

Ten Years On – Making Sense of 9/11

by Richard Ramsbotham

According to recent polls about 15% of all American and British people think that the attacks in America on 9/11, (2001), were orchestrated by people within the U.S. Government. Among young people in Britain aged between 16 and 24, about 25% think that the attacks were an ‘inside job.’ Polls in other countries show similar or even greater numbers of people who either partially or completely disbelieve the official story of what happened on 9/11. These figures represent millions of people around the world. Yet in the week of the 10th anniversary of 9/11, no single serious mention of this was to be found in all the immense amount of media coverage given to the anniversary. I only know of one exception. In his blog [an internet special interest website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Ed.] for the *New York Times*, Nobel prize-winning economist Paul Krugman wrote that “What happened after 9/11...was deeply shameful... *the attack was used to justify an unrelated war the neocons wanted to fight, for all the wrong reasons.* The memory of 9/11 has been irrevocably poisoned.” Krugman has been mercilessly vilified in the U.S. media for his remarks. There is plenteous evidence, however, regarding the truth of Krugman’s comments about the 9/11 attacks being ‘used to justify a ... war the Neocons wanted to fight’. The main part of this article will look into this evidence – and then also begin to look at the even more disturbing claims not mentioned by Krugman.

The end of the Cold War and the ‘New American Century’

As the Cold War came to an end in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and the frozen stalemate in world politics that had existed since the end of World War Two thawed, a severe unease at the chaos that might result was felt at high levels of power and influence in American foreign policy and government. This unease was answered by an unprecedented and absolute determination for America to remain now the world’s single superpower and for American policy to now literally dominate the entire globe.

In 1986, William Kristol, an influential policy-maker in the government of George Bush Senior, declared that the aim of American foreign policy should be to achieve a: “*global unilateralism*”. In 1989, another columnist, Charles Krauthammer, wrote an article entitled: “*Universal Dominion.*” America, he stated, must now unambiguously take the lead in the new “*unipolar world*”. “The alternative to unipolarity is chaos”, wrote Krauthammer, and said that what was needed was the USA: “unashamedly laying down the rules of world order and being prepared to enforce them.” In 1992, the last year of George Bush Senior’s presidency, ideas such as this were aired for the first time in official government policy. Dick Cheney, the then secretary of defense, together with his undersecretary Paul Wolfowitz, Lewis Libby and Zalmay Khalilzad drafted a document for the Pentagon called: *Defense Planning Guidance*. The document was leaked to the Press, whereupon both its tone and its content caused such a strong negative reaction that the Bush administration quickly attempted to distance themselves from it. The document has been described, quite objectively, as: ‘in effect a blueprint for permanent American global hegemony.’¹

Dick Cheney is seen as having been the prime creator of this ‘unipolarist blueprint’, helped by his above-mentioned colleagues. Between 1993 and 2001 they – and many other ‘neoconservatives’, or ‘neocons’ as they are often referred to, such as Donald Rumsfeld and William Kristol – lost their positions in government during the eight-year presidency of Bill Clinton. During their period in opposition, however, these neocons from the administration of George Bush Senior were the opposite

of inactive. They laid plans and drew up manifestoes for global American domination, which later, during the presidency of the second George Bush (2001-2009), were eventually carried out as fully-fledged U.S. policy.

One of the most significant – and disturbing - activities of the neoconservatives during the Clinton presidency was the creation of the *Project for the New American Century* (PNAC) in 1997. The project, in other words, for an *American 21st Century* - with America, as sole superpower, exercising dominion over the entire ‘unipolar world’. Among the founders of the PNAC were those who would hold the highest positions during the Presidency of George W. Bush: Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Lewis Libby, as well as Jeb Bush, George Bush’s brother and Dan Quayle, who had been vice-president under George Bush Senior. The (PNAC) was founded by William Kristol (known at one point as ‘Dan Quayle’s brain’) and Robert Kagan. It also included other key policy makers and thinkers, such as Francis Fukuyama, whose book *The End of History* set out the view that after the Cold War there were no more ideological struggles to be fought, for Western secular democracy must now be seen as valid for all places and all peoples.

The PNAC’s founding principles stated: ‘The history of this century should have taught us to embrace the cause of American leadership... Such a Reaganite policy of military strength and moral clarity may not be fashionable today. But it is necessary if the United States is to build on the successes of this past century and to ensure our security and our greatness in the next.’

In September 2000, three months before George Bush became President, and provided the PNAC with its long-awaited moment to try and make their ideas into official government policies, the PNAC published a 76-page document: *Rebuilding American Defenses*. After an introduction, proposing that the document be seen by the incoming administration as “a road map for the nation’s immediate and future defense plans”, the opening chapter made the document’s intentions completely clear and threw down its gauntlet. To paraphrase: the supremely opportune moment after the Cold War for achieving and maintaining American hegemony across the globe had been shamefully let slip by the Clinton Administration, and without drastic and urgent measures might be lost altogether.

The chapter stressed once again the difference of America’s military priorities today compared with those during the Cold War: “America’s strategic goal used to be containment of the Soviet Union; today the task is to preserve an international security environment conducive to American interests and ideals.” (The document’s seemingly innocuous tone should not fool anyone who calls to mind the vast numbers of deaths caused by the military might and ‘firepower’ by which this ‘international security environment’ is actually ‘preserve(d).’)

Continuing in the same tone, it outlined four main tasks for the U.S. military:

1. To secure and expand the ‘zones of democratic peace’.
2. To deter the rise of a new great superpower competitor.
3. To defend key regions of Europe, East Asia and the Middle East.
4. To preserve American pre-eminence through the coming transformation of war made possible by new technologies.

We will return to this fourth point, which plays a hugely important role in the PNAC’s “road map”, but to carry out all four would obviously demand a massively increased U.S. Defense Budget. The PNAC document therefore set about to demonstrate the utter necessity, as they saw it, for such a budget to be granted.

First of all the document launched an attack against the Clinton administration’s “decade of defense neglect.” The document pointed to the fact that at the time of writing: “America spends less than 3 percent of its gross domestic product on national defense, *less than at any time since before World War II.*” Under Clinton: “approximately \$426 billion in defense investments have been deferred, creating a weapons procurement ‘bow wave’ of immense proportions.”

The challenge was then thrown down to the next president of the United States: “he must increase military spending to preserve American geopolitical leadership, or he must pull back from the security commitments that are the measure of America’s position as the world’s sole superpower... This choice will be among the first to confront the president.”

“The transformation of war made possible by new technologies.”

The fifth chapter of *Rebuilding American Defenses* addresses the fourth task referred to above. In brief – and as, after the huge numbers of casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan we increasingly hear called for today - a new form of warfare was seen as necessary, different from that carried out by conventional ground, sea and air forces. Namely, the possibility both to detect and to intercept, from space, any enemy missile the moment it has been launched. To this end: “The first element in any missile defense network should be *a galaxy of surveillance satellites* with sensors capable of acquiring enemy ballistic missiles immediately upon launch. Once a missile is tracked and targeted, this information needs to be instantly disseminated through *a world-wide command-and-control system*, including direct links to interceptors.” (My italics.)

The PNAC describes the need, in this context, for “three new missions” in order “to maintain American military preeminence that is consistent with the requirements of a strategy of American global leadership”. These are – 1: “*Global missile defenses.*” 2: “*Control of space and cyberspace...* An America incapable of protecting its interests or that of its allies in space or the “infosphere” will find it difficult to exert global political leadership.” And 3: “*a two-stage strategy for transforming conventional forces*” – a first transitional stage, followed by “true transformation, featuring new systems, organizations and operational concepts”.

It does not demand much imagination to envisage the unprecedented amounts of extra Defense expenditure this would involve, or the problems the PNAC would be likely to face from international treaties concerning missile proliferation, or indeed from “ordinary citizens” concerning the presence of a new “*galaxy of surveillance satellites.*” Even the PNAC themselves acknowledged this.

The expressed need for an event like 9/11

The opening words of the chapter had expressed unequivocally: “To preserve American military pre-eminence the Department of Defense must move more aggressively to experiment with new technologies”. But how, given the obstacles mentioned in the last paragraph, could the need for this central element of the PNAC’s Defense Plan gain acceptance – and so become reality? And do this quickly, moreover, for, as the PNAC never stopped restating, the opportunity was fast running out for America to secure its role as the world’s single superpower. There was, in fact, only one way the PNAC could envisage which would enable this to happen. Only some massive, catastrophic event, which would be etched into people’s minds and psyches, might so change things that the currently prevailing obstacles of funding, international law and public opinion might be overcome. This led to the document’s most ominous statement: “*(T)he process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event – like a new Pearl Harbor.*”

Remarkable as these words are for expressing the need, in advance, for an event such as 9/11, they are in fact only one of several such comments made between 1997 and 2000 from people at the highest levels of U.S policy making. Enter Philip Zelikow – the person who, after 9/11, would be given the main responsibility by the Bush Government for overseeing and authoring the *9/11 Commission Report* – the supposedly complete and unbiased official report into the events of 9/11.

Zelikow, together with Condoleezza Rice, the National Security Advisor at the time of 9/11, had played hugely significant roles in forming U.S. policy regarding the direction it took at the close of the end of the Cold War. At the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the final end of the Soviet Union (1989-1991) Rice was Senior Director of Soviet and East European Affairs in the National Security Council. In this capacity she helped to determine U.S. policies in favour of German reunification, aided by Zelikow, who was later to be described in the Washington Post as: “a one-

person think-tank for Rice.”² In 1995 he and Rice co-wrote a book called: *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft*. Zelikow was also the director of a major ‘think-tank’ on addressing the ending of the Cold War, called the Aspen Strategy Group. This counted among its members Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz and other founder members of the *Project for the American Century*.

In 1997 Zelikow co-edited a book called *Why People Don’t Trust Government*, in which he described that history, far from being definable as truth, is in fact “defined... by those critical people and events that... form... the public’s presumptions about its immediate past... Such presumptions are beliefs thought to be true (although not necessarily known to be true with certainty), and shared in common within the relevant political community.” (These remarks are of great interest coming from the person who would be given responsibility for the official ‘presumptions’ about 9/11.)

The need to imagine an event like 9/11

After this, Zelikow became project director of the Catastrophic Terrorism Study Group. (This stemmed from the Kennedy School of Government’s project: *Visions of Governance for the Twenty-First Century*.)

Zelikow co-authored an article on the work done by the group, entitled: *Catastrophic Terrorism: Elements of a National Policy*, which was published in the November/December 1998 issue of *Foreign Affairs*. The article stated:

“(T)he danger of Catastrophic Terrorism is new and grave... The objective of the Catastrophic Terrorism Study Group is to suggest program and policy changes that can be taken by the United States government... to prepare the nation better for the emerging threat of Catastrophic Terrorism.”

The title of the article’s first section described the first thing the authors saw to be necessary: *Imagining the Transforming Event*. The authors couldn’t help mentioning the assistance already given for this by Hollywood movies:

“Long [a] part of Hollywood’s and Tom Clancy’s [author and scriptwriter for espionage and military techno-thriller storylines. Ed.] repertory of nightmarish scenarios, catastrophic terrorism is a real possibility. In theory, the enemies of the United States have motive, means, and opportunity... A successful attack with weapons of mass destruction could certainly kill thousands, or tens of thousands. If the device that exploded in 1993 under the World Trade Center had been nuclear, or the distribution of a deadly pathogen, the chaos and devastation would have gone far beyond our meager ability to describe it.”

Friend and colleague of many of the founders of the PNAC, Zelikow then reiterated the need for the U.S. to transform its conventional approach to warfare, especially as others were already doing this: “Practically unchallengeable American military superiority on the conventional battlefield pushes this country’s enemies toward the unconventional alternatives.”

A fascinating footnote inserted at this point appears to point to the presence of highly detailed research into all aspects of such “threat scenarios” which would never be widely known about:

“The most detailed and credible threat scenarios, based on close analysis of specific vulnerabilities, should not be published at all. These would be indispensable but quite sensitive documents to be prepared by relatively small groups of knowledgeable officials and expert consultants.”

The article then urged readers to: “imagine the possibilities for themselves, because the most serious constraint on current policy is lack of imagination.” It then went into considerably more detail than the PNAC document had as to the exact consequences that would ensue from such an event – fitting in very many ways to the event that did take place three years later on 9/11:

“An act of catastrophic terrorism that killed thousands or tens of thousands of people and/or disrupted the necessities of life for hundreds of thousands, or even millions, would be *a watershed event in America’s history*... Constitutional liberties would be challenged as the United States sought to protect itself from further attacks by pressing against allowable limits in surveillance of citizens, detention of suspects, and the use of deadly force. More violence would follow, either as

other terrorists seek to imitate this great “success” or as the United States strikes out at those considered responsible. *Like Pearl Harbor, such an event would divide our past and future into a ‘before’ and ‘after.’*”

The article then reiterated the PNAC’s demands for necessary changes in defence policy and massive increases in defence funding: “The threat of catastrophic terrorism is therefore a priority national security problem...” The threat thus deserves the kind of attention we now devote to threats of military nuclear attack , as in(...) the resources we devote to defense.”

Further expressions of the need for a “New Pearl Harbor”

The third person who spoke in this way was Zbigniew Brzezinski. In his book *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives* (1997), Brzezinski wrote that in America “the pursuit of power is not a goal that commands popular passion... *except in conditions of a sudden threat or challenge to the public’s sense of domestic well being.*” Both economic and human sacrifices would need to be made for “*imperial mobilization*”, and the only thing that would make the American people willing to make these would be “*a truly massive and widely perceived direct external threat.*” Earlier on in the book, Brzezinski, like both Zelikow and the PNAC, had named the great precedent in recent American history where a reluctant public had completely changed its views and given its support to a massive war effort - when they had supported: “America’s engagement in World War II largely because of the shock effect of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.”

A fourth example is Donald Rumsfeld, founder member of the PNAC which had described the urgent need for a “transformation of warfare”, involving, among other things, the ability to intercept ballistic missiles from space. In preparation for putting this into practice, in 1998 Rumsfeld chaired the *Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States*. In late 2000 he further chaired the *U.S. Commission to Assess National Security Space Management and Organization*. This latter so-called “Rumsfeld Commission”, announced identical needs, not surprisingly, to those expressed by the PNAC: military “transformation” and the “weaponization of space.” Yet again, the problem was raised of such essential changes being blocked by “resistant bureaucracies”. Yet again, the image was given of what might prove the only possible means to effect such change: “The question is... whether, as in the past, a disabling attack against the country and its people - a “Space Pearl Harbor” - will be the only event able to galvanize the nation and cause the U.S. Government to act.”³ Rumsfeld chaired this commission right up until the end of December 2000, when he was nominated U.S. Secretary of Defense in the new presidential administration of George Bush.

‘No Defense’!

One may well have imagined that with George Bush as President, Dick Cheney as Vice President, Donald Rumsfeld as Secretary of Defense and Paul Wolfowitz as Rumsfeld’s deputy – all the PNAC’s hopes might now be fulfilled. But, during the first nine months of 2001, the leading neocons found, to their horror, that their demands for massive increases in Defense Funding received no more support than they had under Clinton. Having spent eight years in opposition, preparing for this moment and being, by their own admission, the opposite of pacifist in their approach, they were furious at having their expectations thwarted in this way.

On July 23rd, 2001, the main founders of PNAC, William Kristol and Robert Kagan, wrote an article in *The Weekly Standard*⁴ called ‘*No Defense.*’ From its opening words its message could not have been clearer:

“Here’s some unsolicited advice for two old friends, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz: Resign... (I)t may be the only way to focus the attention of the American people – and the Bush administration – on the impending visceration of the American military. If our suggestion sounds extreme, consider the following... A few weeks ago Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld went to the White House to present his Fiscal Year 2002 budget request... Rumsfeld was mauled... This was the

third time in six months that Rumsfeld had had his head handed to him on a platter... Those of us who expressed concern about the Bush administration's shorting of the military were told not to worry... *But (n)ow it's clear that there is no real prospect for a meaningful defense increase – this year, next year, or for the remainder of Bush's first term.*"

Kristol and Kagan went on: "(T)he consequence of an underfunded military will be the steady erosion of our ability to defend *all* of America's vital interests, not only in Europe but in Asia and in the Persian Gulf as well... *It now seems certain that the Bush administration will officially abandon* the so-called 'two-war' standard that has served since the Cold War as the rule of thumb for *what is needed for American global pre-eminence.*"

[The 'Two-War' standard relates to America's policy at this time of retaining a force capable of rapidly and decisively conducting two large regional wars. Ed.]

Towards the end of the article they then laid down their challenge to the Bush administration:

"Perhaps it's an isolationist's dream. For everyone else it's a nightmare. It ought to be George Bush's nightmare. For *if the president does not reverse course now, he may go down in history as the man who let American military power atrophy and America's post-Cold War pre-eminence slip away.*"

This 'nightmare' scenario could clearly not be allowed to continue: "Surely George W. Bush did not seek office to preside over the retrenchment of American power and influence. Surely Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz did not come back to the Pentagon to preside over the decline of the American military."⁵

'*No Defense*' (July 2011) may have been offering one last chance to those capable of providing the necessary increases to the American Defense Budget. It sounds far more, though, like a clear call to action, in the face of the certainty that these increases would not be granted. Another article in the *Weekly Standard*, published on the day before 9/11, (Sept 10th, 2001), stated categorically that all chance of any such increases was over. The article, called '*The Phony Defense Budget War*' was written by Gary Schmitt, Co-Chairman of the PNAC, and Tom Donnelly, the chief author of *Rebuilding America's Defenses* which had mentioned that without "an event like a new Pearl Harbor" the PNAC might never see its aims realized.

The article repeated its own and Donald Rumsfeld's diagnosis of the present crisis: "Over the past decade, hundreds of billions of dollars in weapons research and procurement has been deferred... *The challenge of transformation is real. 'The proliferation of weapons with increasing range and power into the hands of multiple potential adversaries means that the coming years will see an expansion of risk' to American cities*", warns Rumsfeld."

The article's conclusion then gave its verdict on the "disgraceful" failure of the U.S. Government to respond to that crisis:

*"(T)he promise of conventional-force transformation, global missile defenses protecting America and its allies, and control of space will be deferred until the distant future... As Rumsfeld himself recently said, 'Each year we put off these critical investments, each year we kick the can down the road, we are digging ourselves deeper and deeper in the hole'... (T)he president and the Congress, Republicans and Democrats – (are all now) irresponsibly kicking the can down the road. A pretty disgraceful performance all around, but particularly disappointing for an administration that assured us help was on the way."*⁶

September 11th, 2001 – 'The Pearl Harbor of the 21st Century'

For the neocons, though, even if for nobody else, help already *was* on the way. The events of the following day, September 11th, 2001, as we know, changed everything. Hard as it may be for many people to look past the immense personal tragedy and suffering wrought by the events of 9/11, we must recognize that 9/11 for the neocons *was* the 'Pearl Harbor' moment they had been waiting for.

They themselves were the first to note this. President Bush was reported to have written in his diary that evening: “The Pearl Harbor of the 21st Century took place today.”⁷ Donald Rumsfeld admitted that 9/11 created: “the kind of opportunities that World War II offered, *to refashion the world.*”⁸ Philip Zelikow – who, remember, would later be given responsibility for the *9/11 Commission Report* – the supposedly unbiased report into what took place on 9/11 – authored in 2002, the *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, stating: “The events of September 11th, 2001... opened vast, new opportunities.”

Within one day, *all* the expressed intentions of the neocons suddenly proved possible and many received almost immediate public and government support. With regard to Defense Spending the Pentagon was immediately granted by Congress an extra \$40 *billion*, with far more to follow. According to Zelikow, writing this September, 2011: “Measured in constant dollars, spending on national defence in the last ten years has gone up about 67 per cent.”⁹(!) The wars in Afghanistan and then Iraq had also been on the neocons’ agenda and the obstacles to fighting them were immediately removed. These wars in turn made possible the much called for military “transformation” or RMA - “revolution in military affairs.” As Andrew Bacevich writes: “After 9/11, the Pentagon shifted from the business of theorizing about war to the business of actually fighting it. This created an opening for RMA... War plans... became the means for demonstrating once for all the efficacy of the ideas advanced by... Rumsfeld and his deputy Paul Wolfowitz.”¹⁰

This “transformation”, as we quoted earlier, demanded the ‘control of space and cyber-space’, necessitating a “*galaxy of surveillance satellites.*” The huge *U.S.A. PATRIOT Act*, (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism), brought in with incredible speed after 9/11, and under whose restrictions everyone in America has since then had to suffer, instigated a gigantic increase in both public and private surveillance. Last but not least, the neocons had admitted that much of what they intended encountered difficulties from - frankly – inconvenient international treaties about what was permissible and impermissible regarding rules of war, interrogation, surveillance, etc.

The 2002 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, authored by Zelikow, took unprecedented new steps, permitting the U.S., for example, to take preemptive military action against enemy threats, even ‘before (these threats) are fully formed.’ As David Ray Griffin writes: ‘This is a step of great significance, because it involves an explicit statement by the United States that the basic principles of international law, as embodied in the United Nations, does not apply to its own behaviour.’¹¹ This viewpoint, that as regards international politics, America needs only be obedient to itself, has all too frequently been encountered since that time. Already in March 2001 PNAC member Charles Krauthammer had starkly and brutally expressed it: “The U.S. can reshape, indeed remake reality on its own... America is no mere international citizen. It is the dominant power in the world, more dominant than any since Rome. Accordingly, America is in a position to reshape norms... and create new realities. How? By unapologetic and implacable demonstrations of will.”¹²

Merely a coincidence?

Let us briefly recapitulate: individuals and groups at the highest levels of American policy-making and power had announced unambiguously what role in world politics they saw it necessary for the U.S. to play after the end of the Cold War. Namely: “undisputed masters of the world.” (Krauthammer.) Four of the most influential of voices – Donald Rumsfeld, Philip Zelikow, Zbigniew Brzezinski and the Project for the New American Century – had even declared that it might take an event something like a ‘New Pearl Harbor’ to create the support both from government and from the public necessary to bring this about. With the start of the Bush Presidency, at the beginning of 2001, these individuals and groups then moved into leading positions of power. To begin with, as they had predicted, little public support could be found for the huge defense budget increases and military (and security) changes and actions they envisaged. Then... 9/11 happened. A “watershed event in America’s history.” (Zelikow – *Catastrophic Terrorism.*)

Almost immediately all their plans were able to be realized, and have continued being implemented until today.

Were the crime of 9/11 to be investigated like any other murder inquiry, where it would be foolish just to accept whatever may *appear* to have happened, there is little doubt as to which direction one would first wish to look in for suspects. For those who not only had a motive for the event, but had openly expressed this motive and who had, in fact, achieved from the event everything they had hoped. (The PNAC would certainly be one such starting place. Nine days after 9/11, they wrote an open letter to George Bush which began: “We write to endorse your admirable commitment to ‘lead the world to victory’ in the war against terrorism.” They outlined all the actions that would “constitute the minimum necessary if this war is to be fought effectively and brought to a successful conclusion” and stated: “We urge that there be no hesitation in requesting whatever funds for defense are needed to allow us to win this war.”)¹³

Of course, there was no question whatsoever of the events of 9/11 being investigated like an ordinary murder inquiry. The whole *reason* that the event galvanized public opinion in the way it had been predicted it might, was because of the utterly overwhelming impression it produced that America was under full-scale attack from foreign Islamic terrorists, providing full justification, therefore, for the “global war on terror” that was announced.

Thinking the unthinkable

But... slowly at first, then gradually snowballing to the percentages mentioned in this article’s first paragraph, people started to look more closely at what had happened on September 11th, 2001, not just blindly accepting what appeared to have happened, employing their wide awake faculties of thinking and perception. As they did so, they began to realize that the never to be forgotten images of the Twin Towers almost exploding before people’s eyes, pulverizing into huge, surging dust clouds, then collapsing straight downwards at almost free-fall speed, with the colossally thick and strong steel core of the buildings – built to withstand almost anything – bursting and shattering into small pieces, *could not have been brought about* through the fires, however horrific, caused by the aeroplanes plunging into them. No steel-framed buildings have ever, before or since, collapsed in this way as the result of fires.

There are, as everyone who has even lightly researched the issue will know, scores of other contradictions and anomalies regarding the official reports about what happened on 9/11. People can – and should – read or view these and think them through for themselves.

There is one event, however, that occurred on 9/11, whose official explanation is so obviously impossible that it has, rightly, been seen as the one unmistakable ‘smoking gun’ pointing to U.S. complicity, at the highest levels, with what took place on that day. As everyone will remember who watched the events on television, there were three buildings in New York that collapsed on 9/11. After the collapse of the Twin Towers, a third building also came down, another massive steel-framed skyscraper, known as World Trade Centre 7. It had not been hit by any planes. There had been fires in the building caused by burning debris falling from the neighbouring Twin Towers. But its fires were not remotely comparable to those in the two buildings hit by aeroplanes – (WTC1 and WTC2.) Yet this whole vast skyscraper, WTC7, collapsed “into its own footprint” in a matter of seconds - 6 1/2 seconds! For the first eight stories it fell at what has officially been recognized as ‘freefall speed’. Television commentators on the day unhesitatingly pointed out that there was only one thing they had ever known to make buildings collapse in this way: carefully planned controlled demolition, using explosives.

Not only have many firefighters and demolitions experts confirmed this view, but an ever increasing number of professional scientists, engineers and architects have also now demonstrated in great detail – for anyone willing to consider the evidence - that the collapse of WTC7 was unquestionably caused by controlled demolition.¹⁴ Architect Richard Gage, for example, founder of Architects and Engineers for 911 Truth, shows in a ten minute video clip how the collapse of WTC7 provides evidence of all ten features of a standard controlled demolition.¹⁵ Another short

video: ‘Architects and Engineers: Solving the Mystery of WTC7’ presents the voices of many scientists, architects and engineers on the issue, such as Kamal Obeid, who describes the utter impossibility that fire could have made every single core column of the building collapse *simultaneously*, as had to happen for it to fall as it did.¹⁶ And once we see that the collapse of WTC7 could only have been caused by controlled demolition, we also see that a different kind of controlled demolition¹⁷ is the only thing able to explain the explosive pulverization and collapse of the Twin Towers themselves.

This research has greatly increased, over the years, in its thoroughness and exactitude, thanks to the work, for example, of physics professor, Steven Jones or of architect Richard Gage, so that everyone now can, and should, examine this evidence for themselves. I have merely pointed to the existence of this evidence in relation to Building 7. The official reports about all the other events of 9/11 have also been subjected to detailed examination, revealing many other glaring inconsistencies and falsifications. Most of these can be looked into, for example, in David Ray Griffin’s groundbreaking book, *The New Pearl Harbor: Disturbing Questions about the Bush Administration and 9/11* (2004) where he presents what he calls *prima facie* evidence and then, in *Debunking 9/11 Debunking*, (2007), where, by also examining the inevitable attempts to ‘debunk’ this research, he is able to describe the evidence for U.S. complicity in the events of 9/11 - in other words that it was an ‘inside job’ - as being “overwhelming”.

9/11 and the Threshold of Knowledge

Time-wise, though, we have jumped ahead of ourselves, for it would be absurd not to recognize the immense hurdles - both in the outer world and within themselves - that individuals had to, and still have to overcome, before first of all imagining, and then becoming able to accept that only ‘insider’ U.S. involvement is able to explain the events of 9/11. David Ray Griffin describes this well: “It seemed to me simply beyond belief that the Bush administration – *even* the Bush administration – would do such a heinous thing. I assumed that those who were claiming otherwise must be ‘conspiracy theorists’ in the derogatory sense – which means, roughly, crackpots... I fully sympathize, therefore, with the fact that most people have not examined the evidence. Life is short and the list of conspiracy theories is long and we must all exercise judgement about which things are worth our investment of time. I had assumed that conspiracy theories about 9/11 were *below the threshold of possible credibility*.”¹⁸ Physicist David Chandler also describes how: ‘It took some kind of consciousness-raising on my part before I was willing to look at the possibilities.’¹⁹ Richard Gage describes how for a long time he had simply accepted the official story. And then how, when he realized that he wasn’t being responsible if he didn’t try and take stock of the inconsistencies that were being reported, he had the experience of *waking up* again to his usual ability to bring his own thinking to bear on his perceptions and experience. And once he did so, as an architect with years of experience behind him in designing steel-framed buildings, like the boy able to see quite clearly that the “emperor has no clothes”, he realized that *of course* fires could never have led WTC7 to collapse in the way it did; that *of course* the only explanation for the phenomena everyone witnessed is controlled demolition.

And once people began waking up to this, they woke up to very much else as well, such as all the intentions described in the main part of this article. And millions of people, the world over, are also now waking up to or are already awake to all this. Meanwhile, the ‘official’ view remains impervious to these developments. The 9/11 Commission Report, headed by Philip Zelikow, did not even include a mention of the anomalies in the collapse of WTC 7. In a recent issue of *Prospect* magazine, in an article entitled: ‘Ten years after 9/11 what have we learned?’ Zelikow merely writes: “The historical work of the commission about what happened before and on 9/11 does not yet need any significant amendment.”²⁰ Zelikow was publically challenged as to why his report had included no discussion of Building 7, for example, and he answered, significantly, that many things were not discussed in the report, for “you couldn’t have sustained the narrative.”²¹ We will discuss this comment further in Part Two of this article, look further at how the 9/11 *Truth Movement* and the official “narrative” have

developed, and also attempt to see a wider perspective or ‘narrative’ which is able to include all that has been pointed to in this article.

Endnotes

1. Andrew Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 44.
2. *Close Adviser to Rice Plans to Resign*, Glenn Kessler, Washington Post, November 28, 2006.
3. *Report of the Commission to Assess US National Security Space Management and Organization*.
4. The neoconservative journal started by William Kristol and financed by Rupert Murdoch.
5. ‘No Defense’ on PNAC website: ‘Defense and National Security’ section – 2001: <http://www.newamericancentury.org/defensenationalsecurity2001.htm>
6. Same as note 5 – ‘The Phony Defense Budget War.’
7. According to the Washington Post, January 27th, 2002.
8. New York Times, October 12th, 2001.
9. ‘The twilight war. Ten years after 9/11, what have we learned?’ Philip Zelikow. Prospect Magazine, September, 2011.
10. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism*, p.173.
11. ‘Neocon Imperialism, 9/11, and the Attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq’, David Ray Griffin. Available on the web at ‘Information Clearing House.’ I am greatly indebted to Griffin’s wonderfully clear and thorough piece which has been the source for several of the quotations in the present article.
12. ‘Bless our Pax Americana’, Charles Krauthammer, Washington Post, March 22nd, 1991.
13. Letter to President Bush on the War on Terrorism, September 20, 2001. ‘Letters/Statements’ section of PNAC website.
14. See “9/11 Blueprint for Truth Video” in 10, 30 or 60 minute version – Architects and Engineers for 911 Truth website: <http://www.ae911truth.org> See: ‘Videos by AE911Truth’.
15. Same as note 14.
16. 15-min Documentary: “Architects & Engineers: Solving the Mystery of WTC 7” at <http://www.ae911truth.org>.
17. WTC7 first exploded at its base, whereas with WTC1 and WTC2 the collapse began at the tops of the buildings.
18. *The New Pearl Harbor – Disturbing Questions about the Bush Administration and 9/11* – David Ray Griffin – Foreword by Michael Meacher, MP – Arris Books, 2004 – pp. xvii-xviii.
19. See Video in note 16.
20. See note 9.
21. See: ‘Zelikow’s parallel universe’ – Snowshoe films – after 3:25minutes:<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XQWBQKsqBU>

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Part Two – The Continuing Significance of 9/11

by Richard Ramsbotham

Part One of this article described much of what led up to the events of 11th September, 2001 – beginning with the vast shift in the balance of global politics caused by the events of 1989-1991 in Europe, which brought to an end the 44-year long ‘Cold War’ (1945-1989). At the end of the article we turned to the events of “9/11” themselves. In this part of the article we shall look at the significance that the ‘watershed’ events of September 11th, 2001 continue to have today.

The ten years that followed 9/11 saw, we may say, an all-out campaign towards certain goals that had been in place before that date, but for which there had previously been neither the moral nor the financial support. In Part One we quoted Donald Rumsfeld describing how 9/11 created: “the kind of opportunities that World War II offered, *to refashion the world.*”¹

The wars that were held to be ‘justified’ in answer to 9/11 followed swiftly upon one another. The very next day, 12th September, 2001, the ubiquitous ‘war on terror’ was declared by George Bush, soon followed by the wars in Iraq and then Afghanistan. We described, in Part One, the continued demands, pre-9/11, for a massively increased U.S. Defense Budget. Between 2000 and 2011 this increased by a staggering 86% - (from \$295 billion to \$549 billion) – and even this is a massively understated figure, as it neither includes the costs of ‘homeland security’ nor of overseas wars, which receive their own budgets. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan alone are estimated to have cost the U.S. \$900 billion.

This whole wave of American-led military activity world-wide, together with many other issues, such as the loss of individual freedoms, and continually increasing surveillance, have led many people to declare, as did the economist Paul Krugman “What happened after 9/11... was deeply shameful... the attack was used to justify an unrelated war the neocons wanted to fight, for all the wrong reasons. The memory of 9/11 has been irrevocably poisoned.” Or, as Claes Ryn put it, the neoconservatives “have taken full advantage of the nation’s outrage over 9/11 to advance their already fully formed drive for empire.”² For the wars were but the means necessary to achieve much wider global aims. These were summed up by the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), in 2000, when it set out the four chief priorities of the U.S. military:

- “1. To secure and expand the ‘zones of democratic peace’.
2. To deter the rise of a new great superpower competitor.
3. To defend key regions of Europe, East Asia and the Middle East.
4. To preserve American pre-eminence through the coming transformation of war made possible by new technologies.”³

These PNAC goals have been rigorously – and ruthlessly – pursued in the years since 9/11 and, with only some modifications, this continues unabated today. I am far from being an expert on U.S. politics, but there appear to be two different ways of approaching these goals. These are to some degree partly embodied and represented by the Republican Party and the Democrat party, yet they are also both to be found within each of these parties, and even, at times, within the same individual.

One of these voices, which we shall name the ‘Republican’ one, is in essence identical to the voice ten years ago of the PNAC. It has, however, since that time, undergone some changes in appearance. At the ending of the Cold War the great call, from those who thought along the lines of the PNAC, was for a ‘unipolar world’ – with the U.S.A. being the *single pole*, the sole world superpower. This viewpoint was presented, for example, in *The End of History* by Francis Fukuyama, a member of PNAC. One of the two founders of PNAC, Robert Kagan (the other was William Kristol) declared an end to this situation in his book: *The End of the End of History* (2008.) Kagan describes how, since the end of the Cold War, ‘autocratic’ states have reasserted themselves - such as China and Russia, for example, or the Islamic nations (not yet affected by the ‘Arab Spring’) – leading once again to a ‘multipolar’ world. Thus Kagan writes:

“The new era, rather than being a time of ‘universal values,’ will be one of growing tensions and sometimes confrontations between the forces of democracy and the forces of autocracy... the struggle between liberalism and autocracy... is returning to dominate the geopolitics of the twenty-first century.”⁴

However, Kagan is by no means favouring any questioning of the values of so-called 'liberal', Western democracy, but setting up instead a new polarity and urging on the world's 'democracies' to a new and future triumph. Having referred to the previous 'triumphs' by 'the liberal international order', both in the Second World War and in the Cold War, Kagan concludes: 'But those victories were not inevitable and they need not be lasting... the re-emergence of the great autocratic powers, along with the reactionary forces of Islamic radicalism, has weakened that order, and threatens to weaken it further... The world's democracies need to begin thinking about how they can protect their interests and advance their principles in a world in which these are, once again, powerfully contested.'⁵

Another definite change in the outer appearance, at least, of the PNAC is that it no longer exists by the same name. New bodies have been created, though, by the same individuals, which not only champion the same PNAC agenda, but also do so in the same Old Testament (and significantly pro-Israeli), imperialist, war-mongering spirit.

The Spectre of the PNAC and the Calls for Military Action Against Iran

The main successor to the PNAC is the blandly named 'Foreign Policy Initiative' (FPI), co-founded yet again by William Kristol and Robert Kagan. The FPI is clamouring, at present, in the loudest possible way, for war with Iran. Kristol has demanded in an editorial that Congress authorise the use of force against Iran. He concludes: "It's long since been time for the United States to speak to this regime in the language it understands — force(...) The next speech we need to hear from the Obama administration should announce that, after 30 years, we have gone on the offensive against this murderous regime. And the speech after that can celebrate the fall of the regime, and offer American help to the democrats building a free and peaceful Iran."⁶ The FPI's executive director, Jamie Fly, likewise states: "It's time to take military action against the Iranian government elements that support terrorism and its nuclear program. More diplomacy is not an adequate response."⁷

The FPI is also seeking – just as the PNAC did in 2000/2001 – to have a dominant voice in U.S. politics, should the Republicans win the 2012 presidential election. Three of the FPI's four directors – Robert Kagan, Dan Senor and Eric Edelman – are currently advisors to Mitt Romney, who until very recently looked likely to win the Republican nomination. The words of Mitt Romney himself show him to be an all-too-willing mouthpiece for such advisors: "I'm guided by one overwhelming conviction and passion... This century must be an American Century."⁸ And in a later speech: "Barack Obama has shredded his own credibility on Iran (and) conveyed an image of American weakness... The United States needs a very different policy. *Si vis pacem, para bellum*. That is a Latin phrase, but the ayatollahs will have no trouble understanding it from a Romney administration: If you want peace, prepare for war."⁹ Almost vying with each other for boldness – and folly – in their statements about Iran, one Republican, Senator Lindsey Graham, writes: "A military attack against Iran... would open Pandora's Box, but the Iranian regime's acquiring a nuclear weapon will empty Pandora's box. I'm afraid this is the world in which we live – we face difficult choices..."¹⁰

Iran and 9/11

What has this to do with 9/11? A second offshoot of the PNAC is the 'Foundation for the Defense of Democracies' (FDD). A senior fellow at the FDD, a particularly militantly minded former member of PNAC, is the distinctively named Marc Reuel Gerecht. Under another name – Edward Shirley – Gerecht wrote a book in 1997 called: *Know Thine Enemy: A Spy's Journey into Revolutionary Iran*. Gerecht is part of the "team of FDD scholars focused on the Iranian threat." On the FDD's website there is a page devoted to: 'Iran's Sponsorship of Terrorism Worldwide.' The last item on this page pronounces: "Policymakers would be wise to revisit the role of Iran in the 9/11 attack against the United States. The 9/11 Commission's report noted unequivocally that Iran played a role in the attack, and the Commission encouraged the intelligence community to explain this role to the American public. Ten years later, there is still no public explanation."¹¹ Philip Zelikow, the chief author of the 9/11 Commission Report, equally ominously stated, on the tenth anniversary of 9/11, that although the report "does not yet need any significant amendment": "On Iran, the commission did find some interesting but inconclusive circumstantial evidence, and asked the US government to examine further Iran's pre-9/11 relationship with Al Qaeda..."¹² Thus, even should such evidence prove utterly 'inconclusive', or attempt is being made to summon up the spirit of 9/11 in order to support military action, in this case with Iran.

The echo of 9/11 being used in this way to support such action should call up in us the utmost wakefulness. Zbigniew Brzezinski, in a statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on February 1st, 2007, said that: “A plausible scenario for a military collision with Iran” could involve “a terrorist act in the U.S. blamed on Iran, culminating in a ‘defensive’ U.S. military action against Iran.” This year there have already been a number of small-scale ‘terrorist’ events ‘blamed on Iran’. A ‘plausible scenario’ behind these, to borrow Brzezinski’s term, is that the Western public is being steadily prepared by them to lay the blame squarely on Iran for some future, larger-scale, ‘false flag’ ‘terrorist act.’ The hope is that people’s clear-sightedness and wakefulness regarding what took place on 9/11 will somehow provide a sufficient antidote against history repeating itself.

Such is the crudeness of many of the calls for war against Iran that many sane voices have in fact been raised in opposition, which recognize the simplistic repetition of PNAC-style tactics. Thus Aaron David Miller, a former U.S. diplomat, wrote regarding Mitt Romney’s pro-war posturing: “He can get America into a lot of trouble with tough talk, no strategy, and a failure to understand the world in which we live... We saw that movie in 2003. No sequels please.”¹³

Different Routes to the Same Goals (1) – “Transformation of War Made Possible by New Technologies”

But We Should Not Be Fooled By The Seeming Attractiveness, compared with the Republican voice, of the voice mainly represented by the Democratic Party. The approach, internationally, of President Obama certainly appears sophisticated after exposure to Mitt Romney, and yet it is also possible to see it as representing a different or further path towards the same goal of making the twenty-first century an ‘American century.’

Nothing makes this clearer than by observing the extent to which the current U.S. administration, under Obama, is still in determined pursuit of the four goals set by the PNAC in 2000. [See page 12]

There are great claims made by the Obama administration that it is withdrawing from the warmongering stance of the years of the Bush administration. “The tide of war is receding”, says Obama, and: “after a decade of war, the nation we need to build and the nation we will build is our own.” Praise is sought, for example, for removing American ‘boots on the ground’ from Iraq or for never having placed them in Libya – as it is sought for there being a slight reduction, for the first time in 11 years, in the total U.S. Defence budget requested for 2012. (\$881 billion, compared to \$895 billion in 2011.)

The fact that there has been a small reduction in this still gigantic figure may possibly say something about the enormity of the present financial crisis.¹⁴ But even if \$40 billion less than in 2011 has been requested on the wars, taken together, in Iraq and Afghanistan, approximately \$25 billion more has been requested for “cybersecurity, satellites, weapons research and nuclear security.”¹⁵ And as soon as we remember that a key priority of the U.S. military is: “To preserve American pre-eminence through the coming transformation of war made possible by new technologies”, we see that the Obama administration, far from decreasing the U.S.’s warring activity, has in fact massively advanced, or, in their own words, ‘transformed’ it. For right back to the time of 9/11 the intention was always that the ‘transformation of war’ would mean *less* ‘boots on the ground’ and eventually also a reduction in cost, owing to the great increases that technologically advanced machines would bring in: ‘knowledge, speed, precision, and lethality’¹⁶.

The recent war in Libya, culminating in the killing of Muammar Gaddafi, is an instructive example. Obama boasted about what happened there: “Without putting a single U.S. service member on the ground, we achieved our objectives.” Hillary Clinton joked, much more tastelessly, on receiving news of Gaddafi’s death: “We came, we saw, he died.”¹⁷ But Gaddafi’s death was not, as Hillary Clinton makes out, some miracle that happened by itself. Popular as is the view that Libyan ‘rebels’ alone brought about the end of Gaddafi, it is not the case. A U.S. Predator Drone appears to have provided the surveillance which first picked up the presence of Gaddafi in a convoy of fifteen vehicles. MI6 agents and CIA officers had also been providing intelligence on the ground. The U.S. Predator drone, “flown out of Sicily and controlled via satellite from a base outside Las Vegas” then “struck the convoy with a number of Hellfire anti-tank missiles.”¹⁸ French warplanes then also attacked the convoy. From this ‘hellfire’ assault Gaddafi and the few others with him somehow fled to meet their final end at the hands of ‘rebels’, as seen world-wide on the media.

In Iraq, although ‘boots on the ground’ are to be withdrawn, we also learn that the “transformation of war made possible by new technologies” is nevertheless continuing:

“As the U.S. military departs Iraq, the CIA is looking at how it can... continue secret counterterrorism and intelligence programs... involv(ing) everything from the deployment of remote sensors that scan the wireless spectrum of terrorist safe havens to stealth U.S.-Iraqi counterterrorism commando teams.”¹⁹

The terrible double-speak in relation to such technological warfare has been made very clear in the discussion of its use by the U.S. in Pakistan. In a Reuters column called ‘Waging a war without footprints’ William Saletan claims that the Pakistan government have no right to complain about the huge increase in U.S. drone strikes within their territory. As ‘hunter-killer’ drones are operated from afar, they involve no ‘boots on the ground’ at all, leaving Saletan to the bizarre argument that they should therefore be welcomed:

“(D)rones don’t increase America’s footprint in Pakistan. They reduce it(...) If Pakistan wants a smaller American footprint on its territory, it should make its peace with a technology that leaves no footprints at all.”²⁰

There is at present an immense increase both in the development and the deployment of ‘unmanned aerial vehicles’ (UAVs), or drones, predominantly by the U.S. military. These are said to be ‘redefining military tactics worldwide’²¹, as the above examples show, and have been described as Obama’s ‘weapon of choice’. Compared to the days of George Bush, the use of drone strikes under Obama has more than quadrupled.

Different Routes to the Same Goals (2) – “To Secure and Expand the ‘Zones of Democratic Peace’.”

The above intention could more honestly be expressed: “To use military might to impose ‘democracy’ world-wide.” It is one of the more sickening attempts to deceive through language – another being “overseas contingency operations”, which is the term now used in the U.S. budget for war.

Whatever the words that are used, there has been no let-up whatsoever, under Obama, in the pursuit of this intention. General Wesley Clark, former NATO Supreme Allied Commander, has described being shown a classified memo in the Pentagon a few days after 9/11, stating, as Clark put it: “We’re going to take out 7 countries in 5 years: Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Iran.”²² Even if the order of this has not proved quite accurate, it is ominous enough. After Iraq and then Afghanistan, Libya has been the last ‘victory’, Syria will perhaps be the next and now the clamour is for war with Iran. We have spoken of the Republican voices in favour of this, but Obama has also been clear that he has certainly not withdrawn from a military option. Obama has often been compared with Woodrow Wilson in this respect – that he is quite capable of furthering war while extolling peace. One columnist, fearing that Obama might attack Iran, remarked: “(R)ecall that Woodrow Wilson was reelected in 1916 on the slogan ‘He kept us out of war.’ Then, in 1917, he went to war and quickly built the most stringent wartime state... in modern American history. A Wilsonian desire for international order is not inconsistent with aggressive military action... It would be ironic if the professorial Barack Obama launches a military attack when his supposedly cowboy predecessor declined to do so.”²³

Different Routes to the Same Goals (3) – ‘New American Century’ – ‘America’s Pacific Century’

More than this, however, the Obama administration has now determined to “expand the ‘zones of democratic peace’” still further, thus satisfying the second key aim stated by the PNAC: “to deter the rise of a new great superpower competitor.” Whatever may still transpire in Iran, the U.S. is now shifting its focus from the Middle and Near East to the Asia-Pacific region. Thus in the November 2011 ‘America Issue’ of ‘Foreign Policy’, the main article is by Hillary Clinton and is called: ‘America’s Pacific Century.’ The subtitle states: “The future of geo-politics will be decided in Asia, not in Afghanistan or Iraq, and the United States should be right at the center of the action.”

The key concern, of course, is the ‘emerging power’ of China. It does not belong to this article to discuss this. What is important, though, is that although Hillary Clinton’s article talks of the ‘winding down’ of the wars in response to 9/11, the new intentions she describes are nothing but an expansion and acceleration of the intentions for a ‘New American Century’, albeit modified to suit today’s geopolitical situation and under a new name. Clinton’s words could hardly make this any clearer: “Our model of free democracy and

free enterprise... remains the most powerful source of prosperity and progress known to humankind. I hear everywhere I go that the world still looks to the United States for leadership. Our military is by far the strongest, and our economy by far the largest in the world... So there should be no doubt that America has the capacity to secure and sustain our global leadership in this century as we did in the last. As we move forward to set the stage for engagement in the Asia-Pacific over the next 60 years..."²⁴

Returning to 9/11

In the light of the U.S.'s new aim to 'pivot to new global realities', as Clinton put it, and shift its focus towards China, Obama and those 'in high places' in the U.S., power, are very keen to see 9/11, and the 10 years of war that it 'justified', as a chapter that is ended and has no further significance. "After a decade of war, we're turning the page and moving forward", said Obama. Philip Zelikow is also very keen now to underplay the significance of 9/11. This foremost mainstream authority on the events of 9/11 commented in an interview at the Council of Foreign Relations on September 12th 2011: "I'm not sure I'm smart or good enough to articulate what 9/11 means... *there's almost a level to me at which it's meaningless...* the act is so ridiculously disproportionate to the pathetic group of zealots who carried this out, that, you know, we struggle... to make that fit into a grand narrative that somehow fits the calamity."²⁵ (As Zelikow was quoted earlier using 9/11 as ammunition against Iran, he is one of those individuals able to speak with either a 'Republican' or a 'Democrat' voice. But 9/11 is either 'meaningless' or it isn't!) Francis Fukuyama, writing in *The Observer* on 11th September, 2011, also now speaks of the irrelevance of 9/11: "In the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, there were grand assertions that... 'the world had changed.' It is my view that in a longer historical perspective, al-Qaida will be seen as a mere blip or diversion. Bin Laden got lucky that day and pulled off a devastating, made-for-media attack. The United States then overreacted... Since 2001 the most important world-historical story has been the rise of China. This... will almost certainly be felt in 50 years time. Whether anyone will remember Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida at that remove is a different matter."²⁶

This wish to close the chapter begun by 9/11 was given great support, of course, by the supposed death of Osama Bin Laden in May this year, not long before the 10th anniversary of 9/11. In a BBC interview with Andrew Marr on May 22nd, 2011, Barack Obama began by reiterating the sense of closure this had brought: "If you think about what an extraordinary trauma it (9/11) was for the country as a whole, the sacrifices... made by troops - not only from the United States... - and you think that all traces back to this maniacal action by Al Qaeda, for us to be able to say unequivocally that the mastermind behind that event had been removed was a powerful moment."

But...

But... Not only did even the FBI not list 9/11 as one of the crimes bin Laden was wanted for... (The FBI's chief of investigative publicity, Rex Tomb, said regarding this: "He has not been formally indicted and charged in connection with 9/11 because the FBI has no hard evidence connecting Bin Laden to 9/11".²⁷) Not only is there no evidence whatsoever showing that it was Osama bin Laden who was killed in Abbottabad in May, and a very great likelihood that he in fact died at the end of 2001,²⁸ but also, even if a new chapter is being started, titled 'America's Pacific Century', it is a new chapter *in the same book*.

It depends completely on the previous chapter, for it is only on the basis of its so-called 'victories' in the Middle and Near East that the U.S. now feels ready to turn its attention towards the Asia-Pacific. And the book (probably titled 'The New American Century') was only able to be 'jump-started' in the first place, and achieve all the 'success' that it did, because of the 'watershed' events of September 11th, 2001.

And so it is impossible to bypass the need to ascertain the truth or the lie of what happened on 9/11.

We are being hurriedly asked to accept a new chapter-beginning, one which would have us view the events of 9/11 as 'meaningless', just as in 2001 we were hurriedly asked to accept the enormity of their significance. But if an edifice is suspected as having a false foundation, then no matter how many storeys are added to it, sooner or later it becomes imperative to examine it and face up to whatever consequences would ensue from what one finds.

"An Impossible Task"

The taboo, it appears, has almost been lifted on saying in public, as Paul Krugman did, that the events of 9/11 were "used to justify an unrelated war the neocons wanted to fight." Although Krugman was vilified

in the U.S. for saying this on the 10th anniversary of 9/11, these thoughts are now increasingly expressed. Even former PNAC member Francis Fukuyama has done so. Simon Jenkins, in a recent article in the Guardian, which warned in the strongest possible way against war with Iran, began: “This time there will be no excuses.” The lessons have now surely all been learned, he writes, after our experience of the appalling “wars of choice that followed 9/11... These wars have been a gigantic, historic tragedy. They have not advanced western security one jot.”²⁹

The taboo has very definitely not been lifted, however, from there being any open discussion in mainstream media and politics about whether the events of 9/11 were in fact an “inside job”, orchestrated by individuals within U.S. circles of power, for the precise purpose of launching the otherwise unrealizable agenda of the “new American century”, which is still moving forward today.

This taboo was confirmed to me by a member of the British House of Lords to whom I showed Part One of this article. Although he had no difficulty agreeing with such viewpoints as those of Simon Jenkins or Paul Krugman, he remarked that I should have left out any discussion about the evidence pointing to controlled demolition being responsible for the collapse of the three WTC buildings. ‘One cannot go there’, I was told. But, unless one decides that some questions are simply too uncomfortable to address, one has, in the end, to ‘go there’.

Paul Craig Roberts, former Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Treasury and former editor of the Wall Street Journal describes the impasse we find ourselves in if we “accept the government’s explanation of 9/11 yet(...) try to oppose the ‘war on terror’ and the police state which are the consequences(...) Trying to oppose the consequences of an event whose explanation you accept is an impossible task.”³⁰

We therefore return to the need for the truth to be discovered and known about the events of 9/11.

The “9/11 Truth Movement”

As I said in Part One, it is not my purpose to examine here the vast and increasing amount of evidence showing up the contradictions or the falsehoods in the ‘official version’ of what happened on 9/11. This has already been done in great thoroughness by many others. It is, I believe, everyone’s responsibility to take the trouble to look into this research and make up their own minds about it.

Let us briefly look, however, at the perhaps unprecedented phenomenon of the ‘9/11 Truth Movement’. I am not aware of voices of protest being raised before, in the English-speaking world, in quite this way. A considerable number of professional organisations have been formed, each highlighting different aspects of what took place and different contradictions or impossibilities in the official explanations.

The following is a list of the organisations I have become aware of - (their names all end “...for 9/11 Truth”, which I have omitted): Architects and Engineers; Firefighters; Pilots and Aviation Professionals; Scientists; Political Leaders; Survivors and Family Members; Lawyers; Scholars; Intelligence Officers; Religious Leaders; U.S. Military Officers; Medical Professionals; Actors and Artists; Journalists and Media Professionals. Most of these have their own websites. The website ‘patriotsquestion911’ details many of them and includes individual comments about 9/11 by large numbers of those involved.

We see an example of how the research of different professionals complements that carried out by others with regard to the questions relating to the collapse of the buildings.³¹ This has been approached from many angles. Physics Professor Steven Jones has described the impossibility, according to the laws of physics, of the buildings collapsing as they did.³² The same impossibility is explored from the perspectives of architecture and engineering by architect Richard Gage and others of the over 1500 members of the organisation he founded: ‘Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth’.³³ Firefighters have also described how nothing in their experience could have led them to believe that the fires in the WTC buildings would have caused such vertical high-speed collapses, which is why, initially, they had no hesitation in entering the buildings.³⁴ More importantly, though, all of the firefighters present in the WTC buildings on 9/11 were interviewed soon after the events.³⁵ This provided 12,000 pages of first-hand experiences of the events of 9/11. Professor Graeme MacQueen then made a thorough phenomenological study of all these interviews.³⁶ Here are some examples of their testimonies:

“We originally had thought there was like an internal detonation, explosives, because it went in succession, boom, boom, boom, boom, and then the tower came down. (Edward Cachia.)

“The tower was - it looked to me - I thought it was exploding, actually. That’s what I thought for hours afterwards, that it had exploded(...)or there had been some device on the plane that had

exploded, because the debris from the tower had shot out far over our heads(...) At that point I had no idea what had happened. It seemed that the thing had blown up. Everybody I think at that point still thought these things were blown up.” (John Coyle.)

“We heard a rumbling noise, and it appeared that that first tower, the south tower, had exploded, the top of it. That’s what I saw, what a lot of us saw (...) I remember asking Ray Downey was it the jet fuel that blew up. He said at that point he thought there were bombs up there because it was too even. As we’ve since learned, it was the jet fuel that was dropping down that caused all this. But he said it was too even. (John Delendick)

“About a couple minutes after George came back to me is when the south tower from our perspective exploded from about midway up the building. We all turned and ran(...) At that point a debate began to rage because the perception was that the building looked like it had been taken out with charges(...) at that point many people had felt that possibly explosives had taken out 2 World Trade, and(...) and the officers were debating whether or not to go immediately back in or to see what was going to happen with 1 World Trade at that point. The debate ended pretty quickly because 1 World Trade came down.” (Christopher Fenyo.)

“At that point in time I called Manhattan. I was answered. I asked them if they were aware of an explosion at the World Trade Center. I told them basically what I thought had happened(...) I thought that when I looked in the direction of the Trade Center before it came down, before No. 2 came down, that I saw low-level flashes. In my conversation with Lieutenant Evangelista, never mentioning this to him, he questioned me and asked me if I saw low-level flashes in front of the building, and I agreed with him because I thought - at that time I didn’t know what it was. I mean, it could have been as a result of the building collapsing, things exploding, but I saw a flash flash flash and then it looked like the building came down.

Q. Was that on the lower level of the building or up where the fire was?

A. No, the lower level of the building. You know like when they demolish a building, how when they blow up a building, when it falls down? That’s what I thought I saw. And I didn’t broach the topic to him, but he asked me. He said I don’t know if I’m crazy, but I just wanted to ask you because you were standing right next to me. He said did you see anything by the building? And I said what do you mean by see anything? He said did you see any flashes? I said, yes, well, I thought it was just me. He said no, I saw them, too. I don’t know if that means anything. I mean, I equate it to the building coming down and pushing things down, it could have been electrical explosions, it could have been whatever. But it’s just strange that two people sort of say the same thing and neither one of us talked to each other about it. I mean, I don’t know this guy from a hole in the wall. I was just standing next to him...” (Stephen Gregory.)

“Then that’s when I kept on walking close to the south tower and that’s when that building collapsed.

Q. How did you know that it was coming down?

A. That noise. It was a noise.

Q. What did you hear? What did you see?

A. It was a frigging noise. At first I thought it was - do you ever see professional demolition where they set the charges on certain floors and then you hear ‘pop, pop, pop, pop, pop’? That’s exactly what - because I thought it was that. When I heard that frigging noise, that’s when I saw the building coming down.” (Daniel Rivera)

And so on!

An astonishing 118 firefighters directly spoke of experiencing explosions. Only 10 firefighters gave descriptions of the buildings collapsing as the official explanation describes - through the floors of the building collapsing in on one another - ‘pancaking’. (The remainder of the 503 witnesses did not, it appears, directly refer to the manner of the collapses.)

Hardly surprisingly, MacQueen concludes his study: “The implications of this for our understanding of September 11, 2001 are very, very serious.”

MacQueen acknowledges that the firefighters' testimonies do not, on their own, constitute proof, saying:
"I do not claim to have proven that the Towers were brought down with explosives, but I believe the eyewitness testimony assembled and discussed here strengthens the argument that explosions were critical to the collapses."

The testimonies of the firefighters fit together, though, with the experience and the research of physicists, architects and engineers, such as, most prominently, Steven Jones and Richard Gage; as well as with the experience of demolitions experts, such as the late Danny Jowenko, who, seeing a video of the collapse of WTC7, unaware that it was one of the buildings involved in 9/11, stated it to be, quite unquestionably, an example of controlled demolition.³⁷

When taken together – and there is plenty of other research into other factors that could be added - the cumulative evidence appears both overwhelming and incontrovertible.

Towards Open Discussion

As I have said, it is not my purpose in this article to examine any further the details of this evidence. Yet, what is, from a certain perspective, just as extraordinary as the evidence itself, is that in our culture – a "free democracy", described by Hillary Clinton as the "most powerful source of(...) progress known to humankind" – it is not possible, in mainstream politics or the mainstream media, for there to be any serious, open discussion of this evidence. This is the taboo I spoke of earlier.

Former Senator and Presidential candidate Mike Gravel has spoken of this as follows:

"The government and the media have marginalized efforts to re-examine what happened on 9/11... to such a degree of calling it a conspiracy theory. We're not talking about a conspiracy theory here. We're talking about scientific evidence that has been put forth for any reasonable person to look at and question and say: 'Hey, there's something wrong here!'... It's vital for us to get to the bottom of these events - what led up to 9/11, what happened on 9/11 and what happened in the aftermath of 9/11 – all of that must be re-examined."³⁸

The viewpoint has sometimes been put forward that people might not be able to tolerate such discussions and must therefore be protected from them. Gravel answers this:

"The American people are stronger than we realize... These people can handle this investigation wherever it leads and whatever it uncovers. They'll handle it maturely – and that is vital to the survival of our democracy – and absent that we are in very serious difficulties for the future."

The final part of this article, in the next issue of *New View*, will further consider this gap – between this vast amount of questioning and research, taken seriously by enormous numbers of people – and the fact that, at present, mainstream discussion of it is impossible. I shall look at what might be necessary for this gap – or taboo – to be overcome. I will look at questions the whole issue of '9/11' raises regarding our relationship to truth; at some of the deeper geopolitical intentions hidden behind the events of 9/11; and finally, I hope, at what it all asks of us in response.

Endnotes

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11. www.defenddemocracy.org/irans-sponsorship-of-terrorism-worldwide
12. The twilight war. Ten years after 9/11, what have we learned?’ Philip Zelikow. Prospect Magazine, September 2011.
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15. FY 2012 Department of Defense Budget.
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20. William Saletan: ‘Waging a war without footprints’ National Post. Apr 13, 2011. Reuters.
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26. ‘The legacy of that terrible time will be less significant than we feared.’ Fukuyama. *The Observer*, 11.09. 2011.
27. Quoted in ‘9/11 Ten Years Later’ by David Ray Griffin, Haus Publishing, 2011, page 15.
28. See ‘The Osama bin Laden story and the search for truth.’ Richard Ramsbotham. *New View*, Summer 2011.
29. ‘America’s itch to brawl has a new target – but bombs can’t conquer Iran’, Simon Jenkins, *The Guardian*, 4th November, 2011.
30. 9/11 and the Orwellian Redefinition of ‘Conspiracy Theory’ by Paul Craig Roberts. Roberts’ remarks about a ‘police state’ may appear too extreme for some. His article describes what he means by this. The article finishes: ‘A country whose population has been trained to accept the government’s word and to shun those who question it is a country without liberty in its future.’
31. There are plenty of other equally serious questions relating to 9/11, such as, for instance, the ‘attack’ on the Pentagon. I have focussed on the question of the collapse of the buildings as the most glaringly obvious.
32. ‘Why Indeed Did the WTC Buildings Completely Collapse?’ By Dr. Steven E. Jones. Available online, at Journal of 9/11 Studies. An earlier version of this long and thorough analysis was published in 9/11 And The American Empire: Intellectuals Speak Out, eds. David Ray Griffin and Peter Dale Scott. (Interlink Publishing, 2006.)
33. www.ae911truth.org
34. All the fire chiefs described how what happened was contrary to all their previous experience. There follow two examples:
“Once again, I’m doing this 23 years...This changed all the rules. This changed all the rules. This went from a structure to a wafer in seconds, in seconds. I couldn’t believe the speed of that tower

coming down. I heard the rumble, I looked up, debris was already 50 feet from the ground...” (Sergeant James Canham.)

“I’ve worked in Manhattan my whole career in high rises and everything else...you looked back, all you see - you know how fast those buildings came down...it just doesn’t click that these buildings can come down...you just couldn’t believe that those buildings could come down...there’s no history of these buildings falling down.” (Lieutenant Warren Smith.)

Quoted in: ‘118 Witnesses: The Firefighters’ Testimony to Explosions in the Twin Towers’; Graeme MacQueen. (See endnote 35.)

35. This was on the order of Thomas Von Essen, the city fire commissioner on Sept. 11, who wished “to preserve these accounts before they became reshaped by a collective memory.” These oral testimonies by 503 firefighters, emergency medical technicians and paramedics cover some 12,000 pages. They were collected between early October 2001 and late January 2002.
36. ‘118 Witnesses: The Firefighters’ Testimony to Explosions in the Twin Towers’; Graeme MacQueen. Published online in: *Journal of 9/11 Studies*, 57, August 2006/Volume 2.
37. On the following youtube video Danny Jowenko may be watched making his comments on the collapse of WTC7, unaware that it had happened on 9/11: “Demolitions Expert – Danny Jowenko – YouTube” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMhUTrBODtA>
The whole 6 minute video – Jowenko appears after 2 or 3 minutes – is very much to be recommended for anyone wishing to observe for themselves the phenomenon of the collapse of WTC7.
38. Video interview with Mike Gravel. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IgrkvUQR6IE>

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Making Sense of 911: Part Three

Truth-telling and Storytelling

by Richard Ramsbotham

There is an immense amount of detailed and exact research demonstrating that many aspects of the ‘official explanation’ of the events of September 11th, 2001 in New York are both incomplete¹ and incorrect. Millions of people, world-wide, are now convinced of this. (The lowest estimates reckon this to be about 15% in U.S.A. and more in many other countries.) Yet it is currently impossible (or impermissible) for this research to be openly discussed in mainstream politics or the mainstream media. What might be necessary for this situation – this taboo – to be overcome? This was the question with which I finished Part Two of this article. [*New View* Winter 2011/12.- Ed.]

“What is truth?”

Our contemporary culture has a very flimsy grasp of the prerequisites of truth – of what the requirements are which can enable us to know for certain that our experience or apprehension of something is true. On the one hand, there is the widespread view – popularized and elaborated in much ‘post-modern’ thought – that to speak about the attainment of truth is impossible, for all we say or think is always relative and subjective. On the other hand, we are asked by ‘science’ to *believe* in certain ‘facts’. Endlessly we are expected to accept certain things as true, without our being able to experience these ‘truths’ for ourselves, through our own perception and understanding. These two attitudes – of believing we can never fully know anything and of accepting ‘scientific’ facts – are often held simultaneously, without people concerning themselves about the contradiction.

This, as we shall see, has a very particular relevance to our understanding of 911. For the argument between supporters of the ‘official version’ of 911 and supporters of the ‘911 Truth Movement’ is by no means merely a question of one attempt to understand the truth of that day being honestly weighed up and considered against another. The way the events of September 11th, 2001 are reported and understood raises enormous questions not only about the truth of this or that viewpoint but also about truth itself and *truth-telling*. We shall now turn to this.

When Philip Zelikow, the person primarily responsible for writing the *911 Commission Report*, was asked in public why the report did not mention some of the great anomalies regarding the events of September 11th, 2001, he replied: ‘*you couldn’t have sustained the narrative*’.² When the 9/11 commissioner Chris Cojman was asked by a Congressman (Weldon) why the *911 Commission Report* had excluded mention of another highly significant fact, which the commission admitted they knew about, Cojman replied: “*it did not fit with the story we wanted to tell*”.³

What do these two remarks say about the *attitude to truth* of the *911 Commission Report*?⁴

Narrative

‘Narrative’ is clearly one of Mr. Zelikow’s favourite words. In an interview at the Council on Foreign Relations Zelikow said: “what we did after 9/11 was we made the enemy big enough *to fit the narrative* that made logical sense to us.”⁵ This was a mistake, Zelikow later said: “We tried to make 9/11 *a grand narrative*, but it’s not.”⁶ “We all grew up, you see, in an era where we were in great danger, apocalyptic nuclear danger, but in *the narrative that had a sort of grand, logical coherence to it*. And now we live in an era of vulnerability that’s not really quite susceptible to *the same sort of epochal narrative conventions*.” In Part Two I addressed the current views of Zelikow and others about the ‘meaninglessness’ of 9/11: “there is a level to me at which it’s meaningless... the act is so ridiculously disproportionate to the pathetic group of zealots who carried this out that... *we struggle... to make that fit into a grand narrative* that somehow fits the calamity.” He is not saying, however, that there is no ‘narrative’ – only that it cannot be fitted into “any of the

conventional narratives.” Zelikow is always searching for *new narratives*. Thus, after the so-called death of Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, Zelikow wrote an article in the *Financial Times*, beginning: “The next 10 years will be quite different from the last 10. Osama bin Laden’s death is one of those catalytic moments that seize mass attention, as people sense a turning point of some kind. But what kind? Leaders who seize the chance can regain precious strategic initiative, to redefine interests and *offer a fresh narrative.*”⁷

What are the consequences of such an excessive interest in ‘narrative’ with regard to 9/11 – or more particularly regarding the official viewpoint about 9/11, for which Zelikow was responsible?

The Story of 9/11: Making History

Nothing can answer this question better than a short examination of how the *9/11 Commission Report* was conceived, written and then launched into the world.

The mainstream presumption is that such a Commission would first impartially examine all the conflicting information regarding the events of 9/11, in order to arrive slowly but thoroughly at the truth of what happened, and then provide the public with a truthful statement of all this, which people might test against their own perceptions and understanding.

Let us compare this, briefly, with the extraordinary manner in which the Commission was conceived and carried out. I am not interested here in looking at the Commission’s *politics* – relevant as it undoubtedly is – but at its *epistemology* – at the suitability of its principles and the way it worked as a method for attaining truth – and at the way the 9/11 Commission related to *truth-telling* on the one hand and *story-telling* on the other.

Zelikow’s main co-author and closest colleague regarding the kind of report he wished to see written was Ernest May.⁸ May was the chief consultant to the 9/11 Commission and describes his own role as follows: “I had no managerial responsibility. My job was to help produce the historical narrative.” May has also been helpful in providing an indispensable narrative⁹ about the way the report was created, to which I am indebted in the section that follows.

May describes the very first telephone conversation he and Zelikow had had about the 9/11 Commission, in January 2003. As this conversation is clearly recognized by May as somehow containing the essence of everything else that came later in the report, it is worth noting the three main things that Zelikow and May discussed.

Firstly – in discussing the necessity of such a report, they discussed the similarity of 9/11 to Pearl Harbour: “September 11th, 2001 was a watershed moment, on a par at least with Pearl Harbour.” They discussed how the three Pearl Harbour investigations had all given too much emphasis to ‘blaming Americans’ – and had failed, therefore, to make fully clear the ‘Japanese role’ in the attacks. No such error should be repeated this time. As there was already much information about “Al Qaeda, the Islamist terrorist network behind the sinister plot”: “here was an opportunity to try and tell the whole story from both sides.” (May speaks of telling the story “from both sides” – and yet here, even before he and Zelikow had joined the commission, he states categorically who was “behind the sinister plot.”)

Secondly, they discussed the *effect* they wanted the report to have – the measure of success and influence they wanted the report to achieve. Their stated wish was that the report should: “remain the reference volume on September 11th, sitting on shelves of high school and college teachers a generation hence.” So serious were they in this intention that they took the question of how to achieve it to the U.S. Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz. In telling of this, Wolfowitz candidly admits to the completely partisan nature of the 9/11 Commission Report, as this conversation took place *before* completion of the report.¹⁰ In Wolfowitz’s words (from a 2004 lecture about Paul Nitze): “When Don Rumsfeld and I had lunch with members of the 9/11 commission recently, one member asked what could they do to ensure that their report would make a real difference, that it would be read five or 10 years from now, instead of just filed away on a dusty shelf.”

Wolfowitz’s answer was that they should “write something similar to George Kennan’s long telegram or Paul Nitze’s NSC-68.”¹¹ This is a telling remark, seeing as neither of these documents

had had the aim of truthfully examining something that had already happened – but rather of dictating strategy and policy regarding what *should happen*.

Wolfowitz also spoke to the commissioners, though, of the Pearl Harbour report lacking popular interest or appeal: “I told them that, rarely to my knowledge, has anyone other than historians with a specific interest in the subject, gone back to read the report of the Pearl Harbor Commission. NSC-68, on the other hand, is still studied in colleges and universities, including colleges for strategists like the war colleges of our military services or our National Defense University.”¹²

This leads to the third thing discussed by May and Zelikow that evening – the question of *how the report should be written* – in order to attain the scale of political influence and popular appeal they were seeking. They would need to avoid the traditional method of fact-finding and presentation of evidence – and provide instead a thoroughly readable historical *story* or narrative: “Typically, government reports focus on ‘findings’ and array the evidence accordingly. None, to our knowledge, had ever attempted simply to produce professional-quality narrative history.” May elaborates on what he means by this. The report would need “to deal not only with the immediate past but also with the long background... if, as we said to each other, the report was to remain the reference volume on September 11(...) a generation hence.” When they first began work on the report they planned “starting with the rise of Al Qaeda, perhaps even beginning with the birth of Islam, then moving through the story chronologically.” The report, therefore, envisaged from the beginning as something of a best-seller, would be a rewriting of history, providing people with a long perspective within which to understand the attacks of 9/11, followed by clear statements about the policies and directions needing to be taken *after* 9/11. Furthermore, not only should the report provide, as no other report had ever done, a long historical narrative leading up to the events in America in 2001; but it should also do so in such a way that this new historical perspective would be valid not just for America but for the whole world. It would be the first time a government report had been conceived as international history, not just American history.”

The above makes clear why May called the essay in which he describes all this: “*When Government Writes History*.” Philip Zelikow would use the same phrase at the end of a memorandum he wrote welcoming all new members of staff working for the Commission: “You are now part of *a history-writing and history-making enterprise*, working with some of the most talented people in America, and led by an outstanding group of commissioners. Welcome.”¹³

After their first telephone call Zelikow took on to persuade the chair and vice-chair of the commission, Thomas Kean and Lee Hamilton, to agree with this idea of ‘couching the report as a history’ – and both, according to May, immediately agreed.

Pre-emptive Outline

The next thing to take place has fairly frequently now been condemned for its inappropriateness, if not its scandalousness, in a report that still *purports* to be presenting the results of an honest investigation into the events of 9/11. It fits perfectly, though, when we see, as we have done, that May and Zelikow aimed from the beginning, to create a popular historical narrative.

As soon as Zelikow and May had both signed up to the Commission, before therefore any but the most preliminary investigations can have been carried out, they drafted *a complete plan of the narrative to be written*: “he and I worked up an outline for a sixteen-chapter report. By the middle of March 2003, the outline had chapter headings, subheadings and sub-subheadings.” As this once top-secret document is now openly available on the internet,¹⁴ one can see for oneself the remarkable extent to which the scheme of the final Commission Report, published 16 months later, is almost identical to this first draft outline, with only three significant changes being made to it. (This makes, I think, abundantly clear why Zelikow, asked why the official report mentioned none of the anomalies relating to 9/11, truthfully replied that this was *not* because of ignorance, but because: “you couldn’t have sustained the narrative.”)

Zelikow and May then showed this narrative outline to the other four leading members of the commission¹⁵ and: “They all approved, but agreed that for the moment (...) the outline should be treated as if it were the most highly classified document the commission possessed.”

(Appalling as is the blatancy of the control exerted from the beginning on what the report would contain, there is nevertheless something admirable in Ernest May's honesty in putting down, before he died, these details about how the 9/11 Report came into being.)

As far as was possible, they recruited staff capable of writing such "narrative history". According to May, however, the severe time-constraints necessitated that most of the staff were people who "already had high-level security clearances." The 50 or so professional staff seconded from government departments therefore needed to be 'trained' because: "For the most part these government veterans tended to assume that the commission would produce a report of the traditional type. *They had to be educated to the idea of writing a narrative.*" (My italics.) The final report, says May, is the evidence of the success of this 'education': "Its first eleven chapters would not tell such a riveting story if the commissioners and the staff had not accepted and internalized the idea of the report's being an enduringly readable history."

The moment was bound to come when Zelikow and May would have to reveal to everyone the outline of the *pre-existing master narrative* into which everyone's research and writing would need to fit. This must, one imagines, have been a significant moment for May and Zelikow, obliged to admit quite openly to such out-and-out prejudice in the report. According to May, by this time (late spring of 2003) the staff had "accepted... the idea of the report's being an enduringly readable history" to such an extent that: "when the outline was finally unveiled before all the commissioners, it appeared to have won acceptance among the staff. The commission endorsed it almost without debate." May, though, is either trying to fool himself or us. For the admission certainly did *not* pass without cynicism on the part of some members of staff. They wrote their own two-page parody of the draft outline, which they named with both truth and humour: "Preemptive Outline". It has chapter headings such as: "We Haven't Seen The Evidence Yet. But Really. We're Sure."¹⁶

Nonetheless, the victory had been won. From then on the *9/11 Commission Report* was, effectively, a *fait accompli*. As May put it: "Everyone became a storyteller."!

May does also mention some political questions regarding the completion of the report, such as that the commissioners were *never* allowed to speak to any of the arrested "Al Qaeda detainees".

After May had written his article this particular question escalated to such a size that, had it been about another event, it might have ignited a public scandal. It became known that there had been CIA videotapes of these interviews with 'Al Qaeda suspects' and that the videos had been destroyed, without anyone on the 9/11 Commission hearing about this. Zelikow, the executive director *may* of course have heard about it. But Thomas Kean, the *Chair* of the Commission was justifiably furious not to have been told about the existence of these videotapes. Kean and the Commission's Vice Chair, Lee Hamilton, wrote an article in the *New York Times* together, entitled: *Stonewalled by the CIA*. It ended: "As a legal matter, it is not up to us to examine the C.I.A.'s failure to disclose the existence of these tapes. That is for others. What we do know is that government officials decided not to inform a lawfully constituted body, created by Congress and the president, to investigate one the greatest tragedies to confront this country. *We call that obstruction.*" (2nd Jan, 2008.) Asked about the CIA's remarks that the Commission hadn't explicitly asked for these tapes, Kean replied: "They can parse their words all they want. We asked for every single thing that they had, and then my vice chairman, Lee Hamilton, looked the director of the CIA in the face and said, 'look, even if we haven't asked for something, if it's pertinent to our investigation, make it available to us.' And our staff asked again and again of their staff and the tapes were not given to us. So there was no question."¹⁷ (When one reads this – that even the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Commission were kept in the dark – and aware that both they and Ernest May have made public statements about the serious failings of the report - one cannot help wondering whether Philip Zelikow was the *only* person on the Commission who actually knew what was happening.)

Our present theme, however, has more to do with how Zelikow ensured that the report *told a story*, the outline of which he had already decided on and how he then launched the story to try and achieve his aim that the story should become a part of popular consciousness.

To achieve this, Zelikow again broke with the tradition of government reports and brought out

the report with a popular commercial publisher. The contract with the publisher, Norton, stated that “the report be put on sale in most bookstores in America on the day of its public release and that the price not exceed ten dollars.” There was considerable concern about this among some people, but, as with everything else, all took place in accordance with Zelikow’s master-plan. As May describes: “Norton managed to print six hundred thousand copies overnight... . The copies flew off booksellers’ tables. Norton had to print another half-million within a week. Over the next eight months (it) sold something like two million copies, and an astounding 6.9 million copies were downloaded from the commission’s website.” The public success of the 9/11 Commission Report culminated in its even receiving a nomination for a National Book Award.¹⁸

Zelikow was asked (by Philip Shenon) about his own response to the praise the report had received and replied: “The praise was gratifying... More gratifying than the praise, though, was the reaction from people... not only were millions of people buying or downloading the report, they were actually reading it, and reading it through.” He then describes his greatest satisfaction – that his storytelling experiment had worked! - “As you know we had *developed a theory about how to prepare the report and put it out* and then worked hard to execute the design. *So the reaction was akin to that of a scientist who designs a pathbreaking experiment, expecting certain results, but feels pretty gratified when the thing actually works.*”¹⁹ (My italics.)

Very many people – of whom I am one – would of course say that the *9/11 Commission Report* should not be viewed as a success. Its inaccuracies, flaws and omissions have been consistently and thoroughly shown up almost from the moment it appeared.²⁰

The viewpoint expressed in the report, though, *has been successful* – because it is the prevailing viewpoint – both popularly – and in mainstream media and politics. (At least in the Western world or in countries modelled on it.)

This official *story* of 9/11 also proved “successful” by becoming the prevailing ‘myth’ behind U.S. and then U.N. policy and military action. (I am using the word ‘myth’ as Philip Zelikow uses it, which I shall say more of.) Despite the huge emphasis we observed being placed on *narrative* and *storytelling* in the *9/11 Report*, the purpose of the report was nevertheless completely pragmatic. After the first 11 chapters, which told: “*such a riveting story*” (May) the last two chapters abandon any wish to tell stories and are overtly, unashamedly political. Their titles are: *What To Do? A Global Strategy* (Chapter 12) and *How To Do It – A Different Way of Organizing the Government* (Chapter 13).

(This is a dubious kind of storytelling. If some people even dislike French fables for finishing by preaching a ‘moral’, this American version leads to a call to arms. This touches on the terrible abuse of all we are speaking about here against genuine “fiction” and storytelling. A true story leads to no direct outer action – but is, in a way, its own end. The *9/11 Commission Report*, by contrast, uses storytelling in order to influence its audience and to explicitly dictate a certain response. This is not storytelling at all. This is ‘creating a myth’ or, to put it bluntly, embellishing a lie in order to achieve through this one’s own ends. Zelikow’s use of the word “myth”, which shall be addressed, is equally a grotesque distortion of genuine myths, which, even if “fictional” in form, embody profound spiritual truths.)

The storytelling aspect of the *9/11 Commission Report* is only one half of it. The other half is its impact upon policy. This same division may be seen in Philip Zelikow’s *two* documents written in the aftermath of 9/11. The *9/11 Commission Report* was for public consumption and had, as we have seen, its chief emphasis on storytelling. Prior to this, though, Zelikow had also authored *the* statement setting out what became known as “The Bush Doctrine” – overturning or rewriting all previous legalities about what was permissible regarding a “pre-emptive” or “preventive” military strike against another country. (Without it being necessary for there to be any clear signs that this other country was wishing to attack.) This was *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (2002). This was a much more private document, specifically setting out government policy – but it is a twin document to the *9/11 Report*. As Zelikow writes: “I was a principal drafter of the National Security Strategy that was later published in 2002... The document was strongly influenced by reflections on 9/11, very much along the lines of what the Commission ended up

saying in its report.”²¹

Contemporary Political Myths and Storytelling

We see a stark polarity here or two-edged sword – one of its edges being the “riveting story” and the other being the violent political and military response. The story (supposedly) presents the *knowledge* – and the political and military strategy the *action*.

It is the main intention of this article to explore the first of these – and to examine its validity or invalidity as a *method* of arriving at knowledge.

In order fully to understand the background of Zelikow’s enormous emphasis on ‘narrative’ we need also to look at his work prior to 9/11.

In October 1998 Zelikow gave the opening address at a conference on *Contemporary Political History*.²²

Zelikow’s short presentation is like a manifesto declaring the importance of a certain way of presenting history – and defining how it functions.

Contemporary history, says Zelikow, consists of “the public’s presumptions about its immediate past.” These “public presumptions” might also be described as “public myth(s)” – “*though without the negative implication sometimes invoked by the word ‘myth’.*” (Zelikow would unquestionably agree that the public perception of 9/11 completely qualifies it as such a “public presumption” or “myth”. He would also agree that these myths are a huge determining factor for how the public and the government respond.)

Zelikow defines these presumptions as: “*beliefs... thought to be true (although not necessarily known to be true with certainty)*” – and as “*beliefs... shared in common within the relevant political community.*”

The ways people receive these “presumptions” are either “personal (from direct experience)” or “vicarious (from books, movies and myths).”

If we think of 9/11, we cannot help but note that Zelikow, who played such a key role in creating the “public presumption” of 9/11, not only clearly knew better than almost anyone “the power of these presumptions” – in his own words - but also *how* they can take root in people.

There are four chief characteristics of such public presumptions, says Zelikow – and a popular myth may possess just one of these, or in a massive instance like 9/11, all four of them. There are “generational” myths – “etched in the minds of those who lived through them”. Secondly, when events are “particularly ‘searing’ or ‘molding’” they become “transcendent” myths. Thirdly, there are presumptions that acquire an almost timeless character - “dramatic stories plucked out of time.” Zelikow quotes ‘the Titanic’ as an example. Lastly, there are “myths” that “have a particular resonance for us... because they seem to explain ‘why we are the way we are today.’”

When Zelikow looks at “political history” he turns to the question of what provides “a history’s narrative power.” This comes into play when people can feel a connection between what has taken place and “their own lives.”

Zelikow finishes the address by anticipating a strong future for “contemporary political history” – speaking of “the extraordinary and continuing power of political history” and “the public’s huge appetite for more.”²³

Story-telling and Power

As regards its validity as *knowledge*, and as a way of *arriving at knowledge* about events in the world, Zelikow’s methodology clearly will not do.

He would have our understanding of our present and our past based on common *presumptions* or *myths* – which are: “*beliefs... shared in common*”... “*thought to be true (although not necessarily known to be true with certainty).*”

These presumptions or beliefs acquire “narrative power” –which powerfully fuels the common response to them – when people feel personally affected by them. This may happen through “direct experience” – if they have witnessed the event, or if people they know have been directly affected. Even if this has not happened, people may still feel a powerful “vicarious” connection to the

presumption or myth through “books, movies and myths”.

If Zelikow had at this point urged extreme caution on people – making them aware of the enormous danger of mass public suggestion governing their responses to political events and directives – his analysis might have proved helpful. But this is in no way Zelikow’s intention. Quite the opposite. He welcomes these *public presumptions* – and the “mythic” events that cause them. It is by such events, in his eyes, that history is made. And the public has a “huge appetite for more.”

When we now remember Zelikow’s calculated creation of the “narrative” of what took place on 9/11 – ignoring from the beginning whatever did not fit with this – we realize we have been observing Zelikow at work *creating* just such a “public myth”. It becomes quite clear what he meant by telling his staff they would be involved in a “history-writing and *history-making* enterprise.” We must look squarely in the face at the fact that we are dealing with a *making* or rewriting of history – with a massive “public presumption” explicitly intended to determine the whole global political response that would follow. Lest there be any doubt that a *public presumption* has *direct* political consequences, the *9/11 Commission Report* provides the supreme example when after 11 chapters of “riveting story” the last two chapters tell us: “What to do?” and: “How to Do It?” In the light of this, many people rightly focus on the political *agenda* which high-sounding words like Zelikow’s try and mask. In this article, though, I wish to focus rather on the *understanding* about knowledge and public perception displayed here, disseminated at the highest levels and put into effect everywhere through popular culture and popular opinion.

We should not suppose that the “official version” thinks one version of events to be true and the “9/11 Truth Movement” thinks another version to be true and that it is left open to people to weigh these two viewpoints up against one another. This is to assume that each viewpoint recognizes that it ultimately stands or falls according to its *truthfulness*. But this is not the case.

Many people in the “9/11 Truth Movement” do genuinely state that they only wish for there be a full examination of the truth. (A brief look at the many seriously expressed petitions for there to be new and genuinely independent investigations of 9/11 makes this clear.)²⁴ (There are undoubtedly also others who *do* attempt to sway people by force of emotive opinion.) But this is *not* the attitude of those responsible for the official version of 9/11, such as Zelikow. It is *no* interest of theirs to see their interpretation of 9/11 critically examined for its *truthfulness*, whatever this examination might bring. (I do not say *this* emotively.) We have seen this quite clearly in the destruction of crucial evidence, which outraged even the senior 9/11 Commissioners. And there are countless other examples. Testing the *truth* of the *story* of 9/11 is not what is important for Zelikow. What is important, as he unambiguously spells out, is the power it possesses as a *belief*. (Zelikow is of course only one representative of this view, but he does in a certain way epitomize it.) His writings show that he understands to an almost unparalleled degree the exact way in which this happens – the way a “belief” can become a “public myth”.

“Books, movies and myths”

Imagining and never having imagined

Let us take one final look at Zelikow’s exact knowledge of *how* “public presumptions” are created and at *how* this knowledge is deliberately used in order to create them.

Zelikow described (in *Thinking about Political History*) that “public presumptions” acquire “narrative power” when people feel personally affected by them. This may happen through “direct experience” or “vicariously” – through “books, movies and myths”.²⁵

A month after this defining speech by Zelikow, he elaborated on this “vicarious” connection in much more specific political detail (in the November/December 1998 issue of *Foreign Affairs*).²⁶ This was in an article proposing actions “that can be taken by the United States government... *to prepare the nation better for the emerging threat of Catastrophic Terrorism.*” (My italics.) The first thing to be done is named as *Imagining the Transforming Event*. “Lack of imagination” is described as the worst hindrance to the necessary action being taken against the threat of “catastrophic terrorism”. The article asks its readers to take seriously the scenarios in certain: “books, movies and myths”: “*Long part of Hollywood’s and Tom Clancy’s repertory of nightmarish scenarios,*

catastrophic terrorism is a real possibility.”

As this 1998 article explicitly urges people to “imagine the possibilities for themselves” it is obviously no accident that Tom Clancy is the one author Zelikow names.

For Tom Clancy had written two novels – *Debt of Honor* (1994) and *Executive Orders* (1996) – where a 747 (Japanese airlines) plane was “kamikaze’d”²⁷ into the Capitol building in Washington, killing the U.S. President and most members of the Senate, the House of Representatives and the Supreme Court. *Both of these* books had made it to top of the New York Times bestseller list - two years and four years respectively before Zelikow’s article. Clancy’s pictures therefore could certainly have been brought to mind by many people. (The book *Debt of Honor* had a first edition of *two million copies*.)

Here is a clear example, therefore, of how “books, movies and myths” can give people a “vicarious” experience of such events.

Zelikow describes two ways in which “books, movies and myths” may serve. They may, as Clancy’s novels are explicitly named as doing, “prepare the nation” beforehand to imagine such an event. Or they may help afterwards – through the constant repetition of certain images and storylines – to create and reinforce people’s vicarious feeling of connection with the “presumptions”. Zelikow, however, is *caught out here by his own intentions*. For whereas it was necessary in 1998 to *prepare* people to recognize the “mythic” quality of an event such as 9/11, once the events of 9/11 had happened – it was obviously essential that everyone believe they had been completely unforeseen. Thus, *although*, inevitably, it was often said on 9/11: “what is happening is like right out of a Tom Clancy novel”²⁸, top government and military officials were at the same time consistently denying *ever* having imagined the possibility of such an event. George Bush declared: “there was nobody in our government at least and I don’t think in the previous government that could envision flying airplanes into buildings on such a large scale.”²⁹ Condoleezza Rice repeated the same: “I don’t think anybody could have predicted that these people would have taken an airplane and slammed it into the World Trade Center, taken another one and slammed it into the Pentagon.”³⁰ The chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Air Force General Richard Myers, commenting on the complete military failure to respond to the incoming planes, said: “you hate to admit it, but we hadn’t thought about this.”³¹

These remarks are ludicrous. Tom Clancy is not some author unknown to the U.S. administration and military. As well as his bestselling fiction Clancy has written several non-fiction books about the U.S. military – one with the former deputy head of “U.S. Special Operations”, General Carl Stiner.³² According to a review of this book, Clancy is “regarded as an insider” in both “the armed forces and the CIA... and granted an amazing level of access”. Commenting as to why this was, Stiner said: “we trust him. We know he gets it right.”³³ Clancy’s wife is a cousin of George Bush’s Secretary of State, Colin Powell.

These connections – let alone the fact that his book with the 911- style disaster at the end of it³⁴ had a first edition of 2 million copies and was top of the New York Times bestseller list – *let alone* the fact that Philip Zelikow had specifically urged people (in *Foreign Affairs*) to take note of “Tom Clancy’s... nightmarish scenarios”³⁵ – show a remark such as that of George Bush: “nobody in our government... could envision flying airplanes into buildings” to be a direct and blatant lie.

Philip Zelikow’s use, though, of Clancy’s novels, as examples of how an event such as 911 could be imagined, clearly shows us what he means by saying that people can have a “vicarious” experience of such events through “books, movies and myths.”

We must recognize the complete unacceptability of this. If such things are not seen through, people will find themselves watching movies made by those who wish to control world events, and taking those movies to be reality.³⁶

We can only ask, therefore – *what* is necessary in order for people on as wide a scale as possible to be able to see through the manipulation of truth that occurred in relation to 9/11 – so that it might even be thinkingly addressed in mainstream media and politics? The attempt of this article has been to address *one necessity* if such a change is eventually to come about. People must learn to see *how* a “public presumption” such as 9/11 is created. Only then may these “presumptions” or “myths”

begin to lose some of their power, for it will prove impossible or far harder for new ones to be created. The approach of Zelikow and others is to a certain degree *unthreatened* by arguments about the truth of this and other “official versions”, however accurately the truths are put forward, or by revelations about the clearly underlying political agendas. Their approach, which knows exactly how to create and then steer public opinion, has in a certain way already armoured itself against such arguments and revelations. This approach has a cynical voice, which, if it would ever express itself unguardedly might say: “Such arguments about truth and untruth *do not matter* – what matters is *popular belief*, regardless of what the “truth” is – and public belief is in our hands – we know how it is created and how it is maintained. We are therefore immune to whatever you may reveal to people.”

As we have been talking so much about “myths” this situation may remind one of some devastating mythical creature, which people find themselves powerless against, using the weapons they currently possess. Only when they understand *how* this creature attains its power can they find what is capable of overcoming it.

Similarly, when vast numbers of people begin not only to see the lies they are being asked to support and believe, but also *how* they are created and implanted, *how* opinion and belief are created, only then may this particular dragon (the power of public *presumptions*) lose the widespread hold it enjoys.

Telling beliefs

To accept the swaying of public opinion by the use of “books, movies and myths” to connect people to certain “beliefs” - as a permissible methodology, either in writing history or in influencing public opinion - is to open the door to any imaginable tyranny, with people blindly *believing* what they are told to believe.

The very greatest defence against the obvious dangers inherent in such *belief* is for people to know: *how they know*. The colossal power and resources behind the creation of *public* beliefs and public opinion are such that they will not be threatened or replaced by any alternative *opinion* or *belief*. And nor should we wish them to be. We are not in the Middle Ages. We are called on *to know* – and to do this we must know *how we know*.

There is nothing, perhaps, more telling or more disturbing than that Zelikow seriously asks people to accept that the whole of contemporary culture be governed by *beliefs*. Nor is he alone in urging this upon us. Knowing that public opinion could no longer be suggestively steered if people understood the difference between believing and knowing, it should probably come as no surprise – although it does! - that epistemology - the study of how we know – has recently been redefined as the study, in fact, of how we arrive at our *beliefs*. [This is already a ‘pre-emptive strike’ against using epistemology in its rightful meaning; again helping to obfuscate the search for the truth in any matter. Ed.]

This has come to light precisely in relation to 9/11. A ‘top’ law professor, Cass Sunstein, was appointed by Barrack Obama (in 2009) to run the Orwellian-sounding *Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs*. In 2008 Sunstein co-authored an article entitled: “Conspiracy Theories” in which he made the case that the government should “cognitively infiltrate” viewpoints such as those of the 9/11 Truth Movement. He advised that as it would perhaps not be constitutional literally to make such viewpoints illegal, the best approach would be, covertly, to deliberately spread confusion among people holding these views.

What is so telling in Sunstein’s proposal is that he makes use of an attempt to redefine or rather to wrongly define epistemology.

Sunstein states that if people agree with the findings of those in the 911 Truth Movement this is because they have a “crippled epistemology.” He borrows the term from a 2002 essay by Russell Hardin entitled: “The crippled epistemology of extremism.”³⁷ Hardin explicitly states that by epistemology he means “the way people hold their beliefs”. Revealing exactly the kind of disinclination to think through received information that leaves many people defenceless against the suggestive power of “public myth(s)”, he says: “Most of us do not have the time or incentive to be

deeply committed philosophers or scientists and we need not even suspect that there is anything questionable about our beliefs.” David Ray Griffin once again brings a lance of truth to Sunstein’s and Hardin’s error: “If one is not interested in epistemology, one should not use the word. If one is interested in the sociology of belief, there is a perfectly good term for this area of interest: ‘sociology of belief’ ... It would have been better if Hardin and Sunstein... had simply spoken of a ‘crippled process of belief-formation’.”³⁸

What this makes clear is that for the likes of Zelikow or Sunstein, who are deliberately working to ensure that people follow or swallow the ‘*right*’ public “beliefs” – those who do *not do so* are to be seen as “crippled” in the way they arrive at their beliefs – leading them, therefore, to hold the *wrong* beliefs.

This will not do. Truth and knowledge and the understanding of how we arrive at these are *not* questions of belief. We are not, to repeat it one more time, in the Middle Ages.

There have, since then, been hundreds of years of development in culture, philosophy and spiritual understanding – progressively achieved by some of the greatest and most spiritually awake artists and thinkers. We ignore this development – let alone fall back from it – at our peril.

*Never let it be said that he
Despising his own intellect
Art and his whole Past Wrecked
And cast his planet’s faith beneath the sea.*

Vernon Watkins
‘Ode at The Spring Equinox’

Overcoming the division between faith and knowledge

In the Middle Ages Thomas Aquinas *did* present the view that there was a boundary to what intellectual knowledge may justifiably claim to know – and that for us to go beyond this boundary can only be achieved by “faith”. [”Faith may also be seen as an open-hearted trust that there is something as yet unknown. This is, potentially, based upon knowledge that is inscribed in the very kernel of the human being but remains latent and is mostly, as yet, un-remembered. Ed.] *At the time* this was, in fact, a huge advance, for it showed that there is no fundamental divide between knowledge and faith – that they were, ultimately, in harmony with one another. However, to continue this paradigm of Aquinas’s beyond its appropriate time *would be* to create an ever-widening split between what we can and cannot know.

The creation of precisely such a split was achieved – or given its most complete philosophical expression – by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). For Kant, unlike for Aquinas, *all* intellectual and scientific knowledge about the world is, in the end, impossible. He states that such is the make-up of our knowing apparatus, as well as of the structure of the world and of things, that the true reality – “*the thing in itself*” – behind any thing or event or person that we meet, is impossible for us to know. (Kant does, though, claim to know *this* with certainty!) Having “established” this, Kant then immediately asserts that we must, nonetheless, have “faith” in the divine and in the moral world order. Although, or perhaps *because* we can have no real *knowledge* of this moral world order, we must, according to Kant, *obey* what it commands us to do - its “categorical imperative”.

As the devil tells “restless old Immanuel” at breakfast in Bulgakov’s novel *The Master and Margarita*: “Say what you will, Professor, but you have thought up something that makes no sense.”

Nevertheless, even if few people know very much about Kant nowadays, his *basic outlook*, almost as a subconscious assumption in people, is still all too prevalent today. As I mentioned at the beginning of the article, many people *remain* torn between on the one hand the conviction that they can never fully know anything, and on the other simply blindly accepting what they are asked to believe in. This may still be a question, as it was for Kant, of belief in religious truths. But it may equally well involve nowadays blindly accepting what they are *told to believe* and told to follow by

“science” or by the media or by political leaders.

One place that Kant’s name has been brought to people’s attention, interestingly, is by Robert Kagan, one of the founder members of the *Project for the New American Century*, who has attempted to describe the differences between America and Europe as being typified by the differences between Hobbes and Kant.³⁹ There is much we could say about Kagan’s views on this and what they reveal, but for now we will only say that if all we are left with is a choice between Hobbes (1588-1679) and Kant then our future is definitely bleak!

Fortunately, however, many thinkers, particularly in the 18-19th centuries, from Coleridge to Blake to Fichte to Hegel to Goethe have gone far beyond Kant in his understanding of knowledge and freedom. One of the greatest dangers, though, in increasingly taking our lead in things from the United States, is that the immense cultural and philosophical developments that took place in Europe, which can still provide enormously fertile ground for a true understanding and development of many aspects of our culture, are ignored.

Goethe called his autobiography *Poetry and Truth (Dichtung und Wahrheit)*. If the likes of Zelikow and Kagan were to immerse themselves in this for a few years many of the ills of our culture might be overcome. They would learn, for one thing, the extraordinary discipline of truth that even storytelling – despite its existence as *fiction* – *must* possess. About *Poetry and Truth* few people can ever have been more qualified to speak than Goethe – a poetical giant in German and European literature – and the creator, in seed-form, of a new way of doing science – able, potentially at least, to overcome many of the limitations that natural science has in great measure imposed upon itself.

The task of editing and elucidating Goethe’s scientific work was given to someone whose work in the area of the science of knowing is still not sufficiently known – Rudolf Steiner. After this work on Goethe, Steiner named his own first philosophic work: *Science and Truth (Wahrheit und Wissenschaft)*. It begins: “Present-day philosophy suffers from an unhealthy faith in Kant. This essay is intended to be a contribution toward overcoming this.”

It goes on:

“It would be wrong to belittle this man’s lasting contributions toward the development of German philosophy and science. But the time has come to recognize that the foundation for a truly satisfying view of the world and of life can be laid only by adopting a position which contrasts strongly with Kant’s. (...)

“(Kant) showed that the foundation of things lying beyond the world of our senses and our reason (...) is inaccessible to our faculty of knowledge.⁴⁰ (...)

“*The aim of this essay is to show that everything necessary to explain and account for the world is within the reach of our thinking.* The assumption that there are principles that belong to our world, but lie outside it, is revealed as the prejudice of an out-dated philosophy...”

“Unlike Kant, the purpose here is *not to show what our faculty of knowledge cannot do, but rather to show what it is really able to achieve.*”

Many people are put off from looking into Rudolf Steiner’s work because they suppose that it must be based on what *cannot* be known. But here, in *Science and Truth*, Steiner’s PhD dissertation, lies an essential basis *not* for something that cannot be known, but for *getting to know how we know anything* – for an epistemology, that is, without presuppositions.

We all, perhaps, to a greater or lesser degree, carry some element of ‘unredeemed Kantianism’ where, on the one hand, we set limits to what we subject to our thinking examination, considering the understanding of certain things to be “beyond us” – and where, on the other hand, we simply accept or believe something, without fully making clear, to ourselves and to others, the way in which we arrived at this view.

Epistemology and freedom

With regard to 9/11, to return to the main subject of this essay, this is also often the case. Belief and opinion *will not suffice* with anyone’s arguments – whether these arguments are supportive of the

“official version” or of the 911 “Truth Movement”.

When people are able to become fully clear about the prerequisites of truth and what the activity of *knowing* demands from us, the appallingly flimsy scaffolding of the official version of 911, for example, made out of thin and hollow poles of propaganda and presumption, that we have hopefully shown up in this article, will surely come crashing down by itself, revealing the naked lies of those “emperors” in the fields of politics and public opinion who have upheld certain “myths” for the sake of their own power – and for the sake of keeping others subservient to it.

For a thorough relationship to truth has its consequence. Genuine individual understanding of truth *must* in the end lead to freedom. Steiner’s *Science and Truth* was therefore – *almost* inevitably – the prologue to his fuller and ground-breaking work: *The Philosophy of Freedom*.

The preface to *Science and Truth* already prepares this, describing how the ability to know: “has the most significant consequences for the laws that underlie our deeds”. These “consequences” have to do with the possibility of true human freedom.

If we are able to know for ourselves then we may also know *our own motives*, which means “rejecting the ‘categorical imperative,’ an external power whose commandments we have to accept as moral laws.” We will then not only see through attempts to have us blindly go along with “public presumptions”, but we will also be able to unlock the springs of our own free activity – and in this way gradually find the way to renew our culture, in every different area of it, through infinitely varied free acts of creativity and initiative.

If we do not do so, we have only ourselves to blame if we fall back into some kind of version of Orwell’s *1984*. Orwell’s book may have seemed to belong to a previous decade, but it proves in fact strangely pertinent to our own (if we replace the communist-sounding “the Party” with something like “the creators of public opinion”) – describing, as it does, the struggle against a complete rewriting of history and the need to win through to a new recognition of truth.

“If all others accepted the lie which the Party imposed — if all records told the same tale — then the lie passed into history and became truth. “Who controls the past,” ran the Party slogan, “controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.”...

“Once when he happened in some connection to mention the war against Eurasia, (Julia) startled him by saying casually that in her opinion the war was not happening. The rocket bombs, which fell daily on London were probably fired by the Government of Oceania itself, ‘just to keep people frightened’. This was an idea that had literally never occurred to him. ...

“In the end the Party would announce that two and two made five and you would have to believe it... The Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears...

And yet... being a minority, even a minority of one, did not make you mad. There was truth and there was untruth...”

This study of story-telling and truth-telling has become much larger than I expected. I had initially imagined it forming just a preface to the final part of this article. There will therefore need to be a Part Four in the Summer edition of *New View*. I shall continue to discuss what might be necessary for the real background to the events of 911 to be openly discussed and understood. I shall attempt to explore what might even be called the greater “narrative” behind the events of 9/11 – involving wider questions concerning spiritual geography and world history and the significance of these for geopolitics – which the official “narrative”, so far, has perhaps been most successful of all in continuing to conceal.

Endnotes

1. For example, the 9/11 Commission Report made no mention of the collapse of WTC7, nor of any of the testimonies of the firefighters quoted in Part Two.(*New View*, issue 62, Winter 2011/12)
2. See: ‘Zelikow’s parallel universe’ – Snowshoe films – youtube, after 3:25minutes.

3. This concerned the knowledge that Mohammed Atta and other terrorists were well known to U.S. Intelligence in the years preceding 9/11 (1998/9/2000). Lt. Colonel Anthony Shaffer, who was actively involved in this intelligence work, described the details of this to the 9/11 Commission – but was then removed from office and denied access to all his existing documentation. See: “Able Danger and the 9/11 attacks”. “Unclassified draft prepared statement of Anthony A. Shaffer, Lt Col, US army reserve, senior intelligence officer - before the House Armed Service Committee, Congress of the United States.” (February 15, 2006) www.abledanger.blog
4. The 911 Commission Report may justly be seen as the ‘official version’ of what took place on September 11th, 2001. It was fully authorized by the U.S. Government and became a national best-seller, when it was published in 2005.
5. *Council on Foreign Relations* – “A Conversation with Philip Zelikow” – September 12th, 2011. (The other un-numbered quotations in this paragraph also come from this conversation.)
6. The Daily Cougar, Monday November 7th, 2011.
7. The Financial Times, May 3rd, 2011. *Bin Laden killing buries the trauma of 9/11*. Philip Zelikow.
8. Ernest May (1928-2009) was a professor of history at Harvard, the director of Harvard University’s Intelligence Policy Program and he and Zelikow had already co-written or co-edited several publications – mainly on U.S./Soviet relations.
9. *When Government Makes History* by Ernest May, first published in *The New Republic*. (June 24th, 2005.) (On “History News Network” website.)
10. Wolfowitz’s words come from his speech Paul Nitze’s legacy: for a new world – given on April 15th, 2004. The 911 Commission Report was not published until July, 2004. This “lunch” with Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz should be compared with the other “lunch” – at around the same time – where the chair and vice chair of the Commission were “stonewalled by the CIA”. Kean and Hamilton describe how they met with the director of the CIA requesting access to the “Al Qaeda detainees”: “we decided that we needed to question the detainees directly, including Abu Zubaydah and a few other key captives. In a lunch meeting on Dec. 23, 2003, George Tenet, the C.I.A. director, told us point blank that we would have no such access.” (“Stonewalled by the CIA – New York Times – Jan 2nd, 2008.)
11. “*National Security Council Report 68 (NSC-68)* was a 58-page formerly-classified report issued by the United States National Security Council on April 14, 1950...Written during the formative stage of the Cold War, it was top secret until the 1970s when it was made public. It was one of the most significant statements of American policy in the Cold War. NSC-68 largely shaped U.S. foreign policy in the Cold War for the next 20 years.” (From Wikipedia.) Regarding the “long telegram”: “George Kennan (1904-2005) served as deputy head of the U.S. mission in Moscow until April 1946. On February 22, 1946... Kennan sent a lengthy 5,500-word telegram (sometimes cited as being over 8,000 words) from Moscow to Secretary of State James Byrnes outlining a new strategy on how to handle diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.” This and a later document by Kennan “quickly emerged as foundation texts of the Cold War, expressing the Truman administration’s new anti-Soviet Union policy.” (From Wikipedia.)
12. Wolfowitz’s comments that the Commissioners study Paul Nitze’s NSC-68 also show why Ernest May became the 911 Commission’s chief consultant. Already in 1993 May had written a book called: *American Cold War Strategy – Interpreting NSC-68*.
13. Memorandum by Philip Zelikow to “All Incoming Staff”: ‘What do I do now?’ Available at Scribd.com
14. For links to three different versions of this, see: <http://hcggroups.wordpress.com/2009/08/07/911-commission-report-outline-from-spring-2003-similar-to-final-report/>
15. Tom Kean, Lee Hamilton, Christopher Kojm and Daniel Marcus.

16. *The Commission. The Uncensored History of the 9/11 Commission.* Philip Shenon, pages 370-371.
17. Interview with CNN's *American Morning*, broadcast on December 24, 2007. See: *The Raw Story*– 24th December, 2007. “9/11 Commission chair: ‘No question’ CIA knew we wanted tapes.”
18. David Ray Griffin heard of this nomination just as his own searching analysis – *The 9/11 Commission Report – Omissions and Distortions* was going to press. He concludes his book therefore by adding: “I would not have been shocked by this news except for the fact that the nomination was in the nonfiction category.”
19. Email from Philip Zelikow to Philip Shenon. October 18th, 2007. (pdf of complete email exchange available at: www.philipshenon.com/content/behind.asp)
20. Several full-length books have been written just on this. For example: Philip Shenon, *The Commission: The Uncensored History of the 9/11 Investigation* (2008); David Ray Griffin, *The 9/11 Commission Report – Omissions and Distortions.* (2004.)
21. From email to Philip Shenon, February 5th, 2007. (See note 17 for details.) For an excellent study of the further details and implications of the common authorship of these two documents see: *The Bush Doctrine and the 9/11 Commission Report: Both authored and by Philip Zelikow* by David Ray Griffin. Article available online at: ‘Information Clearing House.’
22. The event was organized by the Miller Center, University of Virginia, of which Zelikow was Director.
23. All the quotations from Zelikow’s speech from: “Thinking about Political History” – Miller Center Report, Winter 1999, vol. 14, No. 3. There is a link to a full pdf of this report in reference 15 at the end of ‘Philip D. Zelikow’ wikipedia page.
24. These are listed at the end of the web-page: <http://patriotsquestion911.com/#NewInvestigation>
25. “Thinking about Political History”. (See endnote 23.)
26. This was in an article entitled: Catastrophic Terrorism: Elements of a National Policy co-authored by Zelikow. I also referred to this article in Part One.
27. From first page of *Executive Orders* by Tom Clancy.
28. CNN – Sept 11th, 2001. (Judy Woodruff).
29. At: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-jed-7H2jI8> “9/11 NORAD Rehearsed Crashing Hijacked Planes Into The World Trade Center Years Before”
30. Ibid.
31. American Forces Radio and Television Service - Oct. 17th, 2001.
32. *Shadow Warriors – Inside the Special Forces* by Tom Clancy, Carl Stiner and Tony Koltz. (2003.) Although this book was published in 2003, Clancy’s military and intelligence non-fiction began in 1993. His website states of his book *Special Ops*: “First canceled and then reinstated, the release of this book predates the September 11 terror attacks (released on February 6, 2001) but will prove to be an invaluable resource in the coming actions.” (www.clancyfaq.com/hold%20Originals/Non-fict.htm)
33. “Clear And Present Danger” by Warren Berger. BOOK, Jan-Feb, 2002. www.bookmagazine.com/issue20/clancy.shtml
34. *Debt of Honor* ends with the “kamikaze’d” Japanese Airlines 747 crashing into the Capitol Building, killing the President and most of the rest of his senior government members. *Executive Orders*, which is the sequel to *Debt of Honor* begins with a description of this attack.
35. Let alone Zelikow’s demand, in the same article where he refers to Tom Clancy, for “sensitive documents to be prepared by... small groups...”, which “should not be published” and which would look into the “most detailed and credible threat scenarios, based on close analysis of specific vulnerabilities.” (I referred to this statement in Part One of this article.)
36. This is no far-fetched future vision. There is ample evidence of this happening already, for example with the so-called killing of Osama bin Laden in 2011. Social media sites also create

the new possibility of a particular video “going viral”. See: “After Kony, could a viral video change the world?” John Naughton. Guardian.co.uk. Saturday 10 March 2012.

37. “The Crippled Epistemology of Extremism”, Russell Hardin, in: *Political Extremism and Rationality*, ed. Albert Breton, CUP, 2002. See David Ray Griffin’s *Cognitive Infiltration* (Olive Branch Press, 2011) for a thorough and satirical refutation of Sunstein’s calculated instigation of covert propaganda. I am indebted to Griffin’s book, from where all my quotations from Hardin have been taken.
38. See Griffin’s *Cognitive Infiltration* – pp. 166-167. Endnote 128.
39. In Robert Kagan’s article: “Power and Weakness,” *Policy Review*, No. 113 (June and July 2002). Then in his book: *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (2003)
40. Rudolf Steiner also spoke about this in a lecture about Thomas Aquinas: “Kantianism... is the lowest ebb of Western philosophy, the complete bankruptcy of man in his search for the truth, a despair that man can in any way find truth in external objects.” *The Redemption of Thinking*. (New York, 1983.) pp.99-100.

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Towards a Deeper Understanding of 9/11

by Richard Ramsbotham

Part Three of this article looked at truth itself and at the need for people to become aware far more widely that (despite what Kant and others would have us believe) we do have the means necessary to arrive at truth on any question¹ and must therefore not remain satisfied until we have become able to understand for ourselves the truth of any issue – in this case 9/11.

With regard to 9/11, though, because of people's rightful sense of moral outrage at what took place, it has remained almost impossible for many people to accept the extremely uncomfortable truth that the facts increasingly make clear.

Looking into the Telescope

One cannot help but be reminded of the story that Galileo asked the cardinals to look into his telescope – where they would see for themselves the truth of what he was saying – at which the cardinals *refused to look*.

The cardinals are hardly to be blamed for the fear they must have experienced. For to have looked into the telescope *would have*, almost literally, taken away the very ground they stood on. The situation is in no way dissimilar with regard to 9/11.

The evidence that Galileo wished to show them – to prove that the earth moved round the sun – not only threatened what they knew but also all they *believed in*. If true, it would make it impossible for them – for the foreseeable future – to make *moral sense* of the universe they were living in.² In today's relativistic culture, where 'anything is possible', we may even admire the intensity of the cardinals' response. It was justified, furthermore, that they found it difficult. For what Galileo was *not* providing them with was any way of making moral or spiritual sense of what he was showing them. (Nor, it must be said, has this even today been fully achieved. For Galileo's discoveries did *not* mean we are living in a soul-less and spirit-less universe, as many still believe; only that the previously existing way of relating to the soul and spirit in the universe was no longer sufficient.) Without this, without also seeing how to make inner sense of these new discoveries, *they could not understand them*.

And so too it is with 9/11. The 'facts' by themselves – for example that *no* buildings such as the three that came down on 9/11 have ever previously collapsed, in the way they did, because of fires – are, in many cases, not enough to bring about understanding. For these people, based on all their previous experience of what has – and continues to give – meaning to their lives, this *cannot be*.

Stated at its simplest, millions of people, whatever the wrongs that may have stemmed from the U.S. government, trust that the powers of democracy in the world *are*, somewhere, what they say they are, the spreader, if not necessarily of light, then at least of freedom and democracy – that they *are* working for good in the world. Whereas, if individuals within or close to the top levels of U.S. government had themselves in any way orchestrated events of 9/11, this would signify U.S. responsibility for acts that must unmistakably be recognized as evil.

It is this which many people have not been able to reconcile themselves to. Whatever the facts may be pointing to, many people have simply had no moral framework with which to make sense of these; they have therefore, like the cardinals, *refused to look*.

It is therefore no accident that many of the foremost researchers into 9/11 have been people with a very strong moral sense – who have therefore attempted not only to look at the facts themselves, but also to provide a moral framework capable of at least beginning to understand how something seemingly so unthinkable could have happened.

9/11 and Moral Truth

We increasingly see people, with regard to 9/11, stretching their moral and spiritual understanding not only in order to comprehend how such events could have taken place, but also in order to look for a different and better way forward.

This may ‘simply’ be a question of the value of truth itself – and the need to face up to it – whatever this may cost. An outstanding example is Kevin Ryan, who worked for a company.³ that certified and underwrote the steel components used in the World Trade Centre buildings. Ryan wrote to the ‘Metallurgy Division’ of the National Institute of Standards of Technology (NIST), who were responsible for the government-sponsored report about how the WTC buildings had collapsed. Pointing out that the steel used in the WTC buildings “will not melt until reaching red-hot temperatures of nearly 3000 Fahrenheit”, but that “the steel was probably exposed to temperatures of only about 500 Fahrenheit”, Ryan concluded his letter to the Deputy Chief of NIST’s “Metallurgy Division”: “This story just does not add up. If steel from those buildings did soften or melt... this was certainly not due to jet fuel fires... let alone the briefly burning fires in those towers. That fact should be of great concern to all Americans.”

Ryan went on:

“The events of 9/11 are the emotional driving force behind the War on Terror. And the issue of the WTC collapse is at the crux of the story of 9/11. My feeling is that your metallurgical tests are at the crux of the crux of the crux.”

Ryan was fired from his job for such questioning. In a later personal statement he said the following about the NIST report:

“To me, the report in question represents a decision point, not just for the US, but for humanity as a whole. *We’re at a point where we must decide if we will live consciously, or literally give up our entire reality for a thin veneer of lies.*”

He added: “All people lie to themselves. It’s one of the most important things we have yet to accept about our own nature... This lying is at the root of many of our problems (e.g. nationalism and racism). Until we see this, and strive to understand if not control it, the resulting problems will continue unchecked and the outcome will be certain. Any organism or society that makes self-deception its *modus operandi* will make many bad, and ultimately fatal, decisions. The day will come when we are collectively fooling ourselves in such a way that we essentially trade everything we have for what’s behind our fantasy curtain. It appears that day is near.”

Ryan then reiterates the central importance, in this regard, of the events of 9/11:

“The official conspiracy theory of 9/11 is a key part of our current self-deception. More importantly, this story may be our last chance to see just how critical our situation is so that we can all stop, and begin working together to solve the real problems we face.”⁴

Ryan’s approach is echoed by Paul Craig Roberts (former Assistant Secretary of the Treasury under Ronald Reagan and a former editor for the *Wall Street Journal*). Roberts writes: “When scientific evidence that challenges government veracity (is suppressed), we know that in America respect for truth is dead.” Regarding a context capable of understanding how this has happened, Roberts points to the world depicted by George Orwell:

“My generation was raised to believe in evidence and the scientific method. George Orwell and other writers warned us of the consequence of succumbing to government propaganda as a result of disinterest in the truth or government manipulation of one’s patriotism.”

Roberts concludes his article “9/11 and the Orwellian Redefinition of ‘Conspiracy Theory’” by saying: “A country whose population has been trained to accept the government’s word and to shun those who question it is a country without liberty in its future.”⁵

In a later part of this article I shall return to questions raised by 9/11 about politics and power and rightful and wrongful state governance.⁶ In this part, however, I am more concerned to explore the views of those who, in order to make sense of an event like 9/11, seen unambiguously by many people as ‘evil’, find it necessary to bring to it a spiritual framework of understanding.

It is significant that among the people who are not 9/11 researchers, yet who have nevertheless courageously supported the demand for the truth to be uncovered about 9/11, are also to be found those who have shown a profound commitment over the years for what we could call ‘moral truth’.⁷

Michael Meacher

In Britain, the only politician that I am aware of who has had the courage to speak out in public about the need for truth about 9/11 is Michael Meacher.⁸ Meacher wrote the foreword to David Ray Griffin’s first book on 9/11: *The New Pearl Harbour*, praising Griffin’s “excellent exposé of... the deeply troubling questions that must still be answered fully and transparently if democratic control over political and military

leaders is to mean anything at all.”

In September, 2003, Michael Meacher had written in *The Guardian* newspaper about the agenda of the Project for the New American Century, (as set out in their document ‘Rebuilding America’s Defences’.) Meacher wrote : “This is a blueprint for US world domination... it provides a much better explanation of what actually happened before, during and after 9/11 than the global war on terrorism thesis... It seems that the so-called “war on terrorism” is being used largely as bogus cover for achieving wider US strategic geopolitical objectives.” He added: “the ‘global war on terrorism’ has the hallmarks of a political myth propagated to pave the way for a wholly different agenda – the US goal of world hegemony, built around securing by force command over the oil supplies required to drive the whole project.” Meacher then asked his British readers: “Is collusion in this myth and junior participation in this project really a proper aspiration for British foreign policy?” The article ended: “this whole depressing saga surely provides all the evidence needed for a radical change of course.”

Meacher’s article was a rare example of a politician speaking out on these themes in a national newspaper. The US government quickly responded, through an embassy spokesman in London, denouncing Meacher, in effect, in Orwellian fashion, as a *non-person*:

“Mr Meacher’s fantastic allegations – especially his assertion that the US government knowingly stood by while terrorists killed some 3,000 innocents in New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia - would be monstrous, and monstrously offensive, *if they came from someone serious or credible.*”⁹

What, we might ask, leads Michael Meacher to attempt to address these massive public lies and delusions, when so many others appear willing to go along with the prevailing ‘story’? It can surely be no accident that Meacher is also someone who has attempted to ask profound and searching questions about himself, the universe and the purpose of human existence.

In 2010 Meacher published a book called: *Destination of the Species. The Riddle of Human Existence*. It states at the very beginning: “There is really only one question for human beings that in the end matters. That is, what if any, is the purpose of existence, and what are we here for?” We are unable to explore this book further here, but he says, for example, later on: “Conditions may well be right, not for the death of religion now so confidently being predicted in some quarters, but for its renaissance, though only via a radically different exposition that speaks to today’s world.”

The final words of the book are: “The challenge now for humans is not to transform the world, but to transform themselves.”

William Sloane Coffin and other religious voices

In America one of the small number of people with a significant public profile to have spoken out about the need for the truth to be known about 9/11, is the protestant pastor and social activist, William Sloane Coffin (1924-2006). Coffin’s work led him to be considered: “the voice of American Protestant liberalism” and obituaries referred to him as “among the most important Christian leaders in American history.” Shortly before he died, he fully endorsed the research of David Ray Griffin into 9/11, stating: “All Americans who love their country enough to dig into the facts of these critical times will be well rewarded by examining Professor Griffin’s books. 9/11 Truth is a very important issue with the power to bring lasting change to our country.”¹⁰

Again, we might ask why Sloane Coffin could see through the public deception concerning 9/11 and also had the courage to express himself publicly about it when many others with a similar public profile have not. Again we discover that Sloane Coffin had what we might call a profound moral activism, both towards himself and to what he perceived of injustice and untruth.

In a talk in 2005, Sloane Coffin spoke of the need for “*a politically engaged spirituality*”: “Arthur Miller¹¹ (...)once wrote ‘I could not imagine a theater worth my time that did not want to change the world.’ I feel the same way about religious faith; it should want to change the world. The ‘blood-dimmed tide’ loosed in the last century claimed more lives than all wars in all previous centuries, and the present century is filled with violence and cruelty... Urgently needed for our time is a politically engaged spirituality... Christianity(...) doesn’t *have* a social ethic as much as it *is* a social ethic, called to respond to (...) mandates like truth-telling, confronting injustice and pursuing peace.”¹²

Such “politically engaged spirituality” is also found among many others who address the truth of 9/11, which should perhaps not be surprising, given the many different levels at which it needs to be addressed. A significant symptom of this multi-levelled need is the fact that the important book: *9/11 and American*

Empire. Intellectuals Speak Out (ed. David Ray Griffin and Peter Dale Scott) was followed up by a second volume: *9/11 and American Empire. Christians, Jews and Muslims Speak Out*. The three sections of the book respond, in turn, to the issues of truth about 9/11 from Christian, Jewish and Islamic standpoints. (Edited by John Cobb Jr, Sandra Lubarsky and Kevin Barrett, respectively.)

David Ray Griffin

The greatest single example of someone whose moral (or spiritual) standpoint enables them to unveil ever more thoroughly the events of 9/11 is David Ray Griffin.

Griffin's work on 9/11 is the most comprehensive of any researcher; he has written twelve full-length books on the subject (ten specifically on 9/11 – two on related themes), following on from some twenty-four previous books addressing questions of religion, spirituality, ethics, ontology, the origin of evil, and the practical implications of these with regard to how governments could or should be addressing the demands of the present.

It may be said that Griffin has gone as far as almost producing – or helping to produce – a whole new moral and spiritual framework with which to understand the seeming contradictions between religious worldviews and scientific views of evolution, the unity of world religions, the origin and evolution of evil, and the significance of this in divine and human history, as he sees these. This perspective is called 'process thought' or 'process theology' – of which Griffin is one of the most prominent representatives. Process theology is not only comprehensive in scope – there being, seemingly, almost no areas of human life it does not address itself to – but also *comprehensible*. It is rationalist in approach – confining itself to what can be clearly argued and expressed – and is not, therefore, offputtingly 'religious' for people – and has thus been able to become part of contemporary discourse on philosophy, the history of religions, what Griffin terms constructive postmodernist thought,¹³ regarding many areas of contemporary life,¹⁴ and most importantly for the themes of this essay, on the role of governments and contemporary political institutions.

Griffin on 9/11 and American Empire

Griffin's most detailed book, specifically linking these themes, is *Christian Faith and the Truth Behind 9/11*.¹⁵ Griffin explores how Christianity, in its true nature as represented by Jesus,¹⁶ shows human beings a path which one must call the opposite of any kind of imperialism. Griffin then shows how the drive to create empires – and not least the current drive for an *American Empire*¹⁷ – must be seen unambiguously as 'evil' or 'demonic'.¹⁸ This is seen most clearly by the brutal and violent means by which these imperialistic ends are achieved.

Griffin gives example after example demonstrating that: "U.S. foreign policy has not, any more than Rome's foreign policy, aimed at the promotion of freedom, democracy and human rights."

Griffin is aware, of course, that the neoconservatives (of the Bush years) presented themselves as having rectified many of the wrongs of previous administrations, and that they spoke, therefore, like Robert Kagan, of: "the benevolent hegemony exercised by the United States" which "is good for a vast portion of the world's population." But turning his attention to the 2003 war in Iraq, Griffin states:

"All the attempts to rationalize this war in Iraq, to show that it was a noble effort, or at least a defensive necessity, have been exposed as false. This war has from the first been based on lies, greed, and imperial lust. To see it accurately is to see that it is an unmitigated evil."

"Demonic Power"

Towards the end of his book, in the chapter: 'The American Empire, Demonic Evil and 9/11', Griffin refers to the popular American characterization of the Soviet Union (during the Cold War) as an "evil empire" – "American political leaders maintained that Soviet Communism was evil because it was ideologically driven to rule the world."¹⁹

Griffin then speaks of Nazi Germany: "The other regime that Americans regularly call evil, even demonic, is the Nazi regime... We rightly consider the Nazi regime demonic."

Griffin then turns the whole labour of the previous 175 pages firmly on the devastating imperial actions of the U.S.A.:

"But if we apply the same criteria to the American Empire, how can we withhold the judgement that it, too, is an evil, even demonic empire? *America has overthrown the governments in more countries than Germany and the Soviet Union combined*... Neocon thinkers and U.S. military documents openly proclaim

that a global *Pax Americana* is the goal. If it would have been evil for the Soviets to want to dominate the world, is it not evil for Americans to seek this kind of domination?”²⁰

Griffin remarks how the Western powers-that-be would very much like us to believe that: “whereas a Soviet-imposed global empire would have been evil, an American-imposed global empire would be good.” But “this part of neocon ideology is patently and massively false. U.S. foreign policy does not act on behalf of civil and political rights; it does not honour the basic economic right to subsistence; it does not respect the results of democratic elections when the ‘wrong’ candidates win; it does not promote freedom and the general good.” For “whereas Soviet and Nazi leaders were each responsible for over 50 million deaths, American leaders, besides being responsible for millions of deaths through their interventions in Central America, Indonesia, Vietnam, Iraq and elsewhere, are, by virtue of their leadership of the global economy, ultimately responsible for some 180 million deaths from poverty-related causes *each decade*.”

Griffin adds evidence upon evidence to this picture, before finally being obliged to conclude that we have no option other than to face up squarely to the fact that the American Empire is “*the principal location of demonic power in our time*.”

He fully justifies, within his own terminology, such an expression, defining the ‘demonic’ as – “creaturely power that, besides being strong enough to threaten divine purposes, is exercised in ways that are diametrically opposed to those purposes.”

Griffin acknowledges, though, the profound difficulty many people may have in coming to terms with this perspective:

“This perspective, to be sure, requires an enormous shift in our understanding of the relation between our country and our God. Most Americans who believe in God have been brought up to assuming that America is at least basically on God’s side, perhaps even the chief instrument of divine purposes in the world. To go from that understanding to the view that our country is instead the chief embodiment of demonic power, hence the primary threat to divine purposes on our planet, is not an enjoyable conversion. But it is, I believe, a conversion that is necessary if our beliefs are to correspond to reality and if we are to be in a position to turn our country, and hence our world, in a different direction.”²¹

Griffin then revisits the significance of 9/11 within this context. The events of 9/11, as Griffin sees them, play an essential, defining role in all he has described as the current “American Empire.” (This is surely the case, as the events of September 11th, 2001, right at the beginning of the millennium, launched the global ‘war on terror’, and however one understands these events they clearly formed something like a ‘founding myth’ at the start of what was heralded as the ‘New American Century.’)

Griffin therefore states: “The attacks of 9/11, understood as a false-flag operation orchestrated by forces within the U.S. government can be taken, I suggest, as the chief revelation of our time. Not a divine revelation, to be sure, but the chief revelation of the demonic – to the extent to which it has taken control of the American government.”

Just as we must understand the full scale of the intentions for American hegemony and empire, if we are to understand the ‘false-flag’ operation of 9/11 necessary in order to achieve these; so we can only fully grasp the brutality of the intentions of America’s ‘global domination project’²² when we perceive the truth about 9/11.

Christian Faith and the Truth Behind 9/11 is a remarkable book. Peter Dale Scott said about it, understandably: “Even though it makes some claims and arguments I disagree with, I consider this one of the most significant and original books I have ever read.” It was published by the presbyterian Westminster John Knox Press, whose President and vice-President lost their jobs as a result of the furore caused by its publication.

American Faith versus Christian Faith

In a further book, written for the tenth anniversary of 9/11,²³ Griffin added to these thoughts a significant new emphasis, in a chapter called: ‘Nationalist Faith: How it Blinds America to the Truth about 9/11’.

“We normally think of the primary form of faith in the United States as Christian faith. But I suggest, in agreement with theologian John Cobb, that the primary form of faith in America is the American version of nationalism, which could be called ‘Americanism’.”

“Truth, ‘Faith’ and 9/11” (John Cobb)

This is, surely, a startling statement – and one that, if true, would clearly have colossal implications. The source for what Griffin is saying, as he points out, is a significant essay called - “Truth, ‘Faith’ and 9/11”²⁴

– by his friend and long-term colleague, John Cobb.²⁵

Cobb's essay represents, I think, almost the pinnacle of this whole range of work, addressing the spiritual significance of 9/11, written from a perspective which is religious, on the one hand, and rational, on the other.

Cobb's aim is to become clear about the role 'faith' plays with regard to how people understand 9/11.

He begins by describing what he means by 'faith'. Growing up into a particular society and culture we take into ourselves, completely unconsciously at first, a whole range of assumptions about and responses to the world around us. Such a relationship to the world Cobb refers to as 'a faith': "We may call the largely unconscious underlying and overarching view of the world as well as the more conscious beliefs in which it is expressed 'a faith'."

This does not exclude, says Cobb, the possibility for "critical reflection on a range of topics, particularly those on which members of the society disagree. *But the deeper context of those debates will not itself be brought into discussion.*"

Cobb then describes the main 'faiths' that have led to present-day American culture, and particularly, for the purposes of his essay, that American culture that goes along with the 'official version' of what happened on 9/11.

For a thousand years prior to the Renaissance, says Cobb, "the 'faith' of the great majority of Europeans was Christian." This faith began becoming "problematized" with the Renaissance, and the era of the Enlightenment (approximately between second half of 17th Century and 1800) "introduced a new form of faith", namely, the "Cartesian view of nature." (Taking its name from the philosophy of René Descartes.) This Cartesian view, however, still saw the world as: "self-evidently created by a God whose special concern was moral goodness." The philosophical scepticism of Hume (1711-1776), a little later on, exposed and threatened to completely undermine people's unconscious assumptions regarding both their relationship to the natural world and to God. According to Cobb, the intellectual authorities of the day were little troubled by Hume's undermining of people's religious (Christian) faith, but definitely could not accept Hume's equally strong skepticism about our ability to know anything scientifically. The Cartesian view of nature had been replaced by a deeply held trust in the approach of science and the "*belief that science provides truth was beyond question.*"

(Such was people's belief in 'science' that they saw less and less cause for philosophy or epistemology. Where people did continue to concern themselves with philosophy, as Cobb points out, this mainly happened under the influence of Immanuel Kant, 1724-1804.)

According to Cobb, a further factor also led to the steady undermining of Christian faith. Partly as a result of the new era of exploration (beginning in the Renaissance), partly as a result of political power coming to replace Church power, *national identity* became increasingly important for people: "Wars over religion gave way to national conflicts. It became self-evident that one should be ready to fight and die for one's country... *Virtue was redefined as patriotism.*" This has continued up to the present day, where: "Public debates pro and con Christianity are fully acceptable. But... there is no public debate about national loyalty. In short, the dominant 'faith' of most people in the modern world has been nationalist."

Cobb then turns specifically to American 'nationalist faith' and to the way it has determined responses to 9/11. The objection might be made that there is plenty of criticism aimed at the way the American government behaves, even within the U.S., but, as Cobb stated from the beginning, a "faith" does not imply there can be no criticism of those who belong to it, only that *the underlying faith itself* cannot be criticized. In this case that: "*the United States is a fundamentally virtuous nation that is also basically invincible*" or that "*Americans enjoy a unique freedom that is worthy of defense at any cost.*" (Any criticism of a particular government's actions can only therefore state that: "the nation's actions are not in its true interests or do not accord with its true character.")

Cobb pursues these thoughts to much relating to American foreign policy, culminating in his examination of the events of 9/11. Speaking of the vast body of evidence demonstrating the impossibility of the 'official version' of what happened, Cobb states that the utter refusal of most Americans even to consider this evidence: "shows how powerful is the hold upon them of their nationalistic 'faith.' They do not want to hear that members of their government may have deceived them on a matter of such importance. They do not want to examine the evidence. They 'know' in advance that the questioner is out of line. They 'know' because the alternative does not fit in with their 'faith'."

This is also relevant to the 'taboo' we referred to in the last article [*New View*, Spring 2012]. It is not at all

the case that people who reject the evidence put forward by the 9/11 'Truth Movement' do so having openly considered this evidence. There is a taboo on doing so. Such evidence is therefore often responded to as people might have, in the Middle Ages, on hearing some unspeakable heresy or blasphemy. Upsetting people's nationalistic faith, in this way, says Cobb: "is felt to be a violation, in religious terms, a 'sacrilege'."

(Perhaps the clearest possible example of such a response is that of Ryan Mackey. Mackey, a research scientist at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, has often been trumpeted as a champion of rationality, who has disproved, 'scientifically', all the claims of the 9/11 Truth Movement regarding the way the WTC towers collapsed, etc. Underlying his response, though, is precisely such an irrational horror at what he sees as a violation of his most fundamental 'faith'. This is how he describes his first experience of hearing the claims of the 9/11 Truth Movement, through an acquaintance:

"This conversation was somewhat uncomfortable. Imagine, if you will, striking up a discussion with an old acquaintance at a party, until an hour later your friend suddenly blurts out an earnest belief in reptilian shapeshifters living among us. What does one do in this situation? My initial response was one of incredulity ("surely my friend doesn't actually believe this tripe") followed by bemused curiosity. I watched the video presentation, and it left me torn between laughter and concern for my friend's mental well-being."

Given the utter subjectivity of his response²⁶ it is clearly impossible to imagine that Mackey has approached the evidence put forward by the 9/11 Truth Movement with, in any way, an unclouded and unbiased mind.)

'Faith' and faith

Cobb repeatedly puts "faith" in inverted commas – by which he means a faith that has not been recognized as such, but which functions nevertheless as faith does, colouring and determining the way its followers view the world.

As Cobb points out, whilst people with a secular view of the world frequently consider that others following traditional faiths are blinkered in their vision, they themselves often fail to see that "something very similar shapes their own way of being in the world" – be this through 'faith' in science, nationalistic 'faith', or other unacknowledged 'faiths'.

And what of John Cobb himself? Or David Ray Griffin? (who stated that he agreed with Cobb's perspective). Through what lens do they view the world?

Cobb relates himself – and thereby also Griffin and William Sloane Coffin – to the 'prophetic tradition' in our time.

He is referring to the Hebraic 'prophetic tradition', where religious 'prophets' continually faced a people and its leaders with the most unflinching of truths about the rights and wrongs of the paths they were taking. Cobb does not see it necessary for this 'prophetic' approach to remain connected today to a particular religious tradition; many who speak and write today with an equivalent truthfulness and courage see no need to relate themselves in any way to the Bible; but, says Cobb:

*"where the deep influence of the prophetic spirit is lacking, 'faith' typically reasserts its control on the boundaries of inquiry."*²⁷

For the *prophetic spirit*, as Cobb sees it, is *beyond any particular 'faith'*. It is almost, even, *beyond faith*:

"we in the prophetic tradition use the word 'faith' in a different way. We call for faithfulness to a God who transcends every culture, tradition, and nation, who cares equally for all people and judges all impartially. God is Truth, and our commitment to that God is our faith."

Such a faith, says Cobb, provides the necessary basis for "our critical relationship to everything finite and our efforts to overcome excessive trust in religious and political institutions and beliefs in human leaders."

"God is Truth, and our commitment to that God is our faith."

The above statement is, without question, a noble ideal and vision – and is shared, in different ways, by many who are connected to the 9/11 Truth Movement – such as David Ray Griffin, Kevin Barrett, Senator Mike Gravel (who has sometimes referred to himself as a "unitarian universalist") and even, perhaps, by Michael Meacher.

But this motto still speaks in terms of faith. A faith not subject to the negative aspects of many of the existing conscious or unconscious 'faiths'; an *inter-faith* faith, not bound by any particular faith;²⁸ a faith that is defined as a commitment to truth – but that terms itself, nevertheless, *faith*.

Noble as these aims are, they are, ultimately, insufficient, if we are to apprehend the realities behind the

intentions that brought about 9/11.

Process theology

Cobb and Griffin are the foremost living exponents of ‘process thought’ or ‘process theology’. The greatest single influence on this approach is Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) This thought is in many ways very remarkable indeed. Reading it, it can appear indeed as if everything can be rationally comprehended by it. It is, however, speculative. Whitehead himself says of his approach: “Speculative Philosophy is the endeavour to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in which every element of our experience can be interpreted.”²⁹ This *includes* realities that were previously considered to be the domain of faith or religion. Cobb himself, in a brief history of Process Theology, describes what it was about the work of the Englishman, Whitehead, that proved so influential on American thinkers when Whitehead moved to Harvard in 1924: “(Whitehead’s work) was far more complex and systematically rigorous than that of American thinkers. It was closely related to mathematical physics, and *it offered an integration of the findings of the sciences with the evidence of religious experience that had come to seem almost impossible.*”

This points very clearly to what it is in process philosophy and theology as a whole that has continued to prove endlessly fascinating and inspiring for people. Its ability, on the one hand to describe, in a scientific manner, all aspects of the universe as inherently related, and its ability, on the other, to speak clearly and rationally of truths of religion, as well as its ability to interlink the two approaches of science and religion, has made it seem well fitted to answer many of the ills that beset humanity and our planet.

Beyond belief

There is a limit, however, to how far the approach of process thought (and other comparable approaches) can reach.

This applies also to our understanding of all that lies behind the events of 9/11.

In Part Three of this article [*New View*, Spring 2012] we addressed the need for an epistemology enabling people to arrive, by themselves, at a sure and certain experience of truth regarding whatever they encounter or the questions they address themselves to. Without this, people will be ever less able to discern what is true amidst all the conflicting ‘stories’ told to them.

I spoke, in this regard, of the gap (or threshold) described by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) between what knowledge may apprehend and what may only be apprehended by faith. (Knowledge and faith were, however, seen as being ultimately reconcilable.)

I described how Kant exacerbated and perpetuated this gap, stating: “I have found it necessary to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith.”

I then described how Rudolf Steiner, in his epistemological work, set himself the goal of overcoming Kant’s division – and showing that we do have the means to *know* – through strengthening our *experience* of thinking and bringing this active thinking to bear on what we encounter through perception. This ever-developing ability to know, furthermore, is not limited by what our physical senses can perceive – (our thinking, without which we cannot know anything, is *already* not something we experience through our senses) – and therefore even the gulf described by Aquinas is steadily able to be overcome. Steiner opens the door to our being able to carry our *knowledge* into realms we could previously only receive intimations of, through faith.

The approach, then, initiated by Steiner, is *not* a matter of faith – or of religion. His work, in all the infinitely varied areas to which he turned his attention (after his earlier epistemological work) is in no way addressed to our belief but to our knowledge. Steiner knew his work to be a furthering of science – albeit one that did not limit science’s domain only to what is accessible to our physical senses. Extending the boundaries of existing natural science, Steiner therefore named his work spiritual science.

Fourteen points

I had intended, at this point, to make a more detailed description of the differences between the work of Steiner and of Whitehead, before then going on to look at the different perspectives we can gain on the intentions behind 9/11 in the light of Steiner’s research into history and the deeper background of current events and at what these can add to the perspectives already offered by Griffin and others in the light of ‘process thought’ and ‘process theology’, owing their inspiration, as they do, to Whitehead.³⁰ There is only the space though, to do this extremely briefly.

Something, however, must be said. For Steiner and Whitehead, who were born 12 days apart from each other,³¹ were *not* attempting to do something similar to one another. It is important to understand this, for otherwise we may fail to take notice of the immense contribution made by Rudolf Steiner towards a penetrating, detailed and wide-ranging understanding of current affairs.

David Ray Griffin has written an article called: ‘Rudolf Steiner’s Anthroposophy and Whitehead’s Philosophy’, in which “a brief summary of fourteen similarities between the positions of Steiner and Whitehead is given.”³² I have, so far, not found it possible to find a copy of this article, and so am not responding to anything said there by Griffin, but for the purposes of this article I see it as important, rather, to become clear about the *differences* between Steiner’s and Whitehead’s work (and by extension that of Griffin and Cobb also, who are, in a sense, furthering Whitehead’s work.)

I can do this here, as I have said, only very briefly and, even, aphoristically.

A review of one of Griffin’s books - *Reenchantment Without Supernaturalism: A Process Philosophy of Religion* – gives a good impression – albeit colloquially – of Griffin’s achievement: “Griffin covers a simply massive range of topic... The book... like a fantastic novel... exposes new ideas and forces the intellect to work in new ways. *It is a work that essentially outlines the creeds of a different religion, albeit a religion which is designed to go hand-in-hand with others.* It touches on nearly every area of philosophy of religion, from religious language to natural theology.”³³

Steiner, as I have described, does *not* “outline the creeds of a new religion.” Steiner does not attempt any rationalization of faith (“philosophy of religion” or “natural theology”) but furthers, rather, directly experienceable knowledge, even when this is of realities that were *once* seen as only being accessible by faith.

Whitehead’s (and also Griffin’s) *linking* of science and religion is, in essence, just that. Their work is both scientific and religious at the same time. Although it is not hindered by Kant’s restrictions on what it is possible to describe, it achieves, albeit in very modern form, something akin to Aquinas’s reconciliation of faith and knowledge. On the one hand, there is the activity of a scientific, even mathematical intellect – addressing itself to every detail of earthly phenomena (we may think, for example, and in a very positive way, of the unparalleled detail and extent of Griffin’s research into 9/11); and on the other the attempt of “redefining the divine” – to use the words of a significant interview with Griffin on these themes.³⁴ The attempt to clarify, in other words, through all the powers of one’s speculative reason, what one understands of the divine. Thus, as one scholar of Whitehead puts it: “*Both the clear and distinct consciousness of rationalism and the vague feeling of divinity at the base of any radical empiricism are important in Whitehead’s scheme.*”³⁵ This “vague feeling of divinity” is closely allied to faith and to a religious sense. “*We are essentially religious beings*”, says Griffin, in the above-mentioned interview.

This is very different from Steiner’s approach – which is not to *link* science and faith, but rather to transform science itself (or to transform our cognitive faculties), so that this Thomistic need to reconcile knowledge and faith is itself overcome. Faith itself is gone beyond, as we eventually become able to know, through our immediate and cognitive experience, spiritual realities.

The philosophical, cosmological and theological views of Whitehead, Griffin and others are endlessly fascinating – going far beyond countless other more limited and limiting perspectives. But they do not *cross the threshold* into the world of directly experienced spiritual realities. They dance, we might say, fascinatingly, *at* the threshold, where different aspects and disciplines within the physical world, the different religious ‘faiths’ even, merge and are seen to be connected, but they do not consciously cross this threshold. Nor do they claim to. But they should not therefore claim that Steiner’s work and theirs accomplish something similar. This is no criticism of the work of Whitehead or of Griffin. Their work is unquestionably remarkable. But what Steiner achieved is such a vast step forward in what our faculties of knowledge are capable of that many people cannot yet shake themselves free from their own ‘mindsets’, regarding this, and thus wake up to what Steiner made possible. In the meantime, it is not helpful to blur the distinctions and make out that Steiner’s work was something other than it was.

This difference between Steiner’s work, on the one hand, and Whitehead’s and Griffin’s on the other, is clearly described I think, in some words spoken by Steiner in 1920:

“It is necessary to know that we live in three realms, three streams: namely, the physical world where we perceive and process the perceptions with our intellect that is brain-bound; then, the world at the threshold where the intellect is no longer adequate to explain the experiences; and lastly, the world on the other side of the threshold where one comes into contact with spiritual beings. Humanity as such stands at the threshold.

Everything of nature and the outer world that is around us is on this side of the threshold, but we can ask ourselves where we can find the experiences of the threshold revealed. We find these mainly in the religious confessions of the most varied kinds...

The experiences at the threshold have something confusing about them. That is because everything that we bring with us from the sense world loses its meaning there. The modern religious denominations... want to penetrate everything with the intellect, which must fail there... The confusion, which arises because everything brought with us from the sense world loses its meaning, ceases only when the light from the other side of the threshold rays into this confusion."³⁶

In the light of this, we may say that Whitehead and Griffin each offer, in their own ways, scintillating displays of intellect; there appear to be no limits to what they address in thought. These thoughts, however, at the limit of what the intellect is capable of, though they frequently dazzle, by their own brilliance, at other times dim through their inability to be illumined by "the light from the other side of the threshold."

In art the real statements of power are those in which the whole intellect is involved, first in a suspension of power, and then in a renewal of that power through grace.

(Vernon Watkins)³⁷

Rudolf Steiner's research is *not* based merely on the thoughts that he offers to us. His path, as he describes in many different ways, is one where the activity of thinking itself becomes concentrated and intensified, so that it may cease to think conceptual thoughts and yet still remain fully conscious of its own activity. This awakened inner activity – or *living thinking* – is then able to become conscious of spiritual realities or spiritual beings whose existence is beyond the threshold of what our intellect can apprehend.

However, this does not mean that we have no way of knowing these realities until we ourselves can directly perceive them, spiritually, beyond the threshold of our ordinary consciousness. (This is partly comparable to the fact that we do not need ourselves to be artist of genius in order to be able to recognize great works of art – or even, in a lesser way, to the fact that we do not need to have carried out someone else's scientific research before being able to appreciate it.) For the *language* in which Steiner expressed the results of his spiritual scientific research is accessible to our healthy and active thinking. If we apply this to these results, and bring towards them our 'whole intellect', then we too may experience, with regard to them, something like a "suspension of (the) power" of our ordinary intellectual knowledge, followed by "a renewal of that power" through a living understanding of what is being described. We can and must *think* the results of Steiner's research – and we may then come to know them for ourselves – as they relate to all our previous knowledge and questioning. Approaching Steiner's spiritual-scientific research through faith – or through less than our "whole intellect" – will not enable us to understand it.

This is one of the chief reasons why Steiner's work has remained so unrecognized. One might think that if he has really managed to develop knowledge in this way, then everyone should be immediately startled by the results. But if they depend on our free and individual activity of knowing then they *cannot* startle in this way – we ourselves must exert ourselves to discover them. They depend on our own power of questioning. Steiner says regarding this:

"It is generally still easier to be effective among human beings by means of force, control, and injustice than by means of freedom. The truth that is to be proclaimed through spiritual science is permitted to count only on human freedom. It must find people who ask questions. One certainly cannot say, 'Why doesn't this truth possess in itself the strength to compel human souls by virtue of divine-spiritual power?' It does not wish to do that; it cannot do that. The reason is that it will always consider inner freedom, the freedom of the human being in general, to be something absolutely inviolable. If the human being is to come to spiritual science out of his own judgment, he must become one who asks questions; out of the innermost freedom of judgment he must convince himself. The word of spiritual truth will be spoken to him; convincing himself of it is something he must do on his own."³⁸

Questions

What, then, finally, does Steiner have to say, that could be pertinent to our understanding of 9/11, (which took place 76 years after his death), that has not already been examined in the vast amount of research already carried out into 9/11?

To see this, it will clearly be necessary to: "*become one who asks questions.*"

This article arose from a request by *New View* to write an article for September, 2011, relating to the tenth anniversary of 9/11. It has unexpectedly grown considerably beyond a single article to a series of them. It will perhaps need to become a small, separate publication in due course. The deeper aim of this series of articles so far has only gradually made itself clear: to try and make a bridge between all that has been brought to light concerning 9/11 by individuals connected to the “9/11 Truth Movement” and a spiritual-scientific understanding of history and current events. Thomas Meyer,³⁹ for example, gave a public lecture in Basel, Switzerland on the fifth anniversary of 9/11, entitled: ‘9/11 as a challenge to develop a new kind of thinking’ (*9/11 als Herausforderung für ein neues Denken*).⁴⁰ The present essay could be seen as attempting to create a bridge between the perspectives of some individuals within the ‘9/11 Truth Movement’ and spiritual-scientific perspectives such as those Meyer presents in this lecture.

That bridge has, I think, in this Part Four, finally managed to reach the ‘other shore’: it has arrived at the point where we can now begin to look at the perspectives to be gained by spiritual science. It has, though, I am aware, only just touched down on this shore – and has not begun yet with the exploration of what we may discover there.

From here we shall begin to ask such questions as: what are we to make of Cobb’s and Griffin’s remarks concerning ‘American Nationalism’ and ‘American Empire’? What wider perspectives can we gain regarding this, and regarding America’s rightful role or position within the wider world? How may we come to understand the fact that what Griffin terms ‘Americanism’ has been presented as valid for the entire globe? Is there any further way to understand how intentions of this kind, intentions that do not serve the whole of humanity but that serve, instead, the aims of a particular group or particular direction, could even lead to an event such as 9/11? If it can be seen, in this way, that a one-sidedness has presented itself as if it were the whole, what might the *whole* picture look like? What might this look like historically and in terms of a rightly understand geo-politics (or spiritual geography)? In other words, what is the wider, alternative, historical ‘narrative’ that the ‘narrative’ of the ‘official version’ of events has attempted to conceal and replace? What, finally, may we learn from all this about possible ways forward in future?

Endnotes

1. Even if this may involve a long journey of inner and outer work before arriving at it.
2. If some choose more sceptically to think that members of the Catholic Church were also concerned about their livelihoods, in the face of what Galileo was showing them, then this is also not wholly irrelevant to 9/11. As Upton Sinclair said: “It is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends upon his not understanding it!” (From his 1935 book: *I, Candidate for Governor: And How I Got Licked*.) Even here, though, I would suggest that fear of losing one’s livelihood manages to connect itself to what one believes.
3. Environmental Health Laboratories (EHL) – a division of Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
4. *A Personal Decision* by Kevin Ryan – available at: <http://911review.com/articles/ryan/personaldecision.html>
5. “9/11 and the Orwellian Redefinition of ‘Conspiracy Theory’” by Paul Craig Roberts - at GlobalResearch.Ca. Earlier quotations from: “Does 9/11 Truth Have a Chance?” (2011) – Paul Craig Roberts – at: informationclearinghouse.com.
6. I am, therefore, not referring here to all the many people who, without question, experience huge moral outrage at the events of 9/11 – but do so, primarily, with regard to the wrongs and abuses of political power that they reveal. Their work – that of Gore Vidal, for example – is very often both courageous and instructive – and offers great insight into the activities and workings of global power. In this present section, however, I am focussing on some of the spiritual (moral) perspectives by which people have attempted to understand 9/11, in order to try and lift a veil on what lies behind the events of 9/11. In a later section, I will attempt to look again at some of the political perspectives. I have mentioned Paul Craig Roberts’s views here, not in order to explore his political or economic perspective, but because of his use of the world depicted by George Orwell as a framework by which to understand 9/11 and the political climate it gave rise to.
7. By this I am not referring to the adherence to outer, ‘moral’ precepts. I am referring to the steadily growing experience of moral or spiritual realities – both in the wider world and in ourselves.

8. Michael Meacher M.P. was environment minister from May 1997 to June 2003.
9. “Meacher sparks fury over claims on September 11 and Iraq war” by Ewen MacAskill, *The Guardian*, Saturday 6 September 2003. (My italics.)
10. Endorsement at the beginning of *9/11 and American Empire. Intellectuals Speak Out* edited by David Ray Griffin and Peter Dale Scott. (Arris Books, 2007)
11. Arthur Miller (1915-2005). American playwright and essayist.
12. *A Politically Engaged Spirituality* William Sloane Coffin. April 28, 2005. Yale University Commons at http://www.yale.edu/divinity/coffin/coffin_transcript.shtml
13. As distinct from ‘deconstructive’ postmodernist thought.
14. Griffin was the overall editor, for example, of the considerable Suny Series of Constructive Postmodernist Thought..
15. *Christian Faith and the Truth Behind 9/11. A Call to Reflection and Action.* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.)
6. Griffin specifically does not refer to Jesus as Christ.
17. Among the many who have explicitly spoken of the present-day American Empire are Charles Krauthammer and Paul Kennedy. Krauthammer wrote: “America is no mere international citizen. It is the dominant power in the world, more dominant than any since Rome. Accordingly, America is in a position to reshape norms... and create new realities. How? By unapologetic and implacable demonstrations of will.” (February 26th, 2001. ‘Inside Policy’, CNN.) Paul Kennedy, having described America’s empire as unrivalled in history, stated: “Charlemagne’s empire was merely Western European in its reach. The Roman Empire stretched farther afield, but there was another great empire in Persia and a larger one in China. There is, therefore, no comparison.” (February 22nd, 2002. ‘The Eagle has landed.’ Financial Times.)
18. Space does not permit a further discussion here of Griffin’s understanding of evil.
19. Quoted by Griffin from Gary Dorrien’s 2011 book: *Imperial Designs: Neoconservatism and the Pax Americana.*
20. *Christian Faith and the Truth Behind 9/11. A Call to Reflection and Action.* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.) Page 175.
21. Ibid. Page 180.
22. See the interview: Resisting the Global Domination Project: An interview with Prof. Richard Falk. April 18, 2003. At: http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2003/04/18_falk-interview.htm
23. *9/11 Ten Years Later. When State Crimes Against Democracy Succeed.* Haus Publishing. London. 2011.
24. In: *The Impact of 9/11 on Religion and Philosophy: The Day that Changed Everything?* ed. Matthew Morgan (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) Available at: ‘Religious Leaders for 9/11 Truth’ website.http://www.amazon.com/Impact-11-Religion-Philosophy-Everything/dp/0230608442/ref=sr_1_8?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1232566674&sr=1-8
25. “John B. Cobb, Jr. (born February 9, 1925) is an American theologian who played a crucial role in the development of process theology. He integrated Alfred North Whitehead’s metaphysics into Christianity, and applied it to issues of social justice.” (From Wikipedia.)
26. Mackey also describes his clearly unfortunate experiences in elementary school, where his teacher: “bought wholeheartedly into extraterrestrials, psychic abilities, and other ‘new age’ beliefs” in which “I was encouraged to believe.” Among the “many hobbies” of the director of the school, furthermore, were: “Egyptian, Kabalistic, and Hindu mysticism, tantric yoga, hypnosis, and paranormal phenomena.” Mackey’s writing clearly shows that not only does he undiscerningly view all these “hobbies” as one and the same, and views as one and the same also “such an insane topic as a conspiracy theory” (in other words the 9/11 Truth Movement), but also that he is still far from free from a strong subjective reaction to these childhood experiences. (These quotations are from Mackey’s 2011 paper: ‘The Great Internet Conspiracy’, available at: http://www.911myths.com/tgite_1_0_final.pdf)
27. Cobb states that the term ‘prophetic’ has become so misused that it has become necessary instead to use the term ‘progressive’: “Many who call themselves ‘progressives’ would prefer the label ‘prophetic,’ but we are deterred from public use of this term because the religious right has led the public to understand prophecy as prediction of the events of the end-time rather than as critique of

- falsehood and oppression.”
28. Many of those we have discussed, who are prominent in the 9/11 Truth Movement, are also strong advocates for ‘inter-faith’ policies and networks.
 29. See first paragraph of “Speculative Philosophy” (1929); a lecture forming the introductory chapter to Whitehead’s book, *Process and Reality*, available at: <http://urantiabook.org/sources/whitehead1.htm>
 30. Other thinkers have also influenced process theology, but Whitehead is acknowledged as having been the greatest single influence.
 31. Alfred North Whitehead (born February 15th, 1861 – died 1949) ; Rudolf Steiner (born February 27th, 1861 – died 1925.)
 32. See Robert McDermott: ‘An introduction to Rudolf Steiner and American Thought’, available on McDermott’s page at CIIS website. Griffin’s article was based on a talk at a conference in 1991 (sponsored by Laurance S. Rockefeller) on “Rudolf Steiner and American Philosophy”.
 33. (My italics). The review by Joseph Wartick, posted under Griffin’s book at Amazon.com, humorously ends: “I highly recommend this book. It is one of my favorites. My only regret is that I find it so off the mark.”
 34. “Redefining the Divine. In postmodern spirituality, redefining the divine is a crucial step toward reinventing the human.” An Interview with David Ray Griffin by Alan Atkisson. Originally published in *Earth & Spirit (IC#24)* Late Winter 1990.
Available at: <http://www.context.org/iclib/ic24/griffin/>
 35. “Whitehead, Eternal Objects, and God.” Matthew David Segall – at his: ‘Footnotes to Plato’ website. (My italics.)
 36. From: Esoteric lesson of February 17th, 1920. The quoted passage is a written report of someone present at this lesson, and is not to be seen as presenting Steiner’s words, verbatim.
 37. “Articulations, May 1955” – In *Poetry Wales*, Spring 1977, Vol. 12, No. 4, page 56.
 38. Rudolf Steiner, *Materialism and the Task of Anthroposophy*, GA 204. Lecture of April 17th, 1921.
 39. Author and publisher (Perseus Verlag, Basel) of many books on spiritual scientific themes and of the monthly journal *Der Europaer*.
 40. Published (in German) as a CD by Perseus Verlag, 2011. A collection of Thomas Meyer’s essays about 9/11 and related themes is available in English: *Reality, Truth and Evil. Facts, questions and perspectives on September 11th, 2001.* (Temple Lodge Press, 2005.)

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One-Sided Political Intentions of the English-Speaking World and the Search for what is Universally Human (Towards a Deeper Understanding of 9/11)

by *Richard Ramsbotham*

Whatever our thoughts about them, we are almost all familiar with comments and claims about public and political life being steered in certain directions, or even being controlled altogether, by various ‘elites’. These claims may often even refer to ‘occult groups’ or ‘secret societies’ or ‘secret brotherhoods’, able to wield enormous influence ‘in high places’ of political power. Such claims are often so wildly speculative and so far-fetched, often involving many further bizarre claims, that the opposite attitude is often firmly adhered to by people – namely, denying all validity to any such claims.

Neither approach is satisfactory, though, and we must simply ask: what, if any, is the *truth* about these claims?

If we are willing to ask this question, however, and without prejudice, to hold an open mind for a moment as to whether there *is* or *isn't* any truth behind such claims, where can we look for any help in relation to this? The wildly speculative claims all too often offer no help in this regard, as they almost always fail to present what they say in such a way that we can test it with our own thinking or weigh it up against all the phenomena we perceive around us. And it should certainly never be a question of simply *believing* what someone might say. Where else, though, can we look?

For a number of reasons, the statements made by Rudolf Steiner on the subject of the influence of ‘secret societies’ on public and political life can, I think, prove extremely helpful. Firstly, they are in no sense speculative. He describes them as the results of his own “spiritual-scientific” research – and, whether or not we become able to substantiate them for ourselves, they are calmly and thoroughly expressed and in considerable detail. Steiner also makes transparently clear the method by which he has been able to carry out such research. Secondly, even if we – or most of us – are not yet able to *carry out* such research for ourselves involving direct spiritual experience, for example, of the hidden workings of such groups, we can nevertheless fully think it through and *understand* it. As Steiner consistently points out, the results of such research, even if we cannot *arrive at* them ourselves, may nevertheless be fully tested by our own healthy powers of thinking. There is no question of our being asked to believe in someone else’s far-fetched assumptions. If we do not find ourselves able to think these statements through, and understand them, there is no reason whatsoever that we should believe them. Thirdly, Steiner’s research is not offered as something purely meta-physical – as something, in other words, whose truth we might understand, but which bears no relation to what we perceive in the world around us. Steiner very much asks us to test his research against all the phenomena in the world we may encounter.

This holds true in a very particular way with Steiner’s statements about the influence of hidden groups on public and political life. For unless we are able to observe the *effects* of such influence on historical or contemporary politics, any statements about this will remain speculative. Steiner is specific on this point:

“So long as I assert that this has been stated in secret societies, it may be doubted. But, if it is pointed out that the whole direction of politics is such that this principle evidently underlies it, people are then within reality with their ordinary sound common sense.”¹

What, then, does Steiner have to say about such hidden groups?

I have no wish to attempt to be exhaustive about this. (Interested readers may easily follow this up for themselves.) I would like, though, to offer three extensive quotations by Rudolf Steiner regarding one particular aspect of this: *the relationship of such groups to the political powers of the*

Western or Anglo-American world. Is there a particular connection between such groups and Anglo-American political intentions in/for the world - and if so, how are we to understand this?

THREE QUOTATIONS

Each of the three quotations are from the long cycle of lectures Steiner gave in December 1916 and January 1917, in the midst of the First World War, which are published in English under the title: *The Karma of Untruthfulness*. (Two volumes.) Each of the quotations will repay careful reading – as they contain many specific details which expand upon the main theme.

In the first quotation Steiner speaks about the significant and valid contribution the West – in this case Britain – has made to world political life. After referring to “the spiritual and cultural life of the British people” Steiner continues:

“I mean the kind of cultural life as it appears before the world in British institutions and the life of the British people. This element is, above all, extremely political in character; its tendency is supremely political. One consequence emerging from it is the political thinking that is so much admired by the rest of the world; in a certain way the most advanced and free kind of political thinking. Wherever in the world efforts have been made to set up political institutions in which freedom can live — freedom in the sense we have come to understand it since the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century — there, ideas have been borrowed from British thinking. The French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century was more a matter of feeling, of passionate impulsiveness, but the thoughts it contained had been brought over from British thinking. The manner in which political concepts are formed, the manner in which political bodies are structured, the manner in which the will of the people is led within political organizations that are as free as possible so that it can work from all sides — all this is expressed in British political thinking in accordance with its original tendencies. That is why so many new states in the nineteenth century imitated British institutions. In many places efforts were made to take over the British way of parliamentary life and parliamentary institutions, for in this connection British thinking is the teacher of modern times.

In England during the nineteenth century, let us say up to its final decades, this political thinking came to expression in some very important politicians who modelled their thoughts in particular on this political thinking. One thing especially became obvious: the wellbeing (das Heil) of the world could be brought about by this thinking if only people would devote themselves entirely to it and allow nothing else to take effect in the arrangements of the various institutions. Therefore, politicians who may seem one-sided to some extent but who model their thoughts entirely on this political thinking and endeavour to work in accordance with it, appear as outstanding and entirely moral. Think of Cobden², Bright³ and others, not to speak of greater men who are always being mentioned; for in this field it is very possible to go astray as soon as a really prominent position is reached. That is why I mention those who have not gone astray in any direction but who are genuinely important in the sense I now mean. I could name many others. (...) This way of forming thoughts of a political orientation belongs in its character very much to the fifth post-Atlantean period. That is where it belongs and where it has to be developed.”

After referring in this way, though, to what is valid and beneficial in English political life, Steiner immediately adds:

“In those western brotherhoods I told you about there lived an exact knowledge of these things(...) And in some individuals there was the will (...) to make use of the forces concerned. (...) If someone wants to use these things, he can.”⁴

In the second quotation – from the lecture given two days later – Steiner elaborates on this danger. A few preparatory remarks are perhaps necessary to provide some background to what Steiner is saying.

Our current civilization, since the Renaissance, is clearly quite different from earlier civilizations or cultures, such as those of Ancient Greece or Rome. Similarly, these cultures or civilizations were

radically different from those preceding them, such as those of ancient Egypt, Assyria or Babylon. Journeying through time, human faculties can certainly appear to fade, that were possessed by people in older cultures, but *new* human faculties are also developed. Thus in Ancient Greece, as an older mythological or clairvoyant consciousness slowly waned, so new capacities of reasoning and philosophical thinking arose and were developed.

With the Renaissance, as humanity emerged from the Middle Ages, we started to face new tasks and challenges – such as those brought in by the widespread development of modern science. We have arrived, without, it seems, too much effort on our parts, at a far more wakeful kind of consciousness, even if we only compare ourselves to the time of the Middle Ages. Yet it is clearly also necessary that we steadily transform and evolve our present level of scientific consciousness if we are to overcome many of the escalating problems and dangers caused by our own and by our civilization’s limited perspectives – for example by its dependence, all too often, in its search for answers, on a very materialistic science and technology.

Steiner names this new era of consciousness we have been living in since the beginning of the Renaissance as the era of the “*consciousness soul*” - (thus distinguishing it from people’s customary soul-experience in previous eras). He also refers to this era as the “fifth post-Atlantean epoch”, (thus distinguishing it from the previous epoch, for example, which included the cultures of Ancient Greece and Rome, which he refers to as the “fourth post-Atlantean epoch”).

The names themselves are of course not what is important here. What *is* important, though, is that *however* we choose to refer to the current era we live in, or to humanity’s customary state of consciousness today, these are *universal* concerns. Humanity’s evolution *towards* our present state of consciousness, our present state of consciousness itself, and all further possible evolution beyond it, relates to everyone, and can therefore be said to have a significance which is *universally human*. We might even say that *unless* humanity’s further development is in accordance with what is universal in us, it will remain limited and one-sided, and will sooner or later encounter great or even insurmountable obstacles on its path into the future.

The strongest ‘occult groups’ or ‘secret societies’ of the West (which are not to be seen as identical with such groups as the Freemasons, but rather as being ‘behind’ these, and therefore able to exert a powerful influence on them and on their members⁵) wish precisely, however, to put a *one-sided* picture of evolution into the world – where civilization from now onwards is to be given a solely *Anglo-Saxon* or *Anglo-American* stamp.

Such groups are very well aware, says Steiner, of the spiritual and cultural realities we have been referring to – whereby humanity as a whole evolves through different periods of civilization. They are also aware that the Anglo-Saxon world does have a particular contribution to make to our present “fifth epoch”, as Steiner spoke of in relation to Cobden and Bright. But instead of describing all this in such a way as to help humanity evolve in accordance with that which is universally human, these groups deliberately spread the one-sided teaching that *only* what is Anglo-Saxon (or Anglo-American)⁶ is valid.

In the second long quotation from the *Karma of Untruthfulness* Steiner begins by describing how these one-sided intentions even undermine or negate the genuine contribution that could be made by English political life. Steiner concludes by describing how the attempt to force such one-sided intentions on the rest of the world must inevitably lead to conflict, unless everyone else should simply agree to meekly submit to such dominance. This, as Steiner points out, is highly unlikely.

“It really is so that, on the one hand, there exists the task which the English people are called upon to perform during the fifth post-Atlantean period, and yet this purpose is constantly being thwarted from quite another direction. And though there are indeed beautiful voices in the orchestra, as I described the day before yesterday, there are also a good many others to be heard as well. Let me draw your attention to some remarks made by Lord Rosebery⁷ in 1893, not because they are particularly important but because they are a symptomatic expression of something that does actually exist. Lord Rosebery said:

‘It is said that our Empire is large enough and that we possess sufficient territories ... We must, however, examine not only what we need today but also what we shall need in the future ... We must not forget that it is a part of our duty and our heritage to ensure that the world bears the stamp of our people and not that of any other ...’

It is important to know that such voices, too, join in the orchestra of the world. Lord Rosebery himself was not particularly important in this direction, but the way he spoke in this tone was a good example of what I wanted to point out. It is important that a pretension of this kind should ring forth, not from a people but from an individual who is backed by various concealed groups, a pretension that the whole world must be stamped with the mark of the English spirit. It is nothing other than an echo of what had always been taught in some secret brotherhoods in words such as the following: (...) The fifth post-Atlantean period belongs to the English-speaking peoples alone; it is for them to make the world into something which stems from them.

The firm doctrine which had come into being in the secret brotherhoods must be heard resounding in the words of Lord Rosebery; for we must learn to look in the right places. What happens outwardly might be quite a comedy. But we have to see through the comedy and not regard it as something that can bring blessing to the world.

If somebody defends the standpoint of Lord Rosebery, there is no need to enter into any discussion with him, for discussion is quite unnecessary in such matters. Neither is it possible to say that no one has the right to such a standpoint. Everyone has the right to take up Lord Rosebery’s standpoint. But he ought then to say: My aim is to make the world English; and not: I am fighting for the freedom and rights of the small nations. This is what matters. It is not difficult to understand Lord Rosebery from his own standpoint. But someone who does not share this standpoint must, instead, take up another. In consequence, there is no agreement between these two standpoints, and the matter has to be balanced out by the means the world has at its disposal for such matters. Under certain circumstances such standpoints of necessity even lead to the outbreak of war. This is perfectly obvious, since it would otherwise be possible to demand that the opposition subject itself voluntarily to one’s own standpoint. But if their standpoint prevents them from doing this, conflicts arise. I am only describing standpoints, for it is not a matter of dealing with objective judgements here, but simply of the choice between two possibilities.”⁸

When we think about this, it can present us with a very great riddle: *How is it possible* that English political life, which potentially has something of world-wide importance to offer, should instead become the tool of the exact opposite – of the attempt to inflict on the world the goals of a purely one-sided Anglo-centric agenda?

The third long quotation offers us essential help with answering this question. Before addressing it, Steiner speaks in an urgent and telling way of all this asks of us, and of how it connects with the challenges of true freedom:

“It is easy to ask the question: What can I myself do in these painful times? The first thing one can do is to endeavour to understand things, to really see through things. This brings up thoughts which are real forces and these will have an effect. What about the question: Have the good forces no power against the evil forces we see all around us? To answer this we have to remember how difficult human freedom makes it for the spiritual world to assert itself amid the surging waves of materialistic life. This is what it is all about. Is it to be made so very easy for human beings to enter fully into the life of the spirit?

Future ages will look back to today and say: How careless these people were with regard to adopting the life of spirit! The spiritual world is sending it down to us, but human beings resist it with all their might. Apart from all the sadness and suffering holding sway at present, the very fact that all this does hold sway is in itself a destiny signifying a trial. Above all it should be accepted and recognized as a trial. Later it will become apparent to what extent it is necessary for those who — so it is said — are guilty, to suffer together with those who are blameless. For after all, during the course of karma all these things are balanced out. You cannot say: Are not the good spirits

going to intervene? They do intervene to the extent that we open ourselves to them, if we have the courage to do so. But first of all we must be serious about understanding things; we must be deeply serious about trying to understand.

As a contribution to this understanding it is necessary that a number of people muster the strength to oppose the surging waves of materialism with their deepest personal being.(...) Every human being is capable of doing this. And the fruits of such efforts will be sure to follow. (...)

You can summarize in two sentences what is needed to work against materialism — which, after all, has some justification. In the fifth post-Atlantean period the world will become even more pervaded by the industrial and commercial element; but the opposite pole must also exist: There must be people who work on the opposite side because of their understanding of the situation. For what is the aim of these secret brotherhoods? They do not work out of any particular British patriotism, but out of the desire to bring the whole world under the yoke of pure materialism. And because, in accordance with the laws of the fifth post-Atlantean period, certain elements of the British people as the bearer of the consciousness soul are most suitable for this, they want, by means of grey magic, to use these elements as promoters of this materialism.

This is the important point. Those who know what impulses are at work in world events can also steer them. No other national element, no other people, has ever before been so usable as material for transforming the whole world into a materialistic realm. Therefore, those who know want to set their foot on the neck of this national element and strip it of all spiritual endeavour — which, of course, lives equally in all human beings. Just because karma has ordained that the consciousness soul should work here particularly strongly, the secret brotherhoods have sought out elements in the British national character. Their aim is to send a wave of materialism over the earth and make the physical plane the only valid one. A spiritual world is only to be recognized in terms of what the physical plane has to offer.”⁹

Steiner answers the riddle mentioned above. Such ‘secret societies’ have, in fact, no interest whatsoever in the true culture and true gifts of the English-speaking world, but desire solely to *use* the external appearances (or garments) of this culture to further their own utterly materialistic ends.¹⁰

We saw a very clear example of this in the opening and closing ceremonies of the London Olympic Games this Summer, where many of the greatest treasures of British culture were *misrepresented* in order to express something completely different from what they actually contain. (I addressed this in an article in the last issue of *New View*.)

We are therefore faced with the possibility that what *looks like* an expression of English-speaking culture may in fact be merely the vehicle of a force of out-and-out materialism, which deliberately disguises itself in the forms and appearances of the English-speaking world.¹¹

Steiner turns now to what is necessary in order to counter this:

“This must be opposed by the endeavours of those who understand the necessity of a spiritual life on earth. Looked at from this point of view, you can express this counter-force in two sentences. One of these is well-known to you, but it does not yet come fully out of the hearts and souls of human beings: ‘My kingdom is not of this world.’ The sentence ‘My kingdom is not of this world’ must sound forth against that kingdom which is to be spread over the physical plane, that kingdom which is only of this world, that kingdom of commercial and industrial materialism.”

Steiner relates the phrase: ‘My kingdom is not of this world’ to that in the human being which is universal, rather than anything stemming from the one-sided aims, for example, of a particular national group.

He then, surprisingly perhaps, draws a comparison between this universally human element and the fourth or lowest caste in ancient India (excluding the ‘untouchables’) – the caste of the peasants (farmers) or servants. In earlier periods of evolution humanity might be said to have been successively guided and ruled over by representatives of the first three castes. In the ancient Egyptian era, therefore, society was ruled over in a strictly hierarchical manner by the *priestly* caste

– by priest-kings or Pharaohs. Echoes today of such hierarchical, theocratic leadership (for example in the idea of *papal* rulership from Rome) harken back to this earlier period of our evolution. A strong echo of the manner of rulership by the second caste – *the princes or kings* - has frequently lived on, says Steiner, in French political life. English political life provides the example, all too frequently, of rulership by the third caste – that of the *industrialists* or *merchants*. (We see the hazardous consequences of this whenever education, the arts and therapeutic and caring professions, to name but some examples, are increasingly treated and run as if they were businesses.) The present epoch demands, though, that we each develop individually, as free human beings, no longer governed by castes of rulers or leaders, and that we develop a society which is in accordance with this:

“The words ‘My kingdom is not of this world’ link up with the cultivation of what belongs to mankind as a whole. (...) In ancient India there were four castes, in ancient Greece four estates. They came into being one after the other(...) In the fifth post-Atlantean period the fourth estate, social life, that which belongs to mankind as a whole, must come into being.”

Regarding the rulership of the “industrial” caste in Britain, Steiner states, speaking in 1916:

“The third estate, as we know, is the industrial element, what was commerce in ancient Egypt and Greece. This is striving to come to the fore again in the British Empire and for the moment must still be dominant over the fourth element, which will eventually be the general, human element. (...)

In this element there can be no question of dominance, for there is nothing below it over which dominance might be exercised; it is solely a matter of laying the foundation for human beings to relate with one another. A theory for this will only come about when the general human element given in anthroposophical spiritual science is made the foundation.”¹²

It remains to say a little bit more about *how* such brotherhoods, working ‘behind the scenes’, are able to influence the actions and events of public and political life. (Steiner’s earlier comments, though, about Lord Rosebery are certainly very revealing concerning this.)

In a different lecture Steiner describes how what was put out by these “secret societies” or “occult schools” first: “*seeped* (hineinsickerte) into all the brotherhoods, even the more esoteric ones — those who worked in the West as so-called high grade Freemasons and suchlike.”

From there (and again it is worth reading closely Steiner’s description):

“These things were insinuated into public affairs by people who had either a close or loose connection with these brotherhoods, often in such a veiled way that those concerned had no idea how they had come by their knowledge.”

“What was known in those circles (...) flows into the instincts behind those persons who occupy positions as political representatives, even if they act only out of political instincts. Behind these are the forces to which I am now referring. You need not inquire, therefore, whether Northcliffe or even Lloyd George is initiated to one degree or another into these forces. This is not what counts. The decisive question is whether or not there is a possibility that they may conduct themselves in accordance with these forces. They need to take up in their instincts alone what runs parallel with these forces. But there is such a possibility; this does happen, and these forces act in the general direction of world history.”¹³

FROM THE FIRST WORLD WAR TO 9/11

All of this is also highly relevant with regard to what lies behind the events of 9/11.

It is possible, I think, to show something like an unbroken thread running from the occult, political machinations Steiner was pointing to behind the events of the First World War, through the main political directions of the rest of the 20th Century, right up to the beginning of the 21st Century, and the events of September 11th, 2001.

It hardly takes much insight, for example, to note the obvious connection between what we have

been saying about groups with one-sided Anglo-American aims and agendas and the intentions of the group that has so often been referred to in relation to 9/11 – the *Project for a New American Century*. (PNAC)¹⁴

It would need a whole book to explore this in detail. I hope that this short article, however, has at least broached the themes that future research could examine much more thoroughly.

Looking to the year ahead, I can do little better than utter the hope and wish expressed by Steiner immediately after the last long passage I quoted from – (changing his second word, however, from “your” to “our”):

“May our hearts strive to see things in their true guise. Only if hearts exist which see things in their true guise and penetrate that terrible fog of untruth which shrouds everything in the world today, can we progress in an appropriate way.”¹⁵

I would like to add, though, that there *are* more and more people today who are striving to see things “in their true guise” – very often unaware of what Steiner’s work is able to contribute to this. My hope is that many of them may be able to become aware of this – which can prove a huge blessing to such endeavours, shedding enormous light on it all and providing vast illumination and insight into the true, spiritual possibilities that the opposing powers are trying to thwart.

As a corollary to this, people who already have a spiritual or even an anthroposophical view of the world sometimes seem to overlook the need “to see things in their true guise.” I hope this too can increasingly be taken on, thus enabling us ever more fruitfully and creatively to “progress in an appropriate way.”

Finally, here are a few lines of a poem¹⁶ by the Welsh poet Vernon Watkins (1906-1967) written in the middle of last century:

*The penumbra of history is terrible.
Life changes, breaks, scatters. There is no sheet-anchor.
Time reigns; yet the kingdom of love is every moment,
Whose citizens do not age in each other’s eyes.
In a time of darkness the pattern of life is restored
By men who make all transience seem an illusion
Through inward acts, acts corresponding to music.
Their works of love leave words that do not end in the heart.*

Endnotes

1. From a lecture by Rudolf Steiner on 1st December, 1918 in: *The Challenge of the Times*. (GA 186)
2. Richard Cobden (1804-1865); English political economist; advocate of free trade, peace, disarmament.
3. John Bright (1811-1889); English Quaker, politician, minister.
4. Quotation from: *Karma of Untruthfulness I: Lecture Two*; Rudolf Steiner; Dornach, December 9th, 1916 (GA 173).
5. “That which people know about all sorts of Higher Orders of Scottish Freemasonry and so on, are actually only the outer aspects, which are shown to the world. But behind these there really stand extensive working occult schools, which have taken up into themselves ancient occult traditions and ancient occult streams...” From lecture of 28th March, 1916, in GA 167. (Available – though in an incomplete translation - at the ‘Rudolf Steiner Archive’ website.)
6. At the time Rudolf Steiner gave these lectures (1916) the one-sided intentions of these groups were mainly *Anglo-Saxon* in character. Since that time, of course, these intentions may be said to have become *Anglo-American*.

7. Archibald Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery (1847-1929). British Foreign Minister 1886 and 1882; Prime Minister 1894/1895. For an excellent and thorough article on Lord Rosebery, his influence, and the influence of his political circle as a whole, see: *Sir Edward Grey, Liberal Imperialism and the Question of British Responsibility for the First World War - From the British Empire to the American Empire* by Terry Boardman, available at: www.threeman.org
8. Quotation from: *Karma of Untruthfulness I: Lecture Four*; Rudolf Steiner; Dornach, December 11th, 1916 (GA 173).
9. Quotation from: *Karma of Untruthfulness II: Lecture Twenty*. Rudolf Steiner. Dornach, January 15th, 1917. (GA 174)
10. In order to do this they need, in fact, to deliberately bypass and subvert the very principles of 'freedom' and 'democracy' they claim to be upholding. Should these principles genuinely be adhered to, this would obviously completely hinder them carrying out their intentions. Steiner therefore comments: "The extraordinary situation is: that for certain impulses which stem from western Europe the political thinking of English culture must be regarded as the least suitable instrument." (Same reference as note 7.)
11. This can put us in the strange situation of needing to stand firmly against what is issuing from the English-speaking world in order to stand up for the true qualities and possibilities of the English-speaking world.
12. See note 8.
13. See note 1.
14. Sevak Gulbekian has written extremely well on the possible relationships between the kinds of group Rudolf Steiner is referring to and more publically recognizable groups, which nonetheless have a closed or semi-secret character, of which the PNAC would be an example. (See the article: 'A Perspective on Conspiracies' by Sevak Gulbekian in *New Dawn* magazine, available online.)
15. See note 9.
16. From: *Taliesin and the Spring of Vision in New Selected Poems of Vernon Watkins*. (Carcenet, 2006).

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