigate it and they give you a story, which almost immediately people can start picking holes in and seeing it is not true. So by definition a deep event is one which we are not given the truth about and the biggest ones we are given a story, which may be true in certain respects but in key respects it is not true.

LS: One thing you are looking at in your work are patterns that were common both in 9/11 and the JFK assassination. First of all, when did you discover this phenomenon and what did

you feel about it?

PDS: Pretty soon after 9/11 I was struck by the fact that they knew almost immediately who had done it. In Richard Clarke's book (he was in position of authority) he says that the FBI had a list of the hijackers of the planes before ten o'clock of that day and that also is before the last of the planes had gone down. For anyone who knows anything about the Kennedy assassination, one of the things that has never been explained is how they were broadcasting on the police tape a description of the perpetrator, the man who had shot Kennedy, allegedly from a window and they gave a pretty precise description: 5 feet ten inches, 165 pounds, and they could never explain where that description came from. They eventually attributed it to a man called Howard Brennan down below; but he had only seen the top half of the man in the window, so how would he know 5 feet ten inches, 165 pounds?

The interesting thing is - that was the description of Lee Harvey Oswald in his FBI file and in his CIA file even though it was not true. They were broadcasting a description of the perpetrator within 15 minutes (when I say broadcast, I mean on the internal police radio) that had been taken from the FBI file and the CIA file; and the FBI has never been able really to explain, nobody has been able to explain how that was done from the government side.

And the same is true with 9/11. Again they circulated internally a list of the hijackers and there were two names on that list that were hastily dropped because one of them [Adnan Bukhari] was dead and the other [Ameer Bukhari] was certainly not on an aeroplane. It was a list I think they took out of files And that is just the first similarity between these two deep events. In my book "The War Conspiracy" I have more than a dozen similarities and I have since been adding to that list myself.

In the modus operandi: the other thing is that these people laid a paper trail: Oswald kept a diary, and he did all kinds of things which were later used to incriminate him (although he was of course dead) and at Logan Airport Mohamed Atta and his friends had left a car that was filled with evidence. And that that was very convenient for the FBI that the perpetrators or what I call the designated culprits because it was clearly decided in advance who was going to be blamed for this. And they had these people actually help document the case against themselves. I could go on and on; I don't know if that is enough for you.

LS: Well, I would like to ask you about specific communication channels that were involved both in JFK and 9/11. Why is it perhaps the most important similarity?

PDS: Well yes, I believe that the national communications network - it has had different names over the years, but it is the special network that was set up in connection with Continuity of Government planning, and it goes back to the 1950s and they change its name all the time. This is a similarity that I came to later. For many years I have known that the White House Communications Agency [WHCA] was a factor in the Kennedy assassination because we were given in conjunction with the Warren Commission investigation of JFK, they released the police transcripts and they released certain Secret Service messages, but it was known there were two channels of the police, both released, but there was also a third channel that was being used in Daily Plaza, and the Secret Service was using the channel of what is called the White House Communications Agency.

For years I have known we should get that and we were not able to get that. In 1993 when they set up a[n Assassination Records] Review Board, I went to the Review Board and I said they should get those records; but they have not been released. And yet the White House

Communications Agency — on its website: I imagine you can still read it there – that helped solve the Kennedy assassination. And that is very interesting because the records never reached the Warren Commission, which was supposed to be solving it.

And then when the records began to come out about 9/11 – this took a couple of years, we got the 9/11 commission report and it turns out that there are certain communications, certain phone calls that we know were made but there is no record of them. And in my book *The Road to 9/11* I said the evidence points to suggestion that they were using — they had already implemented COG; well that means that if that is the case, they implemented [and were using] the COG's special communications network, which with change of names is the inheritor of the emergency network and the White House Communications Agency was and still is part of that emergency network.

So I could throw in that another deep event was Iran-Contra and it turned out that Oliver North in 1985-86 was sending arms to Iran, which was illegal and a lot of people in the government knew nothing about it. They did not know about it because Oliver North was in charge of that same emergency network and he used that emergency network to make communications with the Embassy in Portugal, for example, in order to facilitate getting those arms to Iran. So that is for me a common denominator.

And in Watergate, that is another deep event. We still don't know why there was a wiretap put on the phone in the Democratic National Committee but we do know that James McCord who was in charge of the team that installed it was a member of a Special Air Force Reserve network that was concerned with Continuity of Government. And he was charged with the same sort of thing: who to round up, the warrantless detention: they had that sort of thing back in the days of Watergate.

So this to me is one of the most striking common denominators through those big four deep events – JFK, Watergate, Iran-Contra, and finally 9/11, and if we ever have another deep event of this kind, I would predict now on the basis of past performance that the emergency network, the one which ordinary people in the government don't have access to, that will be a factor again.

LS: Is the Secret Service in both events of special interest?

PDS: They are of interest precisely because of what we have just been talking about; because they use the White House Communications Agency for their communications and a lot of ... whole books have been written about the Secret Service and the JFK assassination – some very exaggerated and some people involved them in the plot. I think there was an odd outperformance on that day; they didn't do things they should have done, they didn't investigate people they should have – that doesn't necessarily mean that they are culprits and so I am not subscribing to those theories. It is less obvious in the case of 9/11, the Secret Service, but what is interesting, they do play a role because at a certain point — there is a special aeroplane for continuity of government, called the E4B, they call it the 'Doomsday Plane' and they call the COG planning the 'Doomsday Program', and this plane flew over the White House.

No plane is ever supposed to fly over the White House, and on yet precisely this day, when everything went wrong, the E4B – it is supposed to be the special plane for the National Command Authority, which is the President and the Secretary of Defense. But of course

neither of them were in the plane: the President was in Florida and the Secretary of Defense was in the Pentagon, according to his own account helping put people on stretchers, which seems an odd thing for him to be doing when the nation is under attack.

But the plane was there and the Secret Service responded by rushing everyone out of the building. There is a very vivid description about they almost lifted Vice President Cheney out of his chair to rush him out of the building and of course they saying the nation was under attack it would have been very logical, very sensible for him to get as quickly as he could to what we call the PEOC, the emergency bunker that is under the White House for when the nation is under attack, but the interesting thing is, he didn't go straight to the PEOC; there were many many minutes where he waited in the tunnel using a telephone that was there in the tunnel. What would that telephone possibly be? I would bet money, that was a telephone that was connected to the emergency network, and I think it was on that phone that a lot of the key decisions were made, not even in the presence of the top advisors who were in the PEOC.

So the Secret Service are involved in the sense that it was their mission to get him out and they would stay with him while he did – with Cheney – while he paused in this tunnel maybe as long as 20 minutes, something like that, to make a series of phone calls with both the President and the Secretary of Defense.

LS: Related to Continuity of Government, why is it important to know more about this and is it still active to this very day?

PDS: Well, let me begin with the second half. Yes, as far as we know, it is still ... it is very hard to talk about it because no one has ever released a word of what these special procedures are. We only know about it from what was released back in the 1980s. But seeing that what was being talked about in the 1980s is what we have seen implemented since: warrantless surveillance, we have that, and warrantless detention, we have had that, and martial law: we have now the government, the military permanently involved in law enforcement. There is an army brigade that is on full-time status in America to deal with any possible disturbances. And — sorry, what was the question again?

LS: Why is it important to know more about it? For example, does it mean that the constitution of the United States that the Americans are so proud about is suspended?

PDS: It is not altogether suspended but it has been supplanted to a large extent. The three things I have just described, every one of them is ... particularly the first two. I mean we have very clear – habeas corpus is mentioned in the constitution. It is not exactly guaranteed by the constitution, it is just taken for granted in the constitution, because it goes back to Magna Carta in the 13th century. It is one of the oldest foundational rights of common law freedoms. And it has been seriously abrogated, not totally suspended; but if they want to detain somebody they will, and they do. And not just foreigners but US citizens.

So yes, it has seriously eroded the status of the constitution and more and more people are beginning to talk about it. We finally are getting a serious debate about the warrentless surveillance, which is unconstitutional, and the President has said he is going to do something about it but we have not seen any results so far, and meanwhile they are not only trying to prosecute Snowden who did a public service, I would say by revealing this, but they are also ... they've indicted the man who made the encryption program which made it possible for him to share the documents with Greenwald. And they have persecuted that

man to the point that he has had to dissolve his company. So they are ruthlessly enforcing this system of secrecy, secret government that has supplanted and has become a second layer overshadowing open government.

LS: Regarding 9/11 you say you know only one thing for sure: there has been a massive cover-up. What has been covered up and why?

PDS: We still don't really have an explanation why the planes failed ... they should have been intercepted. Certainly by the time of the third and the fourth plane they should have been intercepted. There is an elaborate explanation in the 9/11 commission report but there are many things which are still really inexplicable. The behavior of the Vice President, who was a key figure in this. There was a phone call made that implemented COG; that is the very center of what happened here. There is no trace of that phone call. Not because no trace was made, you know, he didn't do it from a pay phone or something; it was certainly done within channels but I am sure it was done on a COG line and we have to hear what was done.

This by the way has real legal consequences because one of the things to be explained is why the Vice President made decisions that he was not legally empowered to make. We have a National Command Authority that governs the military: that is the President and the Secretary of Defense. As far as we can tell - and here the records are missing so that I would say they are being covered up - is that the actual decisions were made by the Vice President who is not part of the National Command Authority.

All of that should be investigated because it is quite possible that crimes were committed in the response to 9/11. I am not now talking about 9/11 itself, which I do not discuss in my book as there have been too many books written about that. But in the response to 9/11 certain things were done, which were not done in the way which is legally prescribed. How they were done is being covered up because we don't have the records.

LS: Could 9/11 have been prevented? I mean, this is a question that is very crucial for everything that has to do with the NSA. Did the NSA know nothing about the plans to attack the US?

PDS: We know so little about the NSA that it is difficult for me to say. There are allegations of course that this Lieutenant Shaffer came forward and said that the DIA, which is the Defense Intelligence Agency, that they in fact had very complete files on Mohamed Atta and other ... the Pentagon has denied this and then Congressman Curt Weldon brought it up in congress and really wanted to get to the bottom of it and then the FBI treated him abysmally. The FBI leaked the idea that he was under investigation for some kind of scam that involved his daughter and the newspapers were full of this and he was never charged but he was defeated, they got him out of congress. So it was a sign, which ... I talked about this in books that it is very dangerous for congressmen to challenge that part of the government that I call the deep state, because inevitably if they do, they get defeated when they come up for re-election. I wrote that before the case of Curt Weldon, but that was important.

Let's talk about the CIA. The CIA definitely knew about two of the hijackers that they were in this - alleged hijackers I always say because I don't really know what their role was on 9/11 but I think it is probable they got on the planes and I just cannot believe that they were able to steer the planes into buildings. That was some other power done from outside the plane,

that is technology totally feasible in the 21st century. But if those two hijackers ... the CIA should have told the FBI and they didn't. And they were able to move around, be in touch with other hijackers. Now if procedures had been followed, the CIA would have notified the FBI, the FBI would have put them under surveillance, and from those two they would have known about virtually all of the hijackers. And so the fact that the CIA did not communicate something that it should have communicated is one of the causes for 9/11 happening the way it did.

It is only a part of the big picture but it is a telltale part and you had similar failures of communication in the case of John F. Kennedy. That is another of the many similarities – that the CIA sent a cable to the FBI ... not a cable, it is a message; they sent a message to the FBI about Lee Harvey Oswald, and they suppressed the information in it which would have led to Lee Harvey Oswald being put under surveillance. And if he'd been put under surveillance, he could not have played the role that he did in becoming the designated culprit for the Kennedy assassination. So in that sense I think it is very very significant that the CIA withheld that.

I don't claim to know who made 9/11 happen and unlike many people I am not saying that the White House made it happen. No, I think somebody in the deep state made it happen but you see, in my notion of the deep state, there are elements of it that are not even in the government. So to say that the deep state did something does not really tell us very much. But we need to know more and there are records buried still that could be released that would help us to understand these things.

LS: Now let us say if rogue elements of the government were involved in 9/11, people say that someone would have surely talked by now. You know, you cannot keep a secret in Washington. What is your take on this?

PDS: Well, you know, there is actually a book of the Kennedy assassination and its title is 'Someone would have talked.' because of course they have said that from the very beginning about the Kennedy assassination and the answer in the book is: many people talked but they do not get heard.

And with 9/11 too ... I was just talking about 9/11 last night and there was somebody who was prepared to swear on a bible that the last plane, flight 93, was maybe hit, injured over Shanksville and part of it went down over Shanksville but it continued because he – I have a friend who talked to a very close friend of his, who talked to a very close friend of his, he says he saw a missile hit flight 93 over Camp David, where the President's hideaway is in the mountains. And that is not in the papers; it is not because the man did not talk, it is because he talked and the FBI came to him and said, you must never talk about that again.

It actually was in the media. There is – I just looked at it – a TV report from the time about ... the FBI was saying that a plane had been shot down over Camp David and they got this information from the FAA. All of that was on TV, but it was taken off TV and the nation has forgotten about it or nearly all of the nation has forgotten about it. The E4B over the White House – CNN reported that on TV. It is a very important part of the story. But then they took it down. Luckily somebody had recorded it and they put it back up on YouTube and if you buy my book when it comes out in November, you will see a URL to watch a video of the plane over the White House. The Air Force denied it ever happened, but it clearly did, it is clearly an E4B and so people come forward ... other people have come forward with explanations. (2)

The thing is, information is always controlled in any society and if somebody says something that does not fit in the official story ... we are a pretty open society in America, so they do get to say it, it just does not get to be heard.

LS: Related to the question if someone has talked about 9/11 and that there might have happened something else than the public was told is significant in the case of Sibel Edmonds. Can you talk about her case a little bit?

PDS: Yes, well, Sibel Edmonds was a translator working for the FBI and she saw things, her languages were Turkish and I think Farsi, and she saw ... the FBI were investigating people because the agents were not Farsi speakers, they needed her to translate these communications they had. And what she saw was so alarming that she tried to bring it to the attention of her superiors.

It is a long time since I looked at her case but essentially she was told to shut up. And eventually she was under a court order, I believe, and to this day she does not want to go to jail so she talks about many other things but she will not fully share what it was that she saw, except she has given strong indications that people very high in the government were involved in improper activities with other governments and she has named those governments, the Turkish government, one of them. And she is an example, and not the only example, of somebody who cannot talk in this free society that we have.

LS: The official version of 9/11 is based in very large parts on tortured testimony. Does this make the story pretty much worthless? And furthermore, is this something that too many people are ignorant of?

PDS: The part ... the 9/11 commission report, it is only one small part of the report, but the part that is talking about what Al-Qaeda did, how they planned it and so on, yes, that is all from people who were being tortured before they gave this testimony. Some of those witnesses now are no longer in custody and recanted what they said. They put in about one person, Abu Zubaydah; he confessed to being a part of the Al-Qaeda thing and he wasn't at all. It was a total misguided direction, so I think all of that testimony should be thrown out.

That would not invalidate the whole of the 9/11 commission report but certain chapters of it, which are talking about what Al-Qaeda did, yes, are not to be taken very seriously because of their reliance. By the way, you know, the 9/11 commission wanted to see the transcripts, were not allowed to see the transcripts; right away that becomes very suspicious. They were not told that the people were tortured and since then I think both of the co-chairman, Thomas Kean and Lee Hamilton, have complained that they were actually misled by the CIA.

And so it is in a bit of a shambles, the official version that is in the 9/11 commission report; it has been discounted even by the co-chairmen of the commission. So, but yes, the fact that they used torture to obtain testimony should not have happened in the first place. It should not have been used in the second place. They should have been candid about the circumstances and they were not, in the third places, so in every way it is a disgrace.

LS: Do you think the hegemony of the US in the world declined because of the action that followed 9/11? For example it seems as if the true beneficiaries of the War on Terror are China and Russia.

PDS: Well, let us go through that bit by bit. One of the major consequences of 9/11 was the

invasion of Iraq and I think there is almost no one who ... everyone would agree that American power in the world and particularly in the Middle East has been eroded because of the invasion of Iraq. It has resulted in first of all in the election, if you want democracy in Iraq then the majority are going to rule and the majority are Shi'a, so you now have a Shi'a government in Iraq. And it is much more friendly to Iran than it is to the United States. Many people could have – and did – predict this. It is not rocket science, it is pretty obvious.

That also has led to major tensions between the US and Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia historically — whether they should be or not can be debated – but historically it has been the strongest ally of the United States in that region. And now there are major differences because Saudi Arabia was delighted to see Saddam Hussein go but they did not want an invasion; because they knew it would destabilize Iraq and create this state of – I don't want to say a failed state; I don't like that phrase – but a very weakened authority in Iraq, which is very dangerous to Saudi Arabia. They have every reason legitimately to be upset about what America did in Iraq and so that weakens America's relationship to Saudi Arabia.

You have the whole of the Middle East now – Zbigniew Brzezinski called it an Arc of Crisis back about 1978 or '79; it is much more an Arc of Crisis now than it was then as a result of ... you know I think that the invasion of Afghanistan was also misguided but it is much more defensible than the invasion of Iraq and the two of them have grossly expanded let us not talk about Al-Qaeda, now let us talk about Al-Qaedaist forces, people who do similar things to Al-Qaeda, and there are many groups now and many of them are actually based in Iraq as a result of America's invasion of Iraq. And this is spreading into Africa, so I am not sure that the beneficiaries are really so much Russia and China as lawlessness.

I think Russia, China and America all have common interests in not seeing terrorists and I think Russia has made it very clear that they would like to collaborate with the United States in dealing with terrorism and there are times when – particularly Obama seemed as if he was going to do more in common with Russia, particularly in Syria for example, where Al-Qaedaist elements are a major part of the problem now for both Russia and America.

And then we suddenly get the Ukraine, where even the Ukraine you could really blame in a way of what has happened since 9/11. That might take more time than we can do in our hour here but the deterioration of understanding between Russia and America — which Afghanistan is part of that — these are all complicated things, but one thing that is so clear is that the Iraq thing was a disaster and it has created tensions and if we don't learn how to deal with these tensions we are closer to the risk of nuclear war today than we have been for 20 or 30 years and that is a very alarming situation.

LS: Related to the Iraq war, has the peace movement around the world failed post-9/11 for it protested for example against the war in Iraq but without questioning the root of all evil, the official 9/11 narrative as a pretext and justification to go to war?

PDS: Certainly it would have been a more powerful protest movement against the idea of war in Iraq if we had understood what happened on 9/11. I don't think that it is realistic to think that we could have known enough at the time – you know, America went in in 2003 and we didn't even get the 9/11 commission report until 2004. So I don't think it ever could have helped the anti-war movement in 2003, but it certainly could help future such movements.

I don't know what is going to happen in Ukraine but ... well, actually I think I do know now. I

think Europe is intervening to stop America making a complete fool of itself. I cannot believe some of the things that John Kerry has said recently. I mean when he for example said to Putin after Crimea, we don't do that kind of thing in the 21st century. Well, America has been the most conspicuous and flagrant example of that kind of behavior.

So I think people not in government have to mobilize around the world and create a kind of global public opinion that can check – I don't want to say just America, but America and other governments when they start doing excessive things. It used to be the case that governments didn't worry about public opinion and that was bad. And now we are beginning to develop a public opinion, which can constrain governments; and it has on occasion and that is good.

I think public opinion for example was a major factor in persuading American corporations not to invest in South Africa. And that divestiture movement, which was public opinion, was a major factor, and Nelson Mandela has said as much, one major factor in the liberation of South Africa. So there have been ... public opinion in the end is what ended the segregation in the southern United States. So there is positive ... it was not successful in Iraq but you shouldn't draw the conclusion from a single failure that these things are not worth doing. They are.

LS: Do you have any hope that the question what did actually happen on 9/11 will ever be seriously addressed in the future?

PDS: Well, if you mean addressed by the US government, perhaps not. But it is already seriously addressed by people who have devoted their lives to it. I don't count myself in that movement but there are such people. I think they have made very significant discoveries, I think the amount ... the fact that there was explosive materials has been pretty well established — in Building Seven and in both the towers. There was a government investigation of why the towers went down by – it's called NIST – National Institute of Standards and Technology, and NIST was forced to revise its findings.

You know, they said that Building Seven came down in 5.3 seconds and the critics were saying that part of that time was free fall and they just simply said from the 5.3 seconds, that's not free fall. So they asked for a clearer definition what they meant and they produced a graph, which showed that in fact, yes, for two or three seconds in the middle the building was in free fall. Well, if the building was in free fall it must have had some kind of explosions to clear away the path of the top of the building to descend: it's as clear as that.

So I think we have made significant progress; we can talk about that as serious when you get the government to admit that. Well, you know, it is 2014 and there has not been a re-consideration of the Warren Commission but almost everybody in America knows that the Warren Commission was not the answer. So in public opinion, I think, there will be more and more serious investigation.

LS: But from the international community, that there is some pressure on the US to get clean – you don't think that this will ever happen?

PDS: I am a former diplomat; I don't think that is the way that governments talk to governments, no. And I am not sure they should. They have to deal with their narrow interests. What we need to see is people in the world exerting that kind of pressure, newspapers exerting that kind of pressure. And it is lucky that we have other countries that

speaking English besides the United States so that for example the British press have given a much better account of what Glenn Greenwald got from Edward Snowden and in general I think if an American wants to know what is happening in his country, he should read The Guardian in London, in England – and he can read it online – so he has no excuse not to.

That is the sort of thing that may restore a degree of sanity to a world when ... I have to say America is a wonderful country; I love living here. It has a government, which ultimately, I have to say, is behaving insanely. The invasion of Iraq was insane. There were any number of experts who said this would work out badly. And when they said that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, the evidence was discredited before and so discredited that they could not even use it the way they really had wanted to use it. Those kinds of pressure from public opinion are what we need to bring the American government back to sanity.

LS: And how do you judge upon the fact that there was no punishment for this lying about the Iraq war?

PDS: We could get into details about this. In my 'American War Machine' I show how a private corporation conducted intelligence on whether he had weapons of mass destruction or not and they concluded that he did. SAIC was the name of the corporation. And then they decided afterwards, when it turned out that he hadn't, we better find out how we could have been so wrong. And who do they charge to find out what went wrong? The same corporation, SAIC.

I'm sort of like Bishop Tutu in South Africa: I think we need truth and reconciliation; that is more important right now than to send people to jail. We need the truth so urgently I would be willing to forego putting people in prison if we could get the truth. Because if we got the truth, that would certainly force, for example, ending the state of emergency that still exists in this country – renewed by Obama without discussion every year (once a year it has to be renewed). Then congress would do what it is supposed to do – look at the state of emergency, look at continuity of government. The more the truth came out about these things, the more we would return to America as it used to be, which was very very far from an ideal condition but very very much better than what we have in America today.

LS: Are Wall Street interests at the very heart of the deep state?

PDS: Yes. In my book I ... the initial notion of the deep state is the public institutions and then overshadowed by NSA, CIA, JSOC and the Pentagon – all these new secret institutions – and that is your first level of the deep state. But these agencies are powerful because they have connections outside the government; they don't just report up to the President, but they are also – particularly the CIA, it is easy to document – is very rooted in Wall Street and was actually designed by Allen Dulles, when he was still a Wall Street lawyer, before he actually entered the CIA.

And the CIA is as powerful as it is because of its connections to Wall Street and – it used to be almost the same thing – its connections to big oil, because the big oil companies used to be based in New York and they were put together by, and they operated as a cartel that was defended successfully by Sullivan & Cromwell, which was a Wall Street law firm that — not accidentally — John Foster Dulles and Allen Dulles were senior members of.

Yes, the Wall Street is important; it was then, it is historically easy to show, in the 1950s and

I do in my book. It is harder to show in the present but there are many indications I think ... One thing is, the deep state, we should mention, is going more and more multinational as the corporations go multinational. Exxon is a multinational firm and there are some US firms, notably Blackwater, which is this kind of private army that turns up in various places. Germany I saying, I believe in Germany your press has said that Blackwater or a subsidiary of Blackwater is operating in the Ukraine.

LS: Yes, that is true.

PDS: What we call an American corporation has now technically its headquarters in Qatar, in the Persian Gulf. So you cannot control it. How is Washington going to control a corporation whose headquarters are in the Persian Gulf? You are getting the apparatus of a supranational deep state and we are going to need to develop institutions on a supranational level that can deal with these new kinds of institutions, these businesses to stir up unrest because it is profitable.

LS: Two personal questions at the very end: How do you deal with it that you get dismissed as a conspiracy theorist from time to time? And how do you deal with the sadness that must surely be a follower of yours given your oeuvre? I mean, I read your stuff and I get super-depressed. And so I would like to know, what's with you. I mean you are the one who writes this, right? And who has to cope with the truth. And how do you deal with it?

PDS: Well, I have come to learn to expect less and less in my lifetime. I am ... first of all, call me a conspiracy theorist, it is almost a badge of honor, the way the ... you know, the people who are using the phrase. They lump me in with people who believe in extraterrestrials and so on. I guess if they refute me by talking about extraterrestrials that is a sign that they don't want to deal with what I am actually saying, which I suppose is a kind of negative compliment.

I had trouble hearing you but if you asked how I deal psychologically with not being heard and so on – it's been difficult at times in my life. In fact, back around 1980 I was supposed to have a book come out, a quarter of a million copies first printing, about the Kennedy assassination. And then my publisher suppressed it; and I took that very hard. I went into a kind of depression. But it was the luckiest thing that ever happened to me because out of that depression I started writing a poem called 'Coming to Jakarta' and that poem deals with depression and deals with terror and deals with all the things that were really upsetting me. And my other book that didn't get published is not nearly as important to me as 'Coming to Jakarta', which was the result of the suppression. So I feel I was in a sense a lucky guy.

And I have a very lovely second marriage and I feel sustained by meeting people like you, Lars, in Germany, and I know somebody in Moscow now; I have my French translator (Maxime Chaix) – these are all wonderful people that I am so privileged to know and work with. And because I have always believed that the task for my generation was to lay the foundations of a global public opinion, a global civil society, and I think I see that happening, I don't feel depressed.

I think that it is very fragile because it depends on the Internet and the Internet is a gift that can be taken away very easily by those in power, and occasionally is. Actually, my website on Facebook was suppressed at a certain point. I don't know why; I think probably accidentally, because they really wanted to get someone else. So it is fragile but it is working and if it were to be suppressed then something else would.

I believe in the goodness of the human species and I also believe that we have had bad governments from the beginning of time and we have not made ... you know, we have made progress in some respects but we have also made the opposite of progress in some respects because the risks of the human race destroying itself are obviously greater today than they were a hundred years ago, so that is not such great progress. But I ... in my poetry I talk about what an idiot I am to write about politics and sometimes I think I am an idiot but I enjoy it and I enjoy talking to you, so that's why I keep going.

Notes:

(1) Dana Priest and William Arkin: "Top Secret America: The Rise of the New American Security State", Little Brown, New York, 2011, page 52.

(2) Peter Dale Scott provides this link to the story, by stating related to his next book: This will be in my book after the title page: Cover picture. Many people are unaware that on the morning of 9/11, during the attack on the Pentagon, the so-called "Doomsday plane," the E-4B, circled briefly in the forbidden air space over the White House. (For video footage of the event, go to CNN's account, which CNN soon took off the Internet, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4upVtXLJ3Ps>.)

The E-4B, a product of Continuity of Government (COG) planning, is a survivable mobile command post, based at Offutt AFB in Nebraska, for the National Command Authority (the President and Secretary of Defense, though neither were in it that day). Its purpose, to quote CNN, is "to keep the government running no matter what, even in the event of a nuclear war, the reason it was nicknamed the 'Doomsday plane' during the Cold War." Its presence on 9/11, which the Air Force once denied, has never been officially acknowledged or explained; unofficially it has been attributed to a war game at the time. It is very relevant that secret COG plans (the so-called Doomsday Project) were implemented at about the same time, and have been updated since. Metaphorically the E-4B flyover of the White House on 9/11 (represented on the cover by a composite image) symbolizes the way these deep state plans preempted constitutional authority, sending the president against his will to the E-4B's base at Offutt, while the vice-president stayed in Washington.

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