

# 9/11: Possible Motives Of The Bush Administration

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The 9/11 Commission understood that its mandate, as we have seen, was to provide “the fullest possible account” of the “facts and circumstances” surrounding 9/11. Included in those facts and circumstances are ones that, according to some critics of the official account of 9/11, provide evidence that the Bush administration intentionally allowed the attacks of 9/11. Some critics have even suggested that the Bush administration actively helped the attacks succeed. In light of the fact that several books have been written propounding such views, including some in English, the Commission’s staff, given its “exacting investigative work,” would surely have discovered such books. Or if not, the staff would at least have known about a front-page story on this topic in the Wall Street Journal. Readers of this story learned not only that a poll showed that 20 percent of the German population believed the “U.S. government ordered the attacks itself” but also that similar views were held in some other European countries.<sup>1</sup> Also, as we saw in the Introduction, polls show that significant percentages of Americans and Canadians believe that the US Government deliberately allowed the attacks to happen, with some of those believing the Bush administration actually planned the attacks. Knowing that such information is available and such views are held, the Commission, we would assume, would have felt called upon to respond to these suspicions.

An adequate response would contain at least the following elements: (1) an acknowledgment that these suspicions exist; (2) a summary of the main kinds of reports and alleged facts cited as evidence by those who have promoted these suspicions; and (3) an explanation of why these reports and alleged facts do not really constitute evidence for complicity by the Bush administration.

Finally, the persistence and widespread documentation of these allegations means that an adequate response would need to consider (if only to debunk) the motives that some critics have alleged the Bush administration would have had for facilitating the 9/11 attacks ? just as the Commission properly looked at motives that Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda organizations may have had for planning the attacks. For many Americans, of course even considering the possibility that their own government might have had motives for facilitating such attacks would not be pleasant. But an account, if it is to be the fullest possible account, cannot decide in advance to restrict itself to the ideas that are pleasant.

In this chapter, accordingly, we will look at *The 9/11 Commission Report* from this perspective, asking how it has responded to the fact that some critics of the official account have alleged that the Bush administration would have had several motives for allowing the attacks and even helping them succeed.

## **The 9/11 Attacks As “Opportunities”**

One way to approach this question would be to ask whether these attacks brought benefits to this administration that could reasonably have been anticipated.

There is no doubt that the attacks brought benefits. Indeed, several members of the Bush administration publicly said so. The president himself declared that the attacks provide “a great opportunity.”<sup>2</sup> Donald Rumsfeld stated that 9/11 created “the kind of opportunities that World War II offered, to refashion the world.” Condoleeza Rice had said the same thing in mind, telling senior members of the National Security Council to “think about ‘how do you capitalize on these opportunities’ to fundamentally change...the shape of the world.”<sup>3</sup> The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, issued by the Bush administration in September 2002, said: “The events of September 11, 2001, opened vast, new opportunities.”<sup>4</sup>

Of course, the fact that these members of the Bush administration described attacks as opportunities after the fact does not necessarily mean that they could have anticipated in advance that attacks of this nature would bring such opportunities. However, all of these statements, except for the last one, were made shortly after 9/11. If the benefits could be seen so soon after the attacks, we can assume that, if these people were thinking about such attacks ahead of time, they could have anticipated that they would create these opportunities.

It would seem, therefore, that the Bush administration’s description of the attacks as providing opportunities, along with the fact that at least some of these opportunities could have been anticipated, were important parts of the “events surrounding 9/11” that “the fullest possible account” would have included. These descriptions of the attacks of 9/11 as opportunities, however, are not mentioned in *The 9/11 Commission Report*.<sup>5</sup>

In any case, the idea that members of the Bush administration could have anticipated benefits from catastrophic attacks of the type that occurred on 9/11 does not rest entirely on inference from the fact that the attacks were seen as opportunities immediately after 9/11. Critics have referred to a pre-9/11 document that speaks of benefits that could accrue from catastrophic attacks. We need to see how the Commission responded to this part of the facts and circumstances surrounding 9/11.

### **“A New Pearl Harbor” To Advance The Pax Americana**

In the fall of 2000, a year before 9/11, a document entitled *Rebuilding America’s Defenses* was published by an organization calling itself the Project for the New American Century (PNAC).<sup>6</sup> This organization was formed by individuals who were members or at least supporters of the Reagan and Bush I administration, some of whom would go on to be central figures in the Bush II administration. These individuals include Richard Armitage, John Bolton, Dick Cheney, Zalmay Khalilzad (closely associated with Paul Wolfowitz<sup>7</sup>), Lewis “Scooter” Libby, Richard Perle, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, and James Woolsey. Libby (now Cheney’s chief of staff) and Wolfowitz (now Rumsfeld’s deputy) are listed as having participated directly in the project to produce *Rebuilding America’s Defenses*. Interestingly, John Lehman, a member of the 9/11 Commission, has been a member of the PNAC or at least publicly aligned with it.<sup>8</sup>

This PNAC document, after bemoaning the fact that spending for military purposes no longer captured as much of the US budget as it once did, argues that it is necessary for defense spending to be greatly increased if the “American peace is to be maintained, and

expanded,” because this Pax Americana “must have a secure foundation on unquestioned U.S. military preeminence.” The way to acquire and retain such military preeminence is to take full advantage of the “revolution in military affairs” made possible by technological advances. Bring about this transformation of US military forces will, however, probably be a long, slow process, partly because it will be very expensive. However, the document suggests, the process could occur more quickly if America suffered “some catastrophic and catalyzing event ? like a new Pearl Harbor.”<sup>9</sup> This statement, we would think, should have gotten the attention of some members of the 9/11 Commission.

After the 9/11 attacks came, moreover, the idea that they constituted a new Pearl Harbor was expressed by the president and some of his supporters. At the end of that very day, President Bush reportedly wrote in his diary: “The Pearl Harbor of the 21st century took place today.”<sup>10</sup> Also, minutes after the president’s address to the nation earlier that day, Henry Kissinger posted an online article in which he said: “The government should be charged with a systematic response that, one hopes, will end the way the attack on Pearl Harbor ended ? with the destruction of the system that is responsible for it.”<sup>11</sup>

One might think that the existence of these statements would have been perceived by the 9/11 Commission as part of the relevant “events surrounding 9/11” that should be included in “the fullest possible account.” But there is no mention of any of these statements on any of the 567 pages of the Kean-Zelikow Report.

Those pages are largely filled ? in line with the Commission’s unquestioned assumption ? with discussions of Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda, Islamic terrorism more generally, and American responses thereto. Then, after the Commission had disbanded, its staff released another 155-page report on al-Qaeda financing.<sup>12</sup> These matters were obviously considered essential for understanding the “facts and circumstances relating to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.”

But the fact that individuals who are central members and supporters of the Bush-Cheney administration endorsed a document indicating that “a new Pearl Harbor” would be helpful for furthering its aims; that some supporters of this administration and even the president himself then compared the 9/11 attacks to the Pearl Harbor attacks; and that several members of this administration said that 9/11 provided “opportunities” ? this complex fact was not thought worthy of a single sentence in the Commission’s “fullest possible account.” Indeed, the Commission’s report does not even mention the Project for the New American Century.

### **Generating Funds For The US Space Command**

One dimension of the “revolution in military affairs” discussed in the PNAC document is so important as to deserve separate treatment. This dimension is the militarization of space, which is now the province of a new branch of the American military, the US Space Command.

The purpose of this branch is to bring about “full spectrum dominance.” The idea is that the US military, with its air force, army, and navy, is already dominant in the air and on land and sea. The US Space Command will now ensure dominance in space. “Vision for 2020,” a document published by the US Space Command, puts it thus: “The emerging synergy of space superiority with land, sea, and air superiority, will lead to Full Spectrum Dominance.”<sup>13</sup>

The government's description of spending for the US Space Command as spending for "missile defense" makes its mission sound purely defensive ? augmenting "homeland security" by defending the United States from missile attacks. The mission statement in "Vision for 2020," however, states: "U.S. Space Command ? dominating the space dimension of military operations to protect US interests and investment."<sup>14</sup> Its primary purpose, in other words, is not to protect the American homeland but to protect American investments abroad. Such protection will be needed, it says, because "[t]he globalization of the world economy will continue with a widening between 'haves' and 'have-nots.'" The mission of the US Space Command, it is clear, is to protect the American "haves" from the world's "have-nots," as American-led globalization leaves these "have-nots" with even less.

The 9/11 Commission, however, makes no mention of the US Space Command's program and mission. To understand the full significance of this omission, it is necessary to understand that its program involves three parts. The first part involves space-based surveillance technology, through which US military leaders can identify enemies of US forces anywhere on the planet.<sup>15</sup>

The second part involves putting up space weapons, such as laser cannons, with which the United States will be able to destroy the satellites of other countries. "Vision for 2020" frankly states its desire to be able "to deny others the use of space."<sup>16</sup>

The third part of the program is usually called, the "missile defense shield," but its purpose, like that of the first two parts, is offensive.

As Rebuilding America's Defenses said (in a passage called "a remarkable admission" by Rahul Mahajan):

In the post-Cold-War era. America and its allies...have become the primary objects of deterrence and it is states like Iraq, Iran and North Korea who most wish to develop deterrent capabilities. Projecting conventional military forces... will be far more complex and constrained when the American homeland...is subject to attack by otherwise weak rogue regimes capable of cobbling together a minuscule ballistic missile force. Building an effective...system of missile defenses is a prerequisite for maintaining American preeminence.<sup>17</sup>

The purpose of the "missile defense shield," in other words, is not to deter other countries from launching a first strike against the United States. Its purpose is to prevent other countries from being able to deter the United States from launching a first strike against them.<sup>18</sup>

The major impediment to making this program operational is that it will be extremely expensive. According to one expert, it will require over \$1 trillion from American taxpayers.<sup>19</sup> The difficulty of getting Congress and the American people to pony up was the main reason for the PNAC document's statement that the desired transformation will take a long time "absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event ? like a New Pearl Harbor."<sup>20</sup>

In omitting any mention of this project for achieving global domination, therefore, the 9/11 Commission omitted a project so big that some of its backers, we can imagine, may have been able to rationalize an attack taking a few thousand American lives, if such an attack seemed necessary to get adequate funding for this project.

Donald Rumsfeld, as we saw, was a member of PNAC when it produced its document. He was also chairman of the Commission to Assess US National Security Space Management and Organization.<sup>21</sup> The task of this commission – commonly known as the “Rumsfeld Commission” – was to make proposals with regard to the US Space Command. After making various proposals that would “increase the asymmetry between U.S. forces and those of other military powers,” the Rumsfeld Commission Report said that, because its proposals would cost a lot of money and involve significant reorganization, they would probably encounter strong resistance. But, the report – which was issued January 7, 2001 – said:

The question is whether the U.S. will be wise enough to act responsibly and soon enough to reduce U.S. space vulnerability. Or 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.<sup>22</sup>

In speaking of a “Space Pearl Harbor,” the report meant an attack on its military satellites in space. The 9/11 attacks were obviously not of this nature. It is interesting, nevertheless, that only a few months after PNAC had issued its statement about “a new Pearl Harbor,” the Rumsfeld Commission also pointed out that a Pearl Harbor type of attack might be needed to “galvanize the nation.”

When the new Pearl Harbor came, Rumsfeld, having been made secretary of defense, was in position to use it to get more money for the US Space Command. Before TV cameras on the evening of 9/11 itself, Rumsfeld said to Senator Carl Levin, then chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee:

Senator Levin, you and other Democrats in Congress have voiced fear that you simply don't have enough money for the large increase in defense that the Pentagon is seeking, especially for missile defense...Does this sort of thing convince you that an emergency exists in this country to increase defense spending, to dip into Social Security, if necessary, to pay for defense spending – increase defense spending?<sup>23</sup>

Earlier that day, the Pentagon, which by then had been under Rumsfeld's leadership for almost seven months, failed to prevent airplane attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon itself. Now that very evening Rumsfeld was using the success of those attacks to get more money from Congress for the Pentagon and, in particular, for the US Space Command. One might think that this rather remarkable coincidence would have gotten the attention of the 9/11 Commission, because it suggests that the secretary of defense may not have wanted to prevent this “new Pearl Harbor.” But the Commission's report, focusing exclusively on al-Qaeda terrorists, makes no mention of this possible motive.

Rumsfeld was, moreover, not the only person highly committed to promoting the US Space Command who was in charge of military affairs on 9/11. Another was General Ralph E. Eberhart, the current head of the US Space Command, who is also the commander of NORAD.<sup>24</sup> General Richard Myers, the former head of the US Space Command, was on 9/11 the Acting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Of Staff.

A truly “independent” and “impartial” commission would surely comment on this remarkable coincidence – that three of the men in charge of the US military response on 9/11 were outspoken advocates of the US Space Command, that the US military under their control failed to prevent the attacks, and that one of these men then used the success of the attacks to obtain billions of dollars more for this branch of the military.

Coincidence does not, of course, prove complicity. Sometimes when events coincide in an improbable way, the coincidence is exactly what the term has generally come to mean; simply coincidental. It is well known, however, that after a crime the first question to be asked is *cui bono?* ? who benefits? A truly independent commission would at least have proceeded on the assumption that Rumsfeld, Myers, and Eberhart had to be regarded as possible suspects, whose actions that day were to be rigorously investigated. Instead, the testimonies of these three men were treated as unquestionable sources of truth as to what really happened ? despite, as we will see later, the contradictions in their stories.<sup>25</sup>

## **The Plan To Attack Afghanistan**

Critics have alleged that another possible motive on the part of the Bush administration was its desire to attack Afghanistan so as to replace the Taliban with a US-friendly government in order to further US economic and geopolitical aims.

The 9/11 Commission does recognize that the US war in Afghanistan ? which began on October 7, less than a month after 9/11 ? was a war to produce “regime change”. According to the Commission, however, the United States wanted to change the regime because the Taliban, besides being incapable of providing peace by ending the civil war, was perpetrating human rights abuses and providing a “safe haven” for al-Qaeda. In limiting the US motives to these, however, the Commission ignored abundant evidence that the motives were more complex, more self-interested, and more ambitious.

At the center of these motives was the desire to enable the building of a multibillion dollar pipeline route by a consortium known as CentGas (Central Asia Gas Pipeline), which was formed by US oil giant Unocal. The planned route would bring oil and gas from the land-locked Caspian region, with its enormous reserves, to the sea through Afghanistan and Pakistan. By 2001, the Taliban had come to be perceived as an obstacle to this project.

The Taliban was originally supported by the United States, working together with Pakistan’s ISI. The pipeline project had become the crucial issue in what Ahmed Rashid in 1997 dubbed “The New Great Game.”<sup>26</sup> One issue in this game was who would construct the pipeline route ? the Unocal-dominated CentGas Consortium or Argentina’s Bidas Corporation. The other issue was which countries the route would go through. The United States promoted Unocal and backed its plan to build the route through Afghanistan and Pakistan, since this route would avoid both Iran and Russia.<sup>27</sup> The main obstacle to this plan was the civil war that had been going on in Afghanistan since the withdrawal of the Soviet Union in 1989. The US government supported the Taliban in the late 1990s on the basis of hope that it would be able to unify the country through its military strength and then provide a stable government.

The centrality of this issue is shown by the title Rashid gave to two of his chapters: “Romancing the Taliban: The Battle for Pipelines.”<sup>28</sup> With regard to the United States in particular, Rashid says that “the strategy over pipelines had become the driving force behind Washington’s interest in the Taliban.”<sup>29</sup> However, although the Kean-Zelikow Commission cites Rashid’s well-known book several times, it makes no reference to his discussion of the centrality of the pipelines to Washington’s perspective.

From reading the Commission’s report, in fact, one would never suspect that “pipeline war” (as it became called) was a major US concern. The pipeline project in general and Unocal in

particular are mentioned in only one paragraph (along with its accompanying note). And the Commission here suggests that the US State Department was interested in Unocal's pipeline project only insofar as "the prospect of shared pipeline profits might lure faction leaders to a conference table". The United States, in other words, regarded the pipeline project only as a means to peace. That may indeed have been the view of some of the American participants. But the dominant hope within Unocal and the US government was that the Taliban would bring peace by defeating its opponents, primarily Ahmad Shah Masood ? after which the US government and the United Nations would recognize the Taliban as the government of Afghanistan, which in turn would allow Unocal to get the loans it would need to finance the project.<sup>30</sup>

The Commission's report, by contrast, suggests that neither the US government nor Unocal took the side of the Taliban in the civil war. The Commission tells us that Marty Miller, who had been in charge of the pipeline project for Unocal, "denied working exclusively with the Taliban and told us that his company sought to work with all Afghan factions to bring about the necessary stability to proceed with the project". As is often the case, the Commission's "exacting investigative work" consisted primarily of interviewing people and recording their answers. Had the Commission consulted Steve Coll's *Ghost Wars*, which the Commission quotes elsewhere, it could have learned that although "Marty Miller insisted publicly that Unocal remained 'fanatically neutral' about Afghan politics, " in reality "Marty Miller and his colleagues hoped the Taliban takeover of Kabul would speed their pipeline negotiations."<sup>31</sup> Coll is here referring to September 1996, when the Taliban, heavily financed by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, took over Kabul, the capital, by forcing Masood to flee. As soon as this occurred, Rashid reports, a Unocal executive "told wire agencies that the pipeline project would be easier to implement now that the Taliban had capture Kabul."<sup>32</sup> We are again left wondering if the Kean-Zelikow Commission's research was simply inadequate or if it deliberately left out information that did not fit its narrative.

There is a similar problem with the Commission's statement about US neutrality. The Commission says flatly: "U.S. diplomats did not favor the Taliban over the rival factions but were simply willing to 'give the Taliban a chance'". Interviews are again the only support offered. Had the Commission consulted Rashid's book on this issue, it would have read that the United States "accepted the ISI's analysis...that a Taliban victory in Afghanistan would make Unocal's job much easier."<sup>33</sup> Rashid also reports that "within house of Kabul's capture by the Taliban" ? when much of the country still remained under the control of other factions ? "the US State Department announced it would establish diplomatic relations with the Taliban."<sup>34</sup> The lack of US neutrality is likewise shown by Steve Coll, who says: "The State Department had taken up Unocal's agenda as its own" ? which meant, of course, support for the Taliban.<sup>35</sup>

Rashid, summarizing the situation, says that "the US-Unocal partnership was backing the Taliban and wanted an all-out Taliban victory ? even as the US and Unocal claimed they had no favourites in Afghanistan."<sup>36</sup> The Kean-Zelikow Commission, by contrast, simply gives us public relations statements of some of the US and Unocal actors, repeated in recent interviews, as actual history.

Why is it important to point out this distortion? Because the Commission's portrayal of US interests in Afghanistan suggests that the United States had no imperialistic or crass material interests in the area ? the kind of interests that might lead a government to devise a pretext for going to war. This issue becomes more important as we move to the point in the story at which the United States comes to think of the Taliban as an obstacle rather than

a vehicle of the Unocal (CEntGas) pipeline project.

In July 1998, the Taliban, after having failed in 1997 to take the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, finally succeeded, giving it control of most of Afghanistan, including the entire pipeline route. After this victory CentGas immediately announced that it was “ready to proceed.”<sup>37</sup> Shortly thereafter, however, the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were blown up, leading the United States to launch cruise missile strikes against OBL’s camps in Afghanistan. These and related developments led Unocal to withdraw from CentGas, convinced that Afghanistan under the Taliban would never have the peace and stability needed for the pipeline project.<sup>38</sup> Rashid, finishing his book in mid-1999, wrote that the Clinton Administration had shifted its support to the pipeline route from Azerbaijan through Georgia to Turkey, adding that “by now nobody wanted to touch Afghanistan and the Taliban.”<sup>39</sup>

When the Bush administration came to power, however, it decided to give the Taliban one last chance. This last chance occurred at a four-day meeting in Berlin in July 2001, which would need to be mentioned in any realistic account of how the US war in Afghanistan came about. According to the Pakistani representative at this meeting, Niaz Naik, US representatives, trying to convince the Taliban to share power with US-friendly factions, said: “Either you accept our offer of a carpet of gold, or we bury you under a carpet of bombs.”<sup>40</sup> Naik said that he was told by Americans that “military action against Afghanistan would go ahead...before the snows started falling in Afghanistan, by the middle of October at the latest.”<sup>41</sup> The US attack on Afghanistan began, in fact, on October 7, which was as soon as the US military could get ready after 9/11.<sup>42</sup>

The 9/11 Commission’s discussion of what transpired in July is much milder. Some members of the Bush administration, we are told, were “moving toward agreement that some last effort should be made to convince the Taliban to shift position and then, if that failed,...the United States would try covert action to topple the Taliban’s leadership from within”. There is no mention of Niaz Naik or the meeting in Berlin. The Commission’s reference to the fact that the United States wanted the Taliban to “shift position” does not mention that this shift involved not simply turning over OBL but joining a “unity government” that would allow Unocal’s pipeline project to go forward. Nor does the Commission mention the statement by US officials that if the Taliban refused, the United States would use military force (not merely covert action). And yet all this information was available in books and newspapers articles that the Commission’s staff should have been able to locate.

In any case, there was still further evidence, ignored by the Commission, that the US war against the Taliban was related more to the pipeline project than to 9/11. For one thing, President Bush’s special envoy to Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad (mentioned previously as a member of PNAC), and the new Prime Minister, Hamid Karzai, were previously on Unocal’s payroll. As Chalmers Johnson wrote: “The continued collaboration of Khalilzad and Karzai in post-9/11 Afghanistan strongly suggests that the Bush administration was and remains as interested in oil as in terrorism in that region.”<sup>43</sup> As early as October 10, moreover, the US Department of State had informed the Pakistani Minister of Oil that “in view of recent geopolitical developments,” Unocal was again ready to go ahead with the pipeline project.<sup>44</sup> Finally, as one Israeli writer put it: “If one looks at the map of the big American bases created, one is struck by the fact that they are completely identical to the route of the projected oil pipeline to the Indian Ocean.”<sup>45</sup>

There is considerable evidence, therefore, that, in Chalmer Johnson’s words, “Support for



[the dual oil and gas pipelines from Turkmenistan south through Afghanistan to the Arabian Sea coast of Pakistan] appears to have been a major consideration in the Bush administration's decision to attack Afghanistan on October 7, 2001" ? a point that Johnson makes apart from any allegation that the Bush administration orchestrated the attacks of 9/11.<sup>46</sup> But the 9/11 Commission does not even mention the fact that many people share Johnson's view, according to which the US war in Afghanistan was motivated by a concern much larger than those mentioned by the Commission.

This larger concern, furthermore, "was not just to make money," suggests Johnson, "but to establish an American presence in Central Asia." Evidence for this view is provided by the fact that the United States, besides establishing long-term bases in Afghanistan, had within a month after 9/11 arranged for long-term bases in Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.<sup>47</sup> The United States could thereby be seen to be carrying out the prescription of Zbigniew Brzezinski in his 1997 book, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, in which he portrayed Central Asia, with its vast oil reserves, as the key to world power. Brzezinski, who had been the National Security Advisor in the Carter administration, argued that America, to ensure its continued "primacy," must get control of this region. The Bush administration's use of 9/11 to establish bases in several countries in this region provided an essential step in that direction. In *The 9/11 Commission Report*, however, there is no hint of this development. The United States simply wanted to stop the war, bring an end to the Taliban's human rights abuses, and prevent Afghanistan from being used as a haven for terrorists. In the world of the Kean-Zelikow Commission, the United States had no larger ambitions.

The omission of Brzezinski's book means, furthermore, the omission of an earlier suggestion that a new Pearl Harbor could be helpful. Brzezinski, having argued that the present "window of historical opportunity for America's constructive exploitation of its global power could prove to be relatively brief,"<sup>48</sup> bemoans the fact that the American public might be unwilling to use its power for imperial purposes. The problem according to Brzezinski's analysis, is that:

America is too democratic at home to be autocratic abroad. This limits the use of America's power, especially its capacity for military intimidation...The economic self-denial (that is, defense spending) and the human sacrifice (casualties even among professional soldiers) required in the effort are uncongenial to democratic instincts. Democracy is inimical to imperial mobilization.<sup>49</sup>

Brzezinski suggests, however, that this weakness in democracy can be overcome. Having said that "the pursuit of power is not a goal that commands popular passion," he then adds: "except in conditions of a sudden threat or challenge to the public's sense of domestic well being."<sup>50</sup>

What would make the American public willing to make the economic and human sacrifices needed for "imperial mobilization," he suggests, would be "a truly massive and widely perceived direct external threat." This passage, near the end of the book, is parallel to an earlier passage, in which Brzezinski said that the public was willing to support "America's engagement in World War II largely because of the shock effect of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor."<sup>51</sup> A new Pearl Harbor would, accordingly, allow America to ensure its continued primacy by gaining control of Central Asia.

In deciding which events belonged to the category of "events surrounding 9/11" a ? meaning

events relevant to understanding why and how the attacks of 9/11 occurred ? the Commission chose to include OBL's 1998 statement that Muslims should kill Americans (47). That was considered obviously relevant. But the 9/11 Commission did not include Brzezinski's 1997 suggestion that a new Pearl Harbor would prod Americans to support the increased money for the military needed to support imperial mobilization ? even though the Commission points out that 9/11 had exactly the result that Brzezinski predicted saying:

The nation has committed enormous resources to national security and to countering terrorism. Between fiscal year 2001, the last budget adopted before 9/11, and the present fiscal year 2004, total federal spending on defense (including expenditures on both Iraq and Afghanistan), homeland security, and international affairs rose more than 50 percent, from \$345 billion to about \$547 billion. The United States has not experienced such a rapid surge in national security spending since the Korean War. (361)

But the Commissioners evidently thought it too much of a stretch to ask whether motive might be inferred from effect.

We see again how the Commission's unquestioned assumption ? that the 9/11 attacks were planned and executed entirely by al-Qaeda under the guidance of Osama bin Laden ? determined in advance its selection of which events constituted "events surrounding 9/11." In line with this assumption, the 9/11 Commission has given us an extremely simplistic picture of US motivations behind the attack on Afghanistan. The Commission has, in particular, omitted all those facts suggesting that 9/11 was more the pretext than the basis for the war in Afghanistan.

### **The Plan To Attack Iraq**

The Bush administration's attack on Iraq in 2003 is probably the issue on which the 9/11 Commission has been regarded as the most critical, stating that it found no evidence of "collaborative operational relationship" between OBL and Saddam Hussein's Iraq and no evidence, in particular, "that Iraq cooperated with al Qaeda in developing or carrying out any attacks against the United States" (66). This statement, released in a staff report about a month before the publication of the final report, created much discussion in the press. The quantity and the intensity of this discussion was increased by the fact that the president and especially the vice president reacted strongly, with the latter calling "outrageous" a front-page story in the *New York Times* headed "Panel Finds No Qaeda-Iraq Tie."<sup>52</sup> The resulting commentary ranged from William Safire's column, in which he lashed out at the Commission's chairman and vice chairman for letting themselves be "jerked around by a manipulative staff," to a *New York Times* story headed "Political Uproar: 9/11 Panel Members Debate Qaeda-Iraq 'Tie,'" to Joe Conason's article entitled "9/11 Panel Becomes Cheney's Nightmare."<sup>53</sup>

This commentary gave the appearance that the 9/11 Commission, perhaps especially its staff, was truly independent, telling the truth no matter how embarrassing it might be to the White House. That, of course, was mere appearance. Nevertheless, given the fact that Bush and Cheney continued to insist on the existence of ties between Iraq and al-Qaeda, the Commission did in this case report something contrary to the public position of the White House.

The Commission was furthermore, forthcoming about the extent to which certain members of the Bush administration pushed for attacking Iraq immediately after 9/11. It pointed out

that Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld instructed General Myers to find out as much as he could about Saddam Hussein's possible responsibility for 9/11. It also cited a report according to which, at the first session at Camp David after 9/11, Rumsfeld began by asking what should be done about Iraq (334-35). The Commission even portrayed Rumsfeld's deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, as arguing that Saddam should be attacked even if there were only a 10 percent chance that he was behind the 9/11 attacks (335-36).<sup>54</sup> Finally, the Commission reported Richard Clarke's statement that the president told him the day after 9/11 to see if Saddam was linked to the attacks in any way (334). The Commission was, therefore, quite frank about the fact that some leaders of the Bush administration were ready from the outset to attack Iraq because of its possible connections to 9/11 or at least al-Qaeda-connections for which the Commission said that it could find no credible evidence.

The Commission has, nevertheless, omitted facts about the decision to attack Iraq that should have been included in a "fullest possible account." These facts are important because their omission means that readers of *The 9/11 Commission Report* are shielded from evidence about how deep and long-standing the desire to attack Iraq had been among some members of the Bush administration.

Some of these omitted facts support the claim that the plan to attack Iraq had, in Chalmers Johnson's words, "been in the works for at least a decade."<sup>55</sup> In pushing it back that far, Johnson is referring to the fact that after the Gulf War of 1991, several individuals in the White House and the Pentagon believed that the United States should have gone to Baghdad and taken out Saddam Hussein, as they indicated "in reports written for then Secretary of Defense Cheney."<sup>56</sup> In 1996, a document entitled "A Clean Break" was produced by a study group led by Richard Perle (who would the following year become a founding member of PNAC). Recommending that Israel adopt a policy of "preemption," Perle and his colleagues suggested that Israel begin "rolling back Syria," an effort that should "focus on removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq." Advocating that Israel invade Lebanon and then Syria, this document included texts to be used for speeches justifying the action in a way that would win sympathy in America. Besides "drawing attention to [Syria's] weapons of mass destruction," Israel should say:

Negotiations with repressive regimes like Syria's require cautious realism...It is dangerous for Israel to deal naively with a regime murderous of its own people, openly aggressive toward its neighbors...and supportive of the most deadly terrorist organizations.<sup>57</sup>

As James Bamford points out in *A Pretext For War*, these justifications were very similar to those that would be used in later years to justify America's attack on Iraq.<sup>58</sup>

The argument for this American attack on Iraq became more visible the following year, after PNAC was formed. In December 1997, Paul Wolfowitz and Zalmay Khalilzad published an article in the *Weekly Standard* ? which is edited by the chairman of PNAC, William Kristol ? entitled "Saddam Must Go."<sup>59</sup> A month later, these three and fifteen other members of PNAC ? including Donald Rumsfeld, John Bolton, and Richard Perle ? sent a letter to President Clinton urging him to use military force to "remove Saddam Hussein and his regime from power" and thereby "to protect our vital interests in the Gulf." In May 1997, they sent a letter to Newt Gingrich and Trent Lott ? the Speaker of the House and the Senate majority leader, respectively. Complaining that Clinton had not listened to them, these letter-writers said that the United States "should establish and maintain a strong U.S. military presence in the region, and be prepared to use that force to protect our vital interests in the Gulf ? and, if necessary, to help remove Saddam from power."<sup>60</sup> Finally,

*Rebuilding America's Defenses*, published by PNAC in September 2000, emphasized that Iraq under Saddam Hussein was a threat to American interests in the region.<sup>61</sup>

When the Bush administration took office in 2001, Chalmers Johnson points out, "ten of the eighteen signers of the letters to Clinton and Republican congressional leaders became members of the administration."<sup>62</sup> It was no mere coincidence, therefore, that — as both Paul O'Neil and Richard Clarke have emphasized — the Bush administration was already intent on removing Saddam Hussein when it took office.<sup>63</sup> And it is also not surprising to learn that immediately after the 9/11 attacks, some members of the Bush administration wanted to use those attacks as the basis for their long-desired invasion to bring about regime change in Iraq.

But the Kean-Zelikow Commission, having left out that background, provides no context for readers to understand why and how strongly some members of the Bush administration wanted to attack Iraq. Indeed, the Commission fails to make clear just how ready some of them were to go to war against Iraq even if there was no evidence of its complicity in the attacks. A crucial omission in this respect is the failure to quote notes of Rumsfeld's conversations on 9/11 that were jotted down by an aide. These notes, which were later revealed by CBS News, indicate that Rumsfeld wanted the "best info fast. Judge whether good enough hit S.H. [Saddam Hussein] at same time. Not only UBL [Usama Bin Laden]. Go massive. Sweep it all up. Things related and not."<sup>64</sup> James Bamford, after quoting these notes, says: "From the notes it was clear that the attacks would be used as a pretext for war against Saddam Hussein."<sup>65</sup>

The Commission, by contrast, merely tells us that notes from that day indicate that "Secretary Rumsfeld instructed Myers to obtain quickly as much information as possible" and to consider "a wide range of options and possibilities". The Commission then adds:

The secretary said his instinct was to hit Saddam Hussein at the same time — not only Bin Laden. Secretary Rumsfeld later explained that at the time, he had been considering either one of them or perhaps someone else, as the responsible party. (335)

From the Commission's account alone, we would assume that Rumsfeld was thinking of hitting Saddam if and only if there was good evidence that he was "the responsible party." As the notes quoted by CBS and Bamford show, however, Rumsfeld wanted to use 9/11 as the basis for a "massive" response that would take care of many threats to American interests ("Sweep It Up"), especially Saddam Hussein, whether he was responsible or not ("Things related and not"). The Kean-Zelikow Commission, with its omission and distortions, hides this fact from us.

Furthermore, just as the Commission failed to point out the centrality of oil and military bases in the Bush administration's interest in Afghanistan, it does the same in relation to Iraq — even though this country has the second largest known oil reserves in the world. The Commission does say that at a National Security Council meeting on September 17, "President Bush ordered the Defense Department to be ready to deal with Iraq if Baghdad acted against U.S. interests, with plans to include possibly occupying Iraqi oil fields" (335). But this is the sole hint in the Kean-Zelikow Report that the Bush administration might have had an interest in getting control of Iraqi oil.

Even this statement, moreover, is doubly qualified. Far from suggesting that Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, and other members of the Bush administration were chomping at the bit to

attack Iraq, as the PNAC letters reveal, the Commission suggests that the Bush administration would have thought of acting against Saddam only if he “acted against U.S. interests.” And far from suggesting that getting control of Iraq’s oil would be a central motivation, the Commission suggests that the plans for attack might only “possibly” include occupying Iraqi oil fields.

From other sources, however, we get quite a different picture. Within months after 9/11, Paul O’Neill reports, the Defense Intelligence Agency, which works for Rumsfeld, had begun mapping Iraq’s oil fields. It also provided a document, entitled “Foreign Suitors for Iraqi Oilfield Contracts,” which suggested how Iraq’s huge reserves might be divided up.<sup>66</sup> The centrality of oil was also pointed out by Stephen Gowans, who wrote:

[T]he top item on the Pentagon’s agenda, once it gave the order for jackboots to begin marching on Baghdad, was to secure the oil fields in southern Iraq. And when chaos broke out in Baghdad, US forces let gangs of looters and arsonists run riot through “the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Irrigation, the Ministry of Trade, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Information.” ...But at the Ministry of Oil, where archives and files related to all the oil wealth Washington has been itching to get its hands on, all was calm, for ringing the Ministry was a phalanx of tanks and armored personnel carriers.<sup>67</sup>

These accounts reveal the distorted picture provided by the 9/11 Commissioners, whose solitary mention of Iraq’s oil suggests that US troops, if they attacked Iraq, might or might not occupy the oil fields.

A more realistic account is also given by Chalmers Johnson, who emphasizes that in relation to oil-rich regions, the US interest in oil and its interest in bases go hand in hand.

[The] renewed interest in Central, South, and Southwest Asia included the opening of military-to-military ties with the independent Central Asian republics of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan and support for a Taliban government in Afghanistan as a way to obtain gas and oil pipeline rights for an American-led consortium. But the jewel in the crown of this grand strategy was a plan to replace the Ba’ath regime in Iraq with a pro-American puppet government and build permanent military bases there.<sup>68</sup>

Johnson’s emphasis on the motivation to establish more military bases is supported by PNAC itself, which said in its 2000 document:

[T]he United States has for decades sought to play a more permanent role in Gulf regional security. While the unresolved conflict with Iraq provides the immediate justification, the need for a substantial American presence in the Gulf transcends the issue of the regime of Saddam Hussein.<sup>69</sup>

As this statement indicates, the plan was for the American military to remain in Iraq long after Saddam Hussein was deposed—perhaps until the exhaustion of the Iraqi oil reserves.

If we move beyond the 9/11 Commission’s simplistic and noncontextual account of the Bush administration’s reasons for attacking Iraq, we can see that the stakes were immense, involving not only trillions of dollars but also global geopolitical control. (For example, even if the United States will not need Iraqi oil in the near future, East Asia and Europe will, so that the United States, by controlling their oil supply, will be able to exert strong influence

over their political-economic life.) Accordingly, we can see that the desire to attack an occupy Iraq, expressed by the same people who suggested that a “new Pearl Harbor” could be helpful, might have provided a motive for facilitating the attacks of 9/11.

*The 9/11 Commission Report*, however, omits all the parts of the story that might lead to this thought. We receive no idea that Iraq might have been “the jewel in the crown” of the US master plan. In the world of the Kean-Zelikow Report, in fact, America has no imperialistic master plan. It is simply an altruistic nation struggling to defend itself against enemies who hate its freedoms.

## **Summary**

As I pointed out in the Introduction, *The 9/11 Commission Report* endorses the official conspiracy theory, according to which the attacks of 9/11 were carried out solely by al-Qaeda, under the direction of Osama bin Laden. I am looking at this report from the perspective of the alternative conspiracy theory, according to which officials of the US government were involved. Although the Commission did not mention this alternative hypothesis, it was clearly seeking to undermine its plausibility. One way to do this would be to show that, contrary to those who hold this hypothesis, the Bush administration did not have any interests or plans that could have provided a sufficient motive for arranging or at least allowing such murderous attacks on its own citizens. The Commission did not do this directly, by explicitly addressing the motives alleged by those who endorse the alternative hypothesis. But it did not do it indirectly, by portraying the Bush administration, and the US government more generally, as devoid of motives in question.

The Kean-Zelikow Commission, however, could provide this portrayal only by means of numerous omissions and distortions. Besides omitting the Bush administration’s reference to the 9/11 attacks as “opportunities,” it omitted any discussion of the US Space Command, with its mission to solidify global dominance, and of the PNAC document, with its suggestion that a new Pearl Harbor would be helpful. It omitted historical facts showing that the Bush administration had plans to attack both Afghanistan and Iraq before 9/11, so that the attacks served as a pretext rather than a cause. And the Commission distorted US motives in those attacks, portraying US leaders as interested only in self-defense, human rights, and peace, not oil, bases, and geopolitical primacy.

End

## **Notes:**

1. Ian Johnson, “Conspiracy Theories about Sept. 11 Get Hearing in Germany,” *Wall Street Journal*, September 29th, 2003.
2. Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 32.
3. “Secretary Rumsfeld Interview with the *New York Times*,” *New York Times*, October 12, 2001. For Rice’s statement, see Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* (New York: Henry Hold, 2004), 229.
4. *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002 (available at [www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html))
5. The only statement I have seen that even comes close is the Commission’s

statement that “[t]he President noted that the attacks provided a great opportunity to engage Russia and China” (330).

6. The Project for the New American Century (henceforth PNAC) *Rebuilding America’s Defenses: Strategy, Forces and Resources for a New Century*, September 2000 ([www.newamericancentury.org](http://www.newamericancentury.org)).
7. Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire*, 178.
8. Lehman, who was secretary of the navy during two Reagan administrations, signed PNAC’s “Letter to President Bush on the War on Terrorism,” September 20, 2001 ([www.newamericancentury.org/Bushletter.htm](http://www.newamericancentury.org/Bushletter.htm)).
9. PNAC, *Rebuilding America’s Defenses*, 51.
10. *Washington Post*, January 27, 2002.
11. Henry Kissinger, “Destroy the Network,” *Washington Post*, September 11, 2001.
12. Greg Miller, “Al Qaeda Finances Down, Panel Says,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 22, 2004.
13. This document, which I downloaded in 2003, gives [www.spacecom.af.mil/usspace](http://www.spacecom.af.mil/usspace) as the website for the US Space Command. But in August 2004, I found that I could no longer access this site.
14. An earlier version of this document, entitled “Joint Vision 2010,” is discussed in Jack Hitt, “The Next Battlefield May Be in Outer Space,” *New York Times Magazine*, August 5, 2001, and in Karl Grossman, *Weapons in Space* (New York: Seven Stories, 2001).
15. The developments that had been achieved already by 1998 are described in George Friedman and Meredith Friedman, *The Future of War: Power, Technology and American World Dominance in the 21st Century* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1998)
16. For a brief overview of this project, see Grossman, *Weapons in Space*.
17. PNAC, *Rebuilding America’s Defenses*, 54, quoted and discussed in Rahul Mahajan, *Full Spectrum Dominance: U.S. Power in Iraq and Beyond* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), 53-54. The idea is that if some country the United States wishes to attack has a modest number of nuclear missiles, we could eliminate most of them with a first strike. If the country then launched its few surviving missiles at the United States, they would probably not get through our missile defense shield. Although this shield would probably not protect America from a first strike in which many missiles were fired, it would, the theory is, knock down all the missiles in a small-scale attack. The foreign country would have good reason to believe, therefore, that the United States might go ahead and attack it in spite of its possession of nuclear weapons. It would, therefore, realize that its efforts to deter the United States with threats to retaliate would be futile. As a result, the United States could simply take over the country without needing to attack its nuclear missiles.
18. Paul O’Neill, the first Secretary of the Treasury in the Bush-Cheney administration, reports that a memo written by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, a member of PNAC, said that threats to US security were being created by the fact that regional powers hostile to the United States were “arming to deter us.” See Ron Suskind, *The Price of Loyalty: George W. Bush, the White House, and the Education of Paul O’Neill* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 81.
19. This figure is reported in the *Global Network Space Newsletter #14* (Fall, 2003), which is posted on the website of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space ([www.space4peace.org](http://www.space4peace.org)).

20. Any possible doubt about the statement's meaning was reportedly dispelled by Christopher Maletz, assistant director of PNAC. Christopher Bollyn says that when he asked Maletz what was meant by the need for "a new Pearl Harbor," he replied: "They need more money to up the defense budget for raises, new arms, and future capabilities," and neither the politicians nor the military would have approved "without some disaster or catastrophic event." Christopher Bollyn, "America 'Pearl Harbored,'" *American Free Press*, updated April 12, 2004 ([http://www.americanfreepress.net/12\\_24\\_02/American\\_Pearl\\_Harbored/america\\_pearl\\_harbored.html](http://www.americanfreepress.net/12_24_02/American_Pearl_Harbored/america_pearl_harbored.html)).
21. Report of the Commission to Assess U.S. National Security Space Management and Organization ([www.defenselink.mil/cgi-bin/dlprint.cgi](http://www.defenselink.mil/cgi-bin/dlprint.cgi)).
22. *Ibid.*, quoted in Thierry Meyssan *9/11: The Big Lie* (London: Carnot, 2002), 151-52.
23. Department of Defense News Briefing on Pentagon Attack ([www.defenselink.mil/cgi-bin/dlprint.cgi](http://www.defenselink.mil/cgi-bin/dlprint.cgi)), quoted in Meyssan, *9/11: The Big Lie*, 152.
24. This point is emphasized by Meyssan, *9/11: The Big Lie*, 154.
25. An examination of the Commission's report shows that Rumsfeld is mentioned in 53 paragraphs, Myers in 18 and Eberhart in 8. Many of these places site interviews with them as sources of information. None of them reflect any questions implying that any aspects of their behavior that day might have been less than exemplary, or that any of their statements may have been less than fully truthful.
26. See Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 145. Rashid first used this name in "The New Great Game: The Battle for Central Asia's Oil," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 10, 1997. He also uses it for Part 3 of *The Taliban*. Chalmers Johnson refers to Rashid as "the preeminent authority on the politics of Central Asia" (*The Sorrows of Empire*, 179).
27. See Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 305
28. Rashid, *Taliban*, Chs. 12 and 13.
29. *Ibid.*, 163.
30. Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 308; Rashid, *Taliban*, 167, 171; Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire*, 177.
31. Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 338.
32. Rashid, 166.
33. Rashid, *Taliban*, 168.
34. *Ibid.*, 166. Although, as Rashid reports, the State Department quickly retracted this announcement, the revelation of its true sympathies had been made.
35. Coll, *Ghost Wars*, 330.
36. Rashid, *Taliban*, 166.
37. *Telegraph*, August 13, 1998, quoted in NPH 90.
38. Rashid, *Taliban*, 75-79, 175.
39. *Ibid.*, 175.
40. Quoted in Jean-Charles Brisard and Guillaume Dasquie, *Forbidden Truth: U.S. Secret Oil Diplomacy and the Failed Hunt for Bin Laden* (New York: Nation Books/Thunder's Mouth Press, 2002), and NPH 91.
41. George Arney, "U.S. 'Planned Attack on Taleban'," *BBC News*, September 18, 2001 ("Taleban" is a spelling preferred by some British writers).
42. The basis for this attack was provided on 9/11 itself. In the president's statement



to the nation that evening, he declared: "We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them." Then in a meeting of the National Security Council, which followed immediately, CIA Director Tenet reportedly said that al-Qaeda and the Taliban are essentially one and the same, after which Bush said to tell the Taliban that we were finished with them (Washington Post, January 27, 2002).

43. Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire*, 178-79.
44. *The Frontier Post*, October 10, 2001, cited in Ahmed, *The War on Freedom*, 227.
45. *Chicago Tribune*, March 18, 2002, quoting from the Israeli newspaper, *Ma'ariv*.
46. Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire*, 176.
47. *Ibid.*, 182-83.
48. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 210.
49. *Ibid.*, 35-36.
50. *Ibid.*, 36.
51. *Ibid.*, 212, 24-25.
52. Reported in David E. Sanger and Robin Toner, "Bush Cheney Talk of Iraq and al-Qaida Link," *New York Times*, June 18, 2004.
53. William Safire, *New York Times*, June 21, 2004; Susan Jo Keller, "Political Uproar: 9/11 Panel Members Debate Qaeda-Iraq 'Tie,'" *New York Times*, June 21, 2004 (<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/21/politics/21PANE.html>); Joe Conason, "9/11 Panel Becomes Cheney's Nightmare" (available at [www.911citizenswatch.org/modules.php?op=modload&nam=News&file=article&sid=319](http://www.911citizenswatch.org/modules.php?op=modload&nam=News&file=article&sid=319)).
54. The Commission added that Wolfowitz said that the chances of Saddam's involvement were high partly because he suspected that Saddam was behind the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center - a theory for which the Commission says it found no credible evidence (336, 559n73).
55. Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire*, 227.
56. Although Johnson does not name it, he probably has in mind the Pentagon's 1992 "Defense Planning Guidance" (DPG), authored primarily by Paul Wolfowitz, then the undersecretary of defense for policy, and Lewis "Scooter" Libby.
57. The Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies, "A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm," July 8, 1996 (<http://www.israeleconomy.org/stratl.htm>).
58. James Bamford, *A Pretext for War* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 263.
59. Paul D. Wolfowitz and Zalmay M. Khalilzad, "Saddam Must Go," *Weekly Standard* (December 1997).
60. PNAC, "Letter to President Clinton on Iraq," January 26, 1998 ([www.newamericancentury.org](http://www.newamericancentury.org)); PNAC, "Letter to Gingrich and Lott," May 29, 1998 ([www.newamericancentury.org](http://www.newamericancentury.org)).
61. PNAC, *Rebuilding America's Defenses*, 14, 17.
62. Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire*, 228-29.
63. See Ron Susskind, *The Price of Loyalty*, 75, 91. In an interview on CBS's "60 Minutes" in January 2004, O'Neill, who as Secretary of the Treasury was a member of the National Security Council, said that the main topic within days of the inauguration was going after Saddam, with the question being not "Why Saddam?" or "Why Now?" but merely "finding a way to do it" ([www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/01/09/60minutes/main592330.shtml](http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/01/09/60minutes/main592330.shtml)). "[H]e is right," says Richard Clarke about O'Neill's claim. "The administration of the

second George Bush did begin with Iraq on its agenda.” Richard A Clarke, *Against All Enemies: Inside America’s war on Terror* (New York: Free Press, 2004), 264.

64. These notes were quoted These notes were quoted in “Plans for Iraq Attack Began on 9/11,” CBS News, September 4, 2002.
65. Bamford, *A Pretext for War*, 285.
66. Susskind, *The Price of Loyalty*, 96.
67. Stephen Gowans, “Regime Change in Iraq: A New Government by and for US Capital,” ZNet, April 20, 2003; the internal quote is from Robert Fisk, *Independent*, April 14, 2003.
68. Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire*, 226.
69. PNAC, *Rebuilding America’s Defenses*, 14.

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