

# In the Wake of 9/11: Did George W. Bush have a Grasp of Key Foreign Policy Issues?

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Militarization and WMD](#)

In-depth Report: [AFGHANISTAN](#), [PAKISTAN](#)

*This text was written fourteen years ago, on September 30, 2001, in the week preceding the onslaught of the US-NATO war on Afghanistan. Officially the war on Afghanistan was in retribution for the alleged sponsorship of the 9/11 attacks by the Afghan government. You do not plan a large scale theater war in a matter of 3-4 weeks, the war on Afghanistan was planned well in advance of September 11, 2001. (Michel Chossudovsky, September 10, 2015)*

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America is preparing for war [late September 2001]. British and US Special Forces “trained in the arts of kidnapping and assassination” are already operating inside Afghanistan. More than one million US troops are on standby. US military bases around the World are on high alert: “the Japan-based USS Kitty Hawk battle group and the 7th Fleet are ready to join” in the largest display of military might since the Vietnam war.

The Bush Administration is planning on launching this military operation without delay, prior to the development of a cohesive anti-war movement in the US and around the World.

Already, US military personnel of the 82nd Airborne and 101st Air Assault Divisions have arrived in Pakistan. They will be collaborating with the Pakistani military and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), [the agency which over the years -under CIA guidance- has channeled support to the Islamic jihad including Osama bin Laden and the Taliban government in Kabul.](#)

The pretext to wage war as a means of combating international terrorism is totally fabricated. In a cruel irony, the legitimacy of the Bush administration in embarking on this military adventure rests entirely on Osama bin Laden’s presumed role in the terrorist attacks of September 11.

At this critical juncture in US history, does President Bush have a firm grasp of the broad implications of his decisions? According to Time Magazine (15 November 1999):

...on too many issues, especially those dealing with the wider world of global affairs, Bush often sounds as if he’s reading from cue cards. When he ventures into international issues, his unfamiliarity is palpable and not even his unshakable self-confidence keeps him from avoiding mistakes.

A president with minimal understanding of key international and strategic issues can easily be manipulated by the military-intelligence apparatus.

Apart from reading carefully prepared speeches, is George W. Bush as President and Commander in Chief capable of formulating “responsible” foreign policy decisions? In this regard, does the President wield real political power or is he an instrument? In other words, who decides in Washington? On the eve of a major military adventure, this question is of utmost significance because ultimately the US military machine will respond when the president “pushes the button”.

The knowledge of the President on Pakistan and Afghanistan –i.e. the two countries which constitute the theatre of America’s war– is dismal to say the least. [Prior to becoming President, George W. Bush thought the Taliban was a rock group.](#)

In a 1999 TV interview with Andy Hiller on NBC (WHDH in Boston), when asked who was the president of Pakistan, George W. Bush had “the name of General Pervez Musharraf on the tip of his tongue, but then allowed his enthusiasm to make him appear to condone the military coup that ousted the elected prime minister, Nawaz Sharif.” (Daily Telegraph, 6 November 1999).

Below is an excerpt of this interview:

Bush: “The new Pakistani General, he’s just been elected – not elected, this guy took over office. It appears this guy is going to bring stability to the country and I think that’s good news for the sub- continent.”

Hiller: “And you can name him?”

Bush: “General. I can name the general.”

Hiller: “And it’s . . ?

Bush: “General.”

Hiller: “And the Prime Minister of India?”

Bush: “The new Prime Minister of India is – (pause) No.”

To which George W. Bush retorted with a question to Andy Hiller:

Bush: “Can you name the Foreign Minister of Mexico?”

Hiller: “No sir, but I would say to that, I’m not running for President.”

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## About the author:

Michel Chossudovsky is an award-winning author, Professor of Economics (emeritus) at the University of Ottawa, Founder and Director of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), Montreal, Editor of Global Research. He has taught as visiting professor in Western Europe, Southeast Asia, the Pacific and Latin America. He has served as economic adviser to governments of developing countries and has acted as a consultant for several international organizations. He is the author of 13 books. He is a contributor to the Encyclopaedia Britannica. His writings have been published in more than twenty languages. In 2014, he was awarded the Gold Medal for Merit of the Republic of Serbia for his writings on NATO's war of aggression against Yugoslavia. He can be reached at [crgeditor@yahoo.com](mailto:crgeditor@yahoo.com)

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