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This Was Not An Intelligence Failure

World War III - 'This Was Not An Intelligence Failure'

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From The Wilderness

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Some of us will come out of the shock sooner than others. Some of us will acknowledge the fear and the hurt sooner than others. Sooner or later we all will feel the pain. But the unfolding of events following the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon will wait for none of us. I do not rely on the fifteen or so times that I have seen the term "World War III" used by major publications like the New York Times. I rely on my knowledge of how the U.S. military, intelligence and economic infrastructure will respond to a given set of circumstances. In this case, the relevant context for these tragedies had developed long before last Tuesday's events.

Only a few, as yet, grasp the dynamics already in motion that will almost certainly produce a long and protracted war, as well as huge economic and perhaps physical dislocations in the United States and around the world. Additional attacks on Americans are almost a certainty, even -- as I am about to describe -- a necessity. The rhetoric from President Bush and his Administration contains messages for the American people, which they do not yet grasp, and for terrorist organizations, which they most certainly do. "This is a war and it will not be a short war." "This will not be over quickly." "We have a war plan that will work, over whatever period of time it requires." "There will be many casualties. The military is prepared for that." "This is not just an effort to get bin Laden. This is a war to wipe out terrorism all over the world." "We are not thinking just in terms of a few air strikes. Ground troops will be involved. And some of them will die." "We will go after terrorism wherever terrorism threatens the United States." "Americans need to be prepared for more sacrifices and more casualties." "Just removing bin Laden won't suffice. We are going after terrorism in all of the countries where it resides."

The last statement is the first great lie of this war. As the U.S. government has announced its partnership with the drug-financed government of Pakistan, which has supported terrorist groups from the Middle East to the Balkans, to

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China, to Southeast Asia, the deception begins. Indeed, after Afghanistan, Pakistan should have been the first great enemy in this war. It's long support of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan ended only as the Taliban destroyed most of that nation's opium crop in February of this year. As in every conflict since World War II, the drug trade will now see a new day of freedom.

And I guarantee that terrorist groups are well aware of one fact that we, as Americans, have not yet grasped. George W. Bush carries on his shoulder the political memory of a father who waged a war against Saddam Hussein and then left him in power. He can afford no such image in the current context and the military he commands must become engaged in a do or die battle. They too, will accept no less.

That said, the terrorist groups in or from Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, the Sudan, Yemen, Jordan, Algeria, Somalia, Turkey, Chechnya, Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Germany, Ireland, France, Spain, Italy, Albania, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico know that they are now in a "use it or lose it" position. For, not knowing where and when the industrialized nations may strike, they now realize that almost any action against any political group will go unchallenged in the world press. Even separatist groups not posing an immediate threat can be conveniently eliminated in the months and perhaps years to come. As evidenced by the almost immediate admission of China into the World Trade Organization, after 15 years of unsuccessful attempts, the warp drive for globalization - unfettered by any need to respond to public opinion - has now been engaged. The most cynical part of me hopes that the headline for this war will not be, "The G-8 Wipes Out Poverty." In this model I must say that the long discussed, but rarely acknowledged, alleged plans for massive global population reduction are no longer a "back burner" issue.

Therefore, in this context, the American people must expect additional attacks that may even include biological warfare or nuclear devices on American soil. And these attacks, already being hinted at by the Administration, will serve an additional purpose. Two days after the attacks every street and highway was a sea of American flags. Now, a week after the attacks - at least in Los Angeles - they are hard to find. Whether we admit it or not, what the vast majority of the American people really want is for this to go away. Only sustained attacks on the American people will provide George W. Bush with the political mandate to wage the war he has committed to fight - to the bitter end. As the economic impact sinks in, and as Americans feel the pain in their wallets, the willingness of American citizens to experience the carnage that has been raging around the world for decades - in the name of prosperity and for the benefit of the G-8's largest corporations - is, in my opinion, a big question mark. Do not expect a quick recovery in the stock market based upon emotion. As we describe in this issue, the fundamental weaknesses in the U.S. economy were not blown up with these attacks. And the markets, if they can still be called that, are driven by one 800 pound guerilla above all others - earnings. With the exception of defense contractors, there is absolutely nothing hopeful to report and I, for one, cannot and refuse to be an advocate for investing in the destruction of the planet. The United States has many enemies. It is the economic enemies that warrant the most scrutiny now because the perception that America is the

safest place in the world in which to invest foreign capital has been dealt a huge blow. Further blows will come with further attacks and this exposes the fine line that the Administration must walk. Without more attacks at home, the bold gambit of George Bush, et al will fail for lack of political support. With them, the world may eventually conclude that the United States is economically expendable as nations look to their own interests. Too much economic blood in the water will start a feeding frenzy.

In the major media, in the alternative media, in Congress and around the world the context now provides the opportunity for great lights with courageous souls to emerge and to lead. We are walking a fine line on a precipice that may lead to Armageddon or, please God, something better. The Bush Administration is not equipped with a repertoire of responses sufficient to navigate the long term perils. We must dig and find something better within ourselves.

We are living in a whole New World. We just don't know what it looks like yet.

The U.S. Had Advance Warning And Could Have Acted --This Was Not An Intelligence "Failure"

To grasp the meaning of the events of 9-11-01, it is critical to go past the widely acknowledged reports that the U.S. had general warnings of a terrorist attack and to look for evidence that the U.S. government had specific warnings of attacks on airports and aircraft. Further, the task is to look for any warnings that signaled the size and scope of the attack and went beyond the vagaries that we have become used to. These will provide the clues needed to understand that the devastating attacks of Sept. 11 served a distinct purpose for the Bush Administration and those in control of the U.S. economy. Given this year's revelations on The History Channel -- including classified documents and the on-camera testimony of intelligence officers -- that the U.S. knew the Japanese were going to attack Pearl Harbor, and allowed it to happen in order to bring the country into World War II, we cannot be so blind as to overlook evidence that it has happened again.

Leaving aside the intelligence reports that are still secret and will likely remain so, and remembering the fact that the Federal Bureau of Investigation had undercover informants working hand in glove with those who perpetrated the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, a preliminary review of solid information showing that this attack could have been prevented is only the beginning of what must remain an essential line of inquiry.

It is premature to jump to conclusions about the rapidity with which the FBI has gathered essential information. I used the word information, instead of intelligence or evidence. Evidence is gathered for the court room. Intelligence is the results of a process done at CIA to evaluate information from various sources. Understanding the differences between work done by the FBI and the CIA is a key to understanding the US counterterrorist work. Hence, use end-result thinking to interpret any counterterrorist discussion and effort.

Any notice of a potential or alleged terrorist act has a well established procedure for its handling. According to a reliable source, the United States

government, especially the intelligence community in the early 1980's, had established a clearly defined procedure for handling notices of threat. The State Department was the lead coordinator and member intelligence community agencies participated in evaluations. The key is that everyone understood that the information might be untrue. That is, the information was still circulated and disseminated to the community so that protective measures might be considered if justified. That last word considered was deferred to the agency involved.

However, one thing is certain, based upon what is now known. By itself, neither the CIA nor the FBI can claim that a lack of resources or human intelligence prevented them from predicting this attack. Indeed, there is credible but preliminary and circumstantial information, that certain segments of Wall Street and the U.S. financial community did know of the pending attack. There is also evidence that the U.S. government already had the technical expertise to know what was coming and was likely using it at the time the attacks occurred.

The Cayman Islands - MS-NBC reported on September 14 that a caller to a radio talk show made several warnings of an imminent attack by Osama bin Laden against American Airlines.

Germany - On September 14, the German newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) reported that "U.S. and Israeli intelligence agencies received warning signals at least three months ago that Middle eastern terrorists were planning to hijack commercial aircraft to use as weapons to attack important symbols of American and Israeli culture."

According to a report filed by the Post-Newsweek information service, "The FAZ, quoting unnamed German Intelligence sources, said that the Echelon spy network was being used to collect information about the terrorist threats, and that U.K. intelligence services apparently also had advance warning. The FAZ, one of Germany's most respected dailies, said that even as far back as six months ago, western and near-east press services were receiving information that such attacks were being planned. "Within the American intelligence community, the warnings were taken seriously and surveillance intensified"

NOTE: Echelon is a highly secret technical intelligence gathering system used to monitor worldwide communications and coordinated in the U.S. by the National Security Agency. Participating countries, who eavesdrop on the citizens of the other member countries -- to avoid civil restrictions preventing governments from spying on their own citizens -- then pool and share their information. Participating countries include the U.S., Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Great Britain and Germany. The eavesdropping covers both telephone and email communications.

According to a Feb 13, 2001 UPI story detailing Echelon's use against bin Laden and other terrorist organizations, "The targets of Echelon center on the penetration of the major components of most of the world's telephone and telecommunications systems. This could cover conversations NSA targets. Also included are all the telexes carried over the world's telecommunications networks, along with financial dealings: money transfers, airline destinations,

stock information, data on demonstrations or international conferences and much more."

Germany - The German news agency "online.ie" reported on September 14, "German police have confirmed an Iranian man phoned U.S. police from his deportation cell to warn of the planned attack on the World Trade Center. The Lower Saxony Justice Ministry has confirmed the man warned of impending series of terrorist attacks, but had not been believed. Spokesman Frank Woesthoff said the man phoned America 'several times', but refused to give further details. He said the U.S. Secret Service had not told the ministry about the calls received from the Langerhagen prison until after the attacks. 'I cannot say anything about the man and the ministry does not know the content of the conversations,' he added. The Hanover daily Neue Presse reported the 29 year-old was dismissed as mentally unstable when he gave the warning of the terrorist attack to occur this week. The ministry would not reveal when the calls had been made."

France - On September 13, Reuters reported, "The FBI arrested an Islamic militant in Boston last month and received French intelligence reports linking him to Saudi-born dissident Osama bin Laden but apparently did not act on them, a French radio station said on Thursday.

"Europe 1 radio reported that U.S. police arrested a man with dual French and Algerian nationality who had several passports, technical information on Boeing aircraft and flight manuals. "The man had been taking flying lessons, it added.

"Asked for information by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, French security services provided a dossier clearly identifying him as an Islamic militant working with bin Laden."

Russia - A former CIA officer told FTW that, according to a Russian newspaper article, Russian intelligence had notified the U.S. government of the attacks. They even stated that they were aware that 25 pilots had been specifically trained for the suicide missions.

Russia - On September 15, Russian president Vladimir Putin told interviewers on MS-NBC that the Russian government had been warning the U.S. of imminent attacks on airports and government buildings in the strongest possible terms for weeks.

The United States - A criminal case proceeding in New York courts at the time of the attacks contradicts the position of conservative news site WorldNetDaily.com which has taken the position that the Clinton Administration had provided bin Laden's terrorists with encryption technology so advanced that the National Security Agency was unable to penetrate bin Laden's most secure communications.

A February 13, 2001 story by UPI terrorism correspondent Richard Sale described Echelon's effectiveness against the bin Laden organization in an active case against him in the U.S. District Court in Manhattan. That case, wrote Sale, "is based mainly on National Security Agency intercepts of phone

calls between bin Laden and his operatives around the world - Afghanistan to London, from Kenya to the United States."

The UPI story stated that the technology had been used since at least 1995 and Ben Venzke, director of intelligence and special projects for iDefense, a Virginia information warfare firm, was quoted in a key paragraph of that story.

"Since Bin Laden started to encrypt certain calls in 1995, why would they now be part of a court record? 'Codes were broken,' US officials said, and Venzke added that you don't use your highest levels of secure communications all the time. It's too burdensome and it exposes it to other types of exploitation."

The UPI story made it clear that much of the evidence in the case had been obtained in Echelon intercepts subsequent to the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in East Africa and were presumably still effective at the time of the New York attacks.

The United States - Several press reports confirm the writing of veteran journalists Alexander Cockburn and Jeff St. Clair in their Sept. 14 issue of Counterpunch. "Reports kept coming in to us of advanced warnings that an attack of some sort was eminent [sic]. San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown was booked to fly from the Bay area to New York City on the morning of September 11. But Brown says that late Monday evening, a full 8 hours prior to the attack, he received a call from a person brown described as his airport security man telling him that he should be extra cautious about air travel on September 11."

The Financial Markets - Cockburn and St. Clair report, "In addition to what we have previously reported about heightened security at the World trade center itself in the weeks leading to the attack and at the Picatinny Arsenal in Rockaway, New Jersey, Counterpunch has also learned that internal memo was sent around Goldman Sachs in Tokyo on September 10 advising all employees of a possible terrorist attack. It recommended all employees to avoid any American government buildings."

Morgan Stanley, the largest tenant of the WTC complex lost none of its 3500 employees occupying some 50 floors according to The Washington Post. Neither did Oppenheimer Funds.

FTW has also verified that at least one Goldman Sachs Vice President had taken the day off to go surfing. This may or may not be a lucky coincidence.

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