

9/11, Deep Events, and the Curtailment of U.S. Freedoms

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Hello everyone! I'm honored to be invited to this important anti-war conference. As I am in the final stages of editing my next book, *The Road to Afghanistan*, I have been turning down invitations to speak. But I was eager to accept this one, and to join my friends and others in debunking the war on terror, the false justification for the Afghan-Pakistan war.

Let me make my own position clear at the outset. There are indeed people out there, including some Muslim extremists, who want to inflict terror on America. But it is crystal clear, as many people inside and outside government have agreed, that it makes this problem worse, not better, when Washington sends large numbers of U.S. troops to yet another country where they don't belong.[1]

A war on terror is as inappropriate a cure as a U.S. war on drugs, which as we have seen in Colombia makes the drug problem worse, not better. The war on terror and the war on drugs have this in common: both are ideological attempts to justify the needless killings of thousands - including both American troops and foreign civilians - in another needless war.

Why does America find itself, time after time, invading countries in distant oil-bearing regions, countries which have not invaded us? This is a vital issue on which we should seek a clear message for the American people. Unfortunately it has been an issue on which there has been serious disagreement dividing the antiwar movement, just as it divided people, even friends, inside the anti-Vietnam War movement of the 1960s.

Perhaps many of you in this room know that there was disagreement between Noam Chomsky and myself in our analysis of how America entered the Vietnam War. This did not stop Noam and I from speaking out on the same platform against the war, or remaining friends, even after our public disagreements. There was too much on which we agreed.

Let me turn to today's topic, the war on terror, by reading a long quote from Noam Chomsky in 2002, with which I fully agree:

"the war on terrorism was not declared on September 11 [2001]; rather, it was redeclared, using the same rhetoric as the first declaration twenty years earlier. The Reagan administration, as you know, I'm sure, came into office announcing that a war on terrorism would be the core of U.S. foreign policy, and it condemned what the president called the "evil scourge of terrorism." International terrorism was described as a plague spread by

“depraved opponents of civilization itself,” in “a return to barbarism in the modern age.””[2]

Today it is easy to see the falsehood of the government rhetoric in the 1980s about heroic freedom fighters fighting the “evil scourge of terrorism.” Most of the CIA money in the 1980s went to the terrorist drug trafficker Gulbeddin Hekmatyar, remembered for his habit of throwing acid in the faces of women not wearing burkas. Hekmatyar did not represent Afghan aspirations for freedom, but the interests of the U.S. ally Pakistan. As a true Afghan leader said in 1994, “We didn’t choose [him]. The United States made Hekmatyar by giving him his weapons.”[3] To describe Hekmatyar’s men as freedom fighters was a fraud.

Chomsky had no trouble perceiving as a “fraud” the Tonkin Gulf incidents that led the U.S. to attack North Vietnam, and the resulting Congressional resolution that had already been drafted some months in advance.[4] But he is not interested in the close analogies between the Tonkin Gulf incidents of 1964 and the 9/11 incidents of 2001, which were almost immediately followed by the Patriot Act, likewise already drafted well in advance. Chomsky argues that the 9/11 movement has drawn “enormous amounts of energy and effort away from activism.”[5] But the strong analogies between the Tonkin Gulf deception and the 9/11 deception have energized and activated me, and not me alone.

It is clear that exposure of McNamara’s deceptions about the Tonkin Gulf incidents, especially in the Fulbright hearing of 1968, was an important factor in slowly changing Congress’s mind about Vietnam. It is my earnest hope that exposure of Cheney’s deceptions about 9/11, and particularly about what he did that day, will someday help end Congressional funding for the Afghan War.

I do not know the truth of what happened on 9/11. I do know for a certainty that there has been a cover-up of 9/11; and also, what the 9/11 Commission itself admits, that there has been high-level governmental lying about what happened, and what didn’t happen, on that day. It became clear to me early on that 9/11 was another in a string of what I have called “deep events” — which I define in my forthcoming book as

events which are systematically ignored, suppressed, or falsified in public (and even internal) government, military and intelligence documents, as well as in the mainstream media and public consciousness. Underlying them is frequently the involvement of deep forces linked to either the drug traffic or to agencies of surveillance (or to both together), whose activities are extremely difficult to discern or document.[6]

For Noam the falsification and lying are not particularly important: he prefers to focus on the continuous imperialist expansion of the United States into other parts of the world, and he hopes to persuade decent Americans to stop this expansion. For me in contrast deep events are of crucial importance, in part because their dishonesty provides us with a chance to counter ideology with truth. Each of us can say, rightly, that the method of the other has not yet stopped America from fighting wars. My appeal to you today is to accept that both approaches are needed in the antiwar movement.

I have been thinking about deep events for two decades, ever since I wrote a book about the Kennedy assassination with the title, Deep Politics. Since 9/11 I have been more and more convinced that

1)by studying deep events as a whole, we can see the underlying aspects of them more clearly.[7]

2) however we analyze them, deep events have contributed collectively to the further erosion and corruption of American politics, which today are in the worst shape they have been since the McCarthyism era in the 1950s.

That is to say, even if you believe that Lee Harvey Oswald shot the president and did it alone, it is clear that the Warren Commission used it to increase CIA surveillance of Americans. As I wrote in *Deep Politics*, this was the result of

the Warren Commission's controversial recommendations that the Secret Service's domestic surveillance responsibilities be increased (WR 25-26). Somewhat illogically, the Warren Report concluded both that Oswald acted alone (WR 22), ..., and also that the Secret Service, FBI, CIA, should coordinate more closely the surveillance of organized groups (WR 463). In particular, it recommended that the Secret Service acquire a computerized data bank compatible with that already developed by the CIA.[8]

This pattern would repeat itself four years later, with the assassination of Robert Kennedy. How many of you are aware that, in the 24 hours between Bobby's shooting and his death, Congress hurriedly passed a statute - again drafted well in advance - that still further augmented the secret powers given to the Secret Service?[9] Don't think that this was a trivial or benign change: from this ill-considered act, passed under Johnson, flowed some of the worst excesses of the Nixon presidency.

In the chaos and violence at the Chicago Democratic Convention of 1968, army intelligence surveillance agents, seconded to the Secret Service, were present, both inside and outside the convention hall. Some of them equipped the so-called "Legion of Justice thugs whom the Chicago Red Squad turned loose on local anti-war groups." [10] The presence of army intelligence agents at the convention was authorized by the statute passed while Bobby Kennedy was dying.[11]

This brings us to 9/11. On that day, before the last plane had crashed in Pennsylvania, the White House authorized the institution of so-called COG plans. There is no doubt that COG was introduced - The 9/11 Report confirms it twice, on pages 38 and 326.[12] And I have little doubt that the COG plans, still in force today under President Obama, are the justification for the surveillance agents who are with you in the room as I speak to you at this moment. I have written that they are also the probable source for the Patriot Act, and also for the Department of Homeland Security's Project Endgame - a ten-year plan to expand detention camps, at a cost of \$400 million in Fiscal Year 2007 alone.[13] The worst features of the Bush decade were apparently all sketched out in COG planning - warrantless surveillance, warrantless detention, even suspension of our constitutional right of habeas corpus, first granted by Magna Carta in 1215.

I can't see you, but I'm going to ask you to raise your hands if you haven't heard about COG. If you haven't, please google for Cheney and COG when you get home (2.5 million hits), and perhaps even add "peter dale scott" to the search (9,470 hits).

You will find that officially "COG" stands for "Continuity of Government" planning. I always say that we should think of it as "Change of Government" planning, since it was well summarized 22 years ago by Alphonso Chardy in the *Miami Herald* as plans for "suspension of the Constitution...emergency appointment of military commanders...and declaration of martial law." [14]

Much is known about COG plans, and much more is not known. We know that the ultra-secret planning began in 1981 under Reagan and then Oliver North, and continued under George H.W. Bush and Clinton. Two of the key planners were Cheney and Rumsfeld, the two men who implemented it under 9/11, even though when Clinton was president both men, both Republicans, were heads of major corporations and not even in the government.[15]

We learned that COG planning was still active in 2007, when President Bush issued National Security Presidential Directive 51 (NSPD 51), which extended for one year the emergency proclaimed on September 14, 2001, and empowered the President to personally ensure “continuity of government” in the event of any “catastrophic emergency.” He announced that NSPD 51 contains “classified Continuity Annexes” which shall “be protected from unauthorized disclosure.” Under pressure from his 9/11truth constituents, Congressman DeFazio of the Homeland Security Committee twice requested to see these Annexes, the second time in a letter signed by the Chair of his committee.

His request was denied, indicating that (as I wrote in Counterpunch)

the systems of checks and balances established by the U.S. Constitution would seem to be failing... Continuity of Government planning has arguably already superseded the Constitution as a higher authority.[16]

One of the post-Watergate reforms so detested by Vice-President Cheney was the National Emergencies Act. It requires specifically that “Not later than six months after a national emergency is declared, ..., each House of Congress shall meet to consider a vote on a joint resolution to determine whether that emergency shall be terminated.”[17]

Former Congressman Dan Hamburg and I appealed publicly last year to Obama to terminate the emergency, and to Congress to hold the hearings required of them by statute.[18] But Obama, without discussion, extended the 9/11 Emergency again on September 10, 2009;[19] and Congress has continued to ignore its statutory obligations. One Congressman explained to a constituent that the provisions of the National Emergencies Act have now been rendered inoperative by COG. If true, this would seem to justify Chardy’s description of COG as suspension of the Constitution.

I want to conclude by addressing those of you who may think that I exhibit the kind of conspiratorialist mentality once criticized by G. William Domhoff, the naïve belief “that if we get rid of a few bad people, everything will be well in the world.”[20]

My own position is still that which I articulated two decades ago years ago in response to Domhoff:

I have always believed, and argued, that a true understanding of the Kennedy assassination will lead not to ‘a few bad people,’ but to the institutional and parapolitical [or deep political] arrangements which constitute the way we are systematically governed.[21]

Michael Parenti has endorsed what I wrote, and added, “In sum, national security state conspiracies [or what I am here calling deep events] are components of our political structure, not deviations from it.”[22]

Thanks to 9/11, followed by COG, we now have a military command in the United States (NORTHCOM), unprecedented surveillance of both foreign nationals and U.S. citizens, and plans for massive detention of folks like you and me, if our protests should begin to threaten

the war machine.

I call on you all to devise how to outwit these forces that are distorting our society.

The beginning of an antiwar movement is the time when it is hardest to be hopeful of success. And if what I have been saying is relevant, it will be harder now than in the 1960s to get our message to the American people. . This makes especially relevant some inspiring words I would like to quote from the late Howard Zinn, who died last Wednesday:

To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.[23]

Notes

[1] Cf. RAND Corporation, "How Terrorist Groups End: Implications for Countering al Qa'ida," Research Brief, RB-9351-RC (2008), http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9351/index1.html: "Minimize the use of U.S. military force. In most operations against al Qa'ida, local military forces frequently have more legitimacy to operate and a better understanding of the operating environment than U.S. forces have. This means a light U.S. military footprint or none at all."

[2] Noam Chomsky, *Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2002), http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Chomsky/Journalist_Mars.html.

[3] *New York Times*, March 13, 1994. Robert D. Kaplan reported his personal experience that Hekmatyar was "loathed by all the other party leaders, fundamentalist and moderate alike" (Robert D. Kaplan, *Soldiers of God: With Islamic Warriors in Afghanistan and Pakistan* [New York: Random House, 1990], 68-69).

[4] Noam Chomsky, *For Reasons of State* (New York: Vintage, 1973), 102; cf. 109.

[5] "Chomsky Dismisses 911 Conspiracy Theories As 'Dubious,'" Rense.com, December 13, 2006, <http://www.rense.com/general74/dismiss.htm>.

[6] Peter Dale Scott, *The Road to Afghanistan: The War Machine, the CIA, and the Global Drug Connection* (forthcoming)

[7] See for example Peter Dale Scott, *The War Conspiracy: JFK, 9/11, and the Deep Politics of War* (Ipswich, MA: Mary Ferrell Foundation Press, 2008), 341-96.

[8] Scott, *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK*, 280.

[9] Peter Dale Scott, Paul L. Hoch, and Russell Stetler, *The Assassinations: Dallas and Beyond* (New York: Random House, 1976), 443-46.

[10] George O'Toole, *The Private Sector* (New York: Norton, 1978), 145; quoted in Scott, *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK*, 278-79.

[11] Joan M. Jensen, *Army Surveillance in America, 1775-1980* (New Haven: Yale UP), 244.

[12] 9/11 Commission Report, 38, 326; Scott, *Road to 9/11*, 228-29.

[13] Scott, *Road to 9/11*, 238, 240-41.

[14] Chardy, *Miami Herald*, July 5, 1987; Scott, *Road to 9/11*, 241.

[15] Scott, *Road to 9/11*, 183-87.

[16] Peter Dale Scott, "Congress, the Bush Administration and Continuity of Government Planning: The Showdown," *Counterpunch*, March 31, 2008, <http://www.counterpunch.org/scott03312008.html>

[17] 50 U.S.C. 1622 (2002); Peter Dale Scott and Dan Hamburg, "Help Force Congress To Observe the Law on National Emergencies," March 24, 2009, http://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=view_all&address=389x5324819.

[18] Peter Dale Scott, "[To All Readers: Help Force Congress To Observe the Law on National Emergencies!!!](http://www.truth.org)" (with Dan Hamburg), <http://www.truth.org>, March 24, 2009, <http://www.911truth.org/article.php?story=20090324183053848#r7>.

[19] White House Press Release, September 10, 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Notice-of-continuation-from-the-president-regarding-the-emergency-declared-with-respect-to-the-September-11-2001-terrorist-attacks/.
A press briefing by Obama's spokesman Robert Gibbs the same day did not mention the extension.

[20] G. William Domhoff, in Jonathan Vankin, *Conspiracies, Cover-Ups, and Crimes: Political Manipulation and Mind Control in America* (New York: Paragon House, 1991), 125-26.

[21] Scott, *Deep Politics and the Death of JFK*, 11.

[22] Michael Parenti, *Dirty Truths: Reflections on Politics, Media, Ideology, Conspiracy, Ethnic Life and Class Power* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1996), 188.

[23] Howard Zinn, *You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train: A Personal History of Our Times* (Boston: Beacon, 2002), 208.

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