

This 'War on Terrorism' is Bogus

The 9/11 attacks gave the US an ideal pretext to use force to secure its global domination

BY MICHAEL MEACHER

Far too little attention has been focused on why the US went to war. (...) The conventional explanation is that after the Twin Towers were hit, retaliation against al Qaeda bases in Afghanistan was a natural first step in launching a global war against terrorism. Then, because Saddam Hussein was alleged by the US and UK governments to retain weapons of mass destruction, the war could be extended to Iraq as well. However this theory does not fit all the facts. The truth may be a great deal murkier.

We now know that a blueprint for the creation of a global Pax Americana, entitled *Rebuilding America's Defences*, was written in September 2000 by the neoconservative think tank, Project for the New American Century (PNAC). [For a PNAC exposé see *Global Outlook*, Issue 5, p. 12-13.] (...)

This is a blueprint for US world domination. But before it is dismissed as an agenda for right-wing fantasists, it is clear it provides a much better explanation of what actually happened before, during and after 9/11 than the global 'war on terrorism' thesis. This can be seen in several ways.

First, it is clear the US authorities did little or nothing to pre-empt the events of 9/11. It is known that at least 11 countries provided advance warning to the US of the 9/11 attacks. Two senior Mossad experts were sent to Washington in August 2001 to alert the CIA and FBI to a cell of 200 terrorists said to be preparing a big operation (*Daily Telegraph*, September 16, 2001). The list they provided included the names of four of the 9/11 hijackers, none of whom was arrested.

It had been known as early as 1996 that there were plans to hit Washington targets with aeroplanes. Then, in 1999, a US national intelligence council report noted that "al Qaeda suicide bombers could crash-land an aircraft packed with high explosives into the Pentagon, the headquarters of the CIA, or the White House."

Fifteen of the 9/11 hijackers obtained their visas in Saudi Arabia. Michael Springman, the former head of the American visa bureau in Jeddah, has stated that since 1987 the CIA had been illicitly issuing visas to unqualified applicants from the Middle East and bringing them to the US for training in terrorism for the Afghan war in collaboration with bin Laden (BBC, November 6, 2001). It seems this operation continued after the Afghan war for other purposes. It is also reported that five of the hijackers received training at secure US military installations in the 1990's (*Newsweek*, September 15, 2001).

Instructive leads prior to 9/11 were not followed up. French Moroccan flight student Zacarias Moussaoui (now thought to be the 20th hijacker) was arrested in August 2001 after an instructor reported he showed a suspicious interest in learning how to steer large airliners. When US agents learned from French intelligence he had radical Islamist ties, they sought a warrant to search his computer, which contained clues to the September 11 mission (*Times*, November 3, 2001). But they were turned down by the FBI. One agent wrote, a month before 9/11, that Moussaoui might be planning to crash into the Twin Towers (*Newsweek*, May 20, 2002). (...)

The former US federal crimes prosecutor John Loftus has said: "The information provided by European intelligence services prior to 9/11 was so extensive that it is no longer possible for either the CIA or FBI to assert a defence of incompetence."

Nor is the US response after 9/11 any better. No serious attempt has ever been made to catch bin Laden. In late September and early October 2001, leaders of Pakistan's two Islamist parties negotiated bin Laden's extradition to Pakistan to stand trial for 9/11. However, a US official said, significantly, that "casting our objectives too narrowly" risked "a premature collapse of the international effort if by some lucky chance Mr.

bin Laden was captured". The US chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, General Myers, went so far as to say that "the goal has never been to get bin Laden" (AP, April 5, 2002). The whistle blowing FBI agent Robert Wright told ABC News (December 19, 2002) that FBI headquarters wanted no arrests. And in November 2001, the US air force complained it had al Qaeda and Taliban leaders in its sights as many as 10 times over the previous six weeks, but had been unable to attack because they did not receive permission quickly enough (*Time Magazine*, May 13, 2002). None of this assembled evidence, all of which comes from sources already in the public domain, is compatible with the idea of a real, determined 'war on terrorism'.

The catalogue of evidence does, however, fall into place when set against the PNAC blueprint. From this it seems that the so-called 'war on terrorism' is being used largely as a bogus cover for achieving wider US strategic geopolitical objectives. Indeed Tony Blair himself hinted at this when he said to the Commons liaison committee: "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" (*Times*, July 17, 2002). Similarly Rumsfeld was so determined to obtain a rationale for an attack on Iraq that on 10 separate occasions he asked the CIA to find evidence linking Iraq to 9/11; the CIA repeatedly came back empty-handed (*Time Magazine*, May 13, 2002).

In fact, 9/11 offered an extremely convenient pretext to put the PNAC plan into action. The evidence again is quite clear that plans for military action against Afghanistan and Iraq were in hand well before 9/11. A report prepared for the US government from the Baker Institute of Public Policy stated in April 2001 that "the US remains a prisoner of its energy dilemma. Iraq remains a destabilising influence to ... the flow of oil to international markets from the Middle East." Submitted to Vice-President Cheney's energy task group, the report recommended that because this was an unacceptable risk to the US, 'military intervention' was necessary (*Sunday Herald*, October 6, 2002). Similar evidence exists in regard to Afghanistan. (...)

Given this background, it is not surprising that some have seen the US failure to avert the 9/11 attacks as creating an invaluable pretext for attacking Afghanistan in a war that had clearly already been well planned in advance. There is a possible precedent for this. The US national archives reveal that President Roosevelt used exactly this approach in relation to Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Some advance warning of the attacks was received, but the information never reached the US fleet. The ensuing national outrage persuaded a reluctant US public to join the Second World War. Similarly the PNAC blueprint of September 2000 states that the process of transforming the US into "tomorrow's dominant force" is likely to be a long one in the absence of "some catastrophic and catalyzing event – like a new Pearl Harbor". The 9/11 attacks allowed the US to press the 'go' button for a strategy in accordance with the PNAC agenda which it would otherwise have been politically impossible to implement. (...)

The conclusion of all this analysis must surely be that the global 'war on terrorism' has the hallmarks of a political myth propagated to pave the way for a wholly different agenda – the US goal of world hegemony, built around securing, by force, command over the oil supplies required to drive the whole project.

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Michael Meacher, MP, was Tony Blair's environment minister from May 1997 to June 2003. Excerpted from the original article, *The Guardian*, 6 September 2003. See the full article at: <http://globalresearch.ca/articles/MEA309A.html>. Copyright belongs to the author. All rights reserved. ■