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We Are All Hostages of 9/11

After years of reporting on the Great War on Terror, many questions behind the US attacks remain unresolved

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In-depth Report: AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN

Afghanistan was bombed and invaded because of 9/11. I was there from the start, even before 9/11. On August 20, 2001, I interviewed commander Ahmad Shah Massoud, the "Lion of the Panjshir," who told me about an "unholy alliance" of the Taliban, al-Qaeda and the ISI (Pakistani intel).

Back in Peshawar, I learned that something really big was coming: my article was published by Asia Times on August 30. Commander Massoud was killed on September 9: I received a terse email from a Panjshir source, only stating, "the commander has been shot." Two days later, 9/11 happened.

And yet, the day before, none other than Osama bin Laden, in person, was in a Pakistani hospital in Rawalpindi, receiving treatment, as CBS reported. Bin Laden was proclaimed the perpetrator already at 11am on 9/11 – with no investigation whatsoever. It should have been not exactly hard to locate him in Pakistan and "bring him to justice."

In December 2001 I was in Tora Bora tracking bin Laden – under B-52 bombers and side by side with Pashtun mujahideen. Later, in 2011, I would revisit the day bin Laden vanished forever.

One year after 9/11, I was back in Afghanistan for an in-depth investigation of the killing of Massoud. By then it was possible to establish a Saudi connection: the letter of introduction for Massoud's killers, who posed as journalists, was facilitated by commander Sayyaf, a Saudi asset.

For three years my life revolved around the Global War on Terror; most of the time I lived literally on the road, in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, the Persian Gulf and Brussels. At the start of 'Shock and Awe' on Iraq, in March 2003, Asia Times published my in-depth investigation of which neo-cons concocted the war on Iraq.

In 2004, roving across the US, I re-traced the Taliban's trip to Texas, and how a top priority, since the Clinton years all the way to the neo-cons, was about what I had baptized as "Pipelineistan" – in this case how to build the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline, bypassing Iran and Russia, and extending US control of Central and South Asia.

Later on, I delved into the hard questions the 9/11 Commission never asked, and how Bush's 2004 reelection campaign was totally conditioned by and dependent on 9/11.

Michael Ruppert, a CIA whistleblower, who may – or may not – have committed suicide in 2014, was a top 9/11 analyst. We exchanged a lot of information, and always emphasized the same points: Afghanistan was all about (existent) heroin and (non-existent) pipelines.

In 2011, the late, great Bob Parry would debunk more Afghanistan lies. And in 2017, I would detail a top reason why the US will never leave Afghanistan: the heroin rat line.

US troops at an opium field in Afghanistan

Now, President Trump may have identified a possible Afghan deal – which the Taliban, who control two-thirds of the country, are bound to refuse, as it allows withdrawal of only 5,000 out of 13,000 US troops. Moreover, the US 'Deep State' is absolutely against any deal, as well as India and the rickety government in Kabul.

But Pakistan and China are in favor, especially because Beijing plans to incorporate Kabul into the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and have Afghanistan admitted as a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, thus attaching the Hindu Kush and the Khyber Pass to the ongoing Eurasia integration process.

Praying for a Pearl

Eighteen years after the game-changing fact, we all remain hostages of 9/11. US neocons, gathered at the Project for the New American Century, had been praying for a "Pearl Harbor" to reorient US foreign policy since 1997. Their prayers were answered beyond their wildest dreams.

Already in *The Grand Chessboard*, also published in 1997, former National Security Adviser and Trilateral Commission co-founder Zbigniew Brzezinski, nominally not a neocon, had pointed out that the American public "supported America's engagement in World War II largely because of the shock effect of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor."

So, Brzezinski added,

> America "may find it more difficult to fashion a consensus on foreign policy issues, except in the circumstance of a truly massive and widely perceived direct external threat." HREEEEE

As an attack on the homeland, 9/11 generated the Global War on Terror, launched at 11pm on the same day, initially christened "The Long War" by the Pentagon, later sanitized as Overseas Contingency Operations by the Obama administration. This cost trillions of dollars, killed over half a million people and branched out into illegal wars against seven Muslim nations – all justified on "humanitarian grounds" and allegedly supported by the "international community."

Year after year, 9/11 is essentially a You Have The Right to Accept Only The Official Version ritual ceremony, even as widespread evidence suggests the US government knew 9/11 would happen and did not stop it.

Three days after 9/11, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung reported that in June 2001, German intelligence warned the CIA that Middle East terrorists were "planning to hijack commercial aircraft to use as weapons to attack important symbols of American and Israeli culture."

In August 2001, President Putin ordered Russian intel to tell the US government "in the strongest possible terms" of imminent attacks on airports and government buildings, MSNBC revealed in an interview with Putin that was broadcast on September 15 that year.

No US government agency has released any information on who used foreknowledge of 9/11 in the financial markets. The US Congress did not even raise the issue. In Germany, investigative financial journalist Lars Schall has been working for years on a massive study detailing to a great extent insider trading before 9/11.

While NORAD sleeps

Discrediting the official, immutable 9/11 narrative remains the ultimate taboo. Hundreds of architects and engineers engaged in meticulous technical debunking of all aspects of 9/11's official story are summarily dismissed as "conspiracy theorists."

In contrast, skepticism rooted in Greek and Latin tradition came up with arguably the best documentary on 9/11: Zero, an Italian production. Just as arguably the most stimulating book on 9/11 is also Italian: The Myth of September 11, by Roberto Quaglia, which offers a delicately nuanced narrative of 9/11 as a myth structured as a movie. The book became a huge hit in Eastern Europe.

Serious questions suggest quite plausible suspects to be investigated regarding 9/11, far more than 19 Arabs with box cutters. Ten years ago, in Asia Times, I asked 50 questions, some of them extremely detailed, about 9/11. After reader demand and suggestions, I added 20 more. None of these questions were convincingly addressed – not to mention answered – by the official narrative.

World public opinion is directed to believe that on the morning of 9/11 four airliners, presumably hijacked by 19 Arabs with box cutters, traveled undisturbed – for two hours – across the most controlled airspace on the planet, which is supervised by the most devastating military apparatus ever.

American Airlines Flight 11 deviated from its path at 8.13am and crashed into the first World Trade Center tower at 8.57am. Only at 8.46am did NORAD – the North American Aerospace Defense Command – order that two intercepting F-15s take off from Otis military base.

By a curious coincidence a Pentagon war game was in effect on the morning of 9/11 – so air-controllers' radars may have registered only 'ghost signals' of nonexistent aircraft simulating an air attack. Well, it was much more complicated than that, as demonstrated by professional pilots.

'Angel was next'

World public opinion is also directed to believe that a Boeing 757 – with a wingspan of 38 meters – managed to penetrate the Pentagon through a six-meter-wide hole and at the height of the first floor. A Boeing 757 with landing gear is 13 meters high. Airliners electronically refuse to crash – so it's quite a feat to convince one to fly five to 10 meters above the ground, landing gear on, at a lightning speed of 800 kilometers an hour.

According to the official narrative, the Boeing 757 literally pulverized itself. Yet even after pulverization, it managed to perforate six walls of three rings of the Pentagon, leaving a two-meter wide hole in the last wall but only slightly damaging the second and third rings. The official narrative is that the hole was caused by the plane's nose – still quite hard even after pulverization. Yet the rest of the plane – a mass of 100 tons traveling at 800 kilometers an hour – miraculously stopped at the first ring.

All that happened under the stewardship of one Hani Hanjour, who three weeks before had been judged by his flight instructors to be incapable of piloting a Cessna. Hanjour, nonetheless, managed to accomplish an ultra-fast spiral descent at 270 degrees, aligning at a maximum 10 meters above ground, minutely calibrating the trajectory, and keeping a cruise speed of roughly 800 kilometers an hour.

At 9.37am, Hanjour hit precisely the Pentagon's budget analysts' office, where everyone was busy working on the mysterious disappearance of no less than $2.3 trillion that Defense Secretary Donald "Known Unknowns" Rumsfeld, in a press conference the day before, said could not be tracked. So, it's not only Boeings that get pulverized inside the Pentagon.

World public opinion is also directed to believe that Newtonian physics was suspended as a special bonus for WTC 1 and 2 on 9/11 (not to mention WTC 7, which was not even hit by any plane). The slower WTC tower took 10 seconds to fall 411 meters, starting from immobility. So it fell at 148 kilometers an hour. Considering the initial acceleration time, it was a free fall, not the least impeded by 47 massive, vertical steel beams that composed the tower's structural heart.

World public opinion is also directed to believe that United Airlines Flight 93 – 150 tons of aircraft with 45 people, 200 seats, luggage, a wingspan of 38 meters – crashed in a field in Pennsylvania and also literally pulverized itself, totally disappearing inside a hole six meters by three meters wide and only two meters deep.

Suddenly, Air Force One was "the only plane in the sky." Colonel Mark Tillman, who was on board, recalled:

> "We get this report that there's a call saying 'Angel' was next. No one really

> knows now where the comment came from – it got mistranslated or garbled amid the White House, the Situation Room, the radio operators. 'Angel' was our code name. The fact that they knew about 'Angel,' well, you had to be in the inner circle."

This means that 19 Arabs with box cutters, and most of all their handlers, surely must have been "in the inner circle." Inevitably, this was never fully investigated.

Already in 1997, Brzezinski had warned,

> "it is imperative that no Eurasian challenger emerges capable of dominating Eurasia and thus of also challenging America."

In the end, much to the despair of US neocons, all the combined sound and fury of 9/11 and the Global War on Terror/Overseas Contingency Operations, in less than two decades, ended up metastasized into not only a challenger but a Russia-China strategic partnership. This is the real "enemy" – not al-Qaeda, a flimsy figment of the CIA's imagination, rehabilitated and sanitized as "moderate rebels" in Syria.

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