

Part Two – The Continuing Significance of 9/11

by Richard Ramsbotham

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Iran and 9/11

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Returning to 9/11

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

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

But...

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

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

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

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

"An Impossible Task"

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

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

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

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

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

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

The “9/11 Truth Movement”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A. That noise. It was a noise.

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

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

And so on!

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

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

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

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

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

Towards Open Discussion

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

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

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

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

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

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

Endnotes

1. New York Times, October 12th, 2001.
2. Claes Ryn, "The Ideology of American Empire," in O'Huallachain and Sharpe, eds., *Neoconned Again*, p. 65.
3. 'Rebuilding America's Defences', PNAC. (2000).
4. 'The End of the End of History – Why the twenty-first century will look like the nineteenth.' Robert Kagan. *The New Republic*, April 23, 2008 . Online.
5. Ibid.
6. 'Speak Softly... And Fight Back', William Kristol, *Weekly Standard*, October 17, 2011.
7. In online edition of 'National Review.' Quoted in: 'U.S. Hawks behind Iraq War Rally for Strikes against Iran' by Jim Lobe. October 18th, 2011.
8. Romney address to military cadets, 7th Oct, 2011: Video recording on:

“http://firstread.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2011/10/07/8208100-romney-presents-plan-for-new-american-century”

9. ‘I Won’t Let Iran Get Nukes’, Mitt Romney, Wall Street Journal, 10th Nov, 2011.
10. ‘Team Obama’s Foreign Policy’, Senator Lindsey Graham, National Review online, Nov. 11th, 2011.
11. www.defenddemocracy.org/irans-sponsorship-of-terrorism-worldwide
12. The twilight war. Ten years after 9/11, what have we learned?’ Philip Zelikow. Prospect Magazine, September 2011.
13. Quoted in ‘Republican Frontrunner Touts Neo-Conservative Foreign Policy’ By Jim Lobe. WASHINGTON, Oct 7, 2011 (IPS).
14. Even though the base defence budget requested for 2012 has in fact risen since 2011 - from \$549 to \$553.
15. FY 2012 Department of Defense Budget.
16. ‘Statement by deputy secretary of defense Paul Wolfowitz on U.S. military presence in Iraq: Implications for Global Defense. June 18, 2003.’
17. [One can see a clear reference with these words to those reportedly written in Latin by Julius Caesar in 47BC as a comment on his short war with Pharnaces II of Pontus in the city of Zela (currently known as Zile in Turkey): Veni, vidi, vici – *I came, I saw, I conquered*. These Latin words are often quoted in music, art, literature and entertainment: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veni,_vidi,_vici. – ED.]
18. ‘Col Gaddafi killed: convoy bombed by drone flown by pilot in Las Vegas’, Daily Telegraph, 20 Oct 2011.
19. Press TV, ‘CIA to continue covert operations in Iraq’, Wednesday Oct 26, 2011.
20. William Saletan: ‘Waging a war without footprints’ National Post. Apr 13, 2011. Reuters.
21. From ‘Earth Imaging Journal’: <http://eijournal.com/uncategorized/uav-market-set-for-10-years>
22. Interview with Gen. Wesley Clark on: ‘Democracy Now’ March 2nd, 2007. Available on YouTube.
23. ‘Rising Speculation about Bombing Iran’s Nukes’, Michael Barone, National Review Online, July 22nd, 2010.
24. ‘Foreign Policy’, November 2011.
25. Council on Foreign Relations. ‘A Conversation with Philip Zelikow.’ www.cfr.org/united-states/conversation-philip-zelikow (My italics.)
26. ‘The legacy of that terrible time will be less significant than we feared.’ Fukuyama. *The Observer*, 11.09. 2011.
27. Quoted in ‘9/11 Ten Years Later’ by David Ray Griffin, Haus Publishing, 2011, page 15.
28. See ‘The Osama bin Laden story and the search for truth.’ Richard Ramsbotham. *New View*, Summer 2011.
29. ‘America’s itch to brawl has a new target – but bombs can’t conquer Iran’, Simon Jenkins, *The Guardian*, 4th November, 2011.
30. 9/11 and the Orwellian Redefinition of ‘Conspiracy Theory’ by Paul Craig Roberts. Roberts’ remarks about a ‘police state’ may appear too extreme for some. His article describes what he means by this. The article finishes: ‘A country whose population has been trained to accept the government’s word and to shun those who question it is a country without liberty in its future.’
31. There are plenty of other equally serious questions relating to 9/11, such as, for instance, the ‘attack’ on the Pentagon. I have focussed on the question of the collapse of the buildings as the most glaringly obvious.
32. ‘Why Indeed Did the WTC Buildings Completely Collapse?’ By Dr. Steven E. Jones. Available online, at Journal of 9/11 Studies. An earlier version of this long and thorough analysis was published in 9/11 And The American Empire: Intellectuals Speak Out, eds. David Ray Griffin and Peter Dale Scott. (Interlink Publishing, 2006.)
33. www.ae911truth.org
34. All the fire chiefs described how what happened was contrary to all their previous experience. There follow two examples:
“Once again, I’m doing this 23 years...This changed all the rules. This changed all the rules. This went from a structure to a wafer in seconds, in seconds. I couldn’t believe the speed of that tower

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

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

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

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

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