

Graeme MacQueen: The “Inside Job” Hypothesis of the 9/11 Attacks: JFK, Fidel Castro and the American Left

Beyond Their Wildest Dreams...

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Incisive and carefully documented analysis by the late Prof. Graeme MacQueen. His legacy will live

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On November 23, 1963, the day after John F. Kennedy's assassination, Fidel Castro gave a talk on Cuban radio and television.[1] He pulled together, as well as he could in the amount of time available to him, the evidence he had gathered from news media and other sources, and he reflected on this evidence.

The questions he posed were well chosen: they could serve as a template for those confronting complex acts of political violence. Were there contradictions and absurdities in the story being promoted in the U.S. media? Who benefitted from the assassination?

Were intelligence agencies claiming to know more than they could legitimately know? Was there evidence of foreknowledge of the murder? What was the main ideological clash in powerful U.S. circles and how did Kennedy fit in? Was there a faction that had the capacity and willingness to carry out such an act? And so on.



But beneath the questions lay a central, unspoken fact: Castro was able to imagine—as a real possibility and not as mere fantasy—that the story being promoted by the U.S. government and media was radically false. He was able to conceive of the possibility that the killing had not been carried out by a lone gunman on the left sympathetic to Cuba and the Soviet Union, but by powerful, ultra-right forces, including

forces internal to the state, in the United States.

Because his conceptual framework did not exclude this hypothesis he was able to examine the evidence that favoured it. He was able to recognize the links between those wishing to overthrow the Cuban government and take more aggressive action toward the Soviet Union and those wishing to get Kennedy out of the way.

In the immediate wake of the assassination, and after the Warren Commission's report appeared in 1964, few among the elite left leadership in the U.S. shared Castro's imagination. Vincent Salandria, one of key researchers and dissidents, said: "I have experienced from the beginning that the left was most unreceptive to my conception of the assassination." [2]

I.F. Stone, a pillar of the American left leadership, praised the Warren Commission and consigned critics who accused the Commission of a cover-up to "the booby hatch." [3] The contrast with Castro is sharp. Speaking well before the Warren Commission's emergence, Castro mocked the narrative it would later endorse. Several other prominent left intellectuals agreed with I. F. Stone, and declined to criticize the Warren Commission's report. [4]

Noam Chomsky, resisting serious efforts to get him to look at the evidence, said at various times that he knew little about the affair, had little interest in it, did not regard it as important, and found the idea of a "high-level conspiracy with policy significance" to be "implausible to a quite extraordinary degree." [5] He would later say almost exactly the same thing about the 9/11 attacks, finding the thesis that the U.S. administration was involved in the crime "close to inconceivable," [6] and expressing his disinterest in the entire issue.

Not everyone on the American left accepted the FBI and Warren Commission reports uncritically. Dave Dellinger and Staughton Lynd, for example, encouraged dissident researchers. [7] In fact, several of the leading dissident investigators, such as Vincent Salandria, Mark Lane and Sylvia Meagher, were themselves, at least by today's standards, on the left of the political spectrum. But they were not among the elite left leadership in the country and they were, to a great extent, unsupported by that leadership during the most crucial period.



Chomsky's use of the terms "implausible" and "inconceivable" has stimulated me to write the present article. I have no new evidence to bring to the debate, which is decades old now, as to how his mind and the other great minds of the U.S.

left leadership could have failed to see what was obvious to so many.

My approach will assume the good faith of these left leaders and will take as its point of departure Chomsky's own words. I will explore the suggestion that these intellectuals were not able to conceive, were not able to imagine, that these attacks were operations engineered by intelligence agencies and the political right in the U.S.

Why would Castro have had less difficulty than the U.S. left leadership imagining that the assassination of Kennedy had been carried out by and for the American ultra-right and the intelligence community?

What we imagine to be true in the present will surely be influenced by what we have intimately experienced in the past. Castro's imagination of what U.S. imperial powers might do was shaped by what he had witnessed them actually do, or attempt to do, to him and his country.

Castro referred in his November 23, 1962 talk not only to the economic warfare against Cuba, but to the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban Missile Crisis. But, of course, the CIA's Operation Mongoose had been active in the interim between these two latter events, and he was familiar with its main lines. Perhaps he was not familiar with all its components. As far as I am aware, he did not know on November 23, 1963 of the 1962 Operation Northwoods plan, endorsed by the CIA and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to create a pretext for an invasion of Cuba through a multi-faceted false flag operation that included terrorist attacks in Miami and Washington, to be falsely blamed on Cuba.[8] Had he been familiar with this scheme he might have cited it on November 23 to bolster his case.



~~TOP SECRET SPECIAL HANDLING NOFORN~~

THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

UNCLASSIFIED

13 March 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Justification for US Military Intervention
in Cuba (TS)

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have considered the attached Memorandum for the Chief of Operations, Cuba Project, which responds to a request of that office for brief but precise description of pretexts which would provide justification for US military intervention in Cuba.

2. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that the proposed memorandum be forwarded as a preliminary submission suitable for planning purposes. It is assumed that there will be similar submissions from other agencies and that these inputs will be used as a basis for developing a time-phased plan. Individual projects can then be considered on a case-by-case basis.

3. Further, it is assumed that a single agency will be given the primary responsibility for developing military and para-military aspects of the basic plan. It is recommended that this responsibility for both overt and covert military operations be assigned the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

SYSTEMATICALLY REVIEWED
BY JCS ON 21 May 84
CLASSIFICATION CONTINUED

L. L. Lemnitzer
L. L. LEMNITZER
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

1 Enclosure

Memo for Chief of Operations, Cuba Project

EXCLUDED FROM GDS

EXCLUDED FROM AUTOMATIC
REGRADING; DOD DIR 5200.10
DOES NOT APPLY

~~TOP SECRET SPECIAL HANDLING NOFORN~~

Castro was certainly familiar with many plans and attempts to assassinate him, which were eventually confirmed to the U.S. public by the Church Committee's report, "Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders." [9] But, to the best of my knowledge, he was not aware when he gave his November 23 talk of an assassination-planning meeting that had taken place the previous day.

On November 22, the day Kennedy was killed, while Castro was meeting with an intermediary who conveyed Kennedy's hope that Cuba and the United States would soon be able to work out a mode of peaceful coexistence,[10] members of the CIA were meeting with a Cuban to plot Castro's death. The would-be assassin was not only given poison to use in an assassination attempt; he was also promised support by the CIA for a shooting, such as was taking place at that very time in Dallas. He was assured that "CIA would give him everything he needed (telescopic sight, silencer, all the money he wanted)."[11]

Castro: questioned JFK and 9/11.

The Church committee used the term "ironic" to refer to the fact that the shooting of John Kennedy took place on the very day a Kennedy-Castro peace initiative was being countered by a CIA plan to kill Castro.[12] Why was there no discussion of the significance of the fact that the same people who were working for the overthrow of the Cuban government considered Kennedy and his peace initiatives serious obstacles to their plans?

Castro noted in his November 23, 1963 talk that Latin American rightwing forces might have been involved in the Kennedy killing. These forces, he said, had not only openly denounced Kennedy for his accommodation with Cuba but were pushing for an invasion of Cuba while simultaneously threatening a military coup in Brazil to prevent another Cuba. Castro could not know at the time what we now know, namely that the threatened coup in Brazil would indeed take place soon—on April 1, 1964. It would lead to a wave of authoritarianism and torture that would spread throughout Latin America.

If, therefore, we try to make the case that Castro's critique of the mainstream account of Kennedy's assassination was the result of paranoia, denial, and a delusional tendency to see conspiracies everywhere, we will have a hard row to hoe. Almost all the operations he mentioned in his talk, and several operations he did not mention, did involve conspiracies. Cuba was at the center of a set of actual and interconnected conspiracies.

I am not suggesting that because Castro *imagined* a particular scenario—ultra-right forces killing John Kennedy—it must have been true. That is not the point. The point is that only when our imagination embraces a hypothesis as possible will we seriously study that hypothesis and put it to the test.

The evidence accumulated over many years has shown, in my view, that Castro's view of who killed John Kennedy was correct. In fact, I think the evidence presented by the first wave of researchers fifty years ago settled the matter.[13] However, it is not my intention to try to prove this in the present article. My topic is the left imagination.

The silencing, by an elite American left, of both dissident researchers and those who have been targets of Western imperial power has reached an unprecedented level in the interpretation of the events of September 11, 2001. The inability of the Western left leadership to imagine that these events were fraudulent—that they involved, as Fidel Castro put it in 1963, people "playing a very strange role in a very strange play"—has blocked understanding not of only of 9/11 but of actual, existing imperialism and its formation and deformation of world politics.

9/11 and state officials facing imperial power

Talk about blaming the victim. Three days after 9/11 the eminent economist

Celso Furtado suggested in one of Brazil's most influential newspapers that there were two explanations for the attack. One possibility, Furtado implied, was that this savage assault on America was the work of foreign terrorists, as the Americans suspected. But a more plausible explanation, he asserted, was that this disaster was a provocation carried out by the American far right to justify a takeover. He compared the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon to the burning of the Reichstag in 1933 and the rise of the Nazis to power in Germany.[14]

Kenneth Maxwell wrote this paragraph in 2002. At the time he was the Nelson and David Rockefeller Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. The paragraph is from an article written for the Council entitled, "Anti-Americanism in Brazil." In writing his article Maxwell clearly felt no need to give evidence or argument as he dismissed Furtado. He must have felt his readers would agree that the absurdity of Furtado's remarks was self-evident. Furtado's claim would be off their radar, beyond their imagination.

Celso Furtado compared the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon to the burning of the Reichstag.

Certainly, Furtado's imagination had a wider scope than Maxwell's. Could his personal experience have had something to do with this? Furtado was more than an "eminent economist;" he was an extremely distinguished intellectual who had held the position of Minister of Planning in the Goulart government when it was overthrown in the April 1, 1964 coup in Brazil. Furtado said in a 2003 interview:

The United States was afraid of the direction we had been taking; this phase ended and we entered—as someone put it—the peace of the cemeteries, it was the era of the dictatorship. Thirty years went by without real thinking, without being able to participate in movements, with the most provocative and courageous young people being hunted down.[15]

Did Celso Furtado have a wild imagination when he implied there was U.S. support for the coup? Not at all. The coup was not only hoped for, but prepared for and offered support at the highest level in the U.S. [16]

Furtado has not been the only sceptical voice on the Latin American left. On the fifth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, the President of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, himself a major target of U.S. imperial force, entered the public debate. The Associated Press reported on September 12, 2006:

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said Tuesday that it's plausible that the U.S. government was involved in the Sept. 11 attacks.

Chavez did not specifically accuse the U.S. government of having a hand in the Sept. 11 attacks, but rather suggested that theories of U.S. involvement bear examination.

The Venezuelan leader, an outspoken critic of U.S. President George W. Bush, was reacting to a television report investigating a theory the Twin Towers were brought down with explosives after hijacked airplanes crashed into them in 2001.

"The hypothesis is not absurd ... that those towers could have been

dynamited,” Chavez said in a speech to supporters. “A building never collapses like that, unless it’s with an implosion.”

“The hypothesis that is gaining strength ... is that it was the same U.S. imperial power that planned and carried out this terrible terrorist attack or act against its own people and against citizens of all over the world,” Chavez said. “Why? To justify the aggressions that immediately were unleashed on Afghanistan, on Iraq.”[17]

Actually, scepticism in Venezuela about the 9/11 attacks was not new. In March of 2006, for example, well known survivor and eyewitness of the September 11, 2001 attacks, William Rodriguez, had spent time with high-ranking Venezuelan officials, including Chavez, and had given talks on television and in universities in that country.[18]

The culmination of this Venezuelan scepticism was a statement in a legislative resolution of the country’s National Assembly. The resolution, apparently passed unanimously in the fall of 2006, referred to the 9/11 attacks as “self-inflicted.”[19]

In a sneering attack on the Chavez government in the *Miami Herald*, journalist Phil Gunson felt no need to support, with evidence or reason, his claim that Chavez was merely engaging in “anti-imperialist rhetoric.”[20] Presumably he knew the imaginations of Floridians could be trusted to block out the possibility that the insane rhetoric about 9/11 might have some truth to it.

Chavez: “Those towers could have been dynamited.”

One year later, on the sixth anniversary of the attacks, Fidel Castro, at that point ill and retired from government but still keeping up with political events, made his own conclusions known. “That painful incident,” he said, “occurred six years ago today.” “Today,” he said, “we know that the public was deliberately misinformed.”

Castro listed several anomalies and omissions in the official reports. For example, he said:

“The calculations with respect to the steel structures, plane impacts, the black boxes recovered and what they revealed do not coincide with the opinions of mathematicians, seismologists...demolition experts and others.”

Referring to the attacks generally, and the attack on the Pentagon specifically, Castro said:

“We were deceived, as were the rest of the planet’s inhabitants.”[21]

This was a poignant admission by the man who had grasped the falsity of the Lee Harvey Oswald story one day after Kennedy’s assassination.

Reporting on Castro’s remarks in the *Guardian*, journalist Mark Tran said:

“Fidel Castro today joined the band of September 11 conspiracy theorists by accusing the US of spreading disinformation about the attacks that took place

six years ago.”[22]

Tran seems to have worried that the dismissive “conspiracy theorist” term might not put an end to the matter for readers of the *Guardian*, so he added two brief factual claims, one having to do with DNA evidence at the Pentagon and one having to do with a 2007 video allegedly showing Bin Laden giving an address.

The contempt for Castro’s intelligence, however, was breathtaking. Tran implied that his “facts,” which could have been found in about fifteen minutes on the Internet and which were subsequently questioned even by typically uncritical mainstream journalists, were beyond the research capabilities of the former President of Cuba.[23]

Indeed, much of the Western left leadership and associated media not only trusted the FBI[24] while ignoring Furtado, Chavez, the Venezuelan National Assembly and Fidel Castro; they also, through silence and ridicule, worked to prevent serious public discussion of the 9/11 controversy.

Among the U.S. left media that kept the silence, partially or wholly, are:

Monthly Review
Common Dreams
Huffington Post
Counterpunch
The Nation
The Real News
Democracy Now!
Z Magazine
The Progressive
Mother Jones
Alternet.org
MoveOn.org



In the end, the most dramatic public challenge to the official account of 9/11 by a state leader did not come from the left. It came from a conservative leader who was, however, a target of U.S. imperial power. Speaking to the United Nations General Assembly on September 23, 2010, President Ahmadinejad of Iran outlined three possible hypotheses for the 9/11 attacks.[25] The first was the U.S. government’s hypothesis—“a very powerful and complex terrorist group, able to successfully cross all layers of the American intelligence and security, carried out the attack.”

The second was the hypothesis that “some segments within the U.S. government

orchestrated the attack to reverse the declining American economy and its grips on the Middle East in order also to save the Zionist regime.” The third was a somewhat weaker version of the second, namely that the assault “was carried out by a terrorist group but the American government supported and took advantage of the situation.”

Ahmadinejad implied, though he did not definitively claim, that he favoured the second hypothesis. He went on to suggest that even if waging war were an appropriate response to a terrorist attack—he did not think it was—a thorough and independent investigation should have preceded the assaults on Afghanistan and Iraq in which hundreds of thousands of people died.

He ended his discussion of 9/11 with a proposal that the UN set up an independent fact-finding group to look into the 9/11 events.

In reporting on this event, *The New York Times* noted that Ahmadinejad’s comments

“prompted at least 33 delegations to walk out, including the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Costa Rica, all 27 members of the European Union and the union’s representative.”[26]

The *Times*’ report was given to remarks that sidestepped the Iranian president’s assertions. Ahmadinejad’s remarks were made to endear himself to the world’s Muslim community, and especially to the Arab world. Ahmadinejad was playing the politician in Iran, where he had to contend with conservatives trying to “outflank him.” Ahmadinejad wanted to keep himself “at the center of global attention while deflecting attention away from his dismal domestic record.” Ahmadinejad “obviously delights in being provocative” and “seemed to go out of his way to sabotage any comments he made previously this week about Iran’s readiness for dialogue with the United States.”

Ahmadinejad proposed that the UN investigate 9/11.

The possibility that Ahmadinejad might have been sincere, or that there may have been an evidential basis for his views, was not mentioned.

Meanwhile, the reported response to Ahmadinejad’s talk by the United States Mission to the United Nations was harsh:

Rather than representing the aspirations and goodwill of the Iranian people, Mr. Ahmadinejad has yet again chosen to spout vile conspiracy theories and anti-Semitic slurs that are as abhorrent and delusional as they are predictable.

Where were these anti-Semitic slurs? In his talk the Iranian President condemned Israeli actions against Palestinians and included as one of the possible motives of a 9/11 inside job the saving of “the Zionist regime” by U.S. government insiders. But how is either of these an anti-Semitic slur? He said nothing in his speech, hateful or otherwise, about Jews. He did not identify Zionism, as an ideology or historical movement, with Jews as a collectivity. He did not identify the state of Israel with Jews as a collectivity. He did not say “the Jews” carried out the 9/11 attacks.

And what did the U.S. Mission mean when it said that Ahmadinejad did not represent the

views of Iranians? His views on 9/11 were probably much closer to the views of Iranians than were the views of the U.S. Mission. As will be explained later, the great majority of the world's Muslims reject the official account of 9/11.

In his address to the General Assembly the following year, Ahmadinejad briefly revisited this issue, saying that, after his 2010 proposal of an investigation into 9/11, Iran was put "under pressure and threat by the government of the United States." Moreover, he said, instead of supporting a fact-finding team, the U.S. killed the alleged perpetrator of the attacks (Osama bin Laden) without bringing him to trial.[27]



In 2012 another leader in the Muslim world made his position on 9/11 known. Dr. Mahathir Mohamad (left) had been Prime Minister of Malaysia from 1981 to 2003 and was still in 2012 a significant power in his country and a major figure in the global south. [He also served as Prime Minister from 2018-2020]

By then he had spent considerable time discussing 9/11 with several well-known members of the U.S. movement of dissent (including William Rodriguez and David Ray Griffin)[28] and had indicated that he questioned the official account. But on November 19, 2012 he left no doubt about his position. In a 20-minute public address introducing a day-long international conference on 9/11 in Kuala Lumpur, he noted:

The official explanation for the destruction of the Twin Towers is still about an attack by suicidal Muslim extremists, but even among Americans this explanation is beginning to wear thin and to be questioned. In fact, certain American groups have thoroughly analyzed various aspects of the attack and destruction of the Twin Towers, the Pentagon building, and the reported crash in Pennsylvania. And their investigations reveal many aspects of the attack which cannot be explained by attributing them to attacks by terrorists—Muslims or non-Muslims.

He went on to give details of the official narrative that he found especially unconvincing, and he concluded that the 9/11 attack:

...has divided the world into Muslim and non-Muslim and sowed the seeds of suspicion and hatred between them. It has undermined the security of nations everywhere, forcing them to spend trillions of dollars on security measures...Truly, 9/11 is the worst manmade disaster for the world since the end of the two world wars. For that reason alone it is important that we seek the truth because when truth is revealed then we can really prepare to protect and secure ourselves.[29]

There is no need to quote Western media coverage of Mahathir's remarks because, as far as

I can tell, there was none—an outcome Mahathir had predicted in his talk.

Now, of course, it is possible that these current and former state officials had not seriously studied 9/11 and were simply intoxicated by anti-imperial fervour. But the evidence suggests otherwise. Those who visited Venezuela well before the public pronouncements in that country in September of 2006 noted that officials had collected books and other materials on the subject of 9/11.[30] And Malaysia's Mahathir had been meeting people to discuss the issue for years. There is no reason to doubt what he said in his 2012 talk: "I have thought a lot about 9/11." The dismissal of these leaders by the Western left is puzzling, to say the least.

Educator Paulo Freire, himself a victim of the 1964 coup in Brazil, pointed out years ago that when members of an oppressor class join oppressed people in their struggle for justice they may, despite the best of intentions, bring prejudices with them, "which include a lack of confidence in the people's ability to think...and to know." [31] Is it possible that the left leadership in the U.S. has fallen into this trap?

The dismissal of 9/11 sceptics has been carried out through a silence punctuated by occasional outbursts. The late Alexander Cockburn of *Counterpunch* was given to outbursts. Not content to speak of the "fundamental idiocy of the 9/11 conspiracists" and to tie them to the decline of the American left, Cockburn even took the opportunity to go beyond 9/11 and pledge allegiance once more, as he had in previous years, to the Warren Commission's Lee Harvey Oswald hypothesis [32]—a hypothesis that had, in my opinion, been shown to be absurd half a century ago.

In a January 2017 article entitled, "American Psychosis," Chris Hedges continued the anti-dissent campaign. Crying out that, "We feel trapped in a hall of mirrors," Hedges announced that:

The lies fly out of the White House like flocks of pigeons: Donald Trump's election victory was a landslide. He had the largest inauguration crowds in American history... We don't know "who really knocked down" the World Trade Center. Torture works. Mexico will pay for the wall. Conspiracy theories are fact. Scientific facts are conspiracies.[33]

The hall of mirrors is real enough but Hedges' rant offers no escape. As far as I can discover, Hedges has made no serious study of what happened at the World Trade Center on 9/11 and has, therefore, no idea who knocked down the buildings.[34] Moreover, he appears never to have seriously thought about what a "conspiracy theory" is and what he is denouncing when he denounces such theories. Does he really mean to suggest that the American ruling class, in pursuing its interests, never conspires?

And thus the U.S. left leadership sits in the left chamber of the hall of mirrors, complaining about conspiracy theories while closing its eyes to actual conspiracies crucial to contemporary imperialism.

9/11 and public opinion

If state leaders familiar with Western imperial power have questioned the official narrative of the September 11, 2001 attacks, what about "the people" beloved of the left?

Actually, sorting out what portion of the world's population qualifies, according to ideological criteria, as "the people" is a difficult task—an almost metaphysical exercise. So let us ask an easier question: what, according to surveys undertaken, appears to be the level of belief and unbelief in the world with respect to the 9/11 narrative?

There have been many polls. Comparing and compiling the results is very difficult since the same questions are seldom asked, in precisely the same words, in different polls. It is, however, possible to set forth grounded estimates.

In 2008, WorldPublicOpinion.org polled over 16,000 people in 17 countries. Of the total population of 2.5 billion people represented in the survey, only 39% said they thought that Al-Qaeda was behind the 9/11 attacks.[35]

The belief that Al-Qaeda carried out the attacks is, I suggest, an essential component of belief in the official narrative of 9/11. If only 39% is willing to name Al-Qaeda as responsible, then a maximum of 39% can be counted as believers of the official narrative.

This WorldPublicOpinion.org poll is, for the most part, supported by other polls, suggesting that the U.S. official narrative is, globally, a minority view. If these figures are correct, of the current world population of 7.5 billion, roughly 2.9 billion people affirm the official view of 9/11 and 4.6 billion do not affirm it.

Now, of the 61% who do not affirm the official view of 9/11, a large percentage says it does not know who carried out the attacks (by implication, it does not know what the goals of the attackers were, and so on). But the number of those who think the U.S. government was behind the attacks is by no means trivial. The figure appears to be about 14% of the world's population.[36] If this is correct, roughly 1 billion people think the U.S. government was behind the attacks. Of course, this figure includes children. But even when we exclude everyone under 18 years of age we have 700 million adults in the world who think the U.S. government was behind the 9/11 attacks.

It is not clear if the *Guardian's* "band of September 11 conspiracy theorists," which Castro was said to have joined, consists of this 700 million people or if it consists of the entire group of 4.6 billion non-believers. Either way, we are talking about a pretty large "band."

Do these poll results prove that the official narrative is false? No. Do they prove that blaming elements of the U.S. government is correct? No. But these figures suggest two things. First, the official story, despite its widespread dissemination, has failed to capture the imaginations of the majority of people on the planet. Second, the minds of 700 million adults have no trouble embracing the possibility that elements of the U.S. government were behind the attacks.

What can be said about the views of that segment of the world population that is most clearly targeted by Western imperialism today?

The so-called Global War on Terror, announced shortly after the 9/11 events, has mainly targeted countries with Muslim majorities.

The 2008 WorldPublicOpinion.org poll of people in 17 countries included five countries with majority Muslim populations. Of the total Muslim population represented in the survey (399.6 million people in 2008), only 21.2% assigned guilt to Al-Qaeda.[37]

In 2011 the Pew Research Group surveyed eight Muslim populations. Of the total Muslim population represented (588.2 million in 2011), only 17% assigned guilt to Arabs.[38]

The evidence suggests that scepticism toward the official account among Muslims has been growing. In December of 2016 a published poll of British Muslims indicated that only 4% of those polled believed that “Al-Qaeda/Muslim terrorists” were responsible for 9/11, whereas 31% held the American government responsible.[39] This is remarkable given the unvarying, repetitive telling of the official story by British mainstream media and political parties.

Are British Muslims wallowing in feelings of victimhood, which have made them prey to extremists peddling “conspiracy theories?” As a matter of fact, the British think tank that sponsored the 2016 poll has drawn this conclusion. But the think tank in question, Policy Exchange, has a special relationship to the UK’s Conservative Party and appears to have carried out the poll precisely in order to put British Muslims under increased scrutiny and suspicion.[40]

Cannot the left, in its interpretation of the views of this targeted population, do better?

Most peculiar and disturbing is the tendency of left activists and leaders to join with state intelligence agencies in using the term “conspiracy theory” to dismiss those who raise questions about official state narratives.

There seems to be little awareness among these left critics of the history of the term.[41] They seem not to realize that they are employing a propaganda expression, the function of which is to discourage people from looking beneath the surface of political events, especially political events in which elements of their own government might have played a hidden and unsavoury role.

In the case of the 9/11 attacks it is important to remember, when the “conspiracy theory” accusation is made, that the lone wolf alternative, which was available for the John Kennedy assassination, is not available here. Everyone agrees that the attack was the result of multiple persons planning in secret to commit a crime. That is, the attack was the result of a conspiracy. The question is not, Was there a conspiracy? The question is, Who were the conspirators? Defamation cannot answer this question.

Conclusion

Suppose our imaginations can embrace the possibility that the 9/11 attacks were orchestrated by elements in the U.S. government. In that case what do we do next? There is no mystery. Once the imagination stops filtering out a hypothesis and allows it into the realm of the possible, it can be put to the test. Evidence and reason must now do the job.[42] Imagination cannot settle the question of truth or falsity any more than ideology, morality, or “common sense.”

I am not concerned in this article to demonstrate the truth of the “inside job” hypothesis of the 9/11 attacks. Ten years of research have led me to conclude that it is correct, but in the present paper I am concerned only with the preliminary, but vital, issue of imagination. Those who cannot imagine this hypothesis to be true will leave it unexamined, and, in the worst of worlds, will contribute to the silencing of dissenters. The left, in this case, will betray the best of its tradition and abandon both the targets of imperial oppression and their

spokespeople.

Fidel Castro sounded the warning in his November 23, 1963 speech:

Intellectuals and lovers of peace should understand the danger that maneuvers of this kind could mean to world peace, and what a conspiracy of this type, what a Machiavellian policy of this nature, could lead to.

(*I would like to thank Ed Curtin for his inspiration and advice.—GM)

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Notes

[1] Martin Schotz, *History Will Not Absolve US: Orwellian Control, Public Denial, and the Murder of President Kennedy* (Brookline, Massachusetts: Kurtz, Ulmer & DeLucia, 1996), Appendix II.

[2] Michael Morrissey, *Correspondence with Vincent Salandria 1993-2000* (Michael D. Morrissey, 2007), 436.

[3] Schotz, *History Will Not Absolve US: Orwellian Control, Public Denial, and the Murder of President Kennedy*, 241.

[4] Schotz, *History Will Not Absolve US: Orwellian Control, Public Denial, and the Murder of President Kennedy*, 14ff., Appendices VII and VIII.

[5] Morrissey, *Correspondence with Vincent Salandria 1993-2000* (Chomsky's position is a continuing theme in the book); Schotz, *History Will Not Absolve US: Orwellian Control, Public Denial, and the Murder of President Kennedy*, Appendix VIII; Barrie Zwicker, *Towers of Deception: The Media Cover-Up of 9/11* (Canada: New Society Publishers, 2006), chap. 5, p. 206.

[6] Zwicker, *Towers of Deception: The Media Cover-Up of 9/11*, 208 and throughout chapter 5.

[7] Morrissey, *Correspondence with Vincent Salandria 1993-2000*, 421.

[8] "ANNEX TO APPENDIX TO ENCLOSURE A: PRETEXTS TO JUSTIFY US MILITARY INTERVENTION IN CUBA (OPERATION NORTHWOODS, pp. 137 ff.)," 1962, <http://www.maryferrell.org/mffweb/archive/viewer/showDoc.do?docId=1244&relPageId=137>.

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- [28] Richard Roepke, "Last Man Out on 9/11 Makes Shocking Disclosures," *COTO Report*, August 10, 2011, <https://coto2.wordpress.com/2011/08/10/last-man-out-on-911-makes-shocking-disclosures/>. The information about David Ray Griffin's 30-60 minute discussion with Mahathir is from my personal correspondence with Dr. Griffin.
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