

The Imperial Anatomy of Al-Qaeda. The CIA's Drug-Running Terrorists and the "Arc of Crisis"

Part I

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Introduction

As the 9th anniversary of 9/11 nears, and the war on terror continues to be waged and grows in ferocity and geography, it seems all the more imperative to return to the events of that fateful September morning and re-examine the reasons for war and the nature of the stated culprit, Al-Qaeda.

The events of 9/11 pervade the American and indeed the world imagination as an historical myth. The events of that day and those leading up to it remain largely unknown and little understood by the general public, apart from the disturbing images repeated ad nauseam in the media. The facts and troubled truths of that day are lost in the folklore of the 9/11 myth: that the largest attack carried out on American ground was orchestrated by 19 Muslims armed with box cutters and urged on by religious fundamentalism, all under the direction of Osama bin Laden, the leader of a global terrorist network called al-Qaeda, based out of a cave in Afghanistan.

The myth sweeps aside the facts and complex nature of terror, al-Qaeda, the American empire and literally defies the laws of physics. As John F. Kennedy once said, "The greatest enemy of the truth is not the lie – deliberate, contrived, and dishonest – but the myth – persistent, pervasive, and unrealistic."

This three-part series on "The Imperial Anatomy of Al-Qaeda" examines the geopolitical historical origins and nature of what we today know as al-Qaeda, which is in fact an Anglo-American intelligence network of terrorist assets used to advance American and NATO imperial objectives in various regions around the world.

Part 1 examines the origins of the intelligence network known as the Safari Club, which financed and organized an international conglomerate of terrorists, the CIA's role in the global drug trade, the emergence of the Taliban and the origins of al-Qaeda.

The Safari Club

Following Nixon's resignation as President, Gerald Ford became the new US President in 1974. Henry Kissinger remained as Secretary of State and Ford brought into his administration two names that would come to play important roles in the future of the American Empire: Donald Rumsfeld as Ford's Chief of Staff, and Dick Cheney, as Deputy

Assistant to the President. The Vice President was Nelson Rockefeller, David Rockefeller's brother. When Donald Rumsfeld was promoted to Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney was promoted to Chief of Staff. Ford had also appointed a man named George H.W. Bush as CIA Director.

In 1976, a coalition of intelligence agencies was formed, which was called the Safari Club. This marked the discreet and highly covert coordination among various intelligence agencies, which would last for decades. It formed at a time when the CIA was embroiled in domestic scrutiny over the Watergate scandal and a Congressional investigation into covert CIA activities, forcing the CIA to become more covert in its activities.

In 2002, the Saudi intelligence chief, Prince Turki bin Faisal gave a speech in which he stated that in response to the CIA's need for more discretion, "a group of countries got together in the hope of fighting Communism and established what was called the Safari Club. The Safari Club included France, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Iran [under the Shah]."[1] However, "The Safari Club needed a network of banks to finance its intelligence operations. With the official blessing of George H.W. Bush as the head of the CIA," Saudi intelligence chief, Kamal Adham, "transformed a small Pakistani merchant bank, the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), into a world-wide money-laundering machine, buying banks around the world to create the biggest clandestine money network in history." [2]

As CIA director, George H.W. Bush "cemented strong relations with the intelligence services of both Saudi Arabia and the shah of Iran. He worked closely with Kamal Adham, the head of Saudi intelligence, brother-in-law of King Faisal and an early BCCI insider." Adham had previously acted as a "channel between [Henry] Kissinger and [Egyptian President] Anwar Sadat" in 1972. In 1976, Iran, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia formed the Safari Club "to conduct through their own intelligence agencies operations that were now difficult for the CIA," which was largely organized by the head of French intelligence, Alexandre de Marenches.[3]

The "Arc of Crisis" and the Iranian Revolution

When Jimmy Carter became President in 1977, he appointed over two-dozen members of the Trilateral Commission to his administration, which was an international think tank formed by Zbigniew Brzezinski and David Rockefeller in 1973. Brzezinski had invited Carter to join the Trilateral Commission, and when Carter became President, Brzezinski became National Security Adviser; Cyrus Vance, also a member of the Commission, became Secretary of State; and Samuel Huntington, another Commission member, became Coordinator of National Security and Deputy to Brzezinski. Author and researcher Peter Dale Scott deserves much credit for his comprehensive analysis of the events leading up to and during the Iranian Revolution in his book, "The Road to 9/11",* which provides much of the information below.

Samuel Huntington and Zbigniew Brzezinski were to determine the US policy position in the Cold War, and the US-Soviet policy they created was termed, "Cooperation and Competition," in which Brzezinski would press for "Cooperation" when talking to the press, yet, privately push for "competition." So, while Secretary of State Cyrus Vance was pursuing détente with the Soviet Union, Brzezinski was pushing for American supremacy over the Soviet Union. Brzezinski and Vance would come to disagree on almost every issue.[4]

In 1978, Zbigniew Brzezinski gave a speech in which he stated, “An arc of crisis stretches along the shores of the Indian Ocean, with fragile social and political structures in a region of vital importance to us threatened with fragmentation. The resulting political chaos could well be filled by elements hostile to our values and sympathetic to our adversaries.” The Arc of Crisis stretched from Indochina to southern Africa, although, more specifically, the particular area of focus was “the nations that stretch across the southern flank of the Soviet Union from the Indian subcontinent to Turkey, and southward through the Arabian Peninsula to the Horn of Africa.” Further, the “center of gravity of this arc is Iran, the world’s fourth largest oil producer and for more than two decades a citadel of U.S. military and economic strength in the Middle East. Now it appears that the 37-year reign of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi is almost over, ended by months of rising civil unrest and revolution.”[5]

With rising discontent in the region, “There was this idea that the Islamic forces could be used against the Soviet Union. The theory was, there was an arc of crisis, and so an arc of Islam could be mobilized to contain the Soviets. It was a Brzezinski concept.”[6] A month prior to Brzezinski’s speech, in November of 1978, “President Carter named the Bilderberg group’s George Ball, another member of the Trilateral Commission, to head a special White House Iran task force under the National Security Council’s Brzezinski.” Further, “Ball recommended that Washington drop support for the Shah of Iran and support the fundamentalist Islamic opposition of Ayatollah Khomeini.”[7] George Ball’s visit to Iran was a secret mission.[8]

Throughout 1978, the Shah was under the impression that “the Carter administration was plotting to topple his regime.” In 1978, the Queen and Shah’s wife, told Manouchehr Ganji, a minister in the Shah’s government, that, “I wanted to tell you that the Americans are maneuvering to bring down the Shah,” and she continued saying that she believed “they even want to topple the regime.”[9] The US Ambassador to Iran, William Sullivan, thought that the revolution would succeed, and told this to Ramsey Clark, former US Attorney General under the Johnson administration, as well as professor Richard Falk, when they were visiting Sullivan in Iran in 1978. Clark and Falk then went from Iran to Paris, to visit Khomeini, who was there in exile. James Bill, a Carter adviser, felt that, “a religious movement brought about with the United States’ assistance would be a natural friend of the United States.”[10]

Also interesting is the fact that the British BBC broadcast pro-Khomeini Persian-language programs daily in Iran, as a subtle form of propaganda, which “gave credibility to the perception of United States and British support of Khomeini.”[11] The BBC refused to give the Shah a platform to respond, and “[r]epeated personal appeals from the Shah to the BBC yielded no result.”[12]

In the May 1979 meeting of the Bilderberg Group, Bernard Lewis, a British historian of great influence (hence, the Bilderberg membership), presented a British-American strategy which, “endorsed the radical Muslim Brotherhood movement behind Khomeini, in order to promote balkanization of the entire Muslim Near East along tribal and religious lines. Lewis argued that the West should encourage autonomous groups such as the Kurds, Armenians, Lebanese Maronites, Ethiopian Copts, Azerbaijani Turks, and so forth. The chaos would spread in what he termed an ‘Arc of Crisis,’ which would spill over into the Muslim regions of the Soviet Union.”[13] Further, it would prevent Soviet influence from entering the Middle East, as the Soviet Union was viewed as an empire of atheism and godlessness: essentially a secular and immoral empire, which would seek to impose secularism across Muslim countries. So supporting radical Islamic groups would mean that the Soviet Union would be less likely to

have any influence or relations with Middle Eastern countries, making the US a more acceptable candidate for developing relations.

A 1979 article in *Foreign Affairs*, the journal of the Council on Foreign Relations, described the Arc of Crisis, saying that, “The Middle East constitutes its central core. Its strategic position is unequalled: it is the last major region of the Free World directly adjacent to the Soviet Union, it holds in its subsoil about three-fourths of the proven and estimated world oil reserves, and it is the locus of one of the most intractable conflicts of the twentieth century: that of Zionism versus Arab nationalism.” It went on to explain that post-war US policy in the region was focused on “containment” of the Soviet Union, as well as access to the regions oil.[14] The article continued, explaining that the most “obvious division” within the Middle East is, “that which separates the Northern Tier (Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan) from the Arab core,” and that, “After World War II, Turkey and Iran were the two countries most immediately threatened by Soviet territorial expansionism and political subversion.”[15] Ultimately, “the Northern Tier was assured of a serious and sustained American commitment to save it from sharing the fate of Eastern Europe.”[16]

While Khomeini was in Paris prior to the Revolution, a representative of the French President organized a meeting between Khomeini and “current world powers,” in which Khomeini made certain demands, such as, “the shah’s removal from Iran and help in avoiding a coup d’état by the Iranian Army.” The Western powers, however, “were worried about the Soviet Union’s empowerment and penetration and a disruption in Iran’s oil supply to the west. Khomeini gave the necessary guarantees. These meetings and contacts were taking place in January of 1979, just a few days before the Islamic Revolution in February 1979.”[17] In February of 1979, Khomeini was flown out of Paris on an Air France flight, to return to Iran, “with the blessing of Jimmy Carter.”[18] Ayatollah Khomeini named Mehdi Bazargan as prime minister of the Provisional Revolutionary Government on February 4, 1979. As Khomeini had demanded during his Paris meeting in January 1979, that western powers must help in avoiding a coup by the Iranian Army; in that same month, the Carter administration, under the direction of Brzezinski, had begun planning a military coup.[19]

Could this have been planned in the event that Khomeini was overthrown, the US would quickly reinstate order, perhaps even place Khomeini back in power? Interestingly, in January of 1979, “as the Shah was about to leave the country, the American Deputy Commander in NATO, General Huyser, arrived and over a period of a month conferred constantly with Iranian military leaders. His influence may have been substantial on the military’s decision not to attempt a coup and eventually to yield to the Khomeini forces, especially if press reports are accurate that he or others threatened to withhold military supplies if a coup were attempted.”[20] No coup was subsequently undertaken, and Khomeini came to power as the Ayatollah of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

As tensions increased among the population within Iran, the US sent “security advisers” to Iran to pressure the Shah’s SAVAK (secret police) to implement “a policy of ever more brutal repression, in a manner calculated to maximize popular antipathy to the Shah.” The Carter administration also began publicly criticizing the Shah’s human rights abuses.[21] On September 6, 1978, the Shah banned demonstrations, and the following day, between 700 and 2000 demonstrators were gunned down, following “advice from Brzezinski to be firm.”[22]

The US Ambassador to the UN, Andrew Young, a Trilateral Commission member, said that, “Khomeini will eventually be hailed as a saint,” and the US Ambassador to Iran, William Sullivan, said, “Khomeini is a Gandhi-like figure,” while Carter’s adviser, James Bill, said that Khomeini was a man of “impeccable integrity and honesty.”[23]

The Shah was also very sick in late 1978 and early 1979. So the Shah fled Iran in January of 1979 to the Bahamas, allowing for the revolution to take place. It is especially interesting to understand the relationship between David Rockefeller and the Shah of Iran. David Rockefeller’s personal assistant, Joseph V. Reed, had been “assigned to handle the shah’s finances and his personal needs;” Robert Armao, who worked for Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, was sent to “act as the shah’s public relations agent and lobbyist;” and Benjamin H. Kean, “a longtime associate of Chase Manhattan Bank chairman David Rockefeller,” and David Rockefeller’s “personal physician,” who was sent to Mexico when the shah was there, and advised that he “be treated at an American hospital.”[24]

It is important to note that Rockefeller interests “had directed U.S. policy in Iran since the CIA coup of 1953.”[25] Following the Shah’s flight from Iran, there were increased pressures within the United States by a handful of powerful people to have the Shah admitted to the United States. These individuals were Zbigniew Brzezinski, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, John J. McCloy, former statesman and senior member of the Bilderberg Group, Trilateral Commission and the Council on Foreign Relations, who was also a lawyer for Chase Manhattan, and of course, David Rockefeller.[26]

Chase Manhattan Bank had more interests in Iran than any other US bank. In fact, the Shah had “ordered that all his government’s major operating accounts be held at Chase and that letters of credit for the purchase of oil be handled exclusively through Chase. The bank also became the agent and lead manager for many of the loans to Iran. In short, Iran became the crown jewel of Chase’s international banking portfolio.”[27]

The Iranian interim government, headed by Prime Minister Bazargan, collapsed in November of 1979, when Iranian hostages seized the US Embassy in Teheran. However, there is much more to this event than meets the eye. During the time of the interim government (February, 1979 to November, 1979), several actions were undertaken which threatened some very powerful interests who had helped the Ayatollah into power.

Chase Manhattan Bank faced a liquidity crisis as there had been billions in questionable loans to Iran funneled through Chase.[28] Several of Chase’s loans were “possibly illegal under the Iranian constitution.”[29] Further, in February of 1979, once the interim government was put in power, it began to take “steps to market its oil independently of the Western oil majors.” Also, the interim government “wanted Chase Manhattan to return Iranian assets, which Rockefeller put at more than \$1 billion in 1978, although some estimates ran much higher,” which could have “created a liquidity crisis for the bank which already was coping with financial troubles.”[30]

With the seizure of the American Embassy in Iran, President Carter took moves to freeze Iranian financial assets. As David Rockefeller wrote in his book, “Carter’s ‘freeze’ of official Iranian assets protected our [Chase Manhattan’s] position, but no one at Chase played a role in convincing the administration to institute it.”[31]

In February of 1979, Iran had been taking “steps to market its oil independently of the Western oil majors. In 1979, as in 1953, a freeze of Iranian assets made this action more

difficult.”[32] This was significant for Chase Manhattan not simply because of the close interlocking of the board with those of oil companies, not to mention Rockefeller himself, who is patriarch of the family whose name is synonymous with oil, but also because Chase exclusively handled all the letters of credit for the purchase of Iranian oil.[33]

The Shah being accepted into the United States, under public pressure from Henry Kissinger, Zbigniew Brzezinski and David Rockefeller, precipitated the hostage crisis, which occurred on November 4. Ten days later, Carter froze all Iranian assets in US banks, on the advice of his Treasury Secretary, William Miller. Miller just happened to have ties to Chase Manhattan Bank.[34]

Although Chase Manhattan directly benefited from the seizure of Iranian assets, the reasoning behind the seizure as well as the events leading up to it, such as a hidden role for the Anglo-Americans behind the Iranian Revolution, bringing the Shah to America, which precipitated the hostage crisis, cannot simply be relegated to personal benefit for Chase. There were larger designs behind this crisis. So the 1979 crises in Iran cannot simply be pawned off as a spur of the moment undertaking, but rather should be seen as quick actions taken upon a perceived opportunity. The opportunity was the rising discontent within Iran at the Shah; the quick actions were in covertly pushing the country into Revolution.

In 1979, “effectively restricting the access of Iran to the global oil market, the Iranian assets freeze became a major factor in the huge oil price increases of 1979 and 1981.”[35] Added to this, in 1979, British Petroleum cancelled major oil contracts for oil supply, which along with cancellations taken by Royal Dutch Shell, drove the price of oil up higher.[36] With the first major oil price rises in 1973 (urged on by US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger), the Third World was forced to borrow heavily from US and European banks to finance development. With the second oil price shocks of 1979, the US Federal Reserve, with Paul Volcker as its new Chairman, (himself having served a career under David Rockefeller at Chase Manhattan), dramatically raised interest rates from 2% in the late 70s to 18% in the early 80s. Developing nations could not afford to pay such interest on their loans, and thus the 1980s debt crisis spread throughout the Third World, with the IMF and World Bank coming to the “rescue” with their Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), which ensured western control over the developing world’s economies.[37]

Covertly, the United States helped a radical Islamist government come to power in Iran, “the center of the Arc of Crisis,” and then immediately stirred up conflict and war in the region. Five months before Iraq invaded Iran, in April of 1980, Zbigniew Brzezinski openly declared the willingness of the US to work closely with Iraq. Two months before the war, Brzezinski met with Saddam Hussein in Jordan, where he gave support for the destabilization of Iran.[38] While Saddam was in Jordan, he also met with three senior CIA agents, which was arranged by King Hussein of Jordan. He then went to meet with King Fahd in Saudi Arabia, informing him of his plans to invade Iran, and then met with the King of Kuwait to inform him of the same thing. He gained support from America, and financial and arms support from the Arab oil producing countries. Arms to Iraq were funneled through Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.[39] The war lasted until 1988 and resulted in over a million deaths.

This was the emergence of the “strategy of tension” in the “Arc of Crisis,” in particular, the covert support (whether in arming, training, or financing) of radical Islamic elements to foment violence and conflict in a region. It was the old imperial tactic of ‘divide and conquer’: pit the people against each other so that they cannot join forces against the imperial power. This violence and radical Islamism would further provide the pretext for which the US

and its imperial allies could then engage in war and occupation within the region, all the while securing its vast economic and strategic interests.

The “Arc of Crisis” in Afghanistan: The Safari Club in Action

In 1978, the progressive Taraki government in Afghanistan managed to incur the anger of the United States due to “its egalitarian and collectivist economic policies.”[40] The Afghan government was widely portrayed in the West as “Communist” and thus, a threat to US national security. The government, did, however, undertake friendly policies and engagement with the Soviet Union, but was not a Communist government.

In 1978, as the new government came to power, almost immediately the US began covertly funding rebel groups through the CIA.[41] In 1979, Zbigniew Brzezinski worked closely with his aid from the CIA, Robert Gates (who is currently Secretary of Defense), in shifting President Carter’s Islamic policy. As Brzezinski said in a 1998 interview with a French publication:

According to the official version of history, CIA aid to the Mujahadeen began during 1980, that is to say, after the Soviet army invaded Afghanistan, 24 Dec 1979. But the reality, secretly guarded until now, is completely otherwise: Indeed, it was July 3, 1979 that President Carter signed the first directive for secret aid to the opponents of the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul. And that very day, I wrote a note to the president in which I explained to him that in my opinion this aid was going to induce a Soviet military intervention.[42]

Brzezinski elaborated, saying he “Knowingly increased the probability that [the Soviets] would invade,” and he recalled writing to Carter on the day of the Soviet invasion that, “We now have the opportunity of giving to the USSR its Vietnam war. Indeed, for almost 10 years, Moscow had to carry on a war unsupportable by the government, a conflict that brought about the demoralization and finally the breakup of the Soviet empire.” When asked about the repercussions for such support in fostering the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, Brzezinski responded, “What is most important to the history of the world? The Taliban or the collapse of the Soviet empire? Some stirred-up Moslems or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the cold war?”[43]

As author Peter Dale Scott pointed out in, *The Road to 9/11*:*

For generations in both Afghanistan and the Soviet Muslim Republics the dominant form of Islam had been local and largely Sufi. The decision to work with the Saudi and Pakistani secret services meant that billions of CIA and Saudi dollars would ultimately be spent in programs that would help enhance the globalistic and Wahhabistic jihadism that are associated today with al Qaeda.[44]

Hafizullah Amin, a top official in Taraki’s government, who many believed to be a CIA asset, orchestrated a coup in September of 1979, and “executed Taraki, halted the reforms, and murdered, jailed, or exiled thousands of Taraki supporters as he moved toward establishing a fundamentalist Islamic state. But within two months, he was overthrown by PDP remnants including elements within the military.”[45] The Soviets also intervened in order to replace Amin, who was seen as “unpredictable and extremist” with “the more moderate Barbak Karmal.”[46]

The Soviet invasion thus prompted the US national security establishment to undertake the largest covert operation in history. When Ronald Reagan replaced Jimmy Carter in 1981, the covert assistance to the Afghan Mujahideen not only continued on the path set by Brzezinski but it rapidly accelerated, as did the overall strategy in the “Arc of Crisis.” When Reagan became President, his Vice President became George H.W. Bush, who, as CIA director during the Ford administration, had helped establish the Safari Club intelligence network and the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) in Pakistan. In the “campaign to aid the Afghan rebels ... BCCI clearly emerged as a U.S. intelligence asset,” and CIA Director “Casey began to use the outside – the Saudis, the Pakistanis, BCCI – to run what they couldn’t get through Congress. [BCCI president] Abedi had the money to help,” and the CIA director had “met repeatedly” with the president of BCCI.[47]

Thus, in 1981, Director Casey of the CIA worked with Saudi Prince Turki bin Faisal who ran the Saudi intelligence agency GID, and the Pakistani ISI “to create a foreign legion of jihadi Muslims or so-called Arab Afghans.” This idea had “originated in the elite Safari Club that had been created by French intelligence chief Alexandre de Marenches.”[48]

In 1986, the CIA backed a plan by the Pakistani ISI “to recruit people from around the world to join the Afghan jihad.” Subsequently:

More than 100,000 Islamic militants were trained in Pakistan between 1986 and 1992, in camps overseen by CIA and MI6, with the SAS [British Special Forces] training future al-Qaida and Taliban fighters in bomb-making and other black arts. Their leaders were trained at a CIA camp in Virginia. This was called Operation Cyclone and continued long after the Soviets had withdrawn in 1989.[49]

CIA funding for the operations “was funneled through General Zia and the ISI in Pakistan.”[50] Interestingly, Robert Gates, who previously served as assistant to Brzezinski in the National Security Council, stayed on in the Reagan-Bush administration as executive assistant to CIA director Casey, and who is currently Secretary of Defense.

The Global Drug Trade and the CIA

As a central facet of the covert financing and training of the Afghan Mujahideen, the role of the drug trade became invaluable. The global drug trade has long been used by empires for fuelling and financing conflict with the aim of facilitating imperial domination.

In 1773, the British colonial governor in Bengal “established a colonial monopoly on the sale of opium.” As Alfred W. McCoy explained in his masterful book, *The Politics of Heroin*:

As the East India Company expanded production, opium became India’s main export. [. . .] Over the next 130 years, Britain actively promoted the export of Indian opium to China, defying Chinese drug laws and fighting two wars to open China’s opium market for its merchants. Using its military and mercantile power, Britain played a central role in making China a vast drug market and in accelerating opium cultivation throughout China. By 1900 China had 13.5 million addicts consuming 39,000 tons of opium.[51]

In Indochina in the 1940s and 50s, the French intelligence services “enabled the opium trade to survive government suppression efforts,” and subsequently, “CIA activities in Burma helped transform the Shan states from a relatively minor poppy-cultivating area into the largest opium-growing region in the world.”[52] The CIA did this by supporting the

Kuomintang (KMT) army in Burma for an invasion of China, and facilitated its monopolization and expansion of the opium trade, allowing the KMT to remain in Burma until a coup in 1961, when they were driven into Laos and Thailand.[53] The CIA subsequently played a very large role in the facilitation of the drugs trade in Laos and Vietnam throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s.[54]

It was during the 1980s that “the CIA’s covert war in Afghanistan transformed Central Asia from a self-contained opium zone into a major supplier of heroin for the world market,” as:

Until the late 1970s, tribal farmers in the highlands of Afghanistan and Pakistan grew limited quantities of opium and sold it to merchant caravans bound west for Iran and east to India. In its decade of covert warfare against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the CIA’s operations provided the political protection and logistics linkages that joined Afghanistan’s poppy fields to heroin markets in Europe and America.[55]

In 1977, General Zia Ul Haq in Pakistan launched a military coup, “imposed a harsh martial-law regime,” and executed former President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (father to Benazir Bhutto). When Zia came to power, the Pakistani ISI was a “minor military intelligence unit,” but, under the “advice and assistance of the CIA,” General Zia transformed the ISI “into a powerful covert unit and made it the strong arm of his martial-law regime.”[56]

The CIA and Saudi money flowed not only to weapons and training for the Mujahideen, but also into the drug trade. Pakistani President Zia-ul-Haq appointed General Fazle Haq as the military governor of Pakistan’s North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), who would “consult with Brzezinski on developing an Afghan resistance program,” and who became a CIA asset. When CIA Director Casey or Vice President George H.W. Bush reviewed the CIA Afghan operation, they went to see Haq; who by 1982, was considered by Interpol to be an international narcotics trafficker. Haq moved much of the narcotics money through the BCCI.[57]

In May of 1979, prior to the December invasion of the Soviet Union into Afghanistan, a CIA envoy met with Afghan resistance leaders in a meeting organized by the ISI. The ISI “offered the CIA envoy an alliance with its own Afghan client, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar,” who led a small guerilla group. The CIA accepted, and over the following decade, half of the CIA’s aid went to Hekmatyar’s guerillas.[58] Hekmatyar became Afghanistan’s leading mujahideen drug lord, and developed a “complex of six heroin labs in an ISI-controlled area of Baluchistan (Pakistan).”[59]

The US subsequently, through the 1980s, in conjunction with Saudi Arabia, gave Hekmatyar more than \$1 billion in armaments. Immediately, heroin began flowing from Afghanistan to America. By 1980, drug-related deaths in New York City rose 77% since 1979.[60] By 1981, the drug lords in Pakistan and Afghanistan supplied 60% of America’s heroin. Trucks going into Afghanistan with CIA arms from Pakistan would return with heroin “protected by ISI papers from police search.”[61]

Haq, the CIA asset in Pakistan, “was also running the drug trade,” of which the bank BCCI “was completely involved.” In the 1980s, the CIA insisted that the ISI create “a special cell for the use of heroin for covert actions.” Elaborating:

This cell promoted the cultivation of opium and the extraction of heroin in Pakistani territory as well as in the Afghan territory under Mujahideen control for being smuggled into Soviet controlled areas in order to make the Soviet troops heroin addicts.[62]

This plan apparently originated at the suggestion of French intelligence chief and founder of the Safari Club, Alexandre de Marenches, who recommended it to CIA Director Casey.[63]

In the 1980s, one program undertaken by the United States was to finance Mujahideen propaganda in textbooks for Afghan schools. The US gave the Mujahideen \$43 million in “non-lethal” aid for the textbook project alone, which was given by USAID: “The U.S. Agency for International Development, [USAID] coordinated its work with the CIA, which ran the weapons program,” and “The U.S. government told the AID to let the Afghan war chiefs decide the school curriculum and the content of the textbooks.”[64]

The textbooks were “filled with violent images and militant Islamic teachings,” and “were filled with talk of jihad and featured drawings of guns, bullets, soldiers and mines.” Even since the covert war of the 1980s, the textbooks “have served since then as the Afghan school system’s core curriculum. Even the Taliban used the American-produced books.” The books were developed through a USAID grant to the “University of Nebraska-Omaha and its Center for Afghanistan Studies,” and when the books were smuggled into Afghanistan through regional military leaders, “Children were taught to count with illustrations showing tanks, missiles and land mines.” USAID stopped this funding in 1994.[65]

The Rise of the Taliban

When the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, the fighting continued between the Afghan government backed by the USSR and the Mujahideen backed by the US, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, so too did its aid to the Afghan government, which itself was overthrown in 1992. However, fighting almost immediately broke out between rival factions vying for power, including Hekmatyar.

In the early 1990s, an obscure group of “Pashtun country folk” had become a powerful military and political force in Afghanistan, known as the Taliban.[66] The Taliban “surfaced as a small militia force operating near Kandahar city during the spring and summer of 1994, carrying out vigilante attacks against minor warlords.” As growing discontent with the warlords grew, so too did the reputation of the Taliban.[67]

The Taliban acquired an alliance with the ISI in 1994, and throughout 1995, the relationship between the Taliban and the ISI accelerated and “became more and more of a direct military alliance.” The Taliban ultimately became “an asset of the ISI” and “a client of the Pakistan army.”[68] Further, “Between 1994 and 1996, the USA supported the Taliban politically through its allies Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, essentially because Washington viewed the Taliban as anti-Iranian, anti-Shia, and pro-Western.”[69]

Selig Harrison, a scholar with the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars and “a leading US expert on South Asia,” said at a conference in India that the CIA worked with Pakistan to create the Taliban. Harrison has “extensive contact” with the CIA, as “he had meetings with CIA leaders at the time when Islamic forces were being strengthened in Afghanistan,” while he was a senior associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. As he further revealed in 2001, “The CIA still has close links with the ISI.”[70] By

1996, the Taliban had control of Kandahar, but still fighting and instability continued in the country.

Osama and Al-Qaeda

Between 1980 and 1989, roughly \$600 million was passed through Osama bin Laden's charity front organizations, specifically the Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK), also known as Al-Kifah. The money mostly originated with wealthy donors in Saudi Arabia and other areas in the Persian Gulf, and was funneled through his charity fronts to arm and fund the mujahideen in Afghanistan.[71]

In the 1980s, the British Special Forces (SAS) were training mujahideen in Afghanistan, as well as in secret camps in Scotland, and the SAS is largely taking orders from the CIA. The CIA also indirectly begins to arm Osama bin Laden.[72] Osama bin Laden's front charity, the MAK, "was nurtured" by the Pakistani ISI.[73]

Osama bin Laden was reported to have been personally recruited by the CIA in 1979 in Istanbul. He had the close support of Prince Turki bin Faisal, his friend and head of Saudi intelligence, and also developed ties with Hekmatyar in Afghanistan,[74] both of whom were pivotal figures in the CIA-Safari Club network. General Akhtar Abdul Rahman, the head of the Pakistani ISI from 1980 to 1987, would meet regularly with Osama bin Laden in Pakistan, and they formed a partnership in demanding a tax on the opium trade from warlords so that by 1985, bin Laden and the ISI were splitting the profits of over \$100 million per year.[75] In 1985, Osama bin Laden's brother, Salem, stated that Osama was "the liaison between the US, the Saudi government, and the Afghan rebels." [76]

In 1988, Bin Laden discussed "the establishment of a new military group," which would come to be known as Al-Qaeda.[77] Osama bin Laden's charity front, the MAK, (eventually to form Al-Qaeda) founded the al-Kifah Center in Brooklyn, New York, to recruit Muslims for the jihad against the Soviets. The al-Kifah Center was founded in the late 1980s with the support of the U.S. government, which provided visas for known terrorists associated with the organization, including Ali Mohamed, the "blind sheik" Omar Abdel Rahman and possibly the lead 9/11 hijacker, Mohamed Atta.[78]

This coincided with the creation of Al-Qaeda, of which the al-Kifah Center was a recruiting front. Foot soldiers for Al-Qaeda were "admitted to the United States for training under a special visa program." The FBI had been surveilling the training of terrorists, however, "it terminated this surveillance in the fall of 1989." In 1990, the CIA granted Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman a visa to come run the al-Kifah Center, who was considered an "untouchable" as he was "being protected by no fewer than three agencies," including the State Department, the National Security Agency (NSA) and the CIA.[79]

Robin Cook, a former British MP and Minister of Foreign Affairs wrote that Al-Qaeda, "literally 'the database', was originally the computer file of the thousands of mujahideen who were recruited and trained with help from the CIA to defeat the Russians." [80] Thus, "Al-Qaeda" was born as an instrument of western intelligence agencies. This account of al-Qaeda was further corroborated by a former French military intelligence agent, who stated that, "In the mid-1980s, Al Qaida was a database," and that it remained as such into the 1990s. He contended that, "Al Qaida was neither a terrorist group nor Osama bin Laden's personal property," and further:

The truth is, there is no Islamic army or terrorist group called Al Qaida. And any informed intelligence officer knows this. But there is a propaganda campaign to make the public believe in the presence of an identified entity representing the ‘devil’ only in order to drive the ‘TV watcher’ to accept a unified international leadership for a war against terrorism. The country behind this propaganda is the US and the lobbyists for the US war on terrorism are only interested in making money.[81]

The creation of Al-Qaeda was thus facilitated by the CIA and allied intelligence networks, the purpose of which was to maintain this “database” of Mujahideen to be used as intelligence assets to achieve US foreign policy objectives, throughout both the Cold War, and into the post-Cold War era of the ‘new world order’.

Part 2 of “The Imperial Anatomy of al-Qaeda” takes the reader through an examination of the new imperial strategy laid out by American geopolitical strategists at the end of the Cold War, designed for America to maintain control over the world’s resources and prevent the rise of competitive powers. Covertly, the “database” (al-Qaeda) became central to this process, being used to advance imperial aims in various regions, such as in the dismantling of Yugoslavia. Part 2 further examines the exact nature of ‘al-Qaeda’, its origins, terms, training, arming, financing, and expansion. In particular, the roles of western intelligence agencies in the evolution and expansion of al-Qaeda is a central focus. Finally, an analysis of the preparations for the war in Afghanistan is undertaken to shed light on the geopolitical ambitions behind the conflict that has now been waging for nearly nine years.

* [Note on the research: For a comprehensive analysis of the history, origins and nature of al-Qaeda, see: Peter Dale Scott, *The Road to 9/11: Wealth, Empire and the Future of America*, which provided much of the research in the above article.]

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Empire, Energy and Al-Qaeda: The Anglo-American Terror Network

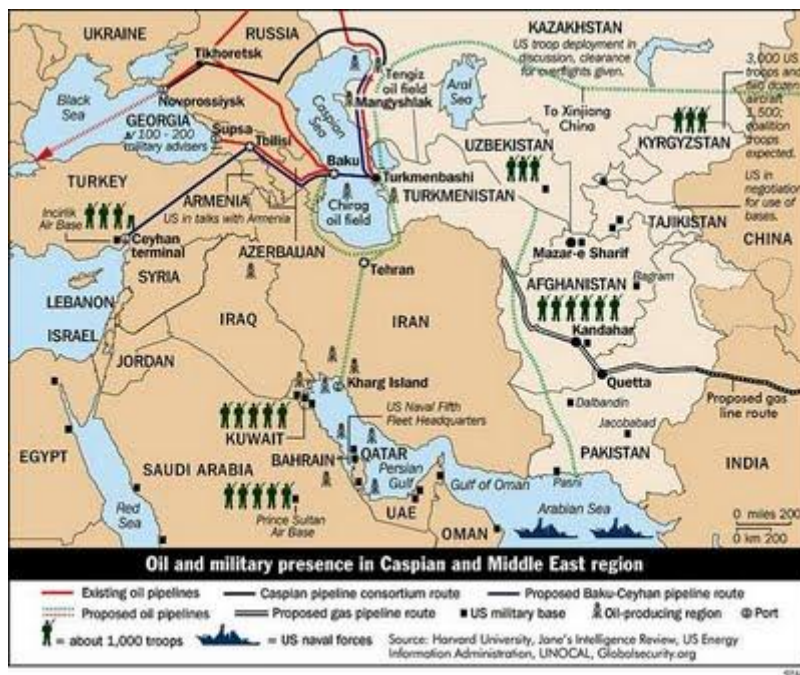
The Imperial Anatomy of al-Qaeda, Part II

By [Andrew Gavin Marshall](#)

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This is Part 2 of the series, "The Imperial Anatomy of Al-Qaeda."

[Part 1: The CIA's Drug-Running Terrorists and the "Arc of Crisis"](#)

The End of the Cold War and Strategy for the New World Order

With the end of the Cold War a new strategy had to be determined to manage the global system. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, declarations of a "New World Order" sprang forward, focusing on the United States as the single world superpower. This presented a great many challenges as well as opportunities for the world's most powerful hegemon.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, a number of new Central Asian and Eastern European nations were formed and became independent, and with that, their immense deposits of natural gas and energy became available for exploitation. Afghanistan itself was considered "a major strategic pivot," as it was "the primary gateway to Central Asia and the immense energy deposits therein." [1] Western oil companies such as ExxonMobil, Texaco, Unocal, BP Amoco, Shell, and Enron began pouring billions of dollars into the countries of Central Asia in the early 1990s. [2]

In 1992, a Pentagon document titled “Defense Planning Guidance” was leaked to the press, in which it described a strategy for the United States in the “new world order,” and it was drafted by George H.W. Bush’s Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney. It stated that, “America’s political and military mission in the post-cold-war era will be to ensure that no rival superpower is allowed to emerge in Western Europe, Asia or the territories of the former Soviet Union,” and that, “The classified document makes the case for a world dominated by one superpower whose position can be perpetuated by constructive behavior and sufficient military might to deter any nation or group of nations from challenging American primacy.”[3]

Further, “the new draft sketches a world in which there is one dominant military power whose leaders ‘must maintain the mechanisms for deterring potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role’.” Among the necessary challenges to American supremacy, the document “postulated regional wars against Iraq and North Korea,” and identified China and Russia as its major threats. It further “suggests that the United States could also consider extending to Eastern and Central European nations security commitments similar to those extended to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other Arab states along the Persian Gulf.”[4]

Similarly, in 1992, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, one of the most influential think tanks in the United States, had established a commission to determine a new foreign policy for the United States in the wake of the Cold War. Participants included Madeleine Albright, Henry Cisneros, John Deutch, Richard Holbrooke, Alice Rivlin, David Gergen and Admiral William Crowe. In the summer of 1992, the final report, “Changing Our Ways: America and the New World,” was published. The report urged “a new principle of international relations: the destruction or displacement of groups of people within states can justify international intervention.” It suggested that the US “realign NATO and OSCE [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe] to deal with new security problems in Europe,” and “urged military intervention under humanitarian guises.” This report subsequently “planted the policy seedlings for the Kosovo war” as it “provided both the rationale for U.S. interventionism and a policy recommendation about the best means—NATO—for waging that war.”[5]

Another Carnegie publication in the same year, “Self-Determination in the New World Order,” furthered imperialist goals for America, as it “set criteria for officials to use in deciding when to support separatist ethnic groups seeking independence, and advocated military force for that purpose.” It recommended that “international military coalitions, preferably U.N.-led, could send armed force not as peacekeepers but peacemakers—to prevent conflict from breaking out and stay in place indefinitely.” It further stated that, “the use of military force to create a new state would require conduct by the parent government so egregious that it has forfeited any right to govern the minority claiming self-determination.”[6]

The United States and its NATO allies soon undertook a new strategy, seeking to maintain dominance over the world, expand their hegemony over regions previously under the influence of the Soviet Union (such as in Eastern Europe and Central Asia), and prevent the rise of a resurgent Russia or China. One of the key facets of this strategy was the notion of “humanitarian intervention.”

Yugoslavia Dismantled by Design

In the 1990s, the United States and its NATO allies, in particular Germany and the UK, undertook a strategy of destabilization in Yugoslavia, seeking to dismantle and ultimately fracture the country. To do this, the imperial strategy of divide and conquer was employed, manipulating various ethnic tensions and arming and training various militias and terrorist organizations. Throughout this strategy, the “database”, or Al-Qaeda was used to promote the agenda of the destabilization and dismantling of Yugoslavia.

In 1989, Yugoslavia had to seek financial aid from the World Bank and IMF, which implemented a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), which resulted in the dismantling of the public state, exacerbating social issues and fueling secessionist tendencies, leading to Croatia and Slovenia seceding from the republic in 1991.[7] In 1990, the US intelligence community had released a report predicting that Yugoslavia would break apart and erupt in civil war, and it blamed Milosevic for the impending disaster.[8]

As far back as 1988, the leader of Croatia met with the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl to create “a joint policy to break up Yugoslavia,” and bring Slovenia and Croatia into the “German economic zone.” So, US Army officers were dispatched to Croatia, Bosnia, Albania, and Macedonia as “advisers” and brought in US Special Forces to help.[9]

Fighting broke out between Yugoslavia and Croatia when the latter declared independence in 1991. The fighting subsequently lasted until 1995, and merged in part with the Bosnian war. The US supported the operation and the CIA actively provided intelligence to Croat forces, leading to the displacement of between 150,000 and 200,000 Serbs, largely through means of murder, plundering, burning villages and ethnic cleansing.[10] The Croatian Army was trained by U.S. advisers and a general later put on trial at the Hague for war crimes was personally supported by the CIA.[11] So we see the double standard of ethnic cleansing and genocide: when the US does it or supports it, it’s “humanitarian intervention,” politically justified, or it is simply unacknowledged; when an enemy state does it, (or is accused of doing it), the “international community” demands action and any means is deemed necessary to “prevent genocide”, including committing genocide.

The Clinton administration gave the “green light” to Iran to arm the Bosnian Muslims and “from 1992 to January 1996, there was an influx of Iranian weapons and advisers into Bosnia.” Further, “Iran, and other Muslim states, helped to bring Mujahideen fighters into Bosnia to fight with the Muslims against the Serbs, ‘holy warriors’ from Afghanistan, Chechnya, Yemen and Algeria, some of whom had suspected links with Osama bin Laden’s training camps in Afghanistan.”[12]

During the war in Bosnia, there “was a vast secret conduit of weapons smuggling through Croatia. This was arranged by the clandestine agencies of the US, Turkey and Iran, together with a range of radical Islamist groups, including Afghan mujahedin and the pro-Iranian Hizbullah.” Further, “the secret services of Ukraine, Greece and Israel were busy arming the Bosnian Serbs.”[13] Germany’s intelligence agency, the BND, also ran arms shipments to the Bosnian Muslims and Croatia to fight against the Serbs.[14] Thus, every side was being funded and armed by outside powers seeking to foment conflict and ultimately break up Yugoslavia to serve their own imperial objectives in the region.

In 1992, the al-Kifah Center in Brooklyn, the recruiting center for al-Qaeda, made Bosnia its chief target. By 1993, it opened a branch in Croatia. The recruitment operation for Bosnian Muslims “was a covert action project sponsored not only by Saudi Arabia but also in part by the US government.”[15]

In 1996, the Albanian Mafia, in collaboration with the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), a militant guerilla organization, took control over the enormous Balkan heroin trafficking routes. The KLA was linked to former Afghan Mujaheddin fighters in Afghanistan, including Osama bin Laden.[16]

In 1997, the KLA began fighting against Serbian forces,[17] and in 1998, the US State Department removed the KLA from its list of terrorist organizations.[18] Before and after 1998, the KLA was receiving arms, training and support from the US and NATO, and Clinton's Secretary of State, Madeline Albright, was close with KLA leader Hashim Thaci.[19]

Both the CIA and German intelligence, the BND, supported the KLA terrorists in Yugoslavia prior to and after the 1999 NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. The BND had KLA contacts since the early 1990s, the same period that the KLA was establishing its Al-Qaeda contacts.[20] KLA members were trained by Osama bin Laden at training camps in Afghanistan. Even the UN stated that much of the violence at the time came from KLA members, "especially those allied with Hashim Thaci." [21]

The March 1999 NATO bombing of Kosovo was justified on the pretense of putting an end to Serbian oppression of Kosovo Albanians, which was termed genocide. The Clinton Administration made claims that at least 100,000 Kosovo Albanians were missing and "may have been killed" by the Serbs. Bill Clinton personally compared events in Kosovo to the Holocaust. The US State Department had stated that up to 500,000 Albanians were feared dead. Eventually, the official estimate was reduced to 10,000, however, after exhaustive investigations, it was revealed that the death of less than 2,500 Albanians could be attributed to the Serbs. During the NATO bombing campaign, between 400 and 1,500 Serb civilians were killed, and NATO committed war crimes, including the bombing of a Serb TV station and a hospital.[22]

Ultimately the strategy of the destabilization of Yugoslavia served various imperial objectives. The war in Yugoslavia was waged in order to enlarge NATO, Serbia was to be excluded permanently from European development to justify a US military presence in the region, and expansion was ultimately designed to contain Russia.[23]

An op-ed in the New York Times in 1996 stated that, "instead of seeing Bosnia as the eastern frontier of NATO, we should view the Balkans as the western frontier of America's rapidly expanding sphere of influence in the Middle East." Further:

The fact that the United States is more enthusiastic than its European allies about a Bosnian Muslim state reflects, among other things, the new American role as the leader of an informal collection of Muslim nations from the Persian Gulf to the Balkans. The regions once ruled by the Ottoman Turks show signs of becoming the heart of a third American empire.

[. . .] Now, in the years after the cold war, the United States is again establishing suzerainty over the empire of a former foe. The disintegration of the Soviet Union has prompted the United States to expand its zone of military hegemony into Eastern Europe (through NATO) and into formerly neutral Yugoslavia. And — most important of all — the end of the cold war has permitted America to deepen its involvement the Middle East.[24]

Further, with the dismantling of the former Yugoslavia, a passageway for the transport of oil and natural gas from the Caspian region was to be facilitated through the construction of the

Trans-Balkan pipeline, which will “run from the Black sea port of Burgas to the Adriatic at Vlore, passing through Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania. It is likely to become the main route to the west for the oil and gas now being extracted in central Asia. It will carry 750,000 barrels a day: a throughput, at current prices, of some \$600m a month.” As the Guardian reported:

The project is necessary, according to a paper published by the US Trade and Development Agency last May, because the oil coming from the Caspian Sea “will quickly surpass the safe capacity of the Bosphorus as a shipping lane”. The scheme, the agency notes, will “provide a consistent source of crude oil to American refineries”, “provide American companies with a key role in developing the vital east-west corridor”, “advance the privatisation aspirations of the US government in the region” and “facilitate rapid integration” of the Balkans “with western Europe”.

In November 1998, Bill Richardson, then US energy secretary, spelt out his policy on the extraction and transport of Caspian oil. “This is about America’s energy security,” he explained. “It’s also about preventing strategic inroads by those who don’t share our values. We’re trying to move these newly independent countries toward the west.

“We would like to see them reliant on western commercial and political interests rather than going another way. We’ve made a substantial political investment in the Caspian, and it’s very important to us that both the pipeline map and the politics come out right.”[25]

The pipeline project, supported since 1994, “featured prominently in Balkan war politics. On December 9 1998, the Albanian president attended a meeting about the scheme in Sofia, and linked it inextricably to Kosovo.” The message given at the meeting was that, “if you [the United States] want Albanian consent for the Trans-Balkan pipeline, you had better wrest Kosovo out of the hands of the Serbs.”[26]

And so, with the help of an international network of CIA-trained Islamic militants, American political and economic hegemony expanded into Central Asia and the Caspian region.

The Spread of Al-Qaeda

Al-Qaeda did not just spread to Bosnia and Albania/Kosovo, but rather a great many places around the world saw the spread of this vast “database” of Islamist fighters, and always aided by Western intelligence agencies or their regional conduits (such as the ISI and Saudi intelligence agencies). Following on the heels of the established American and NATO strategy following the Cold War, Islamic fundamentalism also came to play a part in this strategy.

Bernard Lewis was a former British intelligence officer and historian who is infamous for explaining Arab discontent towards the West as not being rooted in a reaction toward imperialism, but rather that it is rooted in Islam; in that Islam is incompatible with the West, and that they are destined to clash, using the term, “Clash of Civilizations.” For decades, “Lewis played a critical role as professor, mentor, and guru to two generations of Orientalists, academics, U.S. and British intelligence specialists, think tank denizens, and assorted neoconservatives.” In the 1980s, Lewis “was hobnobbing with top Department of Defense officials.”[27] He was also one of the originators, along with Brzezinski, of the “Arc of Crisis” strategy employed in the late 1970s.

Lewis wrote a 1992 article in *Foreign Affairs*, the journal of the Council on Foreign Relations, titled, "Rethinking the Middle East." In this article, Lewis raised the prospect of another policy towards the Middle East in the wake of the end of the Cold War and beginnings of the New World Order, "which could even be precipitated by fundamentalism, is what has of late become fashionable to call 'Lebanonization.' Most of the states of the Middle East – Egypt is an obvious exception – are of recent and artificial construction and are vulnerable to such a process. If the central power is sufficiently weakened, there is no real civil society to hold the polity together, no real sense of common national identity or overriding allegiance to the nation-state. The state then disintegrates – as happened in Lebanon – into a chaos of squabbling, feuding, fighting sects, tribes, regions and parties." [28]

Thus, the "database" of Al-Qaeda could be spread internationally so as to destabilize various regions, and thus provide the justification for intervention or even war. All that was needed was well-placed intelligence operatives to control key leadership positions within the terrorist organization. The great majority of both its higher-ups and nearly all al-Qaeda operatives would not have to be made aware of the organizations covert use as an arm of US geo-policy.

In the 1990s, Osama bin Laden "built a shadow air force to support his terrorist activities, using Afghanistan's national airline, a surplus U.S. Air Force jet and clandestine charters." Further, as the *Los Angeles Times* revealed:

With the Taliban's blessing, Bin Laden effectively had hijacked Ariana, the national civilian airline of Afghanistan. For four years, according to former U.S. aides and exiled Afghan officials, Ariana's passenger and charter flights ferried Islamic militants, arms, cash and opium through the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan. Members of Bin Laden's Al Qaeda terrorist network were provided false Ariana identification that gave them free run of airports in the Middle East.

[. . .] Taliban authorities also opened the country's airstrips to high-ranking Persian Gulf state officials who routinely flew in for lavish hunting parties. Sometimes joined by Bin Laden and Taliban leaders, the dignitaries, who included several high-ranking officials from Saudi Arabia and the Emirates—left behind money, vehicles and equipment with their hosts, according to U.S. and Afghan accounts.[29]

Bin Laden's secret purchase of a US Air Force jet in 1992 "was used to ferry Al Qaeda commanders to East Africa, where they trained Somali tribesmen for attacks on U.S. peacekeeping forces," and Americans had "unwittingly" helped bin Laden "disguise the plane as a civilian jet." US security officials were well aware of Ariana airlines being used by al-Qaeda,[30]

Among the high-ranking Persian Gulf officials who flew to Afghanistan for "hunting trips" were Prince Turki al Faisal who ran Saudi intelligence until August 2001, "maintaining close ties with Bin Laden and the Taliban," as well as "Sheik Mohammed ibn Rashid al Maktum, the Dubai crown prince and Emirates defense minister." On occasions both Osama bin Laden and Omar, the head of the Taliban, mingled with the hunters. Upon their departure, "the wealthy visitors often left behind late-model jeeps, trucks and supplies," which was "one way the Taliban got their equipment." [31]

What the article does not mention, however, was that the ISI was the prime sponsor of the Taliban, with the complete backing and facilitation of the CIA. The connection to the Saudi

intelligence chief further strengthens the thesis that the Safari Club, created in 1976 by the French intelligence chief, may have survived as a covert intelligence network encompassing western intelligence agencies working through regional agencies such as those of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

The German intelligence agency, the BND, revealed in 2004 that two Saudi companies that were linked with financing al-Qaeda throughout the 1990s were in fact front organizations for Saudi intelligence, with close connections to its chief, Prince Turki bin Faisal.[32]

Between 1989 and 2001, Billy Waugh, a CIA contractor, trained several al-Qaeda operatives around the world.[33] In 2002, it was revealed that, “British intelligence paid large sums of money to an al-Qaeda cell in Libya in a doomed attempt to assassinate Colonel Gaddafi in 1996 and thwarted early attempts to bring Osama bin Laden to justice.” In 1998, Libya had issued an arrest warrant for Osama bin Laden, yet:

British and US intelligence agencies buried the fact that the arrest warrant had come from Libya and played down the threat. Five months after the warrant was issued, al-Qaeda killed more than 200 people in the truck bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.[34]

However, “the resistance of Western intelligence agencies to the Libyan concerns can be explained by MI6’s involvement with the al-Qaeda coup plot.” Anas al-Liby, a Libyan al-Qaeda leader, “was given political asylum in Britain and lived in Manchester until May of 2000 when he eluded a police raid on his house and fled abroad.”[35]

Following the end of the Cold War, many mujahideen fighters were relocated to Russia’s unstable region of Chechnya, where the two main rebel leaders who came to power had previously been trained and funded by the CIA in Afghanistan. The war in Chechnya was planned in a secret meeting in 1996 attended by Osama bin Laden and high-ranking officials of the Pakistani ISI, whose involvement in Chechnya went “far beyond supplying the Chechens with weapons and expertise: the ISI and its radical Islamic proxies are actually calling the shots in this war.”[36] In other words, the CIA was directing the war through the ISI.

The US and U.K. have supported Chechen separatism as it, “weakens Russia, advances U.S. power in the vital Caspian Sea region, and cripples a potential future rival.”[37] Mikhail Gorbachev, former President of Russia, claimed that the British had been arming the Chechen rebels.[38] Oil also features prominently in the Chechen conflict, as Chechnya is home to large reserves of oil, as well as pipeline corridor routes being competed over by Russian and Anglo-American oil conglomerates. Thus, the Anglo-Americans support the Chechen separatists, while the Russians send in the military.[39] US intelligence helped fund and transport al-Qaeda into Chechnya in the early 1990s, American intelligence remained involved until the end of the decade, seeing the “sponsorship of ‘Islamist jihad in the Caucasus’ as a way to ‘deprive Russia of a viable pipeline route through spiraling violence and terrorism’.”[40]

The Global Domination Strategy for a New Century

Following upon the strategic objectives set out in the early 1990s for the United States and NATO to expand their hegemony across the world, in preventing the rise of rivals (China and Russia), and expanding the access of western economic interests to the Caspian region, new designs were being drawn in the powerful think-tank community in the United States as well

as being outlined by highly influential strategic thinkers. The renewed strategy, hardly a break from the previously determined aim of encirclement and containment of China and Russia, simply expanded the scope of this strategy. From one faction, the neo-conservatives, came the initial aim at expanding militarily into the Middle East, starting with Iraq, while the more established hard-line realist hawks such as Zbigniew Brzezinski outlined a far more comprehensive and long-term strategy of world domination by controlling the entirety of Eurasia (Europe and Asia), and subsequently, Africa.

The neo-Conservative hawks in the US foreign policy establishment formed the think tank, the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) in the 1990s. In 2000, they published their report, *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, in which they outlined a strategy for the United States in the "new century." Following where the Defense Planning Guidance document left off (during the first Bush administration), the report stated that, "the United States must retain sufficient forces able to rapidly deploy and win multiple simultaneous large-scale wars," and that there is a "need to retain sufficient combat forces to fight and win, multiple, nearly simultaneous major theatre wars," as "the Pentagon needs to begin to calculate the force necessary to protect, independently, US interests in Europe, East Asia and the Gulf at all times."^[41]

It recommended the "regime change" of Saddam Hussein in Iraq as the "immediate justification" for a US military presence in the Gulf; however, "the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein." In advocating for a massive increase in defense spending, and outlining military operations against Iraq, North Korea, and possibly Iran, the report stated that, "further, the process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event – like a new Pearl Harbor."^[42]

Zbigniew Brzezinski outlined a long-term American imperial strategy to control Eurasia in his book, *The Grand Chessboard*. He stated bluntly that, "it is imperative that no Eurasian challenger emerges, capable of dominating Eurasia and thus of also challenging America," and then made clear the imperial nature of his strategy:

To put it in a terminology that harkens back to the more brutal age of ancient empires, the three grand imperatives of imperial geostrategy are to prevent collusion and maintain security dependence among the vassals, to keep tributaries pliant and protected, and to keep the barbarians from coming together.^[43]

He further explained that the Central Asian nations (or "Eurasian Balkans" as he refers to them):

are of importance from the standpoint of security and historical ambitions to at least three of their most immediate and more powerful neighbors, namely Russia, Turkey and Iran, with China also signaling an increasing political interest in the region. But the Eurasian Balkans are infinitely more important as a potential economic prize: an enormous concentration of natural gas and oil reserves is located in the region, in addition to important minerals, including gold.^[44]

Brzezinski emphasizes "that America's primary interest is to help ensure that no single power comes to control this geopolitical space and that the global community has unhindered financial and economic access to it."^[45]

Preparing for War Against Afghanistan

In 1997, Taliban officials traveled to Texas to meet with Unocal Oil Company to discuss the possibility of a pipeline being built from Turkmenistan across Afghanistan and to Pakistan. Unocal had agreements with Turkmenistan to sell its gas and with Pakistan to buy it. The missing link was getting the gas to Pakistan through Afghanistan, which is where the Taliban came into the picture. Unocal's main competitor in the pipeline bid was with Bidas, an Argentine firm. However, at this time, Afghanistan was still embroiled in civil war, making the prospect of a pipeline being built an unstable venture.[46]

A month before the Taliban visited Texas, Bidas, Unocal's main competitor, merged its oil and gas assets with Amoco-Argentina Oil, a subsidiary of British Petroleum (BP), one of the world's top three oil companies.[47] Shortly before this merger was finalized, Bidas had announced that it was close to signing a 2 billion dollar deal with the Taliban, saying "the talks were in their final stages." [48]

After meeting with Unocal officials in Texas, the Taliban announced in January of 1998 that, "they're close to reaching a final agreement on the building of a gas pipeline across Afghanistan," however, they "didn't indicate which of two competing companies the Taliban favoured." [49]

It is significant to note some of the important figures that were involved with the oil companies in relation to Central Asian gas reserves and pipeline projects. In 1997, Zbigniew Brzezinski, the (self-proclaimed) mastermind for the Afghan-Soviet War, Jimmy Carter's National Security Adviser, and cofounder with David Rockefeller of the Trilateral Commission, was an adviser to BP-Amoco, specifically dealing with the Caspian region.[50] Unocal, in an effort to try to secure their pipeline contract with the Taliban, hired former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Afghan-born Zalmay Khalilzad, former Reagan State Department Advisor on Afghanistan during the Afghan-Soviet War, was also brought on as a consultant for a group hired by Unocal. He would later become US envoy to Afghanistan after the US invasion in 2001.[51]

The pipeline project then ran into significant problems when, in December of 1998, Unocal announced that it quit its Afghan pipeline project.[52] Between 1996 and 2001, Enron bosses had given millions of dollars in bribes to Taliban officials to secure contracts for building pipelines. After Unocal withdrew from the deal, Enron continued to pressure the Taliban to continue with a pipeline. In 1996, neighboring Uzbekistan signed a deal with Enron to develop Uzbek natural gas fields.[53] In 1997, Halliburton, with Dick Cheney as its CEO, secured a contract in Turkmenistan for exploration and drilling in the Caspian Sea basin.[54] However, in December of 2001, Enron filed for bankruptcy.

Eventually, Unocal pulled out of the deal as a result of Afghanistan's Taliban government not being fully recognized internationally as the legitimate Afghan government, and therefore, the pipeline project could not receive funding from international financial institutions like the World Bank. Unocal also pulled out as a result of the continual conflict raging in Afghanistan between various groups.[55]

In 1999, the Pentagon issued a secret document confirmed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Secretary of Defense, which stated that, "Oil conflicts over production facilities and transport routes, particularly in the Persian Gulf and Caspian regions, are specifically envisaged" in the near future, stating that, "energy and resource issues will continue to shape international

security.” The document “vividly highlights how the highest levels of the US Defence community accepted the waging of an oil war as a legitimate military option.”[56]

Before George W. Bush became President in January of 2001, there were plans at the highest levels of the United States government in beginning preparations for a war against Afghanistan, which included attempts to secure an alliance with the Russians in “calling for military action against Afghanistan.”[57]

In March of 2001 it was reported that India has joined the US, Russia and Iran in an effort to militarily replace the Afghan Taliban government, with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to be used as bases to launch incursions into Afghanistan against the Taliban.[58] In the Spring of 2001, the US military envisaged and war gamed the entire scenario of a US attack on Afghanistan, which subsequently became the operational plan for the war.[59]

In the summer of 2001, the Taliban were leaked information from top-secret meetings that the Bush regime was planning to launch a military operation against the Taliban in July to replace the government. A US military contingency plan existed on paper to attack Afghanistan from the north by the end of the summer of 2001, as in, prior to 9/11.[60]

A former Pakistani diplomat told the BBC that the US was planning military action against Osama bin Laden and the Taliban before the 9/11 attacks. Niaz Naik, former Pakistani Foreign Secretary, “was told by senior American officials in mid-July that military action against Afghanistan would go ahead by the middle of October.” The invasion subsequently took place on October 7, 2001. Naik was told of this information at a secretive UN-sponsored meeting which took place in Berlin in July 2001, with officials from the US, Russia, and many Central Asian countries. He also stated that the US would launch the operation from their bases in Tajikistan, “where American advisers were already in place.”[61]

As revealed by MSNBC, “President Bush was expected to sign detailed plans for a worldwide war against al-Qaida two days before Sept. 11,” and that, “The plan dealt with all aspects of a war against al-Qaida, ranging from diplomatic initiatives to military operations in Afghanistan.” It outlined “essentially the same” war plan as was put into action following the 9/11 attacks. The National Security document was also submitted to Condoleezza Rice prior to the attacks, and included plans to attack the Taliban and remove them from power in Afghanistan.[62] Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair stated that, “To be truthful about it, there was no way we could have got the public consent to have suddenly launched a campaign on Afghanistan but for what happened on September 11.”[63]

Following the start of the war on Afghanistan in October of 2001, the Guardian’s George Monbiot wrote that the war “may also be a late colonial adventure,” as “Afghanistan is as indispensable to the regional control and transport of oil in central Asia as Egypt was in the Middle East.” It is worth quoting Monbiot at some length:

Afghanistan has some oil and gas of its own, but not enough to qualify as a major strategic concern. Its northern neighbours, by contrast, contain reserves which could be critical to future global supply. In 1998, Dick Cheney, now US vice-president but then chief executive of a major oil services company, remarked: “I cannot think of a time when we have had a region emerge as suddenly to become as strategically significant as the Caspian.” But the oil and gas there is worthless until it is moved. The only route which makes both political and economic sense is through Afghanistan.

Transporting all the Caspian basin's fossil fuel through Russia or Azerbaijan would greatly enhance Russia's political and economic control over the central Asian republics, which is precisely what the west has spent 10 years trying to prevent. Piping it through Iran would enrich a regime which the US has been seeking to isolate. Sending it the long way round through China, quite aside from the strategic considerations, would be prohibitively expensive. But pipelines through Afghanistan would allow the US both to pursue its aim of "diversifying energy supply" and to penetrate the world's most lucrative markets. Growth in European oil consumption is slow and competition is intense. In south Asia, by contrast, demand is booming and competitors are scarce. Pumping oil south and selling it in Pakistan and India, in other words, is far more profitable than pumping it west and selling it in Europe.

As the author Ahmed Rashid has documented, in 1995 the US oil company Unocal started negotiating to build oil and gas pipelines from Turkmenistan, through Afghanistan and into Pakistani ports on the Arabian sea. The company's scheme required a single administration in Afghanistan, which would guarantee safe passage for its goods. Soon after the Taliban took Kabul in September 1996, the Telegraph reported that "oil industry insiders say the dream of securing a pipeline across Afghanistan is the main reason why Pakistan, a close political ally of America's, has been so supportive of the Taliban, and why America has quietly acquiesced in its conquest of Afghanistan". Unocal invited some of the leaders of the Taliban to Houston, where they were royally entertained. The company suggested paying these barbarians 15 cents for every thousand cubic feet of gas it pumped through the land they had conquered.

For the first year of Taliban rule, US policy towards the regime appears to have been determined principally by Unocal's interests. In 1997 a US diplomat told Rashid "the Taliban will probably develop like the Saudis did. There will be Aramco [the former US oil consortium in Saudi Arabia] pipelines, an emir, no parliament and lots of Sharia law. We can live with that."

[. . .] In February 1998, John Maresca, [Unocal's] head of international relations, told representatives that the growth in demand for energy in Asia and sanctions against Iran determined that Afghanistan remained "the only other possible route" for Caspian oil. The company, once the Afghan government was recognised by foreign diplomats and banks, still hoped to build a 1,000-mile pipeline, which would carry a million barrels a day. Only in December 1998, four months after the embassy bombings in east Africa, did Unocal drop its plans.

But Afghanistan's strategic importance has not changed. In September, a few days before the attack on New York, the US energy information administration reported that "Afghanistan's significance from an energy standpoint stems from its geographical position as a potential transit route for oil and natural gas exports from central Asia to the Arabian sea. This potential includes the possible construction of oil and natural gas export pipelines through Afghanistan". Given that the US government is dominated by former oil industry executives, we would be foolish to suppose that such plans no longer figure in its strategic thinking. As the researcher Keith Fisher has pointed out, the possible economic outcomes of the war in Afghanistan mirror the possible economic outcomes of the war in the Balkans, where the development of "Corridor 8", an economic zone built around a pipeline carrying oil and gas from the Caspian to Europe, is a critical allied concern.

American foreign policy is governed by the doctrine of "full-spectrum dominance", which means that the US should control military, economic and political development worldwide. China has responded by seeking to expand its interests in central Asia. The defence white

paper Beijing published last year argued that “China’s fundamental interests lie in ... the establishment and maintenance of a new regional security order”. In June, China and Russia pulled four central Asian republics into a “Shanghai cooperation organisation”. Its purpose, according to Jiang Zemin, is to “foster world multi-polarisation”, by which he means contesting US full-spectrum dominance.

If the US succeeds in overthrowing the Taliban and replacing them with a stable and grateful pro-western government and if the US then binds the economies of central Asia to that of its ally Pakistan, it will have crushed not only terrorism, but also the growing ambitions of both Russia and China. Afghanistan, as ever, is the key to the western domination of Asia.[64]

As revealed by the San Francisco Chronicle in November of 2001, “the United States and Pakistan decided to install a stable regime in place in Afghanistan around 1994 — a regime that would end the country’s civil war and thus ensure the safety of the Unocal pipeline project.” And so:

the State Department and Pakistan’s Inter- Services Intelligence agency agreed to funnel arms and funding to the Taliban in their war against the ethnically Tajik Northern Alliance. As recently as 1999, U.S. taxpayers paid the entire annual salary of every single Taliban government official, all in the hopes of returning to the days of dollar-a- gallon gas. Pakistan, naturally, would pick up revenues from a Karachi oil port facility.[65]

Clearly, the plans and purposes for war on Afghanistan had been well established. What was needed was the public justification. The people will not readily support a war to dominate strategic energy reserves and pipeline routes halfway around the world. Besides the fact that this would be an admission of empire, something that still a great many in the American public have failed to reconcile and accept, it would be a difficult task to ask Americans to die for Unocal. What the American people needed to rouse their appetite for war was to have their collective consciousness reshaped by fear; what was needed was terror.

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9/11 ANALYSIS: 9/11 and America's Secret Terror Campaign

The Imperial Anatomy of Al-Qaeda, Part III

By [Andrew Gavin Marshall](#)

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Anticipating An Attack

For several years prior to the events of 9/11, top American strategists had been acknowledging the necessity of what they oft-termed a “new Pearl Harbor”, a momentous attack upon America itself, in order to mobilize the American populace for a new global war of domination.

As Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote in his 1997 book *The Grand Chessboard*, “America’s primary interest is to help ensure that no single power comes to control this geopolitical space [of Central Asia] and that the global community has unhindered financial and economic access to it.”[1] Brzezinski acknowledged in his book that, “the pursuit of power is not a goal that commands popular passion, except in conditions of a sudden threat or challenge to the public’s sense of domestic well-being.”[2] He also wrote that, “The public supported America’s engagement in World War II largely because of the shock effect of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.”[3]

In 1999, Andrew Krepinevich, Executive Director of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments testified before the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities. He stated that the US faces an “unprecedented challenge”:

[T]he need to transform our armed forces into a very different kind of military from that which exists today, while sustaining the military’s ability to play a very active role in supporting U.S. near-term efforts to preserve global stability within a national security strategy of engagement and enlargement.[4]

After advocating a massive re-imagining of the role and nature of US military might, pushing the notion of a “revolution in military affairs” and an acceleration of imperial ambitions, he told the Senate Committee:

There appears to be general agreement concerning the need to transform the U.S. military into a significantly different kind of force from that which emerged victorious from the Cold and Gulf Wars. Yet this verbal support has not been translated into a defense program supporting transformation. [. . .] While there is growing support in Congress for transformation, the “critical mass” [i.e., public support] needed to effect it has not yet been achieved. One may conclude that, in the absence of a strong external shock to the United States—a latter-day “Pearl Harbor” of sorts—surmounting the barriers to transformation will likely prove a long, arduous process.[5]

In 1999, Graham Fuller, former Deputy Director of the CIA’s National Council on Intelligence, advocated using Muslim forces to further US interests in Central Asia. He stated that, “The policy of guiding the evolution of Islam and of helping them against our adversaries worked marvelously well in Afghanistan against [the Russians]. The same doctrines can still be used to destabilize what remains of Russian power, and especially to counter the Chinese influence in Central Asia.”[6]

In June of 2000, the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Pentagon released *Joint Vision 2020*, outlining the American military strategy that the Department of Defense “will follow in the future.” The emphasis in the report was put on the notion of “Full Spectrum Dominance,” which means “the ability of U.S. forces, operating alone or with allies, to defeat any adversary and control any situation across the range of military operations”:

Joint Vision 2020 addresses full-spectrum dominance across the range of conflicts from nuclear war to major theater wars to smaller-scale contingencies. It also addresses amorphous situations like peacekeeping and noncombat humanitarian relief.[7]

The neoconservative think tank the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) released a report in September of 2000 called Rebuilding America's Defenses in which they advocated for a massive expansion of America's empire and "full spectrum dominance" as well as the necessity to undertake a "Revolution in military affairs," and undertake multiple simultaneous wars in different regions of the world. Several members of the think tank and authors of the report would go on to enter key policy positions within the Bush administration several months later (including, but not limited to Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, and Zalmay Khalilzad). While acknowledging the massive undertaking this "project" would be, the report stated:

Further, the process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event – like a new Pearl Harbor.”[8]

In January of 2001, the Rumsfeld Commission, which was set up to analyze the US National Security Space Management and Organization, chaired by incoming US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld (who had also been a signatory to and member of the Project for the New American Century at the same time). It advocated an expansion of military capabilities in Space and a total reorganization of the armed forces and intelligence agencies of the United States. The report stated that:

History is replete with instances in which warning signs were ignored and change resisted until an external, "improbable" event forced resistant bureaucracies to take action. The question is whether the US will be wise enough to act responsibly and soon enough to reduce US space vulnerability. Or whether, as in the past, a disabling attack against the country and its people – a "Space Pearl Harbor" – will be the only event able to galvanize the nation and cause the US Government to act.[9]

As early as 1998, the President was warned in his CIA daily briefing that, "bin Laden and his allies are preparing for an attack in the US, including an aircraft hijacking." NORAD, the "North American Aerospace Defense command also conducted an exercise to counter a terrorist attack involving smashing an airplane into a building." In August 1999, "the Federal Aviation Administration's intelligence branch warned of a possible "suicide hijacking operation" by Osama Bin Laden.”[10]

In October of 2000, the Pentagon undertook an emergency response exercise in which "there was a mock terrorist incident at the Pentagon Metro stop and a construction accident," and it further envisioned a "downed passenger aircraft" in the Pentagon courtyard.[11]

For years, NORAD had been conducting military exercises and drills in which it envisioned planes being hijacked and flown into buildings in the United States.[12] One of the intended targets in the NORAD drills was the World Trade Center:

In another exercise, jets performed a mock shutdown over the Atlantic Ocean of a jet supposedly laden with chemical poisons headed toward a target in the United States. In a third scenario, the target was the Pentagon — but that drill was not run after Defense officials said it was unrealistic.[13]

As the Guardian revealed in April of 2004:

Five months before the September 11 attacks, US military planners suggested a war game to practise a response to a terrorist attack using a commercial airliner flown into the Pentagon, but senior officers rejected the scenario as “too unrealistic”.[14]

In May of 2001, an exercise involving U.S. Central Command, U.S. Special Operations Command and U.S. Joint Forces Command took place in which the military establishment “forecasted” the first war of the 21st century so closely that, “Nostradamus couldn’t have nailed the first battle of the next war any closer than we did,” as articulated by a former top official with the exercise, Dave Ozolek. The exercise, Unified Vision 2001:

[G]rew out of the realization that the threat was changing. Ozolek said the scenario was a major regional threat emanating from the Middle East. The scenario called for global deployment into a landlocked country with hostile terrain and a lack of basing and agreements with neighboring countries for U.S. access.

[. . .] The threat we portrayed was an unstable and hostile state, but the primary enemy was not the state itself but a transnational actor based out of that area, globally connected, capable and willing to conduct terrorist attacks in the U.S. as part of that campaign.

[. . .] “Many of the participants in Unified Vision, 100 days later, were war planners,” Ozolek said. They took their experiences in Unified Vision back to their commands and put them to use as the commands created plans for operations Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle, he said. They had an idea of the tactics, techniques and procedures needed to operate against such an enemy, he noted.

Ozolek said Unified Vision refutes the pundits who make a living out of critiquing the Department of Defense. “The first thing they like to talk about is that we always dwell on the last battle of the last war,” he said. “What we’re showing them is that this time we got it right: We really were looking at the first battle of the next war, and we nailed it pretty darned close.”[15]

After 9/11, in May of 2002, Condoleezza Rice stated that, “I don’t think anybody could have predicted that ... they would try to use an airplane as a missile, a hijacked airplane as a missile.”[16] So Condi is a fool or a liar, because that statement is nothing if not entirely and utterly false. The national security apparatus had fully anticipated, and even war gamed and drilled this very scenario. It was expected, planned for, and no less with war plans waiting in the wings.

The 9/11 Commission

Of critical importance in understanding the events of 9/11 is taking note of the funding for the operation. The 9/11 Commission itself stated:

To date the U.S. government has not been able to determine the origin of the money used for the 9/11 attacks. Ultimately the question is of little practical significance.[17]

However, one should take issue with this claim. The fact is that any comprehensive investigation, criminal or otherwise, should pay special attention to the role of financing;

follow the money. This is not the only failure of the 9/11 Commission, as has been amply documented.

From its inception, the 9/11 Commission was plagued with problems. The Bush administration had resisted attempts to form a commission to investigate the attacks of 9/11 for over a year, even pressuring Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle not to launch an inquiry.[18] In May of 2002, President Bush voiced his opposition to the formation of a 9/11 commission.[19]

In September of 2002, Bush reversed his previous decision and backed the proposal to form an “independent” commission to investigate the attacks.[20] Within a month of this statement, the White House began undermining the process, as “an almost completed Congressional deal was suddenly undone in October after a Republican lawmaker involved in the final negotiations received a call from Vice President Dick Cheney,” which led to a stalling of the process.[21]

In mid-November, Congress approved the creation of a bi-partisan 9/11 Commission to investigate the attacks, with 10 Congressmen, 5 Democrats and 5 Republicans, with the Chairman appointed by the Bush administration and the Vice Chair appointed by the Democrats.[22]

The Bush administration chose as the Chairman none other than Henry Kissinger, former National Security Adviser and Secretary of State for Nixon and Ford, “a consummate Washington insider,” not to mention war criminal. Even the New York Times had to admit:

Unfortunately, his affinity for power and the commercial interests he has cultivated since leaving government may make him less than the staunchly independent figure that is needed for this critical post. Indeed, it is tempting to wonder if the choice of Mr. Kissinger is not a clever maneuver by the White House to contain an investigation it long opposed.[23]

Two week later, “Facing questions about potential conflicts of interest, Henry Kissinger resigned” as Chairman of the 9/11 Commission.[24] He was replaced with former New Jersey Governor Thomas Kean. As of November 2003, one Commissioner, Max Cleland, claimed that the “investigation is now compromised” by the White House.[25]

Shortly after the release of the final 9/11 Commission Report in 2004, Harper’s Magazine called it “a cheat and a fraud,” declaring the report a “whitewash.”[26]

In 2006, the two co-Chairs of the Commission published a book in which they claimed that the Commission was lied to by both the FAA and the Department of Defense, specifically NORAD.[27] Several commissioners are on the record as saying they felt that the Pentagon purposely lied to them in order to mislead them.[28] Further, much of the information the commission received and used in its report “was the product of harsh interrogations of al-Qaida operatives – interrogations that many critics have labeled torture.”[29]

As it turned out, the Executive Director of the 9/11 Commission, Philip Zelikow, was a man of dubious priorities and connections. He was the ultimate author of the final report and controlled the research staff of the commission. Zelikow, “a former colleague of then-National Security Adviser Condoleeza Rice, was appointed executive director of the 9/11 Commission despite his close ties to the Bush White House, and he remained in regular contact with [Karl] Rove while overseeing the commission.” Zelikow “secretly spoke with

President Bush's close adviser Karl Rove and others within the White House while the ostensibly autonomous commission was completing its report." Zelikow had even previously co-authored a book with Condoleezza Rice. Following the publication of the report, Zelikow then went to work as an adviser to Condoleezza Rice in the White House.[30]

The Bin Ladens

There are many fascinating and important revelations regarding the intricate relationship between the CIA, the ISI, and al-Qaeda in the lead-up to the events of 9/11 that deserve to be subjected to more scrutiny.

First, let's take a look at Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden, whose relationship with the CIA in the past had been well documented, reportedly acted as a rogue following the 1991 US Gulf War against Iraq and American stationing of troops and military bases in Saudi Arabia. However, there are reports that would indicate that the relationship between bin Laden and the US intelligence apparatus remained, at least to some degree, for many years.

We must remember the nature of al-Qaeda, as an organization, or network, of intelligence assets funded, armed, trained and dispersed around the world by a complex network of intelligence agencies from the United States, France, Great Britain, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan.

A French court undertook a probe into the financial network of Osama bin Laden, who was widely assumed to simply be independently wealthy, and financed al-Qaeda operations through his own funds. However, it was revealed that Osama maintained a joint bank account with his half-brother Yeslam bin Laden in Switzerland between 1990 and 1997. Of particular interest to investigators was "a 241 million euro transfer made to Pakistan in 2000 from an account belonging to a company called Cambridge, a SBG [Saudi Bin Laden Group] subsidiary, that was opened at Deutsche Bank in Geneva," with the funds "transferred into an account belonging jointly to Osama bin Laden and someone of Pakistani nationality." [31]

Der Spiegel, a major German newspaper, was granted access to thousands of pages of intelligence documents relating to bin Laden and al-Qaeda. In the report on the documents, the authors revealed that when bin Laden needed financing, "The Saudi elite — and his own family — came to his assistance." The list of financiers:

is a veritable who's who of the Middle Eastern monarchy, including the signatures of two former cabinet ministers, six bankers and twelve prominent businessmen. The list also mentions "the bin Laden brothers." ... Did "the bin Laden brothers," who first pledged money to Al-Qaida and then, in 1994, issued a joint press statement declaring that they were ejecting Osama from the family as a "black sheep," truly break ties with their blood relatives — or were they simply pulling the wool over the eyes of the world? [32]

Osama bin Laden's sister-in-law even stated:

I absolutely do not believe that the bin Ladens disowned Osama. In this family, a brother is always a brother, no matter what he has done. I am convinced that the complex and tightly woven network between the bin Laden clan and the Saudi royal family is still in operation. [33]

Following the death of Osama's father, Salem bin Laden, Osama's brother, became head of the company, Saudi Binladen Group (SBG). As Der Spiegel reported:

Salem bin Laden established the company's ties to the American political elite when, according to French intelligence sources, he helped the Reagan administration circumvent the US Senate and funnel \$34 million to the right-wing Contra rebels operating in Nicaragua. He also developed close ties with the Bush family in Texas.[34]

While Osama was fighting in Afghanistan against the Soviets, he would often be personally visited by Saudi Prince Turki, the head of Saudi intelligence, and was funded by both the Saudi Binladen Group (SBG) and the Saudi royal family. In 1990, when King Fahd of Saudi Arabia allowed the Americans to establish military bases in Saudi Arabia, the SBG got the contract to build the bases.[35]

Though the Bin Laden family claimed Osama was a "black sheep" and that they cut off ties with him in the early 1990s, the evidence remains strong that not only did Osama maintain ties with his family, but he maintained his ties with Saudi intelligence. While Osama was in Sudan in the early 1990s, Saudi intelligence would so frequently send his family over to meet with him, and kept in such close contact with him, that the Israeli intelligence agency, Mossad, believed Osama was a Saudi spy. In 1994, under intense public pressure, both Saudi Arabia and the bin Laden family publicly revoked their ties with Osama.[36]

Yet, even after this, when Osama returned to Afghanistan in the mid-1990s to work with the Taliban, Prince Turki of Saudi intelligence would still maintain contact and even visit Osama, even bringing "gifts" such as dozens of trucks:

According to a former member of the Taliban intelligence service, Prince Turki and OBL [Osama bin Laden] made a deal: The Saudis would support al-Qaida financially, but only under the condition that there would be no attacks on Saudi soil.[37]

On January 9, 2001, Osama attended his sons wedding in Afghanistan, accompanied by his mother and two brothers, hardly the actions of a "black sheep". Further, two of Osama's sisters traveled to Abu Dhabi in February of 2001 to "deliver large sums of cash" to an al-Qaeda agent. In the United States, the Bin Laden family had diplomatic passports, so following the 9/11 attacks, they could not be questioned, but instead were flown out of the country. The Bin Ladens were also in business with the Bush family through the investment company, the Carlyle Group.[38] No one ever seemed to question why the bin Laden family had diplomatic passports, a strange occurrence, it would seem, for a Saudi 'business' family who weren't engaged in any official or formal 'diplomacy'.

In March of 2000, it was reported that Osama bin Laden was sick and suffering from kidney and liver disease.[39] A western intelligence source told the Hong-Kong based magazine, Asiaweek, that bin Laden was dying of kidney failure.[40]

In July of 2001, Osama bin Laden spent 10 days at the American hospital in Dubai for treatment. He traveled from Pakistan to Dubai on July 4, 2001, to be treated in the urology department. While he was in the hospital, Osama was visited by several members of his family, Saudi officials, and the CIA. One visitor was Saudi Prince Turki al Faisal, the head of Saudi intelligence, and the CIA station chief in Dubai, who was soon after recalled back to Washington.[41]

On September 10, 2001, the night before the attacks of 9/11, Osama bin Laden was in Pakistan “getting medical treatment with the support of the very military that days later pledged its backing for the U.S. war on terror in Afghanistan.” Pakistani intelligence reported that bin Laden was quickly taken to a military hospital in Rawalpindi for kidney dialysis treatment. As one medical worker said, “they moved out all the regular staff in the urology department and sent in a secret team to replace them.” Pakistani President Musharraf openly stated in public that Osama suffers from kidney disease and is near death.[42]

The Pakistani ISI and 9/11

Throughout the entire time of overt and covert assistance by Pakistan’s ISI to both the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, the CIA had maintained its close ties with the ISI that they had developed during the Soviet-Afghan war in the 1980s, in which they used the ISI as a conduit; as was set up through the Safari Club in the 1970s, which was the organization of western intelligence agencies which used Middle Eastern and Asian intelligence agencies as conduits for their covert activities. Thus, the CIA maintained its extensive contact with the ISI, and so would be well aware of its activities.[43]

A top Indian intelligence official even stated that, “America’s Defence Intelligence Agency was aware that Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) was sponsoring the Taliban and Al Qaeda, but the Bush Administration chose to ignore its findings.”[44] Is it inconceivable that since the CIA maintained its extensive contacts with the ISI, and the ISI maintained and expanded its contacts with the Taliban and al-Qaeda, that the CIA was not in fact sponsoring both the Taliban and Al-Qaeda through the ISI as well? We know that the CIA was supporting the Taliban through the same network of the ISI that was supporting al-Qaeda operatives,[45] thus it would take a stretch of the imagination to think that the CIA would be unaware of its subsequent support for al-Qaeda. Whether direct or indirect, the CIA was supporting al-Qaeda.

Shortly after 9/11, Indian intelligence became aware of the fact that General Mahmood Ahmad, head of Pakistan’s Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) had wired \$100,000 from Saeed Sheikh, a convicted terrorist who had associations with the ISI, to Mohamed Atta, the purported ringleader and one of the 9/11 hijackers. Thus, the ISI in effect, financed the 9/11 attacks. However, there are several more ambiguous facets to this story. It just so happens that General Mahmood Ahmad went to Washington, D.C. on September 4th, 2001 for a weeklong visit. On September 10, the day before 9/11, a Pakistani newspaper ran a story on Ahmad’s visit:

ISI Chief Lt-Gen Mahmood’s week-long presence in Washington has triggered speculation about the agenda of his mysterious meetings at the Pentagon and National Security Council. Officially, State Department sources say he is on a routine visit in return to CIA Director George Tenet’s earlier visit to Islamabad. Official sources confirm that he met Tenet this week. He also held long parleys with unspecified officials at the White House and the Pentagon. But the most important meeting was with Mark Grossman, US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs.

... What added interest to his visit is the history of such visits. Last time Ziauddin Butt, Mahmood’s predecessor, was here during Nawaz Sharif’s government the domestic politics turned topsy-turvy within days. That this is not the first visit by Mahmood in the last three months shows the urgency of the ongoing parleys.[46]

General Ahmad, while in Washington, met with CIA Director George Tenet and Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage. On the morning of 9/11, General Ahmad was in a meeting with the Chairmen of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees, Senator Bob Graham and Representative Porter Goss, a former 10-year veteran of CIA clandestine operations. Porter Goss was later put in charge of a joint House-Senate investigation into the Sept. 11 attacks, and later became the CIA director.[47]

General Mahmoud, having wired \$100,000 to Mohamad Atta, the purported lead 9/11 hijacker, implicates the ISI in the attacks of 9/11, at least from a financial standing. The FBI even confirmed the transaction took place.[48] The ISI's extensive ties to American intelligence and the fact that Ahmad was in D.C. talking to high level legislators, State Department, Pentagon and intelligence officials begs the question of what the precise nature of these secret meetings were.

Michael Meacher, a former British MP and member of Tony Blair's cabinet, wrote in the Guardian that:

Ahmed, the paymaster for the hijackers, was actually in Washington on 9/11, and had a series of pre-9/11 top-level meetings in the White House, the Pentagon, the national security council, and with George Tenet, then head of the CIA, and Marc Grossman, the under-secretary of state for political affairs. When Ahmed was exposed by the Wall Street Journal as having sent the money to the hijackers, he was forced to "retire" by President Pervez Musharraf.[49]

Meacher further discussed the case of Sibel Edmonds, a former FBI translator-turned-whistleblower who tried to expose evidence of what she saw as collusion between intelligence agencies and the terrorists behind 9/11. She was subsequently gagged by the U.S. Department of Justice:

She is a 33-year-old Turkish-American former FBI translator of intelligence, fluent in Farsi, the language spoken mainly in Iran and Afghanistan, who had top-secret security clearance. She tried to blow the whistle on the cover-up of intelligence that names some of the culprits who orchestrated the 9/11 attacks, but is now under two gagging orders that forbid her from testifying in court or mentioning the names of the people or the countries involved. She has been quoted as saying: "My translations of the 9/11 intercepts included [terrorist] money laundering, detailed and date-specific information ... if they were to do real investigations, we would see several significant high-level criminal prosecutions in this country [the US] ... and believe me, they will do everything to cover this up".[50]

In August of 2009, Sibel Edmonds revealed that, "the US was on 'intimate' terms with the Taliban and al-Qaeda using the militants to further certain goals in central Asia," and stated, "With those groups, we had operations in Central Asia." She explained that Washington used those groups "as we did during the Afghan and Soviet conflict." [51] In other words, the US was arming, funding and using al-Qaeda for its own objectives, just as it always had.

On September 11, 2009, 8 years to the day of the events of 9/11, a major British newspaper, the Daily Mail, ran a story critical of the official story regarding Osama bin Laden. In it, the author posed the question:

What if he has been dead for years, and the British and U.S. intelligence services are actually playing a game of double bluff? What if everything we have seen or heard of him on video

and audio tapes since the early days after 9/11 is a fake – and that he is being kept ‘alive’ by the Western allies to stir up support for the war on terror?[52]

The article quoted former U.S. foreign intelligence officer and senior editor Angelo M. Codevilla, a professor of international relations at Boston University as saying, “All the evidence suggests Elvis Presley is more alive today than Osama Bin Laden”:

Prof Codevilla asserted: ‘The video and audio tapes alleged to be Osama’s never convince the impartial observer,’ he asserted. ‘The guy just does not look like Osama. Some videos show him with a Semitic, aquiline nose, while others show him with a shorter, broader one. Next to that, differences between the colours and styles of his beard are small stuff.’[53]

Interesting to note is that following the 9/11 attacks, Osama bin Laden, in at least four separate statements to Middle Eastern press and media, stated that he did not take part in the 9/11 attacks, while the video in which he supposedly claimed responsibility for the attacks has him wearing gold rings, which is forbidden by his Wahhabist religion, as well as writing with his right hand, whereas the FBI website says that he is left handed, and his face is blurred and difficult to make out. On September 28, 2001, Osama bin Laden said, “I have already said I am not involved. As a Muslim, I try my best to avoid telling a lie. I had no knowledge... nor do I consider the killing of innocent women, children and other humans as an appreciable act.”[54]

Osama bin Laden was even reported to have died of kidney failure on December 13, 2001, in the mountains of Tora Bora on the Afghan-Pakistan border. On that same day, the U.S. government released the fateful videotape in which Osama claimed responsibility for the attacks. However, the bin Laden in the video was very different from the known images of the real bin Laden, and even had a different shaped nose, his beard was darker, his skin paler, and his fingers were no longer long and thin, as well as the fact that he looked to be in good health.[55]

As the Los Angeles Times reported in November of 2009, the extensive and close relationship between the CIA and the ISI has not diminished since 9/11, but had in fact, accelerated: “the CIA has funneled hundreds of millions of dollars to Pakistan’s intelligence service since the Sept. 11 attacks, accounting for as much as one-third of the foreign spy agency’s annual budget.” Further, “the payments to Pakistan are authorized under a covert program initially approved by then-President Bush and continued under President Obama.” Further, “the CIA has routinely brought ISI operatives to a secret training facility in North Carolina,” and as the article pointed out, “the CIA also directs millions of dollars to other foreign spy services. But the magnitude of the payments to the ISI reflect Pakistan’s central role.” As the report in the Los Angeles Times explained, the CIA financial support to the ISI began during the Afghan-Soviet conflict, and has not stopped since then, and since 9/11, it has actually accelerated.[56]

The Nexus Personified: The Case of Ali Mohamed

Perhaps the perfect example of the complex relationship and nexus between intelligence agencies and al-Qaeda is the case of a man named Ali Mohamed. As the San Francisco Chronicle reported in 2001, “A former U.S. Army sergeant who trained Osama bin Laden’s bodyguards and helped plan the 1998 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Kenya was a U.S. government informant during much of his terrorist career.” Ali Mohamed, an Egyptian-born US citizen had approached the CIA in the mid-1980s to inform for them. He also spent years as an FBI informant, all the while being a top-level al-Qaeda operative, even training Osama

bin Laden's bodyguards, as well as training terrorists in camps in Afghanistan and Sudan, and planned the 1998 US Embassy bombing in Kenya.[57]

State Department officials proclaimed this was merely a sign of the problems associated with recruiting informants, that Mohamed was a double agent working for al-Qaeda, and they should have "known better." However, the ignorance plea can only go so far, and considering Mohamed's extensive ties to not one, but several US agencies, there is no doubt he was a double agent, but perhaps it is more likely he was working as an al-Qaeda operative for the US government. After all, it is one thing to say the Ali Mohamed was lucky in his evading being caught, but he was continuously lucky, over and over again. One wonders when 'luck' is organized.

In 1971, Ali Mohamed joined the Egyptian Army, rising to the rank of major. Well educated in Egypt, he was fluent in English. In 1981, he joined the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, "a group of radical Muslim fundamentalists opposed to the Egyptian government's ties to the United States and Israel that included members of the Egyptian military." The very same year, in 1981, Mohamed traveled to the United States for the first time, "graduating from a special program for foreign officers at the U.S. Army Special Forces school at Fort Bragg, N.C." In 1984, Mohamed left the Egyptian military.[58]

In 1984, Ali Mohamed approached the CIA office in Egypt offering to be a spy. Officially, the CIA then cut off contact with him shortly thereafter, as he made contact with terrorist organizations and informed them he was working with the CIA, supposedly proposing to spy on US intelligence agencies. So the CIA had the State Department add him to a "watch list" so that he could not enter the United States. However, the next year, Ali Mohamed obtained a visa from the American Embassy and went to the United States. He then joined the American Army and "served with one of its most elite units." [59]

From 1986 until 1989, Ali Mohamed served at the Army's Special Forces base in Fort Bragg, N.C., until he was honourably discharged in 1989. While on active duty, he went to New York where he trained local Muslims in military tactics to go fight in the Afghan-Soviet war. One of his students was "El Sayyid A. Nosair, the Egyptian immigrant convicted of killing Rabbi Meir Kahane, the founder of the Jewish Defense League, in 1990," which was the first recorded al-Qaeda operation on U.S. soil.[60]

In the early 1990s, Ali Mohamed began working for the FBI. Mohamed then forged ties with Osama bin Laden as early as 1991, and assisted in a variety of ways, such as helping bin Laden and 'al-Qaeda' obtain fake documents, assisted with logistical tasks, and even helped Osama relocate from Afghanistan to the Sudan in 1991. Many terrorists that Mohamed trained were subsequently involved in the 1993 plot to blow up the World Trade Center. In 1992, Mohamed returned to Afghanistan to continue training militants. That same year, he was detained by officials in Rome, yet was released shortly thereafter.[61]

In 1992, Ali Mohamed created an al-Qaeda terrorist cell in Kenya, and in 1993, bin Laden asked Mohamed to scout for potential terrorist targets in Nairobi, Kenya. He took photos of and scouted the French Embassy, the US AID office and the American Embassy. Bin Laden subsequently chose the American Embassy as the target.[62]

In 1993, he was detained by the RCMP in Vancouver, Canada, "while traveling in the company of a suspected associate of Mr. bin Laden's who was trying to enter the United States using false documents." [63] However, after the RCMP were told to contact his FBI

handlers, Mohamed was released.[64] He subsequently masterminded the American Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998.[65]

However, there are implications that may suggest that Ali Mohamed's ties to the CIA did not end or evaporate in the 1980s. Following 9/11, several revelations were reported in the media about a covert program of allowing high-level terrorists to enter the United States under a secret CIA program which had the State Department issue visas to terrorists in order to enter the United States.

The CIA Brings Terrorists to America

Michael Springman, former State Department official and head of the US Visa Bureau in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, from 1987 to 1989, went public with his experiences. He stated that, "In Saudi Arabia I was repeatedly ordered by high level State Dept officials to issue visas to unqualified applicants," and that he would complain to an assortment of different departments and agencies, however, his complaints were met with silence. He elaborated, "What I was protesting was, in reality, an effort to bring recruits, rounded up by Osama Bin Laden, to the US for terrorist training by the CIA. They would then be returned to Afghanistan to fight against the then-Soviets." Further:

The attack on the World Trade Center in 1993 did not shake the State Department's faith in the Saudis, nor did the attack on American barracks at Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia three years later, in which 19 Americans died. FBI agents began to feel their investigation was being obstructed. Would you be surprised to find out that FBI agents are a bit frustrated that they can't be looking into some Saudi connections?[66]

As Springman further revealed in an interview with the CBC, Sheikh Abdel Rahman, the terrorist widely considered to have played a key role in the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993, was issued a visa from a CIA case officer in Sudan, "And that 15 or so of the people who came from Saudi Arabia to participate in the attacks on the WTC and the Pentagon [on 9/11] had gotten their visas through the American consular general at Jeddah." The interviewer asked if this suggests that this "pipeline" of visa applications issued by the CIA to terrorists was never wrapped up, and Springman replied:

Exactly. I had thought it had been, because I had raised sufficient hell that I thought they had done it. I had complained to the embassy in Riyadh, I had complained to the diplomatic security in Washington, I had complained to the General Accounting Office, I had complained to the State Department Inspector General's office, and I had complained to the Bureau of Consular Affairs at the State Department. Apparently the reverberations from this were heard all over the State Department.[67]

Eventually, the State Department fired Springman without a sufficient reason. As he explained, the same program in which he was ordered to allow terrorists to enter the United States in the late 1980s had continued and 15 of the 19 suspected 9/11 hijackers were issued visas through this network. It further turned out that Ali Mohamed was "admitted to the United States under a special visa program controlled by the C.I.A.'s clandestine service," and he had claimed to be working for the CIA.[68]

In the mid-1990s, Ali Mohamed helped al-Qaeda's current number two, presumably after Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, to come to California and raise money for al-Qaeda operations. In 2000, Ali Mohamed was called in for questioning and was subsequently

arrested in relation to involvement with the 1998 embassy bombings and is being kept in an undisclosed location.[69]

Thus, we have a perfect example of the “terror nexus” in Ali Mohamed: simultaneously having connections with the CIA, the FBI, the Army, and al-Qaeda. His high-level status within al-Qaeda could not have taken place without the knowledge and support of his handlers. Mohamed was a double agent, that much is for sure, but for whom was he really working? Considering he has disappeared into the abyss of “National Security”, the answers might never be fully known. However, this does provide more evidence as to the covert relationship that the United States maintained with al-Qaeda.

Able Danger: Tracking the 9/11 Terrorists

Lt. Col. Anthony Shaffer, a military intelligence officer, revealed his in-depth knowledge of having worked with the Pentagon’s ultra-secret “Able Danger” program. Able Danger “was begun in 1999 at the request of General Hugh Shelton, then the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff and under the direct supervision of General Pete Schoomaker, then the commander of the Special Operations Command (SOCOM).” The CIA, however, had refused to cooperate with the Able Danger program, which was designed to track down terrorists, and developed a specific focus on al-Qaeda. Raytheon, a private military contracting corporation, was involved in this data-mining military intelligence program. Once Schaffer went public with information about the program, the “then deputy director of operations at the Defense Intelligence Agency essentially pulled the plug on his involvement with Able Danger.”[70]

In September of 2000, more than a year before 9/11, Able Danger, “a small, highly classified military intelligence unit identified Mohammed Atta and three other future hijackers as likely members of a cell of Al Qaeda operating in the United States,” and in the summer of 2000, Able Danger recommended that the information be shared with the FBI to go in and remove the terrorist cell. However, the information was not shared and the recommendation was rejected, apparently because “Mr. Atta, and the others were in the United States on valid entry visas.” Further:

A former spokesman for the Sept. 11 commission, Al Felzenberg, confirmed that members of its staff, including Philip Zelikow [a friend of Condi Rice who later joined the Bush administration], the executive director, were told about the program on an overseas trip in October 2003 that included stops in Afghanistan and Pakistan.[71]

A Pentagon spokesman said that the 9/11 Commission looked into the issue during the Commission hearings; however, they “chose not to include it in the final report.”[72] Other intelligence officers and sources came forward to reveal and validate the claims made about “Able Danger,” including J.D. Smith, a defense contractor who confirmed that Able Danger had identified Atta. Further, Navy Captain Scott Philpott has also gone on record along with Schaffer, claiming that they were “discouraged from looking further into Atta” and their attempts to share information with the FBI were thwarted.[73] Congress then began an investigation into the “Able Danger” program. According to Congressional testimony:

Pentagon lawyers during the Clinton administration ordered the destruction of intelligence reports that identified September 11 leader Mohamed Atta months before the attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center.[74]

Further, in 2004, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), “destroyed files on the Army’s computer data-mining program known as Able Danger to avoid disclosing the information”:

Retired Army Maj. Erik Kleinsmith, former director of the Army Land Information Warfare Center, told the panel he was directed by Pentagon lawyers to delete 2 terabytes of computer data — the equivalent of one-quarter of the information in the Library of Congress — on Able Danger in May or June 2000 because of legal concerns about information on U.S. citizens.[75]

In September of 2005, as the Senate investigation into Able Danger was underway, several Senators from both parties accused the Defense Department “of obstructing an investigation into whether a highly classified intelligence program known as Able Danger did indeed identify Mohamed Atta and other future hijackers as potential threats well before the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.” This occurred after the Pentagon “blocked several witnesses from testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee at a public hearing.”[76]

The Pentagon even acknowledged that, “it had blocked several military officers and intelligence analysts from testifying at an open Congressional hearing about a highly classified intelligence program.” A Pentagon spokesman said open testimony “would not be appropriate.”[77]

The 9/11 Commission, despite testimony from Col. Schaffer and other individuals about the Able Danger program, had dismissed Able Danger as “not historically significant,” and justified leaving it out of the final report, which stated that, “American intelligence agencies were unaware of Mr. Atta until the day of the attacks.” Louis Freeh, a former FBI Director, wrote in an article in the Wall Street Journal, that this assertion by the 9/11 Commission is “embarrassingly wrong,” especially since Commission members had acknowledged in 2005 (a year after the release of the 9/11 Commission Report), that they had met with Able Danger officials who did mention they were tracking Atta prior to 9/11.[78]

Further, more information was revealed regarding the relationship many supposed hijackers had with the US intelligence community, as it was revealed by Newsweek in 2002 that two hijackers were identified by the CIA in January of 2000 when they attended an al-Qaeda meeting in Malaysia. However, the two men then went to San Diego where they attended flight school, where they “moved into the home of a Muslim man who had befriended them at the local Islamic Center. The landlord regularly prayed with them and even helped one open a bank account.” However, their landlord also happened to be an “undercover asset” for the FBI, yet nothing was done.[79]

Immediately following the 9/11 attacks, it was reported by Newsweek that the military gave information to the FBI which alleged that 5 of the 9/11 hijackers had “received training at secure U.S. military installations in the 1990s.” Further, “three of the alleged hijackers listed their address on drivers licenses and car registrations as the Naval Air Station in Pensacola.” Newsweek continued:

But there are slight discrepancies between the military training records and the official FBI list of suspected hijackers—either in the spellings of their names or with their birthdates. One military source said it is possible that the hijackers may have stolen the identities of the foreign nationals who studied at the U.S. installations.[80]

Could the use of false identities or dual identities be the reason why, in late September of 2001, it was reported that four of the alleged 9/11 hijackers had turned out to be alive and well, and living in the Middle East? The FBI released the list of the 19 purported 9/11 hijackers, and some of the names and photographs on the list show people who were still alive, a remarkable feat for someone accused of crashing a plane in a suicide mission. Even the FBI director in late September of 2001 agreed that the identity of many of the hijackers was still in doubt.[81] Yet, these were not questions addressed by the 9/11 Commission.

It must be looked at and addressed much more closely and critically; the role between the U.S. and other Western intelligence agencies to what is known as “al-Qaeda.” Given our historical understanding of al-Qaeda as a “database” of intelligence assets, which were recruited to fight the Afghan-Soviet war, and our more recent understanding of the relationships between various intelligence agencies historically and presently to these groups and individuals, does it not seem plausible that the operation of al-Qaeda as a covert branch of U.S. policy has continued? Certainly, more research needs to be undertaken, but what is clear is that any and all official investigations thus far have been nothing but concocted lies: that is, willful and intended deception, designed to hide the truth, not reveal it.

It is also within this context, of understanding the deep nexus of intelligence and terrorism in international relations and imperial stratagems (that is, strategic deception), that we must view the rise, role, evolution and purpose of the “Global War on Terror,” now in its 9th year, spending trillions to send poor Americans to kill poor Muslims in nations across the Middle East, Africa, and Central and South Asia.

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