

Should George W. Bush Be Arrested in Calgary, Alberta, To Be Tried For International Crimes?

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This text by Anthony J. Hall, Professor of Globalization Studies at the University of Lethbridge was presented at the annual distinguished lecture sponsored by the Sociology Department of the University of Winnipeg, 6 March, 2009

Serious allegations of criminality are swirling around ex-US President George W. Bush and current Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir. In late February of 2009 it was reported that the Hague-based International Criminal Court was preparing to issue a warrant for al-Bashir alleging his culpability for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. As the documents were being prepared against Sudan's head of state, ex-President Bush was preparing to initiate a series of high-paying speaking engagements beginning in Calgary Alberta on March 17. Bush's visit to Alberta's oil capital tests the consistency and authenticity of the Canadian government's "unequivocal" position that "Canada is not and will not become a safe haven for persons involved in war crimes, crimes against humanity or other reprehensible acts."

The contrast between the treatment afforded Bush and al-Bashir was inadvertently highlighted by Geoffrey York, a colleague with whom I conferred frequently when we were both reporting regularly in *The Globe and Mail* about two decades ago on the surprising twists that repeatedly made Aboriginal Affairs in Manitoba a major source of national news. York introduced his story on the charges against al-Bashir by writing, "For the first time in history, an international criminal court is set to issue an arrest warrant for the leader of a country, accusing him of orchestrating a campaign of murder, torture and rape." The reporter anticipated that the ICC's initiative "will be hailed by many as a sign that nobody is above the law."

The striking contrast between the treatment of al-Bashir and Bush serves to clarify the division of the world's criminals and suspected criminals into two major categories, one inhabited by a small elite that is essentially above the law and the other populated by figures not rich or influential enough to gain exemptions from the law's coercive force. It is not without a sense of irony that I arrive at this conclusion. On the one hand the ICC's decision to press charges against al-Bashir, as well as to initiate in January of 2009 a full-fledged trial against Congolese warlord Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, signals a major transformation in the career of the ICC. It indicates that the court is no longer a mere vehicle for the empty expression of lofty idealism but rather a site of real engagement aimed at subjugating the rule of murder, mayhem and intimidation to the higher authority of law.

On the other hand by pointing its initial surge of juridical activism at the local criminality of

individuals in those afflicted regions of Africa where resource cartels and their client regimes often dominate, the ICC has called attention to the West's hypocrisy in shielding its own war lords and war profiteers in the military-industrial complex from any legal accountability for the violent acts its operatives, many of them in the so-called private sector, regularly plan, instigate, finance, arm, facilitate, commit and exploit. Indeed, the double standard promoted by the ICC in the choice of its targets for prosecution replicates in the international arena much of the duplicity of the criminal justice system in the United States.

As starkly demonstrated by the scandalously high and inequitable proportion of Blacks warehoused in the failing superpower's privatized jails, law-enforcement officials there obviously shower a disproportionately high amount of their energy on criminalizing poor African-Americans leaving those predominately fair-skinned inhabitants of suburbia and the more rarified enclaves of extreme wealth outside the orbit of their most concerted attention. Will the new global enforcers of international law limit themselves to prosecuting gang leaders in the continental ghetto of Africa while conveniently looking the other way when it comes to more comprehensive global networks of cartelized criminality headquartered in North America, Europe, Israel, and, increasingly, China, India and Russia as well.

While Omar al-Bashir is far from a household name, George Bush is one of the most well known people in the world. Indeed, throughout the eight years of his disastrous presidency, Bush managed to make himself into one of the most reviled individuals on the planet. He is widely disliked for his policies as well as for the assorted war hawks, corporate privateers, lying propagandists, evangelical zealots, loan sharks, torture freaks, and psycho cops and generals who formed the ex-president's inner circle. A significant component of global public opinion sees this discredited man as the embodiment of something far worse than terrible leadership. They see the forty-third US head of state as an abusive lawbreaker. Indeed, many rightfully see Bush as a pathological deviant who harboured the delusional fantasy that the power of his office gave him unlimited global power to authorize his national forces, proxy armies and mercenary operatives to commit the most grave onslaughts of mass murder, disappearances and torture on a genocidal scale.

This widespread belief is informed by the large and growing body of legal scholarship using evidence already on the public sphere to make the case that George Bush and his underlings have violated many domestic and international laws, including the Geneva Conventions and UN instruments prohibiting torture. Philippe Sands, Francis Boyle and Osgood Hall Law School Professor Michael Mandel have been prominent among the international jurists who have developed the legal case that George Bush and his war cabinet have transgressed the law of nations on many, many counts. Indeed, the line up is long of jurists seeking to bring the ex-US president to justice. With his recent book, *The Prosecution of George W. Bush for Murder*, Vincent Bugliosi, the former prosecutor of Charles Manson, adds his voice to a crowded field.

Given the depth and extent of the documentation already assembled to indict Bush and many of his top lieutenants for domestic and international crimes, the ex-president's ability to cross international borders and address audiences in places like Calgary stands as an indicator of the juridical malaise of our law-enforcement agencies. Is the role of these agencies primarily to protect the property and prestige of the rich from the incursions of the marginalized and dispossessed? Isn't law a mere fiction if it can't restrain the exploitative application of violence to entrench privilege and intimidate dissent? Will officials of the Crown in Canada or public prosecutors in other countries rise to a higher standard in order to demonstrate their respect for the power of law as a force of equalization applying

uniformly to president and pauper, native and settler, white and black? How can we transcend the mean and frequently racist codes contained in the rhetoric of law and order in order to rise to the high standards required by adherence to the rule of law?

Will truth ever be given its day in court in trials calling not only Bush, but also Richard Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Condoleezza Rice and others to account for their decisions and actions in supervising aggressive wars. As key strategists, lobbyists, and propagandists for the oil, armaments and mercenary industries, most of these figures helped to plan through the Project for the New American Century the our current privatized terror economy and the pseudo-justifications for so-called "preemptive wars." It was PNAC that announced a year before 9/11 the need for "a new Pearl Harbor" in order to produce the necessary climate of public hysteria to achieve its sponsors' objectives. The most ambitious of these was to create a pretext in order to seize control of oil resources in Iraq and throughout the Middle East.

Imagining the Rule of Law Internationally and Globally

For several generations the principle has been developing that all the world's peoples and governments must recognize our shared interest in expressing forms of universal jurisdiction when it comes to dealing with the highest order of criminality. On his return from Africa in 1890 George Washington Williams, a Black missionary from the United States, helped point subsequent legal thought in this direction. As Williams reached for words evocative enough to describe the appalling scope of the violations of human rights he had just witnessed in King Leopold's so-called Congo Free State, the commentator came up with the expression "crimes against humanity." In 1944 a Polish Jew who had escaped the Nazi horror in Europe drew on his experience and scholarship to enhance the vocabulary of international crime. Raphael Lemkin invented the word, "genocide," to advance the project of trying to deal with crimes so severe that they undermine the wellbeing of the entire human family. In the world Lemkin sought to bring about there could be no immunity, no safe refuge, for those involved in the elimination of religious, ethnic and racial groups through industrialized murder and also through the assimilative machinery of cultural genocide. Lemkin was instrumental in helping the delegations at the United Nations to entrench in 1948 the Convention on the Prevention and Prohibition of the Crime of Genocide. This basic pillar of international law was not adopted by the United States until 1989.

In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War the US government emerged briefly as the world's foremost champion of the principle that those who commit the highest order of international crime must be held accountable as individuals. This brief convergence of pragmatism and idealism was channeled into the juridical processes at Nuremberg and Tokyo where some of the leadership of the defeated Axis powers were judged before international military tribunals. In outlining his objectives to US President Harry Truman, Robert Jackson, the US government's chief prosecutor at Nuremberg, explained that the time had come to remove any doubt "that aggressive war making is illegal and criminal." In his view such activity, including campaigns to "exterminate, enslave and deport civilians," constituted "international crimes" for which "individuals are responsible." In introducing his case before the judges Jackson returned to the importance of moving beyond all the old lines of argument that have provided "immunity for practically everyone concerned in the really great crimes against peace and mankind." No longer could "so vast an area of legal irresponsibility" be "tolerated" because "because modern civilization puts unlimited weapons of destruction in the hands of men."

Some of the strongest language used by the Nuremberg judges in the sentencing of the convicted Nazis stipulated that “to initiate a war of aggression.... is not only an international crime. It is the supreme international crime differing from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole.” [my emphasis] The Nuremberg rulings were refined and distilled in 1950 at the United Nations into principles that point with precision at exactly the kinds of illegal acts known to have taken place at, for instance, Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay under George W. Bush’s watch as US president. The Nuremberg Principles divide international criminality into three categories, crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. One of the Nuremberg Principles stipulates, “The fact that a person who committed an act which constitutes a crime under international law acted as a Head of State or responsible government official does not relieve him from responsibility under international law.”

Although the International Criminal Court is a brand new addition to the juridical infrastructure of international criminal law, it draws on hopes, ideals and traditions that have deep roots in many societies’ quest for justice. With all its problems and shortcomings the ICC at its best embodies an attempt to put into action many of humanity’s most stirring proclamations announcing the equal dignity of every human life as articulated in the inspirational language of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The ICC worked its way from a UN study to a full-fledged treaty transacted in Rome in 1998. The court acquired institutional form in 2002. Currently there are 108 state members of the court, including Canada, with 40 states moving towards full ratification of the Rome Statute.

The governments of Russia, India and China oppose the court. President Bill Clinton signed the Rome Treaty on behalf of his government but President Bush nullified his predecessor’s signature in 2002 as part of his sweeping and many-faceted efforts to withdraw the United States from many multilateral agreements. Is the ICC the best hope for the future or has the abject failure of states so far to uphold and enforce the rule of law internationally taken us to the stage where humanity must try something else. Are we reaching the point in the evolution of the global community where it is becoming thinkable, or maybe even necessary, to begin putting in place the structures of a truly global court whose officials would draw their jurisdiction to arbitrate and enforce international criminal law from some form of globalized expression of shared human citizenship?

Calgary and Congo

There is much more than immediately meets the eye in the George Bush’s decision to accept an invitation to address an audience of business executives assembled by Calgary’s Chamber of Commerce. According to David Taras, a Professor of Political Science at the University of Calgary, there is considerable behind-the-scenes strategy in the decision to have the former US president begin the process of attempting to rehabilitate his public image in this “very conservative and pro-American” urban centre. Some have dubbed Calgary Houston North, a nickname that does suggest much about the town’s real character. Calgary is indeed a virtual colony of Houston and Dallas economically, and, to some extent, politically and culturally as well. A high proportion of its inhabitants have either immigrated from Texas or they have relatives who made the northward trek from Governor Bush’s old stomping grounds. Calgary forms the political base and home constituency of Canada’s current minority government leader, Prime Minister Stephen Harper. In 2001 Harper and some of his closest advisors put their provincialist biases on full display when they advocated the raising of a “firewall” around Alberta to isolate Oil Patch

and its agencies from the constitutional authority of the Canada's national government.

Over the last eight years Harper has acted more or less like the main franchise holder of the Bush brand of governance in Canada. As leader of the opposition Harper actually chastised Prime Minister Jean Chretien for not committing Canadian troops to take part in the Anglo-American invasion and occupation of Iraq. Harper worked closely with the former premier of Alberta, Ralph Klein, in opposing the Kyoto Protocol on global climate change. Both delivered the political talking points developed by the global PR firm, Burson-Marsteller. Burson-Marsteller's Calgarian arm is National Public Relations whose "green PR" has included the creation of front organizations such as the Canadian Coalition for Responsible Environmental Solutions.

David Frum has been one of the most striking operatives and embodiments of the axis of ideology that linked Alberta to the ideas and personnel of the Bush White House. Before Frum became one of the chief propagandists for George Bush's War on Terror, this icon of neoconservatism helped earn his spurs by contributing to Ted Byfield's evangelical-libertarian magazine, Alberta Report. Frum is widely lionized on the right for having helped to renew Ronald Reagan's condemnation of the "evil empire" by coming up with the phrase, "axis of evil." George Bush famously included Frum's contribution to the propaganda of aggressive warfare in the president's State of the Union address in January of 2002.

Many forces of history, therefore, converge in how Bush is received by immigration and justice department officials when he touches down at Calgary's International Airport. On February 23, 2009 an organization entitled Lawyers Against War served notice to the relevant officials, including Prime Minister Harper and the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, that "George W. Bush, former President of the United States and Commander in Chief of the U.S. Armed Forces, is a person credibly accused of torture and other gross human rights violations, crimes against humanity and war crimes." With reference to very specific sections of Canada's Immigration Act and its Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act, the jurists spelt out why Bush should not be allowed to enter the country. They continue by explaining that if Bush is allowed to enter the country then he should be arrested by Canadian police officers. In support of these contentions the jurists cite many evidentiary sources including an internal report of the U.S. Army completed in June of 2008 by Major General Antonio Taguba. They also cite some of the conclusions reached in February of 2009 by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, Manfred Nowak. This UN official writes, We possess all the evidence which proves that the torture methods used in interrogation by the U.S. government were specifically ordered by former U.S. Defence Minister Donald Rumsfeld.... Obviously these orders were given with the highest U.S. authorities' knowledge.

There are many Canadian facets to the global proliferation of torture, illegal renditions, wrongful incarcerations, denials of due process and other gross human rights violations that in most cases involve George Bush's White House in one way or another. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service are all implicated along with branches of the US government in the events that led to the jailing and torture in Syria of Canadian citizens Maher Arar, Abdullah Almalki, Ahmed El Maati and Muayyed Nureddin. The state terror heaped on these individuals forms one small part of the transnational regime of lawlessness resulting from the US president's illegal assertion of worldwide jurisdiction over anyone, anywhere branded by the US executive branch as an unlawful enemy combatants. The term, "unlawful enemy combatant," is a phrase of obfuscation invented by George Bush's advisers as a linguistic

device to help facilitate the US government's rogue attempt to evade the jurisdiction of international law or even its own prior laws.

Michael Keefer at the University of Guelph has carefully investigated the Harper government's zeal to replicate George W. Bush's strategy for inflating the national security state's role by trumping up Canadian public hysteria about the supposed existence of a home-grown Islamic terror cell in the Greater Toronto Area. Keefer has documented how the RCMP used paid "moles" who received many millions of dollars to manufacture a fiasco of "evaporating charges." The case basically "imploded" after the RCMP created the political conditions for Prime Minister Harper's sound bite in 2006 giving the Canadian version of George Bush's hallucinatory theories on Islam's imagined "hatred" of the West's freedoms. The debacle was severe enough probably to destroy many of the life chances of several traumatized young people in spite of the fact that they walked away from court with their charges stayed. In Keefer's view the whole sorry episode was essentially "a propaganda operation concocted to shore up the fraudulent post-911 psyop of the War on Terror."

The role of the Canadian and US governments as partners in gross violations of human rights and international law meets most seamlessly in the case of Canadian citizen Omar Khadr. Khadr was a fifteen year old child soldier in Afghanistan when US forces picked up him up after a violent incident during which the boy was wounded twice. Soon after that contested episode Khadr was moved to the notorious Camp X-Ray at Guantanamo Bay Cuba. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has used the case to advertise his willingness to subordinate Canadian sovereignty to the culture of military rule in George Bush's America. Unlike the leaders of other Western countries who intervened successfully to remove their citizens from Guantanamo, Harper has made a point of not asking US authorities to return Khadr to his country of birth.

The Canadian General and UN peacekeeper Romeo Dallaire has commented on the significance of the Khadr case as a precedent-setting display of both the Canadian and US governments' decisions not to adhere to international laws prohibiting the prosecution of child soldiers. Dallaire has written, "We are permitting the United States to try a Canadian child soldier using a military tribunal whose procedures violate basic principles of justice." The General pointed to "incontrovertible evidence of US malfeasance," of officials' "alteration" of documentary evidence in the case, and of various forms of abuse heaped on Khadr including threats of "rape and death." In the Khadr case, Dallaire charges, the Canadian government is "abetting an affront to human rights and international law."

The contempt shown for all recognized principles of US and international law at Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib will almost certainly be seen for generations to come as defining markers of the infamy of George W. Bush's two-term presidency. A number of military jurists have resigned from Guantanamo's staff in disgust, including chief prosecutor Colonel Morris Davis. A more recent whistleblower is ex-prosecutor Lieutenant-Colonel Darrel Vandeveld. As reported in The Globe and Mail on March 2 of 2009, Vandeveld has condemned the "sadistic mistreatment," the "gross abuse," and "sham" justice extended to Khadr and the other inmates in the "cluttered mess" of Guantanamo. It is the "the gulag of our time" declared Amnesty International. "I couldn't bring myself to believe that Americans could do this," said Vandeveld in anticipation of testimony he may very well be called upon to give in a domestic or international court of law.

The ongoing persecution in a US gulag of a young man first apprehended when he was a child soldier casts a weird and telling shadow over the ICC's concurrent prosecution at the

Hague of Thomas Lubanga Dyilo. Lubanga has been accused of recruiting and deploying child soldiers in the eastern Congo. Many US and Canadian mining companies are prominent among the corporate entities from North America, Europe, and South Africa that are helping to fuel the conflicts where child soldiers are regularly deployed. Child soldiers continue to be included among those on the delivering and receiving end of the mass slaughter and mayhem in a zone that has given rise to by far the biggest genocide since the Second World War.

Through their joint position on the Omar Khadr case George Bush and Stephen Harper have transgressed the same complex of international law that Lubanga now stands accused of violating? As we approach the end of the twenty-first century's first decade what more telling proof could there be of the lawlessness cultivated at the highest levels of our governments? What is to be said when an ex-US president, a current Canadian Prime Minister and a Congolese warlord can all be accused of similar contempt for the international laws prohibiting the recruitment and prosecution of child soldiers?

Taking on the 9/11 Cover Up

It is not hard to imagine the main arguments for the defense, if and when George W. Bush, Richard Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and others of their ilk face their accusers in a proper court of law. At its base their defense would almost certainly lie in their contention that their country had been attacked in 2001 by an external enemy using tactics were so audacious and unexpected that the Islamic terrorists were able to penetrate the entire military-industrial complex as well as the huge national security apparatus. From this basis of interpretation the defense lawyers would argue that the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as all attending actions including those that have taken place in Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib, are not be understood as elements of aggressive war. They should not be seen as part of a coordinated plan of military aggression that the Nuremberg judges decided long ago constitutes "the supreme international crime differing from other war crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole."

Following from this line of argument the defense lawyers would assert that everything done on the righteous and civilized side of the War on Terror should not be interpreted as aggressive war. Rather these actions should be viewed as necessary self-defense, or, perhaps as preemptive precautionary actions undertaken with the hope of saving innocent civilians from the violent threat of Islamic extremists. Whether or not we are conscious of it, we are all bombarded with the signal that we have good reason to fear the savage terrorists, a message carefully crafted by practitioners of so-called perceptions management to cast constant suspicion on the entire Muslim and Arab worlds. Indeed, the War on Terror's public mythology forms the most essential element of the terror economy that has fuelled the tremendous growth of the military-industrial complex during George W. Bush's time as US president. The old enemy in the Cold War was no more, so a new enemy was required. Enterprises such as Eric Prince's Blackwater mercenary soldier corporation have been able to prosper in even a more privatized mould than was the case during the capitalist jihad on the Soviet evil empire.

In cross-examining the line of testimony citing 9/11 as the major justification for actions that have been done in the War on Terror's name, a prosecutor might challenge Bush and the others in the following manner. She or he might ask about specific US officials whose negligence and/or incompetence supposedly led to the breakdowns that allowed the terrorists to hit their well protected targets on 9/11. The prosecutor might seek clarification

about what happened to those officials whose malfeasance and mistakes caused such unprecedented failures of, for instance, intelligence, counterintelligence, airport security, air defense and the enforcement of immigration law. Had any incompetent officials been fired? Had any been reprimanded? Had anyone resigned? The accused answers “no.” The prosecutor responds, “Why not?”

If the mass murder and mayhem of 9/11 is attributed to a massive failure of national security, why hasn't anyone taken or been given specific responsibility for precise elements of the supposed breakdown? And what of George W. Bush's own responsibility for the debacle? Why did the President himself not take immediate charge of the crisis by going to Washington instead of fleeing in Air Force One into the American Mid-West leaving Richard Cheney, former CEO of Halliburton, in charge in the bunker under the White House during the fateful morning of September 11, 2001?

The most serious failures connected to the events of 9/11 are not those of US intelligence agencies, airport security services, NORAD and the like. Rather the deepest and darkest of the failures to protect us for those enemies that menace us most lie with journalists, mainstream media outlets, professors and the universities that employ us. It is we who have in the vast majority of cases chosen to abandon our skepticism and with it our professional ethics and responsibilities. By and large our professional class and caste continue to respond to the events of 9/11 in ways that are expedient rather than wise. As I see it, therefore, it is a mass treason of the intellectuals that constitutes the most significant underlying condition resulting in the continuing fraud known as the War on Terror. The War on Terror continues to be packaged, promoted and sold to the public in the most aggressive campaign of psychological warfare ever mounted. How many of us are complicit with our silence in this black psyop, the key enabling factor in the ongoing aggressive wars justified in the name of an unfounded and unproven official conspiracy theory of 9/11?

It is not my intention here and now to deconstruct the lies and crimes of Bush's White House and, more recently, President Obama's White House in the covering up key elements of the truth of what happened on the morning of September 11, 2001. I have attempted such a deconstruction elsewhere, but not nearly as exhaustively, comprehensively and expertly as others have done. I could mention many dozens, if not hundreds, of solid scholarly contributions putting together from partial evidence the minute specifics detailing what probably and certainly happened, as well as what absolutely didn't happen, on that bright, late summer morning in 2001. Those many contributions are by and large in the public domain and can easily be accessed in this era of Google and You Tube.

While many have moved the markers in the understanding of those engaged in the quest for 9/11 truth, the contributions of one particular scholar stand out for their remarkable combination of scope, precision and detail. I believe I speak for many colleagues who share a broad consensus that the theological professor, David Ray Griffin, has more than earned the title of the Dean of the so-called 9/11 truth movement. I defy anyone to read even a portion of Griffin's small library of books and articles written on various aspects of 9/11 and not develop utter contempt for the official conspiracy theory. Given what Griffin and others have already published there is no remaining shred of credibility left to the notion that the hit on the Pentagon together with the pulverization of three steel-frame World Trade Center towers was caused simply by a handful of Saudis armed only with box cutters, a smattering of flight training and intense jihadist zeal.

A more recent entry into the most professionalized branch of 9/11 Studies is the

indefatigable Richard Gage, the founder and guiding light of the 600 member strong Architects and Engineers for 9/11 Truth. Gage has assembled and popularized a great mass of technical study that has removed all basis for reasonable doubt that it was controlled demolitions rather than jet crashes, kerosene fires and the force of gravity that brought down all three of the mighty steel-frame towers. All of them hurtled into their footprint at the speed of free fall.

Recently I have explored carefully the deep scholarship on abundant display in Canadian Peter Dale Scott's *The Road to 9/11: Wealth Empire and the Future of America*. This peer-reviewed book is published at Berkeley by the University of California Press. In it Scott draws on decades of investigation into the intertwined workings of oil companies, drug cartels, counterintelligence operations, banking regimes and politics in an account that exposes the decades of close collaboration between Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld culminating in their strange appearances and disappearances on and around 9/11. Like the work of Nafeez Mossaddeq Ahmed, Scott's text presents much evidence to demonstrate that the boogey man of al-Qaeda has since its inception in the CIA-ISI-sponsored mujahadeen been internally involved in the workings of the national security state. Starting as key players in the financial transactions of the now-defunct Lahore-based Bank of Credit and Commerce, the cast of characters assigned to perform roles in al Qaeda's career have helped advance the process of transforming terrorism into a business and political opportunity for the many merchandisers of fear. I particularly recommend chapter 10 of Scott's book. It is entitled "al Qaeda and the U.S. Establishment." The chapter's subheadings include phrases like "U.S. Operatives, Oil Companies and al Qaeda," "U.S. Operatives and al Qaeda in Azerbaijan," "Unocal, the Taliban, and bin Laden in Afghanistan," "al Qaeda, the Kosovo Liberation Army and the Trans-Balkan Pipeline," "al Qaeda and the Petroleum-Military-Financial Complex."

I could end by making a plea for a parliamentary investigation in Canada into the veracity of the interpretation of 9/11 that continues to put our soldiers in Afghanistan in harms way. I could end by pointing to the journalistic failures of our own CBC or to the propaganda for aggressive war that has proliferated especially in the commercial media. As revealed in the post-Watergate investigations into the CIA, hired "assets" in the mainstream media have long been used by the national security state to propagate spin and disinformation campaigns whose real agenda is to improve the business opportunities for the likes of the Bush family dynasty of war profiteers. I could illustrate some of my contentions by pointing to the ridiculous histrionics particularly of all the Can West Global venues, but especially *The Nation Post*. I'll quote the headline of a piece where anonymous bloggers are given a large amount of space in the newspaper to attack my work. What else are the NP's headline writers doing by "Taking on the 9/11 Conspiracy Theorists" other than fending off challenges to the War on Terror's public mythology?

There are many ways I could conclude but I choose actually to bring this essay to a close with a few thoughts on George Bush, international law, and Naomi Klein's remarkably well received book entitled, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. Through the lens of her Keynesian interpretations, Klein surveys many of the world's countries over the last several decades. In doing so she presents a very compelling case that the modest redistributive programs that were once incorporated into national economies and the global economy have by and large not survived the incursions of "disaster capitalism." Our material relations have been subjected to repeated shocks of hyperprivatization during periods when we have been most vulnerable to the disorienting effects of manufactured or naturally induced trauma.

As the author acknowledges in her text, the events of 9/11 form the classic example for the central thesis of her work. The shocking imagery of the collapsing towers created the pretext for the invasion of Iraq and the subsequent rush by the Bush regime to exploit what Klein call the “market for terrorism.” Iraq was to be remade as a prototype to demonstrate that “the job of the state [is] not to provide security but to purchase it at market prices.” Moreover the violence in Iraq helped stimulate the culture of fear and loathing in North America supporting the rise of what Klein dubs “the homeland security industry.

Like most authors who write about the War on Terror, Klein tip toes around the actual events of 9/11 so she can arrive unscathed at safer professional ground. For her this safer zone of more camera-ready interpretation involve documenting how Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Paul Bremer and the other architect and engineers of the privatized terror economy exploited 9/11 to advance their agenda. As she whizzes by the subject of what actually happened on the day of the Great Shock, Klein bows to the mantra of “the security failures of 9/11.” Klein then takes her readers with her on her highly original and important economic analysis of the War on Terror’s ground zero of Iraq.

I think I understand the basis of Naomi’s journalistic decision. I see it as a necessary tradeoff if she wanted to have a hope of expanding the tremendously useful work she does on mainstream media in Canada and the United States as well as with budding young activists around the world. But my best guess is that Klein is too well informed not to be suspicious of the Bush regime’s “security failure” meme on 9/11. If my hunch is true, what does it say about how bad the climate of paranoia has become when even Naomi Klein is self-censoring rather than taking the risk of joining the marginalized “conspiracy theorists” whose local ranks in Winnipeg include a disqualified Liberal candidate here with us today? Is Klein’s adherence to the taboos of 9/11 similar to that of Noam Chomsky and the producers of otherwise progressive media at, for instance, ZMag, the Nation, and Democracy Now? Or is Barrie Zwicker right when he argues there are more malevolent forces involved that repeat in the context of the so-called War on Terror the Cold War techniques of disinformation and psyops?

President Obama’s rhetoric of hope and change will not transcend the hate talk and hate crimes that will continue to proliferate as long as the public’s gaze is averted from the truth of the event whose content has been misrepresented to justify the international crimes that continue to be perpetrated in the War on Terror’s name. Until that fraud is exposed the obscenity will likely continue of George Bush moving across international borders to give highly-paid motivational speeches. Nevertheless we shall endeavour to do what we can on March 17 to draw the line by making the former US president’s visit to Calgary the test case on whether we are governed by the rule of law or the rule of disinformation, cronyism and military muscle.

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