



## 9/11: The Case Isn't Closed

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*Editor's note: The role of the alternative press is to offer perspectives that the commercial media won't touch. Having run a number of articles critical of the "9/11 Truth Movement" by [Matt Taibbi](#), [Joshua Holland](#), [Matthew Rothschild](#) and others, we asked Sander Hicks, a prominent voice within the movement, to share his perspective. For more of Sanders' views, see his book "[The Big Wedding: 9/11, The Whistle-Blowers, and the Cover-Up](#)."*

No matter what you believe about who was responsible for 9/11, and how it went down, we're all amazed at how much political capital the events of that day produced for this administration: A bipartisan consensus on torture; an era of permanent war; detentions without trial; "no fly" lists for activists; the Bill of Rights gone with the wind, and a cowed professional media willing to self-censor and suppress pertinent information. The 9/11 "America Attacked" story has distracted us from the natural outrage we should feel over illegal wiretaps, stolen elections, hundreds of billions of dollars missing at the Pentagon, war profiteering, Enron and Cheney's secret energy policy.

But with Bush's popularity at a record low, a [Zogby poll](#) shows that over 40 percent of Americans now think there has been a "coverup" around 9/11. A more recent poll conducted at the Scripps-Howard/University of Ohio found more than a third of those asked said it was likely that "*people in the federal government either assisted in the 9/11 attacks or took no action to stop the attacks because they wanted the United States to go to war in the Middle East.*"

So, it's probably no surprise that the propaganda mills of the State Department have recently been cranking out attack websites, targeting 9/11 skepticism. And it's not a shocker that the normal channels of media have followed suit (*Time*, *New York Times*, etc.) What's weird is how similar the attacks sound in the hallowed halls of "respectable" left political opinion. A recent [column](#) on AlterNet by the *Progressive's* Matthew Rothschild matched [the recent bromides](#) of *Counterpunch's* Alexander Cockburn. In both pieces, the way 9/11 has been questioned was attacked, with no alternatives suggested. Instead, questioning 9/11 at all was belittled with sweeping generalizations.

What happened to critical thinking? I thought "the Left" believed that the system's power is based on lies, exploitation and a media controlled by its own culture of overly cautious professionalism. The Left should be leading this 9/11 movement, not taking potshots from outside. Unfortunately, some of the movement's theories, like "the towers came down through a controlled demolition" sound esoteric at first blush. The "No Plane Hit the Pentagon" theory is a loose thread in a maze going nowhere.

The Left has no right to ignore or insult people for trying to assemble the puzzle that is 9/11.

Consider some of the pieces:

Assistant Secretary of State Richard Armitage is a figure bloodied by his work in Iran/Contra. He and then-CIA Director George Tenet had extensive meetings in Pakistan with President Musharraf in the spring of 2001, according to the [Asia Times](#).

Then, Pakistan's top spy, Mahmood Ahmad, [visited Washington for a week](#), taking meetings with top State Department people like Tenet and Mark Grossman, under secretary of state for political affairs. The Pakistani press reported, "ISI Chief Lt-Gen Mahmood's weeklong presence in Washington has triggered speculation about the agenda of his mysterious meetings at the Pentagon and National Security

Council." Did they know that Ahmad had wired over \$100,000 to Mohamed Atta, through U.K. national Saeed Sheikh in the summer of 2001? (Facts all confirmed, quietly, by the FBI investigation in Pakistan, and, partially, in the Wall Street Journal.)

That means that our top people at the State Department enjoyed only a few degrees of separation from 9/11's lead hijacker, Mohamed Atta. Here's the real kicker: As this story first broke in the *Times of India*, in October 2001, instead of retaliating, the United States gave Pakistan \$3 billion in U.S. aid. Ahmad was allowed to quietly resign.

Bob Graham, D-Fla., who sat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, would later tell PBS's Gwen Ifill: "I think there is very compelling evidence that at least some of the terrorists were assisted not just in financing -- although that was part of it -- by a sovereign foreign government and that we have been derelict in our duty to track that down, make the further case, or find the evidence that would indicate that that is not true."

Skip forward to Feb. 15, 2006. Lt. Col. Anthony Shaffer gave a 48-page statement to the House Armed Services Committee, in which he stated, unequivocally, that his Defense Intelligence operation, Able Danger, identified Mohamed Atta as a major terrorist back in year 2000. But Shaffer and his team of "the 'best and brightest' military operators" were prevented from sharing this information with the FBI. According to Shaffer, during a crucial meeting the group's Pentagon supervisors and attorneys from the Special Operations Command in early 2000, the Able Danger team was ordered to cover Atta's mugshot with a yellow sticky note. Military lawyers at the Pentagon claimed it was to protect the rights of "U.S. Persons."

Some progressives are turned off to the Able Danger story, since it was the pet obsession of recently defeated congressman "Crazy" Curt Weldon, R-Pa., the "patriot" who planned a clandestine trip to personally dig through Iraq in order to find the WMD's for Bush's White House. And the Department of Defense inspector general recently issued a report claiming that the Able Danger operation never identified Atta. But author Peter Lance (an Emmy-award winning reporter, formerly with ABC), author of "Triple Cross: How bin Laden's Master Spy Penetrated the CIA, the Green Berets, and the FBI -- and Why Patrick Fitzgerald Failed to Stop Him," calls the Pentagon IG report a "whitewash ... set out to prove a predetermined thesis: that these decorated military officers had somehow lied and risked their careers by exaggerating Able Danger's findings." Rather, Lance confirms that Shaffer, and his colleague, Navy Capt. Scott Phillipott, "found links to 9/11 hijackers, Atta, [Khalid] al-Midhar and [Nawaf] al-Hazmi as connections between al Qaeda and the New York-based cell of [the blind Sheikh] Omar Abdel Rahman."

When the critics focus on the wacky theories and *not* on careful, moderate, serious authors like Lance, it's a strategy to frame the debate. It steers the argument from going after the real meat of 9/11: the *history* of U.S. foreign policy in strategic alliances with radical Islam.

Specifically, there are a set of troubling connections between the 9/11 terrorists and the U.S. State Department, the Pakistani ISI (old friends of the CIA from working together creating Afghani *Mujahadeen* during the Russian occupation), the Saudi General Intelligence Directorate, the Pentagon, Maxwell Air Force Base and the Muslim Brotherhood.

Why *did* the 9/11 terrorists get protected from Able Danger at that Pentagon meeting? Who covered up Atta with a yellow sticky note? What are we supposed to think about the news (reported by Knight Ridder news service 9/15/01) that Atta had attended International Officer School at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama?

Atta was the Oswald of the whole operation. He is an enigma; everywhere you turn in his story, the details are wildly contradictory. Instead of a devout Muslim, you have a party-hearty Florida playboy, according to author Daniel Hopsicker, author of "Welcome to Terrorland: Mohamed Atta and the 9/11 Cover-Up in Florida." The FBI has sworn for five years Atta didn't arrive in Florida until June 2000. But in 2002, Hopsicker found and videotaped Amanda Keller, Atta's American girlfriend, and many other Florida locals who contradict that story. In fact, Atta lived with Keller at the Sandpiper apartments, just outside the Venice, Fla., airport, in March

2000. Thanks to the magic of web video, anyone can see Hopsicker's [footage of Keller's reminiscences](#) of Atta: in Florida, they hung out with cocaine-addled strippers doing lines in three-night-long parties. With them were certain white Germans, including one "Wolfgang Bohringer" whom Atta called "brother."

Why "brother?" During Atta's university years in Cairo, the engineering guild that he joined had made him a member of the group Muslim Brotherhood. 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed is also a card-carrying "brother." The Muslim Brotherhood has been around since the 1920's, it was originally an anti-colonial group. Today, it's the most powerful terrorist force you've never heard of. Their frontmen in Egypt are nonviolent and run for office. But the real sordid history of the Muslim Brotherhood is that, since 1928, its anti-Semitism and anti-Zionist ideologies have turned it into the perfect partner in crime for Nazis, European fascists, American far-rightists and their contemporary counterparts, the neoconservatives.

Hopsicker's original research on Wolfgang Bohringer inspired the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) to issue a FBI Terror Alert on Nov. 16, 2006. According to sources close to the investigation, Bohringer was apprehended in the South Pacific on Nov. 17, but shocked the arresting agents when he claimed, "You can't arrest me, I'm working for the CIA." A former JTTF undercover operative, Randy Glass, confirmed that Bohringer was arrested and released.

Oct. 9, 2006, saw the release of leading D.C. muckrakers Susan and Joe Trento's latest mind-blowing work on "national security." "Unsafe at Any Altitude: Failed Terrorism Investigations, Scapegoating 9/11, and the Shocking Truth about Aviation Security Today" made 60 Minutes. The book savages the incompetence and "eye candy" of the Transportation Security Administration. This is not a book you want to read on a long flight: It turns out the "no fly" lists are pathetically inaccurate. The Trentos report that the CIA regularly lets known terrorists fly as a tactic to try to catch more of them.

Some of the Trentos' findings were too hot for 60 Minutes. The book's blockbuster revelation is that the Pentagon kamikaze Flight 77 terrorist crew was led by two agents of the General Intelligence Directorate (GID) of Saudi Arabia: Khalid al-Mihdhar and Nawaf al-Hazmi. Sound familiar? They should. They are the same two guys Peter Lance found being protected from Able Danger by top brass at the Pentagon. This same duo lived in San Diego with an FBI informant. The same duo took money from the wife of Bush friend Saudi Prince Bandar.

The U.S. State Department's dirtiest secret is its 30-year habit of working with the far-right radical Islamists. In 1977, President Carter's National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski (aka the "Democrats' Kissinger") started the Nationalities Working Group. According to his neocon minion, Richard Pipes, the group was tasked with using Islamic rage in the central Asian republics to stir up "genocidal fury" against the Soviet Union. (Pipes' son, Daniel, is a well-known neocon who headed the U.S. Institute for Peace under Bush II.) Brzezinski later admitted in an interview to *Nouvel Observateur* that he advised Carter to initiate funding for the *Mujahedeen* so that the Soviet Union would have to enter the region, engage in a Vietnam-like debacle and destroy their economy.

In fact, according to a [Special Report in \*The Economist\*](#), the whole notion of "jihad" died out in Islam in the 10th century until "it was revived, with American encouragement, to fire an international pan-Islamic movement after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979."

Throughout the '80s, the Reaganites were superficially opposed to the Islamic fundamentalists in Iran. But in reality, the Islamic fundamentalists were happy customers for U.S. arms sales. Care of the Reagan/Bush team, a triangular trade kept a clandestine flow of weapons, money and narcotics moving in and out of Central America, all to benefit the right-wing Contra militia. Meanwhile, the capital was flowing into the *Mujahedeen* through Pakistan. Oh, yeah, we were selling weapons to Iraq, too, so they could fight the Iranians.

The financial engine that helped run these operations was a well-oiled and bloody front bank called the [Bank of Credit and Commerce International](#). BCCI was the funding vehicle that American and Pakistani intelligence used to arm the Afghani *Mujahedeen* against the Soviets. In the Pakistan/Afghanistan theatre, it moved guns

and bombs in, and shipped heroin out. In Central America, it moved in guns and advisors, and took the payoff in cocaine.

When BCCI got busted in 1991, \$10 million in State Department accounts was discovered. The CIA and the Pakistani ISI, learning to love each other in their first of many sick trysts, built BCCI into an international network still very much alive. Sen. John Kerry's investigation into BCCI started out strong, but eventually caved to political pressure. Under pressure from Senator Claiborne Pell (D-RI), Kerry fired his top investigator, Jack Blum. No major players were ever apprehended, censured, prosecuted or sentenced for the genocidal, narcotics-trafficking, lucrative top crimes of our time. Instead, many of them returned to power in 2001.

According to S.C. Gwynne and Jonathan Beaty, authors of "[The Outlaw Bank](#)," BCCI was "a vast, stateless, multinational corporation" that deployed "its own intelligence agency, complete with a paramilitary wing and enforcement units, known collectively as the Black Network." BCCI wasn't just a fluke; it wasn't just the biggest corporate scandal of all time. It was the perfect example of what big money does today in an unregulated global market.

When George W. Bush, and his gang of bloodstained Iran/Contra suspects seized the White House, they ushered in a new era of intimacy between the federal government and international mega-capital. After all, "Dubya" Bush had wasted a good chunk of his life [in a cocaine and whiskey stupor](#), but the other half was spent in bad business deals with people like Saudi heavyweight Khalid bin Mahfouz. Mahfouz, alongside Salem bin Laden (Osama's half-brother), was a 1977 investor in Arbusto Energy, Bush's first oil company. Mahfouz later became the majority shareholder of BCCI. Mahfouz helped broker the deal for Bush when he wanted to unload his Harken energy stock. This same Khalid bin Mahfouz was branded by [a report to the UN Security Council](#) as one of the seven top Saudi al Qaeda money men. Shortly after the Bush/Harken deal, Mahfouz donated a quarter of a million dollars to Osama bin Laden's *Mujahadeen* in the late 1980s. According to [Forbes](#), he put \$30 million into the Muwaffaq Foundation, which the Treasury Department labeled an al Qaeda front. (Mahfouz is also legendary for suing anyone who says so, and has terrified and constrained independent publishers in Canada and the UK.) Is it any wonder then, that the heavily compromised, Bush-White House connected 9/11 Commission took a dive to the mat on the "financing of 9/11" question? They said the money behind 9/11 was "of little practical significance" when behind the curtain stood an old friend of Bush, controlling a bogeyman named "al Qaeda." Senator Bob Graham said he was "stunned that we have not done a better job of pursuing" the question of foreign financing, and that crucial information had been "overly classified."

Money talks. It helps explain why 14 other countries tried but [could not effectively warn the U.S.A.](#) about the impending 9/11 attacks. The money connections, the real history of 9/11, explains why the top bin Laden financial tracker at the FBI's Chicago office, Robert Wright, was so upset after the attacks. Through tears of anger and frustration, he told a National Press Club audience, "The FBI ... allowed 9/11 to happen." What? What did he say? "FBI management intentionally and repeatedly thwarted and obstructed my investigations into Middle Eastern terrorist financing."

Why was Wright thwarted by his higher-ups? And what about FBI translator Sibel Edmonds' claim that, among the agency's Farsi translators, "it was common knowledge that a longtime, highly regarded FBI 'asset'" told the agency in early 2001 that "bin Laden was planning a major attack involving the use of planes," but after agents wrote up reports and sent them to their superiors "it was the last the agents heard of the matter"? Why were FBI agent Colleen Rowley's reports about Zacarias Moussaoui receiving flight training in Minnesota apparently ignored by Washington, causing her to charge that key facts, were "omitted, downplayed, glossed over and/or mischaracterized" by FBI bosses?

There are important questions that remain to be answered. The establishment isn't asking them. Instead, the citizen journalists out there are breaking this story.

Remember how much political reaction there has been ever since the people rose up, united across borders and shut down the war machine in Vietnam. For six years, the neocons have ruled by fear. We, the resistance, must drive them out with a little something stronger: peace, truth, revolution. We know history. We have a mission. Taste the clash of history, and you'll know which side you're on.

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