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[Book Review] THE Big lie By Qadar Bakhsh Baloch

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BOOKS: REVIEWS & VIEWS

9/11:

THE BIG LIE

Qadar Bakhsh Baloch

- 9/11: The Big Lie
- Thierry Meyssan
- Carnot Publishing Ltd.
London, United Kingdom
- 2002, Pp. 236

OF THE MANY EVENTS marking the first anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, the most peculiar one was the book ‘9/11 The Big Lie’, the English edition of a French best seller.

It asserts that the official version of the tragedy is a total fabrication of the US government. The events of 9/11 were

devastating. This book does not try to refute these facts. The book seriously challenges the official version of these facts concocted.

In fact, the book brings forth several other ideas backed with incontrovertible factual and logical evidence. When both these versions are juxtaposed, one wonders as to how the Government was restive to exploit this human tragedy for advancing its own war agenda.

The Big Lie argues, among other things, that no airliner crashed into the Pentagon (the 757 airline) as no piece of the plane is ever recovered (historic, in the sense, that after crash for the first time no pieces of the crashed plane were founded on American soil). And that the planes that hit the World Trade towers were steered by remote control and that the towers fell because of explosives planted in the bases of these towers.

‘*The Big Lie*’ of Thierry Meyssan of the Voltaire Network, France, is based on the US government documents, statements of the US citizens, military junta, observers and independent analysts and commentators.

An attentive observer of international affairs, the author is intrigued by the anomalies in the first photographs released after the attack on the Pentagon, followed by the confusion and contradictions in official statements—including those about the events at the World Trade Centre. He thus carried out his own investigation, which led him from surprise to surprise, each more astonishing and terrifying than the last. Most crucially, the author contends that these attacks were plotted not by Osama bin Laden but by a clique of right-wingers in the US military.

In *The Big Lie*, the author closely examines the details of the events of that fateful day and the result is a story which makes one realise that what a thing looks is always deceptive. Nothing in his book goes unsubstantiated—he refers only to official documents published by the White House and the US Department of Defense and statements made by leaders to the international press.

The book is categorised into three distinct parts, containing 11 chapters. The first part, *'The Bloody Stage is Set'*, comprises of four chapters.

CHAPTER ONE, *'The Pentagon's Phantom Plane'*, unfolds the attack on Pentagon, which had signaled the world over that invincibility of the United States has become vulnerable even on its own soil.

Firstly, he looks at the events at the Pentagon that day: eyewitness reports, official statements and new eyewitness reports; transcripts of hearings held by the Senate Armed Services Committee and a press interview with various civilian and military authorities. The author quotes different reports on the attack, each contradicting others. Some extracts for instance:

On 11 September 2001, shortly before 10:00 AM (the Washington's time), Secretary Rumsfeld of Defense voiced concern for the families of injured and killed, directing operation from his command centre at the Pentagon. No mention of the attackers and kinds of attack was made in the statement. The following examples from the book highlight the fractures in the fabrication.

First on the scene Reuter's news agency announced that the Pentagon had suffered damage from a helicopter explosion which was laterally corrected by the DoD, saying that a plane was involved.

The security arrangements protecting the Pentagon included:

- i. Anti aircrafts defences, five batteries of missiles installed on the top of Pentagon;
- ii. Two F-16's and F-18's fighter squadrons stationed at Presidential airbase of Saint Andrew.

Questioned On September 13 by the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard Myers, was unable to report on the measures taken to intercept the Boeing or any other attack on Pentagon.

"Whereas, North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) issued a press release on 14th September, claiming that it only received warning of the hijacking at 9:24 am, and assured that it had immediately ordered two F-16 fighters from the Langley Air Force base in Virginia to intercept the Boeing. But the air force could not locate it."

Should we believe that US military's radar system was incapable of locating a Boeing within a zone of only a few miles of radius?

Why did the anti aircraft defense system deployed to protect Pentagon, let the Boeing approach the Pentagon's inner circle?

Are we really to believe that the armed forces of the United States remained passive during the attacks (spread over nearly two hours)?

"To recap the official version: a hijacked Boeing eluded the F-16 fighters sent in its pursuit and foiled the anti-aircraft defense system in Washington. It landed vertically on the Pentagon parking lot while remaining in a horizontal position. It struck the façade at ground level. Its nose and fuselage are supposed to have penetrated into the building. One of its wings, perhaps both of them, burned outdoors, while the fuselage disintegrated inside. The fuel, stored in the wings, burned just long enough to start a fire in the building, and then was transformed to a puddle which moved itself to the spot where the plane's nose supposedly came to a halt. . . .

The official version is only propaganda. But the facts remain that 125 passengers died at the Pentagon and that an airplane carrying 64 passengers disappeared."

They say an airliner crashed into the Pentagon, but if so, why isn't there the debris of an airliner crash at the scene of the attack on Pentagon?

The façade of the Pentagon was damaged along 19 meters, but a Boeing's wingspan is at least 38 meters.

The DoD says that the entire plane and its contents were consumed by the fire, which would be the first time that has happened in aviation history, and would defy the laws of physics if the fire was caused by jet fuel.

What caused the explosion that damaged the Pentagon?

The damage caused to the interior of Pentagon is too deep and too collimated to be from the liquid fuel of an airliner. Only a shaped-charge warhead can cut a circular hole in a wall after going through 3-m of poured concrete.

The easiest way to cause the greatest amount of damage to the Pentagon would have been that, the Boeing should have dived into the Pentagon roof as the building covers the surface of about 29 acres. Instead the terrorist chose to strike on of the façade and despite its weight (100 tons) and its speed (between 250-440mph) it only destroyed the first ring of the building. (It looks as if the terrorists were on a courtesy visit).

What became of American Airlines flight 77?

Are the passengers dead?

If so, who killed them and why? If not, where are they?

What does Thierry Meyssan think of having happened at the Pentagon?

Meyssan begins by looking closely at photographs of the section of the Pentagon reportedly hit by the Boeing 757. If a plane of this size crashed into the Pentagon wall, why did it make such a small hole? The hole may have admitted the plane's fuselage but certainly not its wings. What happened to the wings? The fragments one would expect to see scattered over the area outside the Pentagon wall are not there. Meyssan concludes

that the Pentagon was hit not by a large airplane but by a missile fired from a plane that roared away.

Because the plane penetrated the Pentagon airspace without being fired on, Meyssan apprehends that the missile was launched from a US military aircraft, transmitting a friendly code and as such could enter Pentagon airspace without disturbing the counter-missile protection of the Pentagon. In concluding remarks of the first chapter Meyssan raises some questions and so lays the foundations of the next chapter.

“If the Bush Administration faked the attack on the Pentagon to cover up certain internal problems, did it also dissemble concerning some elements of the attacks that occurred at the World Trade Center?”

IN CHAPTER TWO, Thierry Meyssan tries to high-light the attacks on New York World Trade Center (WTC) by sorting interviews and comments from pilots, engineers and other specialists in the relevant fields. He tries to prove that the planes that hit the WTC towers were probably guided to their targets by radio signals that beamed from inside the towers, and the buildings fell not simply from the explosion of the planes’ fuel but also because dynamites had been placed inside the towers. Though all these points are supported by the remarks of observers or of outside specialists, none of them have been investigated mainly because the government immediately foreclosed the possibility of examining these hypotheses by projecting and propagating absolute certitude that the attacks were conducted by *Al Qaeda*, a terrorist organisation.

Besides, twin towers, the 47 story WTC building 7 was leveled in 8 seconds, seven hours after the twin towers came down. As it had neither been hit by any plane nor sustained any significant damage from the “collapse” of the twin towers earlier two buildings away, why did the building collapsed? The videos clearly show that it was a controlled demolition. Here is a list of questions that agitate the reader’s mind.

How did the WTC planes manage to hit their targets with such accuracy?

What are the possibilities of radio beacons being activated in the towers to guide the planes to their targets?

It would be the first time in history that a fire has ever caused the collapse of a steel building – the theory fails to account for at least four other major phenomena connected with the collapse.

First, the flight 175 hit the south tower at a close angle that caused most of the plane’s fuel to exit and ignite outside the building. Both the towers however collapsed in precisely the same fashion.

Secondly, if jet fuel caused both buildings to collapse, how was it possible for the south tower to collapse 30 minutes ahead of the north tower, given that the north tower was struck 20 minutes before the south tower?

Thirdly, why did a fire continue to burn at a constant three thousand degree temperature below the debris of the WTC for a little over three weeks, when the lower levels were composed mostly of concrete and, being smothered, lacked oxygen to keep the fires alive?

How did the towers collapse?

Experts maintain that explosives could only initiate such a collapse. Firefighters on the scene say they heard explosions on the ground level.

What was tower 7?

How did that building collapse, being separate from the twin towers and still stable after the attacks?

Did it house a secret CIA base? Is that why it too was destroyed?

Why was there less than the usual number of occupants in the twin towers on that particular day?

Who initiated the email warning to the occupants of the offices in the towers two hours before the attacks?

How did US President George W Bush come to watch the first tower being hit before his appearance in a classroom in Florida? How is it that he saw the first plane hit the northern tower when these were supposed to be surprised attacks?

According to his own statement, Andy Card his Chief of Staff, whispered in his ear (while sitting in side the class) that the second tower is also hit. Chapter two ends with the statement of Bush followed by a question by the author:

“The first plane hit the north tower at about 8:45 am and the second plane hit the southern tower at 9:03 am with the interval of just 18 minutes. According to his own declaration, the President of the United States saw pictures of the first crash in Florida school before the second plane had struck the second tower. It must thus have been secret images transmitted to him without delay in the secure communications room that was installed in the elementary school in preparation for his visit.”

This statement of The President Bush generates certain questions. Did the CIA have foreknowledge of the attack?

If US intelligence services could have filmed the first attack that means they must have been informed before hand. And in that case, why didn't they do anything to save their fellow countrymen? All this took place under the eye of intelligence services that observed but did not intervene.

After seeing the pictures of first hit, what actions were taken by the President? Why did he take it so normal and a routine matter that he went inside the class room to lecture the kids? Was the President psychologically incapacitated or was it planned to ignore the happening?

“Could an operation of this nature have really been conceived and directed from a cave in Afghanistan, and then carried out by a handful of Islamic militants?”

CHAPTER THREE, *Moles in the White House*, reveals some of the clearest proof that 9/11 was an act of the US sponsored terrorism comes from a close examination of the Pentagon Attack.

“The press on 12 and 13 September claimed that, according to Presidential spokesman (Ari Fleischer) the secret service received a message from the attackers indicating that they planned to destroy the White House and Air Force One. Even more surprisingly, according to the New York Times, the attackers established the credibility of their call by using the Presidential identification and transmission codes and other important Government agencies” (p.43). What so ever the case may be, the business of the codes reveals that there exists some traitors at the highest levels of the American state apparatus.”

Another fact, which disappeared from the official version, was the firebreak in white house annex. ABC did broadcast live images of this fire on 11 September, at 9:42 AM.

The reader, reviewer of the book inquires:

1. What was going in the White House on this particular day?
2. Was there an attempted *coup d'etat* or at least a “palace coup” which involved people who knew the Presidency’s transmission and authentication codes?

CHAPTER FOUR projects the performance of FBI and other intelligence and security agencies, which constitute the hallmark of the US. The masterpiece of their investigation blitzkrieg was locating of the operation leader “Atta” who at the last moment left his suitcase full of clues in transit between the two connecting flights. The bag contained training videos on piloting Boeing aircraft, a book of Islamic prayers and an old letter in which he announces his intentions to die as martyr. His presence in the Kamikaze was further confirmed by his passport, which was found intact in the smoking ruins of WTC.

I should ask over here about the probability of the following: Why did Atta burden himself with baggage when he was about to commit suicide? Despite all the efforts, America failed to find out any one out of the four black boxes of hijacked aircrafts but FBI was lucky enough to discover Muhammad Atta’s passport intact in the smoking debris of WTC. (Fire melted thousands of tons of steel, but somehow preserved the passport).

Another amazing element that catches our attention is that although all the US agencies were unable to prevent the terrorists from committing this crime against humanity even in years, they were somehow able to piece things together within hours and determine with certainty that these terrorist attacks were conducted by Osama bin Laden and his *Al Queda* network.

The list of 19 hijackers the FBI intelligence designated as the masterminds or terrorists of 9/11, all are Arab-Muslims of between 25-35

years age. Out of this list five have been found alive in their own countries. Moreover none of the hijacker's name is there in the list of victims published by the airline companies on September 13.

The stock exchange was extremely busy in the weeks ahead of the attacks. Interestingly enough, it involved insider trading targeting all the airline companies who had planes hijacked on that day, including companies who had offices in the WTC buildings and the insurance companies involved in the post 9/11 claims. The Securities and Exchange Commission of Chicago raised an alert after noticing this, which apparently prevented insiders from collecting another 2.5 million USD on their deals.

Given the unprecedented means of investigation at its disposal, the FBI should have devoted itself to elucidating each of the contradictions that have been raised above.

For instance:

- Should have tracked down the insider financial dealers who had made the capital gains through the stock of victim airlines few days before 9/11;
- Should have established what really happened at the Pentagon;
- Should have discovered the source of the message sent to Odigo warning occupants of the WTC two hours before the attack took place;
- Why the evidence like the indisputable fact that a number of the 19 supposed hijackers are still alive and well, is being ignored? Seven of the supposed hijackers turned out to be alive and not even in the US on 9/11. Three of the hijackers listed at the US Navy base as per their driving licenses.

IN CHAPTER SIX, the author unfolds the story of preparations and prayers for the holy war undertaken in the National Cathedral.

"An unprecedented ceremony took place in the National Cathedral. President and Mrs. Bush, four former Presidents (Bill Clinton, George Bush, Sr., Jimmy Carter, and Gerald Ford) and nearly all of Congressmen got together in prayer. A cardinal, a rabbi, and an imam all took turns in leading the proceedings. The most famous TV evangelist in the world, Pastor Billy Graham, who had converted George W. Bush fifteen years earlier, pronounced a homily . . . We also know that God is going to give wisdom and courage and strength to the President and those around him. And this is going to be a day that we will remember as a day of victory. . . .

President Bush then mounted to the pulpit and also delivered a sermon...prepared by his adviser, the fundamentalist Biblical scholar Michael Gearson: '...Our responsibility to history is already clear: to answer these attacks and rid the world of Evil'. . . . (Pp75-76)

The Washington Post would later analyze the metamorphosis of George W. Bush: 'For the first time since religious conservatives became a modern political movement, the president of the United States has become the movement's de facto leader--a status even Ronald Reagan...never earned'.

At noon on 14 September, following the prayer by the President of the United States, the 43 states of the Council of Europe (including Russia) and many other countries on all continent, observed three minutes of silence in memory of the victims of the attacks.... Neither the psychological shock, nor the respect that one might feel for the deceased, can explain this intense religious fervor...There was moreover no historical precedent of an American president pronouncing a declaration of war in a cathedral." (p77)

It may not be out of place to quote the two of the highly influential Christian leaders to show that how religious rhetoric serves political and military interests. God Almighty has withdrawn his protection from us, because we wallow in the search for material pleasures and sex reverend Pat Robertson.

Falwell blamed the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and the federal courts on Fox Channel:

"The abortionists have got to bear some burden for this because God will not be mocked." "And when we destroy 40 million little innocent babies, we make God mad. I really believe those pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, all of them who have tried to secularize America, I point the finger in their face and say, 'you helped this happen.'"

IN Chapter SEVEN describes the death story of basic human rights enshrined in USA constitution through Bill of Rights since 1792. Just 45 days after the September 11 attacks, with virtually no debate, Congress passed the USA PATRIOT Act. Many parts of this sweeping legislation take away checks on law enforcement and threaten the very rights and freedoms. For example, without a warrant and without probable cause, the FBI now has the power to have access to your most private medical records, your library records, and your student records... and can prevent anyone from telling you it was done.

The USA PATRIOT Act showers abundant new law enforcement powers on federal agents. Most of its provisions are not limited to terrorism offenses, but instead apply to all federal investigations; among the most far-reaching provisions in the law are the following:

- It permits the Attorney General to detain non-citizens based on mere suspicion, and to deny re-admission to the United States of non-citizens (including legal, long-term permanent residents) for engaging in speech protected by the First Amendment;

- It minimises the power of the courts to prevent law enforcement authorities from illegally abusing telephone and Internet surveillance in both anti-terrorism investigations and ordinary criminal investigations of American citizens;
- It expands the authority of the government in both terrorism and non-terror investigations to conduct so-called “sneak and peek” or “black bag” secret searches, which do not require notification of the subject of the search;
- It grants the FBI and, under new information sharing provisions, many other law enforcement and intelligence agencies broad access to highly personal medical, financial, mental health and student records with only the most minimal judicial oversight;
- It permits law enforcement agents to investigate American citizens for criminal matters without establishing probable cause based on an assertion that the investigation is for “intelligence purposes”;
- It puts the CIA firmly back in the historically abusive business of spying on Americans by giving the Director of Central Intelligence broad authority to target intelligence surveillance in the United States; and
- It empowers the Attorney General to detain a non-citizen if he believes there are “reasonable grounds to believe” the individual may be a threat to national security. The suspect may be detained for seven days before criminal or deportation charges are brought, but thereafter may be detained indefinitely in six-month increments without meaningful judicial review.

CHAPTER EIGHT blames *bin Laden* for 9/11. It tells us how a few hours after the terrorist attacks on the WTC and the Pentagon, the Bush administration concluded without a supporting evidence, that “*Osama bin Laden* and his *Al Queda* organisation were prime suspects”. The CIA Director George Tenet stated that *bin Laden* has the capacity to plan “multiple attacks with little or no warning”. Secretary of State Colin Powell called the attacks “an act of war” and publically called *bin Laden* a “suspect”. President Bush confirmed in an evening televised address to the Nation that he would “make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbours them”.

The book also uncovers the relationship between Bin Laden, his family, CIA, the Carlyle Group and the Bush family. It narrates different operations conducted by Bin Laden in collaboration with CIA and against the wishes of CIA. Ineffectiveness of CIA’s actions to punish OBL breeds doubts in the reader’s mind that OBL is not an enemy but an agent of the USA. Freezing of assets and banning of various firms/organisation suspected for any form of linkages with OBL on one hand and continued operation of Carlyle Group

managing financial assets of Bin Laden Group on the other points to something different. Chapter ten touches upon the operation “Enduring Freedom” and unmasks the true face of the “most humane civilization” which succeeded in imprisoning the “most dangerous terrorists” in the military base of the Guantanamo Bay (Cuba). These bare footed terrorists were brought by plane from Afghanistan after having been dragged and chained to their seats. Where they are subjected to sensory deprivation, blindfolded ness, with muffled ears, and plugged noses. They are denied the status of POWs.

Why is the coalition bombing Afghanistan, when none of the alleged bombers actually came from there, could there be another reason for USA presence in that region, like oil?

CONCLUSION

AT THE END Thierry Meyssan concludes his hypothesis that the attacks were plotted not by Osama bin Laden but were masterminded from inside the American state apparatus. Nevertheless this conclusion may shock and offend many because it pains to contemplate the idea that American could cynically sacrifice almost three thousand of their fellow countrymen. Yes, it is very much possible, in the past a US Chief of Staff had planned a campaign of terrorism against their own population.

Author James Bamford in *‘Body of Secrets’* highlights a set of proposals on Cuba by the Joint Chiefs of Staff codenamed Operation Northwoods. This document, titled *‘Justification for U.S. Military Intervention in Cuba’*, was provided by the JCS to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara on March 13, 1962. Written in response to a request from the Chief of the Cuba Project, Col Edward Lansdale, the Top Secret memorandum describes US plans to covertly engineer various pretexts that would justify a US invasion of Cuba. These proposals, part of a secret anti-Castro program, known as Operation Mongoose, include staging the assassinations of Cubans living in the United States, developing a fake “Communist Cuban terror campaign in the Miami area, in other Florida cities and even in Washington,” including “sinking a boatload of Cuban refugees (real or simulated),” faking a Cuban air force attack on a civilian jetliner, and concocting an incident by blowing up a US ship in Cuban waters and then blaming the incident on Cuban sabotage.

In the epilogue the author sums up the beneficiaries of the episode as follow:

- The energy lobby is the main beneficiary of the war in Afghanistan;
- George Bush could denounce the ABM Treaty, which fixed limits to the weapons development.
- Rather than dismissing the Director of CIA on its apparent failure on 9/11, the agency funding was increased by 42% to enhance its capacity to conduct “Worldwide Attack Matrix”;

- The military budget of US, which has been steadily reduced since the dissolution of USSR has undergone to a sudden increase. Over the five years the US budget will represent more than two trillion dollars equal to combined total for the twenty-five next biggest armies in the world;
- Military industrial lobby was the great victor of September 11. Meyssan's final conclusion is that the main purpose of the internal plot in the US was to get increased funding for the military, especially for weapons in space, a prime tool in the hands of US imperialism.

The American Administration is on the way to announce plenty of "blood, sweat and tears". It remains now to be seen who else than Iraq will bear the brunt.