

Information Warfare, Psy-ops and the Power of Myth

A look at the bombing of the Golden Dome Mosque in Samarra

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The bombing of the Golden Dome Mosque in Samarra is the cornerstone of Bush's psychological operations (psy-ops) in Iraq. That's why it is critical to have an independent investigation and discover who is really responsible. The bombing has been used as a "Pearl Harbor-type" event which has deflected responsibility for the 650,000 Iraqi casualties and more than 3 million refugees. These are the victims of American occupation not civil war.

The bombing was concocted by men who believe that they can control the public through perception management. In practical terms, this means that they create events which can be used to support their far-right doctrine. In this case, the destruction of the mosque has been used to confuse the public about the real origins of the rising sectarian tensions and hostilities. The fighting between Sunni and Shiite is the predictable upshot of random bombings and violence which bears the signature of covert operations carried out by intelligence organizations. Most of the pandemonium in Iraq is the result of counterinsurgency operations (black-ops) on a massive scale not civil war.

The Pentagon's bold new approach to psychological operations (psy-ops) appears to have derived from the theories of former State Dept official, Philip Zelikow (who also served on the 9-11 Commission) Zelikow is an expert on "the creation and maintenance of 'public myths' or 'public presumptions'". His theory analyzes how consciousness is shaped by "searing events" which take on "transcendent importance" and, therefore, move the public in the direction chosen by the policymakers.

"In the Nov-Dec 1998 issue of Foreign Affairs he (Zelikow) co-authored an article called 'Catastrophic Terrorism' in which he speculated that if the 1993 bombing of the World Trade center had succeeded 'the resulting horror and chaos would have exceeded our ability to describe it. Such an act of catastrophic terrorism would be a watershed event in American history. 'It could involve loss of life and property unprecedented in peacetime and undermine America's fundamental sense of security, as did the Soviet bomb test in 1949. The US might respond with draconian measures scaling back civil liberties, allowing wider surveillance of citizens, detention of suspects and use of deadly force. More violence could follow, either future terrorist attacks or US counterattacks. Belatedly, Americans would judge their leaders negligent for not addressing terrorism more urgently". ()

Zelikow's article presumes that if one creates their own "searing event" (such as 9-11 or the

bombing of the Golden Dome Mosque) they can steer the public in whatever direction they choose. His theory depends entirely on a “state-media nexus” which can be depended on to disseminate propaganda uniformly. There is no more reliable propaganda-system in the world today than the western media.

New Clues in the Bombing

New clues have surfaced in the case of the bombing of the Golden Mosque which suggests that the claims of the Bush administration are false. An article by Marc Santora, ([“One Year Later, Golden Mosque is still in Ruins”](#), New York Times) provides eyewitness testimony of what really took place one year ago:

“A caretaker at the shrine described what happened on the day of the attack, insisting on anonymity because he was afraid that talking to an American could get him killed. The general outline of his account was confirmed by American and Iraqi officials. The night before the explosion, he said, just before the 8 p.m. curfew on Feb. 21, 2006, on the Western calendar, men dressed in commando uniforms like those issued by the Interior Ministry entered the shrine. The caretaker said he had been beaten, tied up and locked in a room. Throughout the night, he said, he could hear the sound of drilling as the attackers positioned the explosives, apparently in such a way as to inflict maximum damage on the dome”.(NY Times)

Clearly, if the men were men dressed in “commando uniforms like those issued by the Interior Ministry”, then the logical place to begin an investigation would be the Interior Ministry. But there’s never been an investigation and the caretaker has never been asked to testify about what he saw on the night of the bombing. However, if he is telling the truth, we cannot exclude the possibility that paramilitary contractors (mercenaries) or special-ops (intelligence) agents working out of the Interior Ministry may have destroyed the mosque to create the appearance of a nascent civil war.

Isn’t that what Bush wants to divert attention from the occupation and to show that the real conflict is between Shiites and Sunnis?

It’s unlikely that the mosque was destroyed by “Sunni insurgents or Al Qaida” as Bush claims. Samarra is predominantly a Sunni city and the Sunnis have nearly as much respect for the mosque as a cultural icon and sacred shrine as the Shiites.

The Times also adds, “What is clear is that the attack was carefully planned and calculated”.

True again. We can see from the extent of the damage that the job was carried out by demolition experts and not merely “insurgents or terrorists” with explosives. Simple forensic tests and soil samples could easily determine the composition of the explosives and point out the real perpetrators.

The Times even provides a motive for the attack: “Bad people used this incident to divide Iraq on a detestable sectarian basis.”

Bingo! The administration has repeatedly used the incident to highlight divisions, incite acrimony, and prolong the occupation.

Finally, the Times notes the similarities between 9-11 and the bombing of the Golden

Mosque: "I can describe what was done as exactly like what happened to the World Trade Center."(NY Times)

In fact, the bombing of the Golden Mosque is a reenactment of September 11. In both cases an independent investigation was intentionally quashed and carefully-prepared narrative was immediately provided. The government's version of events has been critical in supporting the extremist policies of the Bush administration.

Just as 9-11 has been used to justify the enhanced powers of the "unitary" president, the evisceration of civil liberties, and a permanent state of war; so too, the bombing of the Golden Mosque, has been used to create a fictional narrative of deeply ingrained sectarian animosity that has no historical precedent. Both events need to be exposed by thorough and independent investigations.

The Bush administration has consistently abandoned the limitations of "reality-based" politics. They govern through demagoguery, force and deception. This is no different.

9-11 and the Golden Mosque are the foundation blocks in the Pentagon's "Strategic Information" program. It is a war that is directed at the American people and it relies heavily on the power of myth.

Forewarned is forearmed.

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