

to alter the course of events so as to enable a national disaster in order to foment a politically advantageous war.

enough to sell to the world as an act of war, yeah, that would do it." "Well, we all assume that he's planning and financing terrorist activity all the time, and especially since Israel has gone crazy with the Palestinians, he could be emboldened to attempt something bigger if he received believable signals that your guard was down." "Then, by acting to realize his agenda, he would be poking his head in the noose, literally begging us to begin Afghan military operations, and at the same time, putting a military presence in the middle-east that would be available at a moment's notice to intervene in the event of a threat to the Saudi regime, which stabilizes your business platform and secures our supply of Saudi crude." "Unfortunately for you, he must create a really big event." "Yeah, war is hell, but hey look—we're just brainstorming here, anyway—but let's keep in touch. You know, it would be easier for him to bring off something big than he probably realizes because the CIA, the FBI, and the INS don't talk to each other, anyway, and I can imagine a bunch of normal bureaucratic ways that their information flow could be slowed even further. But, you know, 'if wishes were fishes'."

One has only to look at the developments since September 11 to see who has benefited from that catastrophe. Bush enjoys 90% popularity. The Democratic opposition, already crippled by a felt need to display bi-partisanship, is reduced to fighting only the most egregious erosion of civil rights and nurture of corporate profiteering. The opponents of corporate globalism are stopped in their tracks. The bear market found a new bottom not ascribable to its own internal weaknesses.

As far as the al Qaeda is concerned, their objective (other than the obvious one of bringing off a successful attack on the homeland of the super-power seen as oppressing them in their homelands) has been authoritatively surmised to be the provocation of a US response which would further de-stabilize shaky US-friendly governments in the mid-east leading to their replacement with governance by hard-line Islamic fundamentalists. If so, it would seem reasonable to conclude that both sides had reasons to foment a war, albeit with varying best and worst case scenarios for the outcome.

Finally, it is not being suggested here that the details of the terrorists plans or the full extent of their ambitions were known to the CIA. Although it seems plausible that the CIA could have had purposeful passive complicity in the attacks, if they had known that the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were targeted, it seems more probable that that would have seemed unacceptable overkill. More likely would have been a supposition that multiple conventional highjackings were in the offing.

The possibility that actors in the intelligence and investment communities had self-serving passive complicity in the events of September 11 is sufficiently plausible and well-documented to justify a full-scale investigation by the appropriate authorities. "Passive complicity" is probably not actionable—or even provable—but as a key event in a conspiracy, or as dereliction of duty (either of which could be reasonably held to be treasonous) it might be a key element in a viable legal proceeding. In any case, the American public should be empowered to judge whether it is appropriate for a democracy to invest a secret and unaccountable agency within the executive branch with the power

Furthermore, there is a historical precedent for such purposeful ignorance at the highest levels. Franklin Roosevelt has been proven to have known in advance of the impending attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. This is not to suggest that George Bush himself orchestrated, or had advance knowledge of the events of September 11. It seems more plausible that he was as much caught off guard as the general public. The possibility that most insistently presents itself is that the behind-the-scenes CIA/Wall Street network took the opportunity offered them by advance knowledge of the up-coming terrorist attack to passively look the other way as a result of a sophisticated Machiavellian cost/benefit analysis.

If the New Yorker of Nov. 12, 2001 is to be believed, a certain amount of behind-the-scenes high-level intrigue by the bin Laden family, and the potential for considerably more seems well established. "The bin Laden family owns and runs a five-billion-a-year global corporation that includes the largest construction firm in the Islamic world, with offices in London and Geneva" with "many influential American friends, defenders, and business partners" such as "a two million dollar (stake) in the Carlyle Group, a private equity firm with a large interest in defense contracting ... known for its politically connected executives such as former President George H. W. Bush, former Secretary of State George Baker, and former British Prime Minister John Major." "The current chairman ..., Frank Carlucci, ... has been a trusted friend of the current Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld."

"About two dozen American-based members of the bin Laden family...were said to be in the US at the time of the attacks." "With the approval of the FBI, ... the bin Ladens flew by private jet from Los Angeles to Orlando, Washinton, and finally, Boston." "Once the FAA permitted overseas flights the jet flew to Europe." "US officials were apparently persuaded ... that the extended bin Laden family included no material witnesses" because of cooperation with the FBI. However, insiders report that "Several members of the bin Laden family (it may number as many as six hundred) sympathize with Osama." For instance, a "former CIA anti-terror expert" reported "that as recently as nine months ago ... two of Osama's sisters (were seen) apparently taking cash to an Abu Dhabi airport where they are suspected of handing it to a member of bin Laden's Al Qaeda organization." Further, in 1998, Prince Turki al-Faisal, then head of Saudi intelligence arranged for Osama's mother to travel to Afghanistan. Osama had once been a protege of al-Faisal's.

It seems plausible to imagine that the Americans went to the Saudi's (or directly to the bin Ladens) and said, "Look, we have evidence that you folks are funneling cash to Osama; what's the deal here?" To which they might have replied, "In truth, a few of the family are sympathetic to him, but to the majority, he is a dangerous embarrassment not only to our business abroad, but to our standing with the Saudi family who fear he has a usurper agenda. But with him holed up in Afghanistan, and the bin Laden family ambivalent anyway, we are powerless to do anything about him, as well as powerless to police family member's surreptitious support." "Hmm," ponders the American, "we would gladly chase him in Afghanistan, but we'd have to have an awfully good excuse to go there." "You mean like a real escalation of terrorist activity?" "If it were severe

This alone should have tipped them off that a highjacking was in the works. If they had inside information from an "asset", a more detailed picture of the planned event could have been known. Also, such an asset could have functioned as an intermediary (or a mole) so that information could have flowed the other way.

The CIA also had another source of information, a sophisticated computer software program to track the financial markets for suspicious anomalies. To back up a little, the CIA was designed at the end of WWII by high-level Wall Street lawyers (like John Foster Dulles) who also filled top government policy posts. Allan Dulles, the first director of the CIA was also a Wall Street lawyer. From its inception to the present day, the CIA has staffed its directorate from this pool. Bush, the Elder, was a CIA director. There have been persistent worries that the CIA uses its stock trading expertise to finance operations kept secret from its overseers in the government. These assertions have never been proven, but any attempt to mount a serious investigation would almost surely have been quashed as a threat to "national security".

In any case, it has been claimed with some credibility that the days immediately preceding September 11 saw anomalies in stock trading, specifically, abnormal calls for selling the stock of United Airlines short. It would seem that the records of those transactions could be subpoenaed to determine who could have possibly been profiting off of advance knowledge of an impending terrorist highjacking. Even if this investigation disclosed a known or suspected terrorist connection, the CIA could still have had complicity in the trades by signaling to an asset that it was looking the other way, or actually have had a hand in it, either for profit or as a kind of sting. By using an asset in this way, they could both reap a profit and have believable deniability.

But a more sinister and far-reaching motivation could logically be imputed to the top CIA directorate. It's well-known that the Bush administration is in thrall to the military-industrial complex of oil, munitions, defense contractors and the like. The military and the CIA have had to invent putative future military enemies to justify keeping in place the bloated military and intelligence capability inherited from the Cold War. At the same time, the economy had rapidly been sinking into recession, and in early September there was considerable concern among Wall Street insiders that a crash of the bubble in derivatives was about to occur, and if that happened without extrinsic cause, a panic might ensue. Also, the Bush administration still suffered from the question of its electoral legitimacy as well as mis-steps and setbacks experienced earlier in the year. Their truculence lost them the control of the Senate, and the disrespect of most of the rest of the world over the rejection of the Kyoto accords, pushing missile defense, and the boycotting of the international conference on racism.

Thus it seems at least plausible that at a very high level, a conscious decision was made to ignore the warnings in early September of a potential large scale terrorist attack, because of all the possible benefits to the Bush administration, the military, the industries crucial to modern warfare, as well as providing an excuse to ram through Congress legislation furthering various rightist agendas.

By the time the Cold War came to an end with the collapse of the USSR, it was clear to all that the end of colonization had not only not produced autonomy for the nations of the mid-east, but on the contrary, the policies of the US were a far greater determinant to their situation than to any of their neighbors, and that these policies were often inimical to their welfare, or if not, only coincidentally so. The constantly increasing demand for mid-east oil was accompanied by determined efforts to keep the price down which led to the formation of OPEC. Israel's US financed war-machine pushed beyond its original borders. Knee-jerk anti-communism led to CIA complicity in the overthrow of left-leaning regimes, while the nations themselves played off the US and USSR against each other. Consequently, the US found itself with a number of monarchies, military juntas, and Islamic fundamentalist extremists as client states. All of this led to wars, insurrections, coups, and revolutions in which the US was an actor. Even when US interests were not directly involved, as in the bloody and protracted Iraq-Iran war, the US sold arms to both sides.

To summarize, the Islamic nations of the mid-east have found themselves, after a half-century, to have granted the US all their major objectives: continuous oil, communist exclusion, corporate access, and Israeli survival, while granting them none of theirs: transcending poverty, enshrining Islamic culture, eliminating unwanted foreign military presence, and the defeat of Israel (or at least the establishment of a viable Palestinian state to which refugees could safely return). This is the fertile soil that nurtured the rise of Islamic fundamentalism as a mass movement. For those with no hope of winning in direct confrontation, but fierce tenacity in pursuing their ends, resort to the jihad of terrorism has come to seem the only effective strategy.

The CIA has been heavily involved in mid-east conflicts since its founding. True to the nature of this kind of endeavor, it elevated deceitful and violent men to great importance. Among these were Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden. Much of the CIA's operations have become a matter of public record, but much is still hidden. The point worth stressing here is that the finding and/or creation of such "assets" is ongoing, and that information and dis-information traveling along these lines of communication can be hidden from host governments (at least while of significance to ongoing operations). Eventually, information or secret alliances develop in these subterranean channels that provide insiders opportunities to either make a fortune or personally change the course of history. The latter has got to be the ultimate thrill to someone addicted to the spy/counterspy game.

Other than the final sentence, the foregoing synopsis seems verifiable from the historical record. In what follows, I propose to make certain unproven (and perhaps un-provable) suppositions, based on the predictable behaviors of the sort of men postulated in the opening paragraph.

In the days following September 11, reports appeared in the media that the CIA had advance warning that something big was brewing in the terrorist network. If the CIA was doing its job, it would have been tracking the movements of at least a few of the terrorists known to them, which would have revealed the purchase of tickets on United Airlines.

## ISLAM, C.I.A., & SEPTEMBER 11

I am basing the speculations contained herein on the following assumptions: one, with certain men, the will to *power* takes precedence over all other reasons for action, and that to this end such men will concentrate their energies on marshalling effective means of *coercion*, the *money* required to gain access to, keep, and exercise power, and the means to gather (and invent, if necessary), control, and disseminate the *information* needed to influence public opinion, inform allies, and mislead enemies; two, that among such men (and those they enlist in their purposes), are men for whom inflicting *violence* is a source of pleasure, the *subjugation* of others necessary to their aims, and for whom the glory of victory in *war* is their highest goal, and; three, such men gravitate to the military (or police), government, and large enterprises (as well as, obviously, to organized crime) where they tend to rise to the top because they tend to be very good at what they do.

When these power-centers have interests at play in the world, the desirability of keeping war and business plans secret from potential enemies or competitors leads to the creation of spy and counter-spy networks. These are empowered by their host governments to keep their activities secret not only from targets but from their own governments. Inevitably they infiltrate each other. This produces double-agents, loose cannons, individuals who compromise their employer to save their skins, free-booters who use their positions in the intelligence community to finance illegal activities for personal gain, and other unintended consequences. Those attracted to this kind of endeavor, while often driven by patriotism, are most attracted by the playing of the game. Due to the nature of the game, the kinds of people described in the paragraph above are often drawn to this line of work.

Upon victory in WW II, Stalin, Truman, and Churchill exercised their power to carve up the spoils of war mainly on the basis of their ability to negotiate their own competing national agendas. Since most of the Islamic world was colonized prior to WW II and the European colonizers—Britain, France, Belgium, Italy, and the Netherlands--were too weakened by the war to re-establish their control, the former colonies were granted sovereignty mostly on the basis of existing colonial borders—the main exceptions being the separation from India of the largely Muslim nation of Pakistan (later itself to be divested of Bangladesh), and the creation in Palestine of the Jewish state of Israel. The will of the people in these lands had almost nothing to do with the drawing of these borders, and practically speaking, could not have, considering their lack of democratic institutions and infrastructure.

During the Cold War which ensued, the US—as the "free world's" major power—consistently and doggedly pursued a set of policies driven by domestic political priorities that subjugated the Islamic nations of the middle-east to a number of its foreign policy imperatives. These were: containment of the USSR with military alliances, making sure that foreign countries weren't closed off to US-based business interests by socialist or communist governments, protection of US access to the region's oil reserves (most particularly, Saudi Arabia's), and unwavering support of the fledgling state of Israel.