

The American Empire and 9/11
(full-length Version with Notes)

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Introduction

After the attacks of 9/11, I accepted the blowback thesis, according to which the attacks were revenge for U.S. foreign policy. This view led me to undertake an extensive study of the American empire, the very reality of which had been an embattled issue.

The American Empire

In his 2002 book *American Empire*, Andrew Bacevich pointed out that it had long been a "cherished American tradition [that] the United States is not and cannot be an empire." The words "American empire" were "fighting words," so that uttering them was an almost sure sign that the speaker was a left-wing critic of America's foreign policy.¹

As Bacevich also pointed out, however, this had all recently changed, so that even right-wing commentators were freely acknowledging the existence of the American empire. As columnist Charles Krauthammer put it in 2002: "People are coming out of the closet on the word 'empire.'"²

Given this consensus about the *reality* of the American empire, the only remaining issue concerned its *nature*. This

¹Andrew J. Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 30, 218-19.

²Quoted in Emily Eakin, "All Roads Lead To D.C.," *New York Times*, Week In Review, March 31, 2002.

empire was generally portrayed, especially by neoconservatives, as benign. Robert Kagan spoke of "The Benevolent Empire."³ Dinesh D'Souza, after writing that "America has become an empire," added that happily it is "the most magnanimous imperial power ever."⁴

Commentators from the left, however, presented a radically different view. A 2003 book by Noam Chomsky was subtitled *America's Quest for Global Dominance*.⁵ Richard Falk wrote of the Bush administration's "global domination project," which posed the threat of "global fascism."⁶ Chalmers Johnson, once a conservative who believed American foreign policy aimed at promoting freedom and democracy, described the United States as "a military juggernaut intent on world domination."⁷

Bacevich, although still a conservative, had come to accept the left's assessment of this empire. He ridiculed the claim "that the promotion of peace, democracy, and human rights and the punishment of evil-doers--not the pursuit of self-interest--[has] defined the essence of American diplomacy."⁸ Pointing out that the aim of the US military has been "to achieve something approaching omnipotence,"

³Robert Kagan, "The Benevolent Empire," *Foreign Policy*, Summer 1998: 24-35.

⁴ Dinesh D'Souza, "In Praise of an American Empire," *Christian Science Monitor*, April 26, 2002.

⁵ Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003).

⁶Richard Falk, "Will the Empire Be Fascist?" *Global Dialogues*, 2003; "Resisting the Global Domination Project: An Interview with Prof. Richard Falk," *Frontline*, 20/8 (April 12-25, 2003).

⁷Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004), 33, 4.

⁸Bacevich, *American Empire*, 7, 46.

Bacevich mocked the idea that such power in America's hands "is by definition benign."⁹

The historical evidence clearly supports this non-benign view of the American empire. Part of this evidence is the fact that U.S. political and military leaders have arranged "false-flag operations" as pretexts for war. We did this to begin the wars with Mexico and the Philippines and to begin the full-out attack on Vietnam.¹⁰

Also important is Operation Northwoods, a plan submitted by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to President Kennedy containing "pretexts which would provide justification for U.S. military intervention in Cuba." Some of the ideas, such as the proposal to "blow up a U.S. ship in Guantánamo Bay and blame Cuba,"¹¹ would have required killing Americans.

This history shows that U.S. military and political leaders have not been averse to using the same tricks as military and political leaders in other countries with imperial ambitions, such as Japan, which in 1931 manufactured the Mukden incident as a pretext for taking control of Manchuria,¹² and Nazi leaders, who in 1933 set the Reichstag Fire as a pretext for rounding up leftists and annulling civil rights,¹³ then in 1939 had German troops

⁹Ibid., 133, 52.

¹⁰ On Mexico, see Richard Van Alstyne, *The Rising American Empire* (1960; New York, Norton, 1974), 143. On the Philippines, see Stuart Creighton Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation: The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 11, 57-66, 237, 245-47. On Vietnam, see Marilyn B. Young, *The Vietnam Wars 1945-1990* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 116-21, and George McT. Kahin, *Intervention: How American Became Involved in Vietnam* (Garden City: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1987), 220-23.

¹¹ See James Bamford, *Body of Secrets: Anatomy of the Ultra-Secret National Security Agency* (2001; New York: Anchor Books, 2002), 82-91.

¹² See Walter LaFeber, *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations throughout History* (New York: Norton, 1997), 164-66.

¹³ See William Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 191-93, whose position has been substantiated in Alexander Bahar and Wilfried Kugel, *Der Reichstagbrand: Wie*

dressed as Poles stage attacks on German posts at the Polish border, allowing Hitler to present his attack on Poland the next day as a "defensive necessity."¹⁴ In each case, evidence was planted to implicate the people these governments wanted to attack.

9/11: A False-Flag Operation?

Given this background information, I might have immediately concluded that the 9/11 attacks were false-flag attacks orchestrated by the Bush administration to enlarge the U.S. empire under the cover of the "war on terror." But when I first heard this allegation, about a year after 9/11, I replied that I did not think even the Bush administration would do such a heinous thing. I checked out some proffered websites but found the evidence unconvincing. (I tell this story because of the widespread allegation that those who call 9/11 an inside job do so because of antagonism to Bush and Cheney and/or their policies.)

A few months later, however, another colleague suggested that I look at a website containing the massive 9/11 timeline created by Paul Thompson.¹⁵ I found that it contained an enormous number of reports, all from mainstream

Geschichte Gemacht Wird (Berlin, Edition Q, 2001); reviewed in Wilhelm Klein, "The Reichstag Fire, 68 Years On," World Socialist Website, July 5, 2001 (<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2001/jul2001/reic-j05.shtml>).

¹⁴ See "Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. II: Criminality of Groups and Organizations" (<http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/imt/nca/nca-02/nca-02-15-criminality-06-05.html>); Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: 1936-45: Nemesis* (New York: Norton, 2001), 221; and "Gleiwitz Incident," Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gleiwitz_incident#References).

¹⁵ Thompson's timeline was originally published at www.cooperativeresearch.org. Much of it has now been published as *The Terror Timeline: Year by Year, Day by Day, Minute by Minute: A Comprehensive Chronicle of the Road to 9/11--and America's Response* (New York: ReganBooks, 2004). The online version continues to be up-dated and is the most complete source of information about 9/11 based on mainstream sources.

sources, that contradicted the official account. This discovery started a process that led me to publish *The New Pearl Harbor*,¹⁶ which summarized much of the evidence that had been discovered by previous researchers---evidence, I concluded, that provided a "strong *prima facie* case for official complicity."¹⁷ I will summarize some of this evidence in terms of six questions.

I. How Could Hijacked Airliners Have Struck the WTC and the Pentagon?

If standard operating procedures of the FAA and the U.S. military had been carried out on 9/11, AA Flight 11 and UA Flight 175 would have been intercepted before they reached Manhattan, and Flight 77 would have been intercepted long before it could have reached the Pentagon. Such interceptions are routine, being carried out about 100 times a year. A month after 9/11, the *Calgary Herald* reported that in the year 2000, NORAD had scrambled fighters 129 times. Just a few days after 9/11, Major Mike Snyder, a NORAD spokesperson, told the *Boston Globe* that "[NORAD's] fighters routinely intercept aircraft."¹⁸ Why did such interceptions not occur on 9/11? We have never been given a plausible explanation. Indeed, we have received three mutually inconsistent stories.

In the first few days, military officials said that no fighter jets were sent up by NORAD until after the strike on the Pentagon at 9:38, even though signs that Flight 11 was

¹⁶ David Ray Griffin, *The New Pearl Harbor: Disturbing Questions about the Bush Administration and 9/11* (Northampton, Mass.: Olive Branch, 2004).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, xxiii.

¹⁸ *Calgary Herald*, Oct. 13, 2001; Glen Johnson, "Otis Fighter Jets Scrambled Too Late to Halt the Attacks," *Boston Globe*, Sept. 15, 2001 [http://nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives?p_action=print]).

in trouble had been observed at 8:15. That would mean that although interceptions usually occur within 15 minutes, in this case over 80 minutes had elapsed before any fighters were even airborne. This story suggested that a "stand-down" order had been issued.

Within a few days, a second story was put out, according to which NORAD had ordered fighters aloft but they did not arrive in time, because FAA notification had unaccountably come very late. Critics showed, however, that even if the FAA notifications had come as late as NORAD's timeline indicated, there was sufficient time for interceptions.¹⁹ This second story did not, therefore, remove the suspicion that a stand-down order had been given.

The 9/11 Commission Report, issued in 2004, gave a third account, according to which, contrary to NORAD's timeline of September 18, 2001, the FAA did not notify NORAD about Flights 175, 77, and 93 until after they had crashed. As I showed in books published in 2005 and 2006, however, this new story contains many problems.²⁰

In August 2006, Michael Bronner, who was an associate producer for the film *United 93*, published an essay, "9/11 Live: The NORAD Tapes," which popularized the 9/11 Commission's new story and emphasized tapes supplied by NORAD, purportedly from 9/11, on which it is based. This new story was further publicized by the simultaneous publication of *Without Precedent* by Thomas Kean and Lee Hamilton, the chair and vice chair, respectively, of the 9/11 Commission. This book and Bronner's essay caused a minor sensation with their suggestion that the account given by the military between 2001 and 2004, which only partly absolved the

¹⁹ David Ray Griffin, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortions* (Northampton: Olive Branch, 2005), 139-48.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 155-226. For a briefer account, see "Flights of Fancy: The 9/11 Commission's Incredible Tales about Flights 11, 175, 77, and 93" in David Ray Griffin, *Christian Faith and the Truth Behind 9/11: A Call to Reflection and Action* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006).

military from responsibility for failing to prevent the attacks, had been a lie. The new story puts all the blame on the FAA, except for a little confusion on the military's part, thereby lessening the grounds for suspicion that the military had been given a stand-down order. This new story has been widely accepted.

However, in my most recent book, *Debunking 9/11 Debunking*,²¹ I show even more fully than I had before that this new story is incredible. Besides contradicting many well-documented reports, it is inherently implausible, because it claims that military leaders lied in a way that made them look worse than does the truth (as described by the 9/11 Commission). This new story does not, accordingly, remove grounds for suspicion that a stand-down order had been issued.

II. Why Did the Twin Towers and Building 7 of the WTC Collapse?

The Bush-Cheney administration has also failed to provide a credible explanation for the destruction of the World Trade Center buildings. According to the official explanation, the Twin Towers (WTC 1 and 2) collapsed because of the impact of the airplanes and the heat of the ensuing fires. But this explanation faces several formidable problems.

First, WTC 7 also collapsed, and in roughly the same way. This similarity implies that all three buildings collapsed from the same causes. However, unlike the Twin Towers, WTC 7 was not hit by an airplane.

Second, the fires in these buildings were not as big, hot, or long-lasting as fires in steel-frame high-rises that have *not* induced collapses. In 1991, a fire in Philadelphia

²¹ David Ray Griffin, *Debunking 9/11 Debunking: An Answer to Popular Mechanics and Other Defenders of the Official Conspiracy Theory* (Northampton, Mass.: Olive Branch, 2007).

burned for 18 hours; in 2004, a fire in Caracas burned for 17 hours. But neither fire produced even a partial collapse.²² The World Trade Center's north and south towers burned only 102 and 56 minutes, respectively, before they collapsed. WTC 7, moreover, had fires on only a few floors, according to several witnesses²³ and all the photographic evidence.²⁴

Third, total collapses of steel-frame high-rise buildings have never been brought about by fire and externally caused structural damage. All such collapses have been caused by explosives in the procedure known as "controlled demolition."

Fourth, the collapses of these three buildings all manifested many standard features of the kind of controlled demolition known as "implosion," such as: *sudden onset* (whereas steel, if weakened by fire, would gradually begin

²² "High-Rise Office Building Fire One Meridian Plaza Philadelphia, Pennsylvania," FEMA (<http://usfa.fema.gov/fire-service/techreports/tr049.shtm>); "Fire Practically Destroys Venezuela's Tallest Building" (http://www.whatreallyhappened.com/venezuela_fire.html).

²³ *New York Magazine* reporter Mark Jacobson, referring to the building a few minutes before it collapsed, said: "It wasn't a 47-story building that was engulfed in flames. The whole building wasn't on fire. . . . There was a lot of fire coming out of a few floors" (Jacobson can be seen making this statement in Michael Berger's film, "Improbable Collapse: The Demolition of Our Republic"). "Chief Thomas McCarthy of the FDNY said that while the firefighters "were waiting for 7 World Trade to come down," there was "fire on three separate floors" (9/11 Oral History of Thomas McCarthy, 10-11). Emergency medical technician Decosta Wright said: "I think the fourth floor was on fire. . . . [W]e were like, are you guys going to put that fire out?" (9/11 Oral History of Decosta Wright, 11). These quotations are from the 9/11 oral histories recorded by the New York Fire Department at the end of 2001 but released to the public (after a court battle) in August 2005, then made available on a *New York Times* website (http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/html/nyregion/20050812_WTC_GRAPHIC/met_WTC_histories_full_01.html).

²⁴ A photograph taken by Terry Schmidt can be seen on page 63 of Eric Hufschmid's *Painful Questions: An Analysis of the September 11th Attack* (Goleta, Calif.: Endpoint Software, 2002). According to Schmidt, this photo was taken between 3:09 and 3:16 PM, hence only a little over 2 hours before Building 7 collapsed. It shows that on the north side of the building, fires were visible only on floors 7 and 12. Therefore, if there were more fires on the south side, as some witnesses have claimed, they were not big enough to be seen from the north side.

to sag); *straight-down collapse* (as opposed to falling over); collapse at *virtually free-fall speed* (indicating that the lower floors, with all their steel and concrete, were offering no resistance); *total collapse* (indicating that the massive steel columns in the core of each building had been broken into many pieces---which is what explosives do in controlled demolitions); the production of *molten metal*; and the occurrence of *multiple explosions*. Although none of these six features can be explained by the official theory, let us focus on only the last two.

To begin with the molten metal: Many people have been led to believe, by misleading TV documentaries, that the Twin Towers collapsed because their steel melted. But steel does not begin to melt until it reaches 2800°F, whereas open fires based on hydrocarbons such as kerosene---which is what jet fuel is---cannot get much above 1700°F (even with an ideal mixture of fuel and oxygen, which seldom occurs in building fires). Nevertheless, molten metal was produced, according to many witnesses. For example, Peter Tully, president of Tully Construction, which was involved in the clean-up operation, said that he saw pools of "literally molten steel" at the site.²⁵

That would be no surprise only if the buildings' steel columns had been sliced by the use of high-temperature explosives, such as thermite, thermate, or RDX, which are regularly used to cut steel. That this is what happened is supported by reports that sometimes when steel beams were lifted from the rubble, they were dripping molten metal.²⁶

²⁵ Quoted in Christopher Bollyn, "New Seismic Data Refutes Official Explanation," American Free Press, Updated April 12, 2004 (<http://www.thetruthseeker.co.uk/article.asp?ID=2580>). For several more examples, see the subsection labeled "Molten Steel" in my chapter, "The Destruction of the World Trade Center: Why the Official Account Cannot Be True," in *Christian Faith and the Truth Behind 9/11*, or the discussion of molten metal in Chap. 3 of *Debunking 9/11 Debunking*.

²⁶ For example, Joe "Toolie" O'Toole, a Bronx firefighter who worked for many months on the rescue and clean-up efforts, said with regard to a beam that had been lifted by a crane from deep within the catacombs at

With regard to explosions, literally dozens of people--including journalists, police officers, WTC employees, emergency medical workers, and firefighters---reported hearing explosions in the Twin Towers, with some of them explicitly saying that the collapses appeared to be instances of controlled demolition.²⁷ One fire captain said: "I hear an explosion and I look up. It is as if the building is being imploded, from the top floor down, one after another, *boom, boom, boom.*"²⁸ One paramedic said: "[I]t was [like a] professional demolition where they set the charges on certain floors and then you hear 'Pop, pop, pop, pop, pop.'" One firefighter said: "It seemed like on television [when] they blow up these buildings. It seemed like it was going all the way around like a belt, all these explosions."²⁹

Steven Jones, a physicist who long taught at Brigham Young University, has pointed out that to believe the official account is to believe that some very basic laws of physics were violated.³⁰

Ground Zero: "It was dripping from the molten steel" (Jennifer Lin, "Recovery Worker Reflects on Months Spent at Ground Zero," *Knight Ridder*, May 29, 2002 [<http://www.messenger-inquirer.com/news/attacks/4522011.htm>]).

²⁷ See my "Explosive Testimony: Revelations about the Twin Towers in the 9/11 Oral Histories" in *Christian Faith and the Truth Behind 9/11*. See also Graeme MacQueen, "118 Witnesses: The Firefighters' Testimony to Explosions in the Twin Towers," *Journal of 9/11 Studies* (<http://www.journalof911studies.com>), Vol. 2/August 2006: 49-123.

²⁸ Captain Dennis Tardio as quoted in Dennis Smith, *Report from Ground Zero: The Story of the Rescue Efforts at the World Trade Center* (New York: Penguin, 2002), 18.

²⁹ 9/11 Oral History of Daniel Rivera, 9, and 9/11 Oral History of Richard Banaciski, 3-4.

³⁰ Steven E. Jones, "Why Indeed Did the WTC Buildings Collapse?" In David Ray Griffin and Peter Dale Scott, eds., *9/11 and American Empire: Intellectuals Speak Out* (Northampton: Olive Branch, 2006), 33-62. The online version, to which Jones refers for photographs, is now in the *Journal of 9/11 Studies*, Vol. 3/September 2006.

Given all the features that indicate controlled demolition, it is not surprising that when a controlled demolition expert in Holland was shown videos of the collapse of WTC 7,³¹ without being told what the building was (he had previously thought that only the Twin Towers had collapsed on 9/11), he said: "They have simply blown away columns. . . . A team of experts did this. . . . This is controlled demolition."³² It is also not surprising that two emeritus professors of structural analysis and construction at Zurich's prestigious ETH Institute of Technology say that WTC 7 was "with the highest probability brought down by explosives."³³

All evidence suggesting controlled demolition is ignored in *The 9/11 Commission Report*, which simply assumed the truth of the official story. Indeed, after FEMA, the first agency given the task of explaining the collapse of the WTC, said that its best explanation for the collapse of WTC 7 had "only a low probability of occurrence,"³⁴ the 9/11 Commission avoided the problem by simply not finding room to mention this collapse in its 571-page report.³⁵

³¹ For videos of all the WTC collapses, see "9/11/01 WTC Videos" (<http://911research.wtc7.net/wtc/evidence/videos/index.html>) and "9/11 Videos: The Controlled Collapse of WTC 7" (<http://www.whatreallyhappened.com/wtc7.html>).

³² This interview can be seen at "Demo Expert Confirms WTC-7 Was 'Controlled Demolition'" (<http://www.911blogger.com/node/2807>).

³³ See Daniele Ganser, "Der erbitterte Streit um den 11. September," *Tages-Anzeiger*, September 9, 2006 (<http://tagesanzeiger.ch/dyn/news/ausland/663864.html>). The statement quoted in the text is from Jörg Schneider. Hugo Bachmann is quoted as saying: "In my opinion WTC 7 was with the utmost probability brought down by controlled demolition done by experts."

³⁴ See FEMA, *World Trade Center Building Performance Study*, Ch. 5, Sect. 6.2, "Probable Collapse Sequence," which I discussed in *The New Pearl Harbor*, 22.

³⁵ This is only one of the most egregious of the 115 lies of omission and distortion that I discuss in *The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortions*, which are summarized in "The 9/11 Commission Report: A 571-Page Lie," *Global Outlook*, April 2006: 100-106; originally posted at

This behavior is no surprise given the fact that the Commission was run by its executive director, Philip Zelikow, who was virtually a member of the Bush-Cheney administration: He had worked with Condoleezza Rice on the National Security Council in the administration of the first President Bush; when the Republicans were out of office during the Clinton administration, Zelikow and Rice co-authored a book; Rice then, as National Security Advisor for the second President Bush, asked Zelikow to help make the transition to the new National Security Council, after which he was appointed to the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board;³⁶ Rice later brought in Zelikow to be the primary author of the 2002 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, which used 9/11 to justify a new doctrine of preemptive warfare, according to which the United States can attack other nations even if they pose no imminent threat.³⁷ The idea that the 9/11 Commission was independent and impartial is, therefore, ludicrous.

If the first two reports on the WTC collapses (FEMA's and the 9/11 Commission's) were carried out by investigative bodies that were closely tied to the Bush-Cheney White House, the same is true of the supposedly definitive report produced by the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST).³⁸ It is an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, headed by Bush's secretary of commerce. It could hardly publish a report that contradicted the official story. In any case, NIST's explanation of the collapses of

911Truth.org, May 22, 2005
(<http://www.911truth.org/article.php?story=20050523112738404>).

³⁶ See *The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortions*, 7-12, 282-85.

³⁷ I discuss the full significance of Zelikow's dual role in "Imperial Motives for a New Pearl Harbor," chap. 6 of *Christian Faith and the Truth Behind 9/11*.

³⁸ NIST, *Final Report on the Collapse of the World Trade Center Towers* (<http://wtc.nist.gov/NISTNCSTAR1CollapseofTowers.pdf>).

the Twin Towers---at this writing it still has not published a report on WTC 7---itself collapses when scrutinized from a scientific point of view.³⁹ As I show in *Debunking 9/11 Debunking*, for example, the NIST scientists, who knew molten metal could not have been produced by the fires, handled the problem by casting doubt on its existence, in spite of the abundant evidence for it.⁴⁰

III. Could the Official Account of the Pentagon Possibly Be True?

According to the official account, the Pentagon was struck by AA Flight 77 under the control of al-Qaeda hijacker Hani Hanjour. This account is challenged by many facts.

First, Flight 77 allegedly, after making a U-turn in the mid-west, flew back to Washington undetected for 40 minutes, even though it was then known that hijacked airliners were being used as weapons and even though the U.S. military has the best radar systems in the world.

Second, in order to get into position to hit Wedge 1 of the Pentagon, the aircraft had to execute an amazing downward spiral and come in at ground level, which according

³⁹ See Steven Jones, "Why Indeed Did the World Trade Center Collapse?"; Judy Wood, "A Refutation of the Official Collapse Theory," Scholars for 9/11 Truth (<http://www.st911.org>); Jim Hoffman, "Building a Better Mirage: NIST's 3-Year \$20,000,000 Cover-Up of the Crime of the Century," 911 Research, Version 1.0, Dec. 8, 2005 (<http://911research.wtc7.net/essays/nist/index.html>); and Kevin Ryan, "What is 9/11 Truth? The First Steps," *Journal of 9/11 Studies* August 2006/Volume 2: 1-6 (<http://www.journalof911studies.com>), and "Propping Up the War on Terror: Lies about the WTC by NIST and Underwriters Laboratories," in Griffin and Scott, eds., *9/11 and American Empire*, 63-71. I discuss these and other critiques in *Debunking 9/11 Debunking*, chap. 3, "The Disintegration of the World Trade Center: Has NIST Debunked the Theory of Controlled Demolition?"

⁴⁰ John Gross, one of the 13 scientists listed at the beginning of NIST's *Final Report*, has been recorded making this denial during a public presentation. See "NIST Engineer, John Gross, Denies the Existence [sic] of Molten Steel" (<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-7180303712325092501&hl=en>).

to some pilots would have been impossible for a Boeing 757, even under the control of an expert. Hanjour, moreover, was known as "a terrible pilot," who could barely fly a single-engine airplane.⁴¹ Russ Wittenberg, who flew large commercial airliners for 35 years after serving in Vietnam as a fighter pilot, has said that it would have been impossible for Flight 77 to have "descended 7,000 feet in two minutes, all the while performing a steep 270 degree banked turn before crashing into the Pentagon's first floor wall without touching the lawn." It would, he added, have been "totally impossible for an amateur who couldn't even fly a Cessna to maneuver the jetliner in such a highly professional manner."⁴² Ralph Omholt, a captain-qualified 757 pilot, agrees: "The idea that an *unskilled* pilot could have flown this trajectory," says Omholt, "is simply too ridiculous to consider."⁴³

Third, terrorists brilliant enough to outfox the U.S. military's defense system would not have struck Wedge 1, for many reasons: It had been reinforced, so the damage was less severe than a strike anywhere else would have been; it was still being renovated, so relatively few people were there; the secretary of defense and all the top brass, whom terrorists would presumably have wanted to kill, were on the opposite side of the building; and hitting Wedge 1 required a difficult maneuver, whereas crashing into the roof--of, say, the area with the offices of Rumsfeld and the top brass---would have been much easier and deadlier.

⁴¹ See *New York Times*, May 4, 2002, CBS News, May 10, 2002. The fact that Hanjour was known as a "terrible pilot" was even acknowledged by *The 9/11 Commission Report* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004), 225-26, 242, but it failed to explain how, then, he could have performed the alleged feats.

⁴² Greg Szymanski, "Former Vietnam Combat and Commercial Pilot Firm Believer 9/11 Was Inside Government Job," *Lewis News*, Sunday, January 8, 2006 (<http://www.lewisnews.com/article.asp?ID=106623>).

⁴³ Ralph Omholt, e-mail letter, October 27, 2006.

Fourth, there is considerable evidence that the aircraft that struck the Pentagon was not even a Boeing 757. Unlike the strikes on the Twin Towers, the Pentagon strike did not create a detectable seismic signal.⁴⁴ Also, according to photographs and eyewitnesses, the kind of damage and debris that would have been produced by the impact of a Boeing 757 was not produced by the strike on the Pentagon.

With regard to the *debris*, the eyewitnesses include Karen Kwiatkowski, who was then an Air Force Lieutenant Colonel employed at the Pentagon. She writes of "a strange lack of visible debris on the Pentagon lawn, where I stood only moments after the impact. . . . I saw nothing of any significance at the point of impact---no airplane metal or cargo debris."⁴⁵ Another eyewitness was CNN's Jamie McIntyre, who said during a live report from the Pentagon on 9/11: "The only pieces left that you can see are small enough that you pick up in your hand."⁴⁶

The lack of the expected debris *inside* the Pentagon has been reported by April Gallop, who, along with her two-month-old son, was seriously injured. She says:

I was located at the E ring. . . . [W]e had to escape the building before the floors . . . collapsed on us. And I don't recall at any time seeing any plane debris. . . . If I wasn't informed [at the hospital that it was

⁴⁴ Won-Young Kim and Gerald R. Baum, "Seismic Observations during September 11, 2001, Terrorist Attack" (<http://www.mgs.md.gov/esic/publications/download/911pentagon.pdf>).

⁴⁵ Karen Kwiatkowski, "Assessing the Official 9/11 Conspiracy Theory," in Griffin and Scott, eds., *9/11 and American Empire*. See also "The Missing Wings" (<http://www.physics911.net/missingwings.htm>), in which A. K. Dewdney and G. W. Longspaugh argue that the absence of wing debris alone is sufficient to disprove the claim that the aircraft was a huge airliner.

⁴⁶ Text and video available at <http://www.global-conspiracies.com/cnn> reported no plane hit pentagon.htm.

a plane] I would have never believed it. I walked through that place to try to get out before everything collapsed on us [S]urely we should have seen something.⁴⁷

With regard to *damage*, Omholt, discussing the photographic evidence,⁴⁸ writes: "There is no hole big enough to swallow a 757. . . . There is no viable evidence of burning jet fuel. . . . The expected 'crash' damage doesn't exist. . . . Even the Pentagon lawn was undamaged! The geometry of the day certifies the 'official' account as a blatant lie."⁴⁹ Significant testimony is also provided by Army Reservist Isabelle Slifer, whose fourth-floor office was directly above the strike zone between the first and second floors. Even though a 757 has a very large tail fin, her office was not damaged by the impact.⁵⁰

Fifth, the Pentagon is surely the best defended building on the planet. It is within an ultra-restricted zone. It is only a few miles from Andrews Air Force Base, which, assigned to protect this zone, has at least three squadrons with fighter jets on alert at all times. (The claim by *The 9/11 Commission Report* that no fighters were on alert the morning of 9/11 is wholly implausible and

⁴⁷ "Interview with April Gallop," George Washington's Blog, July 13, 2006 (<http://georgewashington.blogspot.com/2006/07/interview-with-april-gallop.html>). Also, Ed Plaughter, the county fire chief, and Lee Evey, the head of the renovation project, reported seeing no big pieces from an airplane (DoD news briefings, September 12 and 15, 2001).

⁴⁸ For photographic evidence, see Eric Hufschmid, *Painful Questions*, chap. 9, and Dave McGowan, "September 11, 2001 Revisited: The Series: Act II," Center for an Informed America (www.davesweb.cnchost.com/nwsltr68.html).

⁴⁹ Ralph Omholt, "9-11 and the Impossible: The Pentagon" (<http://www.physics911.net/omholt.htm>).

⁵⁰ Nikki Lowe, "Pentagon Survivor Donates \$500 in Lieu of a Retirement Party: Isabelle Slifer Shares Her Story," Pentagon Memorial Fund Site (<http://www.pentagonmemorial.net/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=5773>).

contradicted by the military's own website.⁵¹) Also, the Pentagon is reportedly protected by batteries of surface-to-air missiles,⁵² so if any aircraft without a U.S. military transponder---a military transponder radiates a "friendly" signal---had entered the Pentagon's airspace, it would have been automatically shot down---unless officials in the Pentagon had deactivated its anti-aircraft defenses. Accordingly, whether the Pentagon was struck by a military or a nonmilitary aircraft, the strike had to be an inside job.

A sixth reason to be dubious of the official story is that, as at the World Trade Center, evidence was quickly destroyed. Shortly after the strike, officials picked up debris in front of the impact site and carried it off.⁵³ Shortly thereafter the entire lawn was covered with dirt and gravel, so that any remaining forensic evidence was literally covered up.⁵⁴

FBI agents, moreover, quickly confiscated videos from security cameras on nearby buildings.⁵⁵ The Justice Department, after long refusing to release any of them,

⁵¹ *The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortions*, 159-64. See my further discussion in *Debunking 9/11 Debunking*, chap. 4, "Debunking 9/11 Myths: A Failed Attempt by *Popular Mechanics*."

⁵² Thierry Meyssan, who has referred to these anti-missile batteries (*Pentagate* [London: Carnot, 2002], 112, 116), has written: "The presence of these anti-missile batteries was testified to me by French officers to whom they were shown during an official visit to the Pentagon. This was later confirmed to me by a Saudi officer" (e-mail communication). See also John Judge, "Pentagon and P-56 Preparations and Defenses and the Stand-Down on 9/11," *Ratville Times*, Jan. 11, 2006 [www.ratical.org/ratville/JFK/JohnJudge/P56A.html].

⁵³ Photographic evidence of this removal can be seen in Eric Hufschmid's video, "Painful Deceptions" (available at www.EricHufschmid.Net).

⁵⁴ A photograph showing this literal cover-up can be seen in Omholt, "9-11 and the Impossible: The Pentagon."

⁵⁵ See Bill McKelway "Three Months On, Tension Lingers Near the Pentagon," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Dec. 11, 2001 (http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2001/12/1211_wirepentagon.html), and Bill Gertz and Rowan Scarborough, "Inside the Ring," *Washington Times*, Sept. 21, 2001.

finally in May 2006 released one purporting to showing a Boeing 757 striking the Pentagon. But it did not. Even Bill O'Reilly of Fox News had to say: "I can't see a plane there."⁵⁶ If there were any videos giving clear support to the official story, would we not have seen them as often as we have seen the strikes on the World Trade Center?

These six problems, besides conflicting with the official account, collectively indicate that the strike on the Pentagon was orchestrated by forces within our own government.

In the light of these first three challenges to the official account, we can reflect on President Bush's advice not to tolerate "outrageous conspiracy theories about the attacks of 11 September."⁵⁷ This is excellent advice. But it deflects attention from the fact that the truly outrageous conspiracy theory is the official theory, according to which a band of Arab Muslims conspired to defeat not only the most sophisticated defense system in history but also, in the attacks in both New York and Washington, some basic laws of physics. The problems in the official account, moreover, do not end there. A fourth question is:

IV. Why Did the President and His Secret Service Agents Remain at the School?

Upon hearing that a plane had struck one of the Twin Towers, President Bush reportedly believed that it was an accident.

⁵⁶ See Ted Twietmeyer, "Judicial Watch Caught Pulling a 180 on Pentagon Footage," Rense.com, May 21, 2006 (<http://www.rense.com/general71/jw.htm>), and "Pentagon Videos a Fiasco, Scholars Conclude," Scholars for 9/11 Truth, May 22, 2006 (<http://www.scholarsfor911truth.org/PressRelease22May2006.html>).

⁵⁷ President George W. Bush, Address to the General Assembly of the United Nations, November 10, 2001 (<http://www.september11news.com/PresidentBushUN.htm>).

It was not terribly strange, therefore, that he decided to go ahead with the photo-op at the school in Sarasota. Word of the second strike, however, should have indicated to his Secret Service agents---assuming that these strikes were unexpected---that the country was undergoing an unprecedented terrorist attack. And yet he was allowed to remain at the school for another half hour.

This behavior was very strange. The president's location had been highly publicized. If the attacks were indeed unexpected, the Secret Service, having no idea how many planes had been hijacked, would have suspected that the president himself was one of the targets: What could be more satisfying to foreign terrorists attacking high-value targets than to kill the president? For all the Secret Service would have known, a hijacked airliner might have been bearing down on the school at that very minute, ready to crash into it, killing the president and everyone else there---including the Secret Service agents themselves. It is, in any case, standard procedure for the Secret Service to rush the president to a safe location whenever there is any sign that he may be in danger. And yet these agents, after allowing the president to remain in the classroom another 10 minutes, permitted him to deliver his regularly scheduled TV address, thereby announcing to the world that he was still at the school.

Would not this behavior be explainable only if the head of the Secret Service detail knew that the targets did not include the president? And how could this have been known unless the attacks were being carried out by people within our own government? The 9/11 Commission, far from asking these questions, said only: "The Secret Service told us they . . . did not think it imperative for [the president] to run out the door."⁵⁸ A serious inquiry into this matter, therefore, remains to be made.

⁵⁸ *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 39.

V. Why Did the 9/11 Commission Lie about Vice President Cheney's Activities?

One sign of the complicity of Vice President Cheney is the fact that the 9/11 Commission evidently felt a need to lie about the time of two of his activities: his entry into the Presidential Emergency Operations Center (PEOC) under the White House and authorization to shoot down any hijacked airliners.

It had been widely reported that the vice president had gone down to the PEOC shortly after the second strike on the WTC, hence about 9:15.⁵⁹ The most compelling witness was Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta, who testified to the 9/11 Commission that when he entered the PEOC at 9:20, Cheney was already there. *The 9/11 Commission Report*, however, claimed that Cheney did not enter the PEOC until "shortly before 10:00, perhaps at 9:58."⁶⁰ Mineta's testimony was simply omitted from the final report of the Zelikow-led 9/11 Commission. Why would the Commission go to such lengths---telling an obvious lie and omitting publicly available evidence---to conceal the true time of Cheney's entry into the PEOC?

One possible reason would involve the testimony of Mineta, who said:

During the time that the airplane was coming in to the Pentagon, there was a young man who would come in and say to the Vice President, "The plane is 50 miles out."

⁵⁹ Griffin, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortions*, 241-44.

⁶⁰ *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 40.

"The plane is 30 miles out." And when it got down to "the plane is 10 miles out," the young man also said to the Vice President, "Do the orders still stand?" And the Vice President . . . said, "Of course the orders still stand. Have you heard anything to the contrary?"⁶¹

Mineta reported that this conversation occurred at about 9:25 or 9:26.

This testimony creates a problem for the official story. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's spokesman, in explaining why the Pentagon was not evacuated before it was struck, claimed that "[t]he Pentagon was simply not aware that this aircraft was coming our way."⁶² The 9/11 Commission supported this claim, alleging that there was no warning about an unidentified aircraft heading towards Washington until 9:36 and hence only "one or two minutes" before the Pentagon was struck at 9:38.⁶³ Mineta's account, however, says that Cheney knew about an approaching aircraft more than 10 minutes earlier. There would have been over 12 minutes for the Pentagon to be evacuated; 125 lives could have been saved.

Mineta's account also implies that Cheney had issued stand-down orders. Mineta himself did not make this allegation, saying instead that he assumed that "the orders" were to have the plane shot down. But that interpretation does not fit what actually happened--the aircraft was *not*

⁶¹ 9/11 Commission, Public Hearing, May 23, 2003 (http://www.9-11commission.gov/archive/hearing2/9-11Commission_Hearing_2003-05-23.htm). YouTube has Mineta's exchanges with Hamilton (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7Vs7KnlpXU>) and Roemer (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Z2c8IkemYI>), during which these statements were made.

⁶² "Air Attack on Pentagon Indicates Weaknesses," *Newsday*, September 23, 2001.

⁶³ *The 9/11 Commission Report*, 34.

shot down. It would also make the story unintelligible: The young man's question whether the orders still stood would not make sense unless they were orders to do something unexpected---not to shoot the aircraft down. By omitting Mineta's testimony and stating that Cheney did not enter the PEOC until almost 10:00, the 9/11 Commission implied that Cheney could not have given a stand-down order to allow an aircraft to strike the Pentagon.

The full brazenness of the Commission's lie is illustrated by the fact that it contradicts Cheney's own account, which can still be read on the White House website. Speaking on NBC's "Meet the Press" five days after 9/11, Cheney said: "[A]fter I talked to the president, . . . I went down into . . . the Presidential Emergency Operations Center. . . . [W]hen I arrived there within a short order, we had word the Pentagon's been hit."⁶⁴ So he got there, as Mineta said, some time *before* the Pentagon was struck, not 20 minutes afterwards.

The lie about Cheney's entry into the PEOC was also important to the controversy over whether the US military shot down Flight 93. The 9/11 Commission, simply ignoring a vast amount of evidence that the plane had been shot down,⁶⁵ supported the official claim that it was *not* shot down by claiming that Cheney, having not arrived at the PEOC until almost 10:00, did not issue the shoot-down order until after 10:10---which would have been seven or more minutes *after* Flight 93 had crashed (at 10:03, according to the official

⁶⁴ "The Vice President appears on Meet the Press with Tim Russert," Camp David, September 16, 2001 (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/vp20010916.html>).

⁶⁵ See Griffin, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortions*, 238-39. Additional evidence came from Paul Cellucci, Washington's envoy to Canada in February of 2005. Seeking to convince Canada to support the missile defense shield, he told his Toronto audience that a Canadian general [Captain Michael Jellinek] was in charge of NORAD on 9/11 when it scrambled military jets to shoot down a hijacked aircraft headed for Washington (Colin Perkel and Beth Gorham, "Missile Rejection Perplexes U.S.," *Canadian Press*, Feb. 23, 2005 [available at <http://www.curevents.com/vb/showpost.php?p=51773&postcount=1>]).

account). But in addition to the evidence that Cheney had been in the PEOC since about 9:15, we also have evidence--- including statements from Richard Clarke, who was the national coordinator for security and counterterrorism, and Colonel Robert Marr, the head of NORAD's northeast sector (NEADS)⁶⁶---that Cheney's shoot-down order was issued *well before* 10:00.⁶⁷

The 9/11 Commission's obvious lies about Cheney's activities give reason to suspect that it, under the leadership of Philip Zelikow, was trying to conceal Cheney's responsibility for the Pentagon strike and the downing of Flight 93.⁶⁸

Incidentally, although Michael Bronner's aforementioned article and the movie *United 93*, on which he worked, were obviously intended to bolster the official account about this flight, they do not refute the conclusion that this account is false. For one thing, the cell phone calls, which play a central role in the drama, were technologically impossible in 2001.⁶⁹ Moreover, Major General Larry Arnold,

⁶⁶ Clarke reports that he received the authorization from Cheney shortly after 9:45, when the evacuation of the White House began (*Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* [New York: Free Press, 2004], 7-8). According to James Bamford and an ABC News program entitled "9/11" (September 11, 2002), Colonel Marr, after receiving Cheney's shoot-down order, "sent out word to air traffic controllers to instruct fighter pilots to destroy the United jetliner" (Bamford, *A Pretext for War* [New York: Doubleday, 2004], 65-66).

⁶⁷ See Griffin, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortions*, 237-40.

⁶⁸ Why exactly the military and the White House denied shooting down Flight 93, rather than taking credit for preventing a second attack on Washington, is unclear. But the very fact that they have steadfastly denied shooting down Flight 93 suggests that this was a criminal act, which needed to be covered up.

⁶⁹ See Michel Chossudovsky, "More Holes in the Official Story: The 9/11 Cell Phone Calls," Aug. 10, 2004 [<http://globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO408B.html>] and A. K. Dewdney, "The Cellphone and Airfone Calls from Flight UA93," *Physics 911* (<http://physics911.net/cellphoneflight93.htm>). However, the technology of "voice morphing," through which the calls could have been faked, was sufficiently developed at the time, as explained in a 1999 article by William Arkin ("When Seeing and Hearing Isn't Believing," *Washington*

who was the commanding general of NORAD's Continental Region at the time, said after seeing *United 93*: "The movie trailer said the military was not notified of UAL 93 until 4 minutes after it had crashed. That is not true as we were notified a short time before it crashed. . . . I advised Col. Marr to intercept UAL 93."⁷⁰

VI. Did the Bush-Cheney Administration Have Motives for Orchestrating the 9/11 Attacks?

When prosecuting attorneys seek to prove the defendant to be guilty as charged, they have to show "means, motive, and opportunity." It is clear that the Bush-Cheney administration, including its Pentagon under the leadership of Donald Rumsfeld, had---unlike al-Qaeda---the means and the opportunity to orchestrate the events of 9/11. Of the several motives that high officials in the administration would have had, I will mention three:

Afghanistan: Zbigniew Brzezinski's 1997 book, *The Grand Chessboard*, said that establishing military bases in Central Asia would be crucial for maintaining "American primacy," partly because of the huge oil reserves around the Caspian Sea. But American democracy, he added, "is inimical to imperial mobilization," which requires "economic self-denial (that is, defense spending) and . . . human sacrifice (casualties even among professional soldiers)." Explaining that the public had "supported America's engagement in World War II largely because of the shock effect of the Japanese

Post, Feb. 1, 1999 [<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/dotmil/arkin020199.htm>]). I discuss this issue at considerable length in *Debunking 9/11 Debunking*.

⁷⁰ Larry Arnold, "MG Larry Arnold on UAL Flight 93," NavySEALs.com, June 8, 2006 (<http://www.navyseals.com/community/articles/article.cfm?id=9723>).

attack on Pearl Harbor," Brzezinski suggested that Americans today would support the needed military operations in Central Asia only "in the circumstance of a truly massive and widely perceived direct external threat."⁷¹

Support for these operations was generated by the 9/11 attacks plus the claim by the Bush-Cheney administration that these attacks had been planned in Afghanistan by Osama bin Laden--a claim for which the administration refused to provide any proof⁷² and for which even the FBI admits that it "has no hard evidence."⁷³

A more specific motivation was provided by the "pipeline war."⁷⁴ The Bush-Cheney administration supported UNOCAL's plan to build an oil-and-gas pipeline through Afghanistan, but the Taliban, being unable to provide sufficient security, had become regarded as an obstacle. In a July 2001 meeting in Berlin, representatives of the administration, trying to get the Taliban to share power with other factions, reportedly said, "Either you accept our offer of a carpet of gold, or we bury you under a carpet of

⁷¹Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 24-25, 35-36, 212.

⁷² Secretary of State Colin Powell promised to prepare a White Paper presenting this proof but never did. And although the Taliban said that it would hand bin Laden over if the United States presented evidence of his involvement in 9/11, Bush rejected the request ("White House Warns Taliban: 'We Will Defeat You,'" CNN.com, Sept. 21, 2001).

⁷³ Ed Haas of the Muckraker Report, being puzzled by the fact that the FBI's list of the attacks for which bin Laden is wanted does not include 9/11 (<http://www.fbi.gov/wanted/terrorists/terbinladen.htm>), asked Rex Tomb, Chief of Investigative Publicity for the FBI, why not. Tomb, reported Haas, said: "The reason why 9/11 is not mentioned on Usama Bin Laden's Most Wanted page is because the FBI has no hard evidence connecting Bin Laden to 9/11" ("FBI says, 'No Hard Evidence Connecting Bin Laden to 9/11'" Muckraker Report, June 6, 2006 [<http://www.teamliberty.net/id267.html>]).

⁷⁴ See Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), chaps. 12 and 13, entitled "Romancing the Taliban: The Battle for Pipelines."

bombs."⁷⁵ When the Taliban refused, the Americans reportedly said that "military action against Afghanistan would go ahead . . . before the snows started falling in Afghanistan, by the middle of October at the latest."⁷⁶

Given the fact that the attacks on New York and Washington occurred on September 11, the U.S. military had time to get logistically ready to begin the attack on Afghanistan on October 7.

Iraq: Some key members of the Bush-Cheney administration--- including Paul Wolfowitz, Lewis "Scooter" Libby, Donald Rumsfeld, and Dick Cheney himself---had in the late 1990s been active members of an organization, the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), that advocated attacking Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein, establish a strong military presence, and control the oil.⁷⁷ PNAC's *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, released late in 2000, reiterated the idea of a permanent military presence in the Gulf region, saying that the "unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification," but "the need for a substantial American force presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein."⁷⁸

⁷⁵Julio Godoy, "U.S. Taliban Policy Influenced by Oil," Inter Press Service, Nov. 16, 2001.

⁷⁶This according to Niaz Naik, the highly respected Pakistani representative at the meeting, as reported in George Arney, "U.S. 'Planned Attack on Taleban,'" BBC News, Sept. 18, 2001. According to a story in the *Guardian*, "Threat of U.S. Strikes Passed to Taliban Weeks Before NY Attack" (Sept. 22, 2001), one of the American representatives confirmed that this discussion of military action did occur.

⁷⁷ See Paul D. Wolfowitz and Zalmay M. Khalilzad, "Saddam Must Go," *Weekly Standard*, Dec. 1997; PNAC, "Letter to President Clinton on Iraq," Jan. 26, 1998 (www.newamericancentury.org); and PNAC, "Letter to Gingrich and Lott," May 29, 1998 (www.newamericancentury.org). The signers of the latter two letters included Wolfowitz and Rumsfeld.

⁷⁸ The Project for the New American Century, *Rebuilding America's Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century*, September 2000 (www.newamericancentury.org), 14.

Immediately upon taking office, both Paul O'Neill and Richard Clarke have revealed, the Bush administration was intent on taking over Iraq. The only question was "finding a way to do it," as O'Neill put it. "The terrorist attacks of September 11," said Bob Woodward, "gave the U.S. a new window to go after Hussein." Although no Iraqis were among the alleged hijackers, the Bush administration was able to use 9/11 as a pretext to attack Iraq. Given the state of fear created of fear created in the American psyche by 9/11, the administration needed only to fabricate evidence that Saddam was acquiring nuclear weapons while also suggesting that he *had* been involved in 9/11.⁷⁹

Increased Military Spending: A second possible motive was provided by PNAC's more general goal of increasing America's military superiority sufficiently to establish a global *Pax Americana*. This goal had already been asserted in the 1992 draft of the "Defense Planning Guidance," written by Wolfowitz and Libby under the guidance of Cheney, who was completing his tenure as secretary of defense.

In 2000, Wolfowitz and Libby were participants in PNAC's project to produce *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, in which this goal showed up again. This document also contained an idea perhaps derived from Brzezinski's book: After saying that the desired *Pax Americana* "must have a secure foundation on unquestioned U.S. military preeminence" and that such preeminence will require a technological

⁷⁹ For Paul O'Neill, who was secretary of the treasury and hence a member of the National Security Council, see Ron Susskind, *The Price of Loyalty: George W. Bush, the White House, and the Education of Paul O'Neill* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), and O'Neill's interview on CBS's "60 Minutes" (www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/01/09/60minutes/main592330.shtml). Richard Clarke, confirming O'Neill's charge, said: "The administration of the second George Bush did begin with Iraq on its agenda" (*Against All Enemies*, 264). Woodward's statement is in his *Bush at War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 83. I have discussed the way in which 9/11 was morphed into a pretext to attack Iraq in "Imperial Motives for a New Pearl Harbor" (in *Christian Faith and the Truth behind 9/11*).

transformation of the US military, it added that this process of transformation will "likely be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event--like a new Pearl Harbor."⁸⁰

When 9/11 came, it was immediately treated as "the Pearl Harbor of the 21st century," as Bush reportedly called it that very night.⁸¹ It was also characterized as, in Bush's words, "a great opportunity,"⁸² with Rumsfeld adding that 9/11 created "the kind of opportunities that World War II offered, to refashion the world."⁸³ This idea then showed up in the previously mentioned Rice-Zelikow document, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* for 2002, which brazenly said: "The events of September 11, 2001 opened vast, new opportunities."⁸⁴

A central dimension of the desired technological transformation of the military was the weaponization of space, euphemistically called "Missile Defense." (One neocon, Lawrence Kaplan, has candidly said: "Missile defense isn't really meant to protect America. It's a tool for global domination."⁸⁵) In January of 2001, the Commission to Assess U.S. National Security Space Management and Organization, which was chaired by Rumsfeld, published its report. Speaking of the need for massive funding for the U.S. Space Command, the Rumsfeld Commission asked whether

⁸⁰*Rebuilding America's Defenses*, 50-51.

⁸¹*Washington Post*, January 27, 2002.

⁸²Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 32.

⁸³ "Secretary Rumsfeld Interview with the *New York Times*," October 12, 2001. Condoleezza Rice made a similar statement (Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire*, 229).

⁸⁴*The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, Sept. 2002 (www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html).

⁸⁵ Lawrence Kaplan, *New Republic* 224 (March 12, 2001), cover text; quoted in Bacevich, *American Empire*, 223.

such funding would occur only after a "Space Pearl Harbor."⁸⁶

On the evening of 9/11 itself, Rumsfeld held a press conference. Senator Carl Levin, the chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, was asked: "Senator Levin, you and other Democrats in Congress have voiced fear that you simply don't have enough money for the large increase in defense that the Pentagon is seeking, especially for missile defense. . . . Does this sort of thing convince you that an emergency exists in this country to increase defense spending?"⁸⁷ Congress immediately appropriated an additional \$40 billion for the Pentagon and hundreds of billions more later, with few questions asked.

Conclusion: The Preeminent Importance of 9/11

The above evidence, plus the fact that all the "evidence" that seems to implicate the alleged hijackers, such as cellphone calls, airport photos, and discovered luggage and passports, appears to have been fabricated, leads to the conclusion that 9/11 was a false-flag operation orchestrated by the Bush administration for primarily imperial reasons.⁸⁸

If this conclusion is correct, then exposing the falsity of the official account of 9/11 should be high on

⁸⁶*Report of the Commission to Assess U.S. National Security Space Management and Organization* (www.defenselink.mil/cgi-bin/dlprint.cgi).

⁸⁷ Department of Defense News Briefing on Pentagon Attack, 6:42 PM, Sept. 11, 2001 (available at http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/sept_11/dod_brief02.htm).

⁸⁸ "False-Flag Operations, 9/11, and the New Rome: A Christian Perspective," in Kevin Barrett, John B. Cobb Jr., and Sandra Lubarsky, eds., *9/11 and American Empire: Christians, Jews, and Muslims Speak Out* (Northampton: Olive Branch, 2007).

the agenda of all people committed to reversing the present policies of the U.S. government, for at least four reasons.

First, 9/11 has provided the pretext for at least most of the malevolent and destructive policies carried out by the Bush-Cheney administration since that day. When any objection is raised to this administration's illicit policies---from illegal invasions to torture to illegal spying to weaponizing space to talk of a nuclear first strike---the answer is always the same: "The critics fail to understand that the world changed on 9/11." Until the truth about 9/11 is exposed, it will remain a blank check for virtually anything desired by this administration.

Second, the truth about 9/11 is one truth that the American people would not tolerate. They have proven remarkably, even disturbingly, tolerant of many other things---such as the clear indication from the Downing Street memo that the Bush administration planned to "fix" the intelligence about Iraq's WMDs---that should have led to demands for impeachment.⁸⁹ But the American people simply would not allow an administration to stay in power after learning that it had orchestrated the attacks of 9/11.

Third, the orchestration of the attacks of 9/11 goes far beyond any previous instance of "high crimes and misdemeanors" that have previously been cited as cause for impeachment. The attacks were---in the words of Bush, Cheney, and Rumsfeld themselves---heinous crimes. Any U.S. citizens who participated in planning, carrying out, and/or covering up these attacks are guilty of treason, as defined by Article 3 of the U.S. Constitution, because these attacks were acts of war against the United States---again, according to the assessment of Bush, Cheney, and Rumsfeld themselves. If this treason is not publicly uncovered and prosecuted, there is little hope for the survival of the

⁸⁹ For an analysis of the memo and the press coverage, see Mark Danner, "Why the Memo Matters," *New York Review of Books*, July 14, 2005 (<http://www.tomdispatch.com/index.mhtml?emx=x&pid=3602>).

democratic forms we still have. If we fail to have a serious investigation of the *prima facie* evidence for such treason--especially given the fact that this evidence, once examined, is overwhelming⁹⁰--we will in effect be telling the perpetrators that they can get away with virtually anything.

Finally, to reverse the policies of the Bush-Cheney administration will require more than simply removing this administration from office---something that could be legitimately done for any number of reasons. The attacks of 9/11 were orchestrated to further the project of creating an American empire of truly global scope and, as we saw earlier, this has been a long and bipartisan project. Differences have involved strategy, emphasis, and demeanor more than the goal itself. The replacement of the Bush-Cheney administration by a Democratic administration for some reason other than 9/11 would probably simply result in a reversion to the subtler, more sophisticated, and hence more effective form of imperialism that the United States previously exercised.⁹¹

What needs to be publicly recognized is that the bipartisan global domination project is, as I have put it elsewhere, "propelled by fanaticism based on a deeply perverted value system."⁹² Those who read books and

⁹⁰ In calling the evidence "overwhelming," I mean the total evidence now available (much of which is contained in my five books on 9/11), not merely the brief summary given here.

⁹¹ See David Ray Griffin, John B. Cobb, Jr., Richard Falk, and Catherine Keller, *The American Empire and the Commonwealth of God* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006).

⁹² "9/11 and the American Empire: How Should Religious People Respond?" Originally on BookTV (C-Span 2), April 30, 2005; text published at 9/11 CitizensWatch, May 7, 2005 (<http://www.911citizenswatch.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=535>). A somewhat revised version, entitled "9/11, the American Empire, and Common Moral Norms," is in Griffin and Scott, eds., *9/11 and American Empire: Intellectuals Speak Out*. I have used the term "demonic" for this value system in "The Divine and the Demonic," chap. 8 of *Christian Faith and the Truth Behind 9/11*.

magazines about U.S. imperialism know that there has long been abundant evidence for this assessment. But the public revelation of the truth about 9/11 could have an educative value extending far beyond the circles of those who read policy-oriented books and magazines. If Americans came to see that the attacks of 9/11 were, in the minds of those who planned them, *justified* by the goal of creating an all-encompassing empire, this realization could lead to widespread revulsion against the goal itself and the values implicit in it---values that are diametrically opposed to basic values embedded in all the world's religions and ethical systems.

Afterword

Prior to 2006, the 9/11 truth movement, with its claim that 9/11 was an inside job, was largely ignored by defenders of the official conspiracy theory. In 2006, however, the fact that this movement spoke for a significant portion of the American public became widely known. A Zogby poll indicated that 42 percent of the American people believe the government and the 9/11 Commission had covered up evidence contradicting the official account.⁹³ A Scripps/Ohio University poll indicated that 36 percent think it likely that "federal officials either participated in the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon or took no action to stop them 'because they wanted the United States to go to war in the Middle East.'"⁹⁴ A story in *Time* magazine,

⁹³ Zogby International, "A Word about Our Poll of American Thinking toward the 9/11 Terrorist Attacks," Zogby International, May 24, 2006 (<http://www.zogby.com/features/features.dbm?ID=231>). For an interpretation, see "Zogby Poll Finds Over 70 Million Voting Age Americans Support New 9/11 Investigation," 911Truth.org, May 21, 2006 (<http://www.911truth.org/article.php?story=20060522022041421>).

⁹⁴ Thomas Hargrove and Guido H. Stempel III, "Anti-Government Anger Spurs 9/11 Conspiracy Belief," NewsPolls.org, Scripps Survey Research Center at Ohio University, August 2, 2006

reporting the latter result, wrote: "Thirty-six percent adds up to a lot of people. This is not a fringe phenomenon. It is a mainstream political reality."⁹⁵

Perhaps not merely coincidentally, 2006 was a year of unprecedented publications intended to undergird the official conspiracy theory and of unprecedented attacks in the press intended to discredit the alternative theory. The main efforts to reinforce the official theory---in addition to the Bronner article and the Kean-Hamilton book mentioned earlier---were *Debunking 9/11 Myths*, put out by *Popular Mechanics*,⁹⁶ and NIST's "Answers to Frequently Asked Questions," in which NIST sought to rebut the claim that the Twin Towers were brought down by explosives.⁹⁷ I respond to all four of these efforts in my *Debunking 9/11 Debunking*, showing that whereas these writings may seem impressive if one has not studied the facts, they are completely unimpressive if one has.

The attacks in the press came not only from the mainstream but also from the left. Although I discuss both in *Debunking 9/11 Debunking*, I will here simply discuss two of the most prominent attacks from the left, "The 9/11 Faith Movement" by Terry Allen (*In These Times*) and "The 9/11

(http://newspolls.org/story.php?story_id=55). The title of the story, incidentally, is the pollster's inference, not a conclusion supported by the answers.

⁹⁵ Lev Grossman, "Why the 9/11 Conspiracies Won't Go Away," *Time*, September 3, 2006.

⁹⁶ David Dunbar and Brad Reagan, eds., *Debunking 9/11 Myths: Why Conspiracy Theories Can't Stand Up to the Facts: An In-Depth Investigation by Popular Mechanics*, Foreword by Senator John McCain (New York: Hearst Books, 2006). This book is an expansion of an article, "9/11: Debunking the Myths," *Popular Mechanics*, March 2005.

⁹⁷ NIST, "Answers to Frequently Asked Questions," August 30, 2006 (http://wtc.nist.gov/pubs/factsheets/faqs_8_2006.htm).

Conspiracy Nuts" by Alexander Cockburn (*The Nation*),⁹⁸ both of which attack my writing in particular.

Allen, citing the Zogby poll indicating 42 percent of our population believes there has been a cover-up, begins her article by writing: "Americans love a conspiracy. . . . There is something comforting about a world where someone is in charge." This psychologizing explanation ignores the fact that the most comforting belief is surely Allen's own: that our government did *not* attack its own people.

As her title indicates, Allen's main point is that the 9/11 movement is based on faith rather than facts. (Indeed, in response to *ITT* senior editor Salim Muwakkil's question, "what happened to Griffin?" she reportedly said: "part of it is that he's a theologian who operates on faith."⁹⁹) The facts, she says, do not support "the conspiracists' key charge that World Trade Center buildings were destroyed by pre-positioned explosives." How does she know this? "Structural engineers found the destruction consistent with fires caused by the jet liner strike." With this allusion to the FEMA and NIST reports, she takes on faith the public claims of engineers working for agencies of the Bush administration (just as people many years ago took on faith the claims by tobacco-company scientists that smoking does not cause cancer).

Assuring us that, having studied the issues for months, she found it "relatively easy" to undermine the movement's "facts," she explains that WTC 7 collapsed because "it was damaged by debris, and suffered fires eventually fueled by up to 42,000 gallons of diesel fuel stored near ground

⁹⁸ Terry Allen, "The 9/11 Faith Movement," *In These Times*, July 11, 2006 (<http://www.inthesetimes.com/site/main/article/2702>); Alexander Cockburn, "The 9/11 Conspiracy Nuts," *The Nation* September 25, 2006 (<http://www.thenation.com/doc/20060925/cockburn>).

⁹⁹ Salim Muwakkil, "What's the 411 on 9/11?" *In These Times*, December 21, 2005 (<http://www.inthesetimes.com/site/main/article/2444>). Muwakkil evidently accepted her answer on faith.

level." These fires could not be put out, she adds, because "the collapse of the towers had broken the area's water main." She takes on faith, in other words, the official story that the buildings were brought down primarily by raging fires. This is, however, faith in the sense of "evidence of things unseen": As mentioned earlier, photograph show no raging fires in WTC 7. Even her claim about the water is false: Fireboats were pumping up great quantities of water from the Hudson.¹⁰⁰

Andrew Cockburn's main reason for calling members of the 9/11 movement "nuts" is that we think the attacks succeeded because of conspiracy rather than incompetence. But he fails to point out that in *The New Pearl Harbor*---the one book that he mentions---I devoted an entire chapter to this issue, showing that an incompetence theory becomes a huge coincidence theory entailing "that FAA agents, NMCC and NORAD officials, pilots, immigration agents, U.S. military leaders in Afghanistan, and numerous U.S. intelligence agencies all coincidentally acted with extreme and unusual incompetence when dealing with matters related to 9/11."¹⁰¹

With regard to the failure to intercept, Cockburn's position implies that although our military would not have been efficient enough to pull off this operation (even though it had engaged in exercises involving just such attacks), al-Qaeda operatives would have. Is that not the nutty view?

Believing, like Allen, that it is easy to give answers to our questions, Cockburn suggests that the Twin Towers fell because "they were badly built . . . and because they

¹⁰⁰ Sharon Seitz, "The Little Fireboat That Did," *Time Out New York*, No. 313: September 27-October 4, 2001 (<http://web.archive.org/web/20011031135350/http://www.timeoutny.com/aroundtown/313/313u.around.fireboat.box.html>), and Huntley Gill, "Retired Fireboat Harvey Helps With World Trade Center Disaster," *NYFD.Com* (<http://www.firehouse.com/terrorist/17 Pharvey.html>).

¹⁰¹ Griffin, *The New Pearl Harbor*, 145.

were struck by huge planes loaded with jet fuel." The fact that this theory violates laws of physics and all historical precedent does not prevent Cockburn from endorsing it. Also, not shy about revealing his ignorance, he says: "People inside who survived the collapse didn't hear a series of explosions."¹⁰²

Besides the fact that Cockburn dismisses the movement without engaging the empirical evidence, his charge that I am a nut because I have written nutty books implies that people who have endorsed these books are also nuts. Would readers of the *Nation* and *Tikkun* want to use this term to describe John Cobb, William Sloane Coffin, Richard Falk, Wayne Madsen, Ray McGovern, John McMurtry, Mark Crispin Miller, Rosemary Ruether, Marcus Raskin, Peter Dale Scott, Gerry Spence, Howard Zinn, and British MP Michael Meacher?¹⁰³

And if to believe that 9/11 was an inside job is *ipso facto* to be a nut, the list must now be enlarged to include former CIA analyst Bill Christison, who in explaining why he wrote an article entitled "Stop Belittling the Theories About September 11," said: "I spent the first four and a half years since September 11 utterly unwilling to consider seriously the conspiracy theories surrounding the attacks

¹⁰² Alexander Cockburn, "The 9/11 Conspiracy Nuts," September 25, 2006 (<http://www.thenation.com/doc/20060925/cockburn>). This is an abbreviated version of "The 9/11 Conspiracy Nuts: How They Let the Guilty Parties of 9/11 Slip Off the Hook," *Counterpunch*, September 9/10, 2006 (<http://www.counterpunch.org/cockburn09092006.html>). Cockburn published a somewhat revised version as "US: The Conspiracy That Wasn't," in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, December 2006 (<http://mondediplo.com/2006/12/02conspiracy>) to which I have written a response, "The Truly Distracting 9/11 Conspiracy Theory: A Reply to Alexander Cockburn," 9/11 Truth Europe (<http://www.911truth.eu/index.php?id=0,8,0,0,1,0>).

¹⁰³ To see growing lists of scientists, professors, and government, military, and intelligence officials who question the official story about 9/11, at least to some degree, see the Patriots Question 9/11 website.

that day. . . . [I]n the last half year and after considerable agony, I've changed my mind."¹⁰⁴ As Christison's experience, like my own, illustrates, the crucial issue is the willingness to confront the evidence.

Allen and Cockburn both conclude with the basic complaint found in leftist attacks on the 9/11 movement: It is a distraction from the government's real crimes. Christison disagrees, saying that if the charge that 9/11 was a fraud is true,

[It] involves a much greater crime against the American people and people of the world than any other charges of fraud connected to the run-up to the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. . . . [A]fter all, the events of 9/11 have been used by the administration to justify every single aspect of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East since September 11. It is a charge that is more important also because it affects the very core of our entire political system.¹⁰⁵

I call on readers of *Tikkun* who have not already done so to follow Christison's example by examining the evidence and then, if you find it persuasive, add your voices to those calling for a true investigation.

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¹⁰⁴ "Letter from Bill Christison to Friends," email letter sent about August 14, 2006.

¹⁰⁵ Bill Christison, "Stop Belittling the Theories About September 11," www.dissidentvoice.org, August 14, 2006 (<http://www.dissidentvoice.org/Aug06/Christison14.htm>).

Richard Falk, and Catherine Keller), *9/11 and American Empire: Intellectuals Speak Out* (co-edited with Peter Dale Scott), *Christian Faith and the Truth Behind 9/11: A Call to Reflection and Action*, and *Debunking 9/11 Debunking: An Answer to Popular Mechanics and Other Defenders of the Official Conspiracy Theory*.