

9/11 and the Trans Afghan Pipeline Project (TAPI): The Invasion of Afghanistan Had Been Planned Prior to 9/11. The Missing Enron Link

Histories of 9/11 rarely cover the reasons why Afghanistan was chosen to be attacked or the significance of the timing; they should look to the decline of Enron for the answers.

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The day after the events of Sept. 11, 2001, the United States demanded that NATO members follow Article 5 and join it in retribution for the attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. While it came to be known that the US State Department had written a letter in August, 2001, claiming that the US military would be in Afghanistan by the following October, the questions of “why Afghanistan?” and “why October?” were not closely examined.

There were no “hijackers” from Afghanistan and the Taliban had immediately been amenable to extraditing Osama bin Laden (who denied responsibility for 9/11); ultimately, the FBI found no evidence of bin Laden’s involvement. Although the US had been negotiating a gas route through Afghanistan with the Taliban until August, 2001, the lack of success was not considered that significant. And why the rush to invade Afghanistan before any investigation into 9/11 could be carried out?

Nafeez Ahmed, in his stunning Part II of “*How the CIA made Google*”: “*Inside the secret network behind mass surveillance, endless war, and Skynet*”, connects the dots through President George W. Bush’s energy policy: specifically, Vice President Dick Cheney’s relationship with Enron and Ken Lay, variously CEO or Chairman of Enron.

President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney’s administration came to office in 2001, in the middle of a California energy crisis which had caused a 10-fold rise in energy costs (largely due to Enron!). Bush claimed that the energy situation would be his administration’s top priority. Dick Cheney became chairman of a White House Energy Task Force, the “National Energy Policy Development Group”, which was to formulate national

policy to deal with the energy crisis.

The “National Energy Task Force” held secret meetings that set in motion not only U.S. energy policy but also foreign and military policy, specifically for Iraq and Afghanistan. The long-sought transcripts of Dick Cheney’s meeting with Ken Lay and other Enron officials have never been made public, but it was clear that Lay’s vision of a TAPI pipeline — from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan, Pakistan and India — that the US would control became a key part of the government’s policy. As Ahmed noted: *“ensuring the flow of cheap gas to India via the Trans-Afghan pipeline [became] a matter of US ‘national security.’”*

The problem became Enron’s financial stability. Enron had invested \$3 billion in the Dabhol plant in India, which India did not want to complete because it was uneconomical. The US government tried to help Enron by pressuring India to complete the Dabhol plant: pressure that would continue until early November, 2001. In June, 2001, however, the construction on the Dabhol power plant was shut down because the Trans-Afghan pipeline plan fell through. The failure of the \$3 billion Dabhol project threatened Enron’s financial stability; Ken Lay informed the Bush administration that month that Enron was in trouble. It appears that by the next month, the administration started to look into invading Afghanistan.

That August, US officials were still trying desperately to salvage the Afghan pipeline route by negotiating with the Taliban; if the Taliban *were* able to secure the pipeline route through Afghanistan, the US promised to recognize the Taliban as the official Afghan government. The US reportedly told the Taliban, “We will either make you very rich or we will destroy you.” The Taliban faced two major problems, however. Firstly, Afghanistan would not benefit from the pipeline because it was not to access the gas going through its country. More importantly, the Taliban did not control Afghanistan and they had no way of being able to secure the route through their country.

On August 15th, an Enron lobbyist informed White House economic advisor Robert McNally that Enron was facing a financial crisis that could cripple American energy markets. That month, US officials claimed that the US would invade Afghanistan in mid- October.

The US sprang into action. According to Ahmed’s article:

Two days before 9/11, Condoleeza Rice received the draft of a formal National Security Presidential Directive that Bush was expected to sign immediately. The directive contained a comprehensive plan to launch a global war on al-Qaeda, including an “imminent” invasion of Afghanistan to topple the Taliban. The directive was approved by the highest levels of the White House and officials of the National Security Council, including of course Rice and Rumsfeld. The same NSC officials were simultaneously running the Dhabol Working Group to secure the Indian power plant deal for Enron’s Trans-Afghan pipeline project. The next day, **one day before 9/11**, the Bush administration formally agreed on the plan to attack the Taliban. [emphasis added]

Enron’s financial problems became evident in October, and on December 2, 2001, Enron filed for Chapter 2 bankruptcy protection. The bankruptcy was one of the largest in U.S. history, eliminating \$60 billion in assets and leaving thousands without their pensions and savings.

A largely unheralded event that December eliminated another U.S. motive for invading

Afghanistan. Osama bin Laden, supposedly the point of the invasion, was widely believed to have died on December 17, 2001, from the advanced kidney disease he was known to have suffered from.

American theologian David Ray Griffin documented the evidence of bin Laden's death in his 2008 book, *"Osama bin Laden: Dead or Alive?"* and also in an interview with Bonnie Faulkner in her *Guns and Butter* program of July 22, 2009 (accessible at the [UNZ archive](#)). Besides facial differences in photos supposedly of bin Laden after December, 2001, Griffin noted the difference in bin Laden's language; after that date, the language ascribed to bin Laden was far less religious in content.

But for U.S. purposes, bin Laden died too early; too many soldiers and citizens were bent on 9/11 payback. And the U.S. still harbored plans for the pipeline because its Afghan bases were placed at the key points in what had been the hoped-for pipeline route.

Because the U.S. had not been honest about why it had invaded Afghanistan, it could not find a valid excuse to end the war. To finally put an end to the myth that Osama bin Laden was still living, U.S. President Barak Obama held a raid in May, 2011 that killed some poor Afghan, but the war still dragged on. The war on Afghanistan continued for 20 years, until a revived Taliban brought the NATO occupation to an abrupt end in July, 2021.

Vengeful despite the devastation it had wrought on the country and on its society, the U.S. continues to punish and impoverish Afghans. Although the U.S. refused to count civilian deaths, one estimate claims that as many as one million Afghans were killed by NATO.

Most Americans have come to distrust the U.S. government and the mainstream media. The fact that the government and media still blame the events of September 11, 2001 for:

- □ the U.S. and NATO's war on Afghanistan, (and at one point on Iraq);
- □ the unending "War on Terror" that turned Muslims into terror suspects;
- □ the "Patriot Act" with its elimination of American civil rights, and
- □ the Presidential "AUMF" (*the open-ended "Authorization to Use Military Force" which has been given wide interpretation to allow attacks on almost anyone, almost anywhere*);

can be seen as valid reason for skepticism — *which must be ongoing.*

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