

19 CHAPTER

WARGAMES AND HIGH TECH: PARALYZING THE SYSTEM TO PULL OFF THE ATTACKS

*C*heney to Oversee Domestic Counterterrorism Efforts *President announces new homeland defense initiative*

President Bush May 8 directed Vice President Dick Cheney to coordinate development of US government initiatives to combat terrorist attacks on the United States...

— White House Press Release, May 8, 2001

Therefore, I have asked Vice President Cheney to oversee the development of a coordinated national effort so that we may do the very best possible job of protecting our people from catastrophic harm. I have also asked Joe Allbaugh, the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to create an Office of National Preparedness. This office will be responsible for implementing the results of those parts of the national effort overseen by Vice President Cheney that deal with consequence management. Specifically it will coordinate all federal programs dealing with weapons of mass destruction consequence management within the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, Justice, and Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, and other federal agencies....

— Official Statement of President George W. Bush, May 8, 2001
Office of the Press Secretary, The White House

What wasn't addressed by any of the constructs previously posed by 9/11 investigators was an assumption that pilots and commanders would just sit passively by and watch their country be attacked — no matter what the orders were — if Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, or acting Joint Chiefs Chairman Richard Myers failed to issue a scramble order or actually issued a (very risky) direct stand-down order. That assumption had people looking for a single “stand down” directive originating from one hidden source. I never felt comfortable with that. A detective learns to be vigilant against the temptation to cut corners; otherwise, the explanation that requires the least investigative work is the one that gets all the attention. In a

sound investigation, the simplest explanation must also encompass the known facts without any of those facts being discarded as a measure of expedience.

Military discipline can be severe, but the absence of orders to scramble would never have provided our suspects with a guarantee that pilots and commanders would not respond on 9/11 and stop the attacks anyway. For an event like 9/11, where the American homeland was under attack and American citizens were dying, that would be the equivalent of asking a prizefighter who had trained his entire life not to enter the ring for his first-ever title fight — a championship match — when the opportunity presented itself and his or her name was called. My father flew in air force interceptors towards the end of the Korean War. I was a toddler then. We were stationed in Maine and I still remember the cold. I also remember the brava-do and the esprit de corps of men who believed in their mission.

Air Force flyers are a proud and assertive lot. They are trained to be aggressive and to show initiative. The lack of an order to scramble in the confusion of 9/11 was no guarantee that enough pilots wouldn't scramble to prevent the second and third attacks, especially after CNN had shown the World Trade Center burning. Clearly NORAD and the FAA knew that multiple hijackings were in progress by the time of the *first* impact. Strong initiative was demonstrated by NORAD's second-in-command, Lieutenant General Larry Arnold, from his command center at Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida (CONR). This was before the first impact. In a 2002 interview with *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, Arnold described his reaction when contacted by NEADS commander Col. Robert Marr who advised that American 11 had been hijacked and that he had gone as far as he could by getting F15 fighters battle-ready at Otis in Massachusetts. He had the pilots in the cockpits and the planes ready. That was as far as he could go.

“I told him to scramble; we'll get clearances later,” Arnold said. His instincts to act first and get permission later were typical of US and Canadian commanders that day.¹

The same *Aviation Week* article which contained Arnold's quote contradicted itself a mere six paragraphs later by quoting Canadian Navy Captain Michael Jellinek, who was acting as NORAD's command director on 9/11 at Cheyenne Mountain. “NEADS instantly ordered the scramble, then called me to get Cinc [NORAD commander-in-chief] approval for it...”² That would have been General Ralph Eberhart.

There were so many conflicting statements flying around that it was reminiscent of a search warrant I once participated in where, among four suspects, we had five different explanations of how six kilos of Mexican brown heroin had found its way into the same room with them. By the time we got to ten different versions from only four people, the lead detectives got confessions.

Whether the scramble was ordered by Arnold at Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida, or by Col. Marr at NEADS, it is clear that no one was going to wait for orders from Donald Rumsfeld. Press accounts and his own statements indicate that

Rumsfeld had not even been advised of the hijacking as he was pontificating to Representative Christopher Cox in his office at the Pentagon that another terrorist attack was imminent at 8:44 AM, just two minutes before the WTC was hit by Flight 11. This was at least 23 minutes after it had been confirmed that Flight 11 had been hijacked.³ Still no fighters had left the ground, and according to FAA reports, Flight 175 had been off course with no transponder for at least two minutes — a second confirmed emergency. Before June 1, 2001, fighters had been off the ground in what I estimate to be about six to eight minutes on average, based upon the few available reports I could find.

Both Arnold's and Jellinek's statements demonstrate that the existing official policy laid out in the Joint Chiefs' instruction of June 1, 2001, was ignored on 9/11.

Something else must have been in place to paralyze fighter response on 9/11 and still offer the plausibly deniable excuse that the tragic outcome was unintended.

In April and May of 2004 I found it after author Barbara Honegger, a senior military affairs journalist with the Department of Defense, and a talented, if erratic, 9/11 researcher named Nico Haupt had again started asking questions in a 9/11 Internet discussion group about the role of a war game exercise on that day. Only one — Vigilant Guardian — was known or had been publicly mentioned at that time.

Starting in August of 2002 Honegger had mentioned Vigilant Guardian and had suggested that the hijackers and/or their controllers had to have somehow learned the date of a wargame to piggyback their attacks on top of it. That story was widely interpreted as suggesting that al Qaeda had penetrated US intelligence or the military with inside help — a conclusion Honegger disputes but which nonetheless was widely held and discussed by those who read her first and second articles on the subject.

A second article by Honegger in May 2003 did not clear up the confusion.

This writer did not become aware of Honegger's wargame research until she refined her original story into a May 2003 story title "The Ides of March."⁴ After reading that article I too walked away believing that Honegger was arguing that there had been some kind of defection from within the government.

Honegger's stories posed two serious problems for researchers. First, a literal reading led most people to believe that she was asserting that al Qaeda had quietly penetrated classified operations. Second, she appeared to be willingly accepting the allegation that the 19 hijackers perpetrated the attacks all by themselves, were all aboard the hijacked airliners, and actually did all the flying themselves. As we will see, all of these assumptions are in serious doubt.

In May of 2003 I checked my reading of "The Ides of May" with a long list of 9/11 researchers, and we all drew the same conclusions. After much subsequent dialogue with Honegger I believe that her intent was to suggest that the US government had deliberately leaked the information to the al Qaeda "hijackers" so that the attacks could be carried out effectively. Unfortunately, that message was not clear, and much time had been lost.

In 2004 when Honegger and Haupt began compiling and posting research about previously undisclosed 9/11 wargames, it was immediately clear to me that they were on to something big. In the spring of 2004 I asked Honegger for, and received, a fairly complete list of every known wargame article (especially the newest). Honegger sent a shocking body of mainstream press stories.

It was then up to me to analyze those stories in detail and see how all the wargames worked together. Honegger's material was good and I was only able to find one or two small stories that she and Haupt had missed. What they revealed, however, has become — in my opinion — the Holy Grail of 9/11 research.

As we will see, the assertion that al Qaeda had somehow penetrated (in an active sense) the military may become an eventual fallback position for the planners of September 11th. In light of what has been unearthed, that assertion falls apart if you but breathe on it.

My answers came as they so often do for detectives working on a tough case: as a result of going back to the files and starting over one more time to look for something I had missed.

As it turns out, on September 11th, various agencies including NORAD, the FAA, the Canadian Air Force, the National Reconnaissance Office, and possibly the Pentagon were conducting as many as five wargame drills — in some cases involving hijacked airliners; in some cases also involving blips deliberately inserted onto FAA and military radar screens which were present during (at least) the first attacks; and which in some cases had pulled significant fighter resources away from the northeast US on September 11. In addition, a close reading of key news stories published in the spring of 2004 revealed for the first time that some of these drills were “live-fly” exercises where actual aircraft were simulating the behavior of hijacked airliners in real life; all of this as the real attacks began. The fact that these exercises had never been systematically and thoroughly explored in the mainstream press, or publicly by Congress, or at least publicly in any detail by the so-called Independent 9/11 Commission made me think that they might be the Grail.

That's exactly what they turned out to be.

For two and a half years after 9/11 the dominant question among skeptics of the official version was why fighters had not been scrambled in time to prevent at least one of the three “successful” attacks. We now know that there was ample time, under normal circumstances, and sufficient resources to have prevented at least two and probably all three of them.

At best I could only come up with questions and a list of people who needed to be interrogated looking searching for answers. Like many others, I concluded only that, if the system had worked perfectly so many times before with so much less provocation, it stood to reason that something must have willfully intervened on 9/11. That was the easy part. Internet stories had reported anecdotal evidence in the form of hearsay from someone who heard it from another person who said that they heard Dick Cheney make a cryptic statement that “the order still stands” and argued

that this was “proof” that Cheney had issued a stand-down order. By any standard such claims do not constitute admissible evidence, and they would never be allowed in a court of law. They certainly do not constitute proof for a trained investigator. It only takes one good embarrassment under cross-examination in court over an overlooked avenue or missed step for a detective to say, “That’s never going to happen to me again.” It happens to most good detectives at least once.

Starting in April of 2004 it all fell into place. First, the June 2001 Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction quoted at the beginning of this chapter surfaced on the website of the Defense Department’s Defense Technical Information Center.⁴ That demonstrated a willful intent to centralize decision-making authority away from field commanders prior to the attacks. As it turns out, the change in procedure had already been indirectly confirmed in a June 3, 2002, story in *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, and almost everyone missed it. That story quoted the order without disclosing that it had been put in place just ten weeks before 9/11. The wording was a near verbatim quote of the Joint Chief’s Instruction. One exception in that order (Reference D) did leave some decision making in the hands of field commanders in certain exigent circumstances, but the thrust was a radical shift away from long-standing NORAD policy.

Further research into this change would disclose more evidence showing that, just a month before that, all counter-terror response planning and organization (with a focus on weapons of mass destruction) had been placed under the control of Dick Cheney.⁵

Then there were the exercises themselves.

Vigilant Guardian was named or referred to in several news stories including *Aviation Week*, Newhouse News Service,⁶ and on two official web sites.⁷ The official websites indicated — and this was later confirmed to me in my own queries with NORAD — that details of Vigilant Guardian were classified and not available for release. A Vigilant Guardian exercise focusing on cold war-era threats was, according to an official site, conducted by NORAD once a year. But a close look at what NORAD told the press described a Vigilant Guardian that was vastly different from an exercise preparing for a Russian attack. In their post-9/11 statements, NORAD officials described details of Vigilant Guardian that seemed to be describing something else altogether.

Aviation Week reported, “Senior officers involved in Vigilant Guardian were manning NORAD command centers throughout the US and Canada, available to make immediate decisions.”⁸ This confirmed the geographic scope of the exercise. Vigilant Guardian was played up in the press as though it had facilitated a quicker response. It did anything but that.

That Vigilant Guardian had a direct impact on the Northeast Air Defense Sector in which all four hijackings occurred was confirmed in a December 2003 original story by NJ.com, a New Jersey-based service also summarizing all major stories published by New Jersey press outlets.

NORAD also has confirmed it was running two mock drills on September 11 at various radar sites and command centers in the United States and Canada, including air force bases in upstate New York, Florida, Washington, and Alaska. One drill, Operation Vigilant Guardian, began a week before September 11 and reflected a cold war mind-set: Participants practiced for an attack across the North Pole by Russian forces.⁹

The story never named the second drill, and the assertion that it was strictly a cold war-type exercise is belied by direct statements of many of the principals involved that day. The NJ.com story also raised another chilling issue.

Investigators at the September 11 commission confirm they are investigating whether NORAD's attention was drawn in one direction — toward the North Pole — while the hijackings came from an entirely different direction.¹⁰

Vigilant Warrior was specifically mentioned by former White House counter-terrorism advisor Richard Clarke in his 2004 bestseller *Against All Enemies*. At the beginning of the book Clarke describes a series of conversations with key officials that occurred after the second tower had been hit as he chaired the White House's Crisis Strategy Group (CSG) during the first minutes of the attacks.

"[FAA Administrator] Jane [Garvey] where's Norm?" I asked. They were frantically looking for Norman Mineta, the Secretary of Transportation, and, like me, a rare holdover from the Clinton administration. At first FAA could not find him. "Well, Jane, can you order aircraft down? We're going to have to clear the airspace around Washington and New York."

"We may have to do a lot more than that, Dick. I already put a hold on all take-offs and landings in New York and Washington, *but we have reports of eleven aircraft off course or out of communications, maybe hijacked.*" [Emphasis added]...

I turned to the radar screen. "JCS, JCS. I assume NORAD has scrambled fighters and AWACS. How many? Where?"

"Not a pretty picture Dick." Dick Myers, himself a fighter pilot, knew that the days when we had scores of fighters on strip alert had ended with the cold war. "We are in the middle of Vigilant Warrior, a NORAD exercise, but ... Otis has launched two birds toward New York. Langley [Air Force Base] is trying to get two up now..."

It was now 9:28 [emphasis added]¹¹

[NOTE: Clarke's book was edited by the White House for some months prior to publication. The ellipsis (three dots) after the word "but" in Clarke's paragraph above are a direct quotation from the book suggesting the possibility that the White House had deleted whatever Clarke had written here.]

As the chart in the preceding chapter shows, according to data provided by the FAA, NORAD, and many press accounts, by 9:28 it was known that all four flights had been hijacked and that flight 77 had been headed towards Washington for some time.

This was the only reference to Vigilant Warrior I was able to find. Earlier references stored on the Web disclosed a 1996 exercise in the Persian Gulf with the same name, but nothing since. I knew that the names assigned to exercises had significance but did not know how names were allocated. Why would Myers indicate that a Persian Gulf exercise, not reported on anywhere else, had any bearing on domestic response on 9/11?

But if Clarke's account is accurate, the name was confirmed directly to him by the acting chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Military exercises are often linked, and according to several sources, when names are partially shared during simultaneous exercises this indicates a connection between them. The juxtaposition of the words "Guardian" and "Warrior" suggest opposing forces in a wargame exercise with one side playing the aggressor and another side playing the defender.

The fact that Jane Garvey indicated that as many as 11 aircraft were out of radio contact or off course was the most startling revelation. Was it an indication that one or more of them could be connected with the war games?

Northern Vigilance was an exercise being conducted on September 11th as reported only by Canada's *Toronto Star* in a story dated December 9, 2001. The story had a great deal to say about how 9/11 unfolded.

Northern Vigilance, planned months in advance, involves deploying fighter jets to locations in Alaska and northern Canada. *Part of the exercise is pure simulation, but part is real world.* NORAD is keeping a close eye on the Russians, who have dispatched long-range bombers to their own high north on a similar exercise....

The Federal Aviation Administration has evidence of a hijacking and is asking for NORAD support. *This is not part of the exercise.*

In a flash, Operation Northern Vigilance is called off. *Any simulated information, what's known as an "inject" is purged from the screens...*

"Lots of other reports were starting to come in," [Major General Rick] Findley [Director of NORAD operations] recalls. "And now you're not too sure. *If they're that clever to co-ordinate that kind of attack, what else is taking place across North America?*"... [emphasis added]¹²

The reference to "injects" was chilling. No other mainstream press (especially in the US) had mentioned that false radar blips had been inserted onto radar screens on September 11th. But on whose screens? Where? A major anomaly in official 9/11 accounts had been officially ignored.

The only brief response I received from NORAD's public affairs office when I tried to sort out the various names and identities of the wargames contained the

statement, “To help clarify, NORAD did issue a news release entitled “NORAD Maintains Northern Vigilance” on 9 SEP 01.” The e-mail response directed me to a NORAD web page where I found the following:

The North American Aerospace Defense Command *shall deploy fighter aircraft as necessary to Forward Operating Locations (FOLS) in Alaska and Northern Canada* to monitor a Russian air force exercise in the Russian arctic and North Pacific Ocean. [emphasis added]¹³

So the fighters had been pulled north and west, away from New York and Washington.

Other press stories referred to Vigilant Guardian as the exercise focused on a simulated Russian attack. Which one was it? The official statements said that Northern Vigilance was the Cold War exercise. So what was Vigilant Guardian? And what were the other exercises all about? As I focused on these discrepancies it became much easier to find answers. They weren't pretty.

Northern Guardian was an exercise that was mentioned only once in a headline for an early version of the same Toronto Star story described above; and then, only in the headline. Being a journalist it appeared to me as though references to Northern Guardian had been removed from the text of the story by an editor while the headline reference had been overlooked. What appeared to be a later version of the same story, posted in the online business section the same day had the reference to Northern Guardian deleted. Otherwise, the stories were the same.¹⁴

The National Reconnaissance Office, a joint creation of the CIA and the air force that operates US spy satellites, was also running an exercise on September 11th. This one happened to involve a plane crashing into the headquarters of the ultra-secret agency in the Washington, DC suburb of Chantilly, Virginia, just outside Dulles International airport, the origin of Flight 77.

An Associated Press story dated September of 2002 was headlined “Agency planned exercise on September 11 built around a plane crashing into a building.”

WASHINGTON — In what the government describes as a bizarre coincidence, one US intelligence agency was planning an exercise last September 11 in which an errant aircraft would crash into one of its buildings. But the cause wasn't terrorism — it was to be a simulated accident.

Officials at the Chantilly, Virginia-based National Reconnaissance Office had scheduled an exercise that morning in which a small corporate jet would crash into one of the four towers at the agency's headquarters building after experiencing a mechanical failure.

The agency is about 4 miles (6 kilometers) from the runways of Washington Dulles International Airport.

Agency chiefs came up with the scenario to test employees' ability to respond to a disaster, said spokesman Art Haubold...

The National Reconnaissance Office operates many of the nation's spy satellites. It draws its personnel from the military and the CIA (news - websites).

After the September 11 attacks, most of the 3,000 people who work at agency headquarters were sent home, save for some essential personnel, Haubold said.

An announcement for an upcoming homeland security conference in Chicago first noted the exercise.

In a promotion for speaker John Fulton, a CIA officer assigned as chief of NRO's strategic gaming division, the announcement says, "*On the morning of September 11th 2001, Mr. Fulton and his team ... were running a pre-planned simulation to explore the emergency response issues that would be created if a plane were to strike a building.* Little did they know that the scenario would come true in a dramatic way that day." [Emphasis added]¹⁵

Strategic gaming, indeed.

A second confirmation of the CIA-run NRO exercise was stored at www.memoryhole.org.¹⁶ It was clear that the CIA was in charge of the NRO drill. This corresponded perfectly with my experience which says that the CIA, when involved in any training exercise involving other agencies, or the military, is always the Alpha dog. How many others? Who was coordinating all these drills anyway? Somebody had to make sure that American pilots didn't start shooting down Canadian airliners or thinking that friendly planes simulating hijacked airliners were Russian bombers or worse, real hijacks.

Vigilant Guardian was a hijacking drill, not a cold war exercise

There were a number of direct quotes from participants in Vigilant Guardian indicating that the drill involved hijacked airliners rather than Russian bombers.

General Arnold had been quoted by ABC news as saying, "The first thing that went through my mind [after receiving the hijacking alert for Flight 11] was, *is this part of the exercise? Is this some kind of a screw-up?*" [emphasis added]¹⁷

The *Aviation Week* article reported:

"Tech. Sgt. Jeremy W. Powell of ... Northeast Air Defense Sector (NEADS) in Rome, N.Y., took the first call from Boston Center. He notified NEADS Commander Col. Robert K. Marr Jr. of a possible hijacked airliner, American Airlines Flight 11.

'Part of the exercise?' the Colonel wondered. No, this is a real world event, he was told. Several days into a semi-annual exercise known as Vigilant Guardian...." [emphasis added]¹⁸

The *Newhouse* story had opened with a reference to hijackings and also confirmed a hijack scenario being linked to Vigilant Guardian.

“Lt. Col. Dawne Deskins figured it would be a long day

September 11 was Day II of ‘*Vigilant Guardian*,’ an exercise that would pose an imaginary crisis to North American Air defense outposts nationwide....

At 8:40, Deskins noticed senior technician Jeremy Powell waving his hand. Boston Center was on the line, he said. It had a hijacked airliner.

‘It must be part of the exercise,’ Deskins thought.” [emphasis added]¹⁹

For those unfamiliar with cold war-type air force exercises, for more than 50 years they have involved the simulated interception of Soviet (or Russian) strategic bombers or missiles coming directly over the North Pole. Simulated, in this case, means that interceptors are launched to intercept points. That’s what my father’s job was in Maine as radar operator/weapons officer in an F89D Scorpion from late 1952 through 1953. The intercepts occurred either in polar regions or in the far northern part of Canada, long before hostile forces could threaten the continental United States or CONUS as it is called. That’s a long way from Boston, New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania. There is no way that NORAD officers in Rome, New York, or a Lieutenant General in Florida could possibly mistake a reported hijacking out of Massachusetts as part of that kind of exercise. Such a question could only arise if hijackings were a part of the scenario in one or more wargames being played inside the US, especially *Vigilant Guardian*.

Northern Vigilance pulled fighter aircraft away from NEADS and CONUS

I found two confirmations of this and a little more information about how extensive the deployment had been. The first, indirect and incomplete, was from NJ.com.

NORAD confirmed it had only eight fighters on the East Coast for emergency scrambles on September 11. Throughout Canada and the United States, including Alaska, NORAD had 20 fighters on alert — armed, fueled up, and ready to fly in minutes.²⁰

A more specific confirmation had already come from NORAD itself from the Northern Vigilance website.

The North American Aerospace Defense Command shall deploy fighter aircraft as necessary to Forward Operating Locations (FOLS) in Alaska and Northern Canada to monitor a Russian air force exercise in the Russian arctic and North Pacific Ocean.²¹

The pieces were falling together rapidly. I remembered a story that the National Security Agency (NSA) had intercepted a message on September 10th between two al Qaeda members. CNN reported:

A message intercepted by US intelligence officials September 10 declared “The match begins tomorrow,” and another declared “Tomorrow is zero hour” — but the messages were not translated until one day after the devastating terrorist attacks.²²

That conversation was between Khalid Shaikh Muhammad, the so-called mastermind of 9/11, and Mohammed Atta, the reported lead hijacker.²³ Could “match” have referred to a wargame? Honegger had suggested this in 2002. The new wargame information now made that conclusion much more attractive.

It certainly appeared that someone in authority had deliberately interfered with FAA/NORAD operations on September 11th to make sure that some of the attacks succeeded. Richard Clarke’s book, previously edited by the White House, had FAA administrator Garvey referring to as many as 11 off-course/out-of-contact aircraft. Was she saying that she couldn’t tell the wargame inserts from the real thing?

It would take only a day or two more to find damning evidence that this is probably what she meant. The fact that the CIA had been running a plane-into-building exercise simultaneously with all the military exercises made me very suspicious. The first question that leapt at me was, with all these related exercises running at the same time, who or what was coordinating them? Someone at DoD had to have a regular job of knowing all the exercises being carried out everywhere to avoid SNAFUs. That question and others would require interviews.

“Live Fly” — Pogo bounces toward truth

On Monday, April 12, the Project on Government Oversight (www.pogo.org) released a copy of an e-mail that had been written in frustration on September 18, 2001, by former NORAD “member” Terry Ropes. In the wake of a multitude of contradictory statements by suspects Rice, Bush, Ashcroft, Tenet, and Mueller about how much had been known of “planes as weapons” warnings, a wave of indignation and journalistic embarrassment had swept the country. All who testified or answered questions, it seemed, had been saying that there had not been enough information about “planes as weapons” to institute any kind of preparatory responses. Ropes’s email proved them wrong.

Some of the major media finally mentioned Project Bojinka, a plan to hijack a number of US-bound airliners over the Pacific and blow them up. Bojinka plans also called for the crashing of a hijacked, explosives-laden airliner into CIA headquarters. The FBI and CIA had learned of Bojinka in 1995 when they arrested Ramzi Yousef in the Philippines. An April 17, 2004, *New York Times* Op-Ed headlined, “Why Didn’t We Stop 9/11?,” finally — finally — mentioned Bojinka, the mother of all advance warnings.²⁴ We crazy, flaky, risible conspiracy theorists had been screaming about it for 31 months.

The US government found out about Bojinka when they seized Ramzi Yousef’s personal computer and then brought him to the US and tried him for the first World Trade Center bombing. In 2001 Minneapolis FBI agents, eventually

“adopted” by Colleen Rowley were apoplectically trying to get into Zacarias Moussaoui’s laptop and receiving nothing but refusals. I wonder why? The agents were also speculating about a hijacked airliner being crashed into the World Trade Center after getting details of Moussaoui’s flight training.

Ropes’ e-mail, written a week after the attacks, expressed the frustration that we now know was felt throughout the military and law enforcement community. It did not take NORAD long to confirm the e-mail’s authenticity for the *Boston Globe*.

Subject: Exercise Scenario

In defense of my last unit, NORAD.

For POSITIVE FORCE/RSOI in Apr 01, the NORAD exercise developers wanted an event having a terrorist group hijack a commercial airliner (foreign carrier) and fly it into the Pentagon. PACOM [Pacific Command] didn’t want it because it would take attention from their exercise objectives, and Joint Staff action officers rejected it as too unrealistic.

Terry²⁵

The media machine kicked into high gear to control the damage. But as is always the case in criminal investigations where the detective gets suspects to talk — just a little — the amount of information learned is directly proportional to the length of time the suspects (or his agents) keep talking.

April 14, 2004, stories in the *New York Times*, the *Boston Herald*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *Washington Post*, all took the same line, emphasizing that the simulation suggested in the POGO email was rejected as being “unrealistic.”

The *Boston Globe*, however, added:

Concerns that terrorists might use hijacked airliners as missiles date back to the 1996 Olympic games in Atlanta, when jets were placed on patrol to guard against such a threat.²⁶

In the *same story*, retired FBI Director Louis Freeh (who had been FBI Director in 1996) stated regarding 9/11: “I was never aware of a plan that contemplated airliners being used as weapons after a hijacking.” I suppose a really rich terrorist could buy a Boeing 757 for such a mission. Osama had lots of money.

Days later, simultaneous with the appearances of top Bush and Clinton officials in the theatrical environment of the so-called Independent 9/11 Commission, further stories revealed shocking information — including the fact that the government had itself been flying actual aircraft during simulated hijack exercises, possibly even on September 11th.

Two new pieces of crucial evidence were that the exercise envisioned in the POGO e-mail had, in fact, been conducted sometime after April of 2001, and that several hijack exercises involved actual aircraft posing as hijacked airliners in “live-fly” operations.

On April 18 *USA Today* spilled some of the beans. Headlined, “NORAD had drills of jets as weapons” it offered never-before reported details of 9/11.

WASHINGTON — In the two years before the Sept 11 attacks, the North American Aerospace Command conducted exercises simulating what the White House says was unimaginable at the time: hijacked airliners used as weapons to crash into targets and cause mass casualties.

One of the imagined targets was The World Trade Center. In another exercise, jets performed a mock shutdown over the Atlantic Ocean of a jet supposedly laden with chemical poisons headed toward a target in the United States. In a third scenario, the target was the Pentagon — but that drill was not run after defense officials said it was unrealistic, NORAD and Defense officials say....

“Numerous types of civilian and military aircraft were used as mock hijacked aircraft,” the statement said. “These exercises tested track detection and identification; scramble and interception; hijack procedures; internal and external agency coordination and operational security and communications security procedures....

A White House spokesman said Sunday that the Bush administration was unaware of the exercises. But the exercises using real aircraft show that at least one part of the government thought the possibility of such attacks, though unlikely, merited scrutiny....

Until Sept 11, *NORAD was expected to defend the United States and Canada from aircraft based elsewhere.* After the attacks that responsibility broadened to include flights that originated in the two countries.

In the very next paragraph the story contradicted itself.

But there were exceptions in early drills, including one operation, planned in July 2001 and conducted later, that *involved planes from airports in Utah and Washington State that were “hijacked.”* Those planes were *escorted by US and Canadian aircraft to airfields in British Columbia and Alaska* [emphasis added]²⁷

The following day, April 19, CNN added fuel to the fire. For a moment — just a moment — I had a hope that 9/11 might be broken, and that some treasonous Americans might go to jail. The headline read, “NORAD exercise had jet crashing into building.”

WASHINGTON (CNN) — Sometime between 1991 and 2001, a regional sector of the North American Aerospace Defense Command simulated a foreign hijacked airliner crashing into a building in the United States as part of a training exercise scenario, a NORAD spokesman said Monday....

Military officials said the exercise involved simulating a crash into a building that would be recognizable if identified, but was not the World Trade Center or the Pentagon....

The identity of the building named in the exercise is classified....

This sector exercise *involved some flying of military aircraft* as well as a command post exercise in which communications procedures were practiced in an office environment....

NORAD has the ongoing mission of defense of US air space....

According to a statement from NORAD, "Before September 11th, 01, NORAD regularly conducted a variety of exercises that included hijack scenarios. These exercises tested track detection and identification; *scramble and interception; hijack procedures*.... [emphasis added]²⁸

NORAD's own statement confirmed that real military and civilian aircraft had posed as hijacked airliners. Fighter pilots can't intercept thin air. They can't fly above and slightly to the left of thin air and rock their wings and wait for a response. They can't practice dodging sudden, unexpected movements, maneuver or lock missiles unless there's a real airplane to do it with.

The NORAD statement was quoted further in the story:

NORAD did not plan and execute these types of exercises because we thought the scenarios were probable. These exercises were artificial simulations that provided us the opportunity to test and validate our process and rules of engagement with the *appropriate coordination between NORAD's command headquarters, its subordinate regions and sectors and National Command authorities* in Canada and the United States.

Any assertion that the White House didn't know of such drills was pure bull-shit.

The National Command Authority is the White House. It starts with the president and descends through the vice president (in the president's absence as was the case on 9/11), to the secretary of defense. Such exercises, when played in real life, usually involve White House staff standing in for the president. But since they are carried out using either the Presidential Emergency Operations Center or the Situation Room, how could the president, vice president, and national security advisor not know about drills that, of necessity, had taken place inside the White House?²⁹

Note the fact that one particular hijacked airliner drill, conducted most likely between July 2001 and September 2001, had the hijacked plane crashing into a building. September 11th was the best possible "drill" of all; the real thing. Was the same exercise that had been rejected in April then carried out as an actual event *on* September 11th? Was the intended game target the World Trade Center? The Pentagon? Both had been mentioned as targets previously, and one of them had actually been bombed before. Was the White House a target? Was the CIA

headquarters at Langley? It had been mentioned as a target in the Bojinka documents. The CIA then certainly had an interest in knowing about and participating in all such wargames.

The *USA Today* story quoted a NORAD spokesman as saying “No exercise matched the specific events of September 11th.”³⁰ So there must have been a major salient difference between this particular drill and the events of 9/11 maybe they used an airplane with Delta markings instead of United and American, or maybe the number of peanuts on board was completely different. No match.

Other significant similarities to 9/11 jumped out. The one admitted domestic hijack drill involved both the Canadian and US Air Forces, exactly like the drills being conducted on 9/11. Importantly, at least one exercise involved the shoot-down of a simulated hijack that must have been remotely piloted. It would have been difficult to find volunteers for the role of doomed airline pilot in a drill like that.

My understanding of the air force, acquired through my father’s career in the military and with Martin-Marietta, reminded me of two things. There are many old airliners lying around, and the air force likes to blow up the real thing rather than a Cessna with an American Airlines logo. The equipment involved on September 11th, Boeing 757s and 767s, were newer models. There might not have been any older ones serviceable lying in the “bone yards.” Might the airlines, very close with the US Air Force, have conveniently loaned some to the air force for use in hijack drills? It’s a great tax write-off. If they did, were they remotely piloted to avoid injury to airline personnel in case of an accident? The technology certainly existed. Intelligence agencies and the military have long disguised special combat aircraft as harmless commercial planes. I believe that one such plane, the white business jet from the chart in the previous chapter, shot down flight 93. We couldn’t have a plane full of witnesses and live “hijacker/patsies” land and start talking; especially if the plane had been flying all by itself, now could we? We will see shortly that at least one of Flight 93’s alleged hijackers, Saeed Alghamdi, had received English language training from the military. If he was on that plane and it was successfully landed, he would have some interesting things to say. If he wasn’t — if only a few of the alleged hijackers had been on the plane, it would have raised an entirely different set of questions.

History remembers

A 1976 NORAD procedural memorandum established that NORAD was absolutely responsible for all air defense in wartime or “limited war” or an “air defense emergency” inside the US. The attacks of 9/11 would seem to qualify as a limited war.³¹ There was no determinate country to attack that day, no invasion by foreign troops. The memorandum, called SCATANA (Security Control of Air Traffic and Air Navigation Aids), was partially implemented on 9/11. It had not been superceded by any later orders. The *Aviation Week* article contained three chilling paragraphs:

By 9:26 a.m., the FAA command center stopped all departures nationwide. At 9:41, American Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon, elevating tension levels even further. NEADS' Sr. Airman Stacia Rountree, an identification technician, said, 'We had three aircraft down and the possibility of others hijacked. We had to think outside the box,' making up procedures on the fly. *Before the day ended, 21 aircraft across the US had been handled as 'tracks of interest.'*

'We didn't know how many more there were ... Are there five? Six? The only way we could tell was to implement Scatana — sanitize the airspace. Get everybody down,' said Lt. Col. William E. Glover Jr., chief of Norad's air defense operations.

Gen. Ralph E. Eberhart, NORAD commander-in-chief, was in the Cheyenne Mountain battle center by then. He and his staff suggested, via an open command link, *implementing a limited version of Scatana — a federal plan designed to take emergency control of all domestic air traffic and navigation aids.* Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta immediately concurred and gave the order to get all aircraft on the ground as soon as possible. That action probably saved many lives, but without unnecessary, paralyzing restrictions of a full Scatana order.³²

Many press stories, including some excellent reports in *USA Today*, painted a clear picture of the biggest problem facing NORAD and air force units as the attacks began. Many stories confirmed Jane Garvey's number of 11 possible hijacks. Some indicated that there were up to 21. How could a NORAD commander have known where to send fighters at that time? There were clearly many possible hijackings underway. No one knew the exact number. No one knew which were real.

Sending fighters to a "possible" hijacking was not acceptable. There weren't enough to go around.³³ And if they were sent to an intercept that turned out not to have been a hijacking, they would have been in the wrong place to respond to a real one. This was exactly the kind of uncertainty that would paralyze eager and loyal pilots and commanders until uncertainty had been eliminated. By that time of course, it was too late. Mission accomplished.

So who was flying those things anyway?

Especially with the case of Flight 77, which was, as 9/11-widow Kristen Breitweiser testified, "performing loop de loops" over the Pentagon, some serious flying was done on September 11th. Flight 77 not only flew straight towards the Pentagon from near the Ohio-West Virginia border, it made a sudden U-turn over Washington so that it could hit the Pentagon in a virtually unoccupied wing on the navy side. It also descended several thousand feet in a sharp dive and was able to pull out and approach the Pentagon just feet above the ground, without colliding with anything other than some trees and a streetlight.³⁴

So who was piloting Flight 77? According to ABC you have your choice between our charmed lucky friends, Khalid Almidhar and Nawaf al Hazmi, or Wail Al Shehri.³⁵ According to multiple sources all three were poor and inexperienced pilots. Someone made great progress in the summer of 2001. Or maybe it wasn't necessary.

Training provided by Uncle Sam

There are differences between intelligence “assets” who are expendable and those who are not. Usually, the non-expendable ones are people in whom an agency has invested a lot of time and money. According to *Newsweek*, as many as five of the 9/11 hijackers received training at US military installations.

September 15 — US military sources have given the FBI information that suggests five of the alleged hijackers of the planes that were used in Tuesday's terror attacks received training at secure US military installations in the 1990s.

Three of the alleged hijackers listed their address on driver's licenses and car registrations as the Naval Air Station in Pensacola, Fla. — known as the “Cradle of US Navy Aviation,” according to a high-ranking US Navy source.

Another of the alleged hijackers [Atta] may have been trained in strategy and tactics at the Air War College in Montgomery, Ala., said another high-ranking Pentagon official. The fifth man may have received language instruction at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Tex. Both were former Saudi Air Force pilots who had come to the United States, according to the Pentagon source.

But there are slight discrepancies between the military training records and the official FBI list of suspected hijackers — either in the spellings of their names or with their birthdates. One military source said it is possible that the hijackers may have stolen the identities of the foreign nationals who studied at the US installations.³⁶

Independent journalist and filmmaker Daniel Hopsicker moved to the Venice, Florida, area shortly after the attacks. In the *Washington Post* and the *Knight-Ridder* syndicate, Hopsicker found news stories confirming that some of the hijackers had received US military training. Those stories had Mohammed Atta pretty well nailed down. He had extensive US military training. He also spent a lot of time in bars and strip clubs — behaviors that are completely inconsistent with those of a devout Muslim about to meet Allah as a pure martyr.³⁷

Credible press stories citing military sources and records also reported that some of the alleged 9/11 hijackers had received English language training at the military installations. The hijackers reported to have received such training here were Saeed Alghamdi and unnamed others; “more than one,” according the Associated Press. Alghamdi was allegedly one of the hijackers of Flight 93.³⁸

Again, a little familiarity with the military proved helpful. Military language instruction is a specialized, very elite school. Its primary providers of students have always been military and civilian intelligence agencies. As one former Special Forces soldier who attended the school told me, attendance is exclusively reserved for the most highly qualified applicants making a career in intelligence or the military. "It costs too damn much money for them to train you to be fluent in another language. It's a highly marketable skill. They won't just let you walk away after that," he said. The same thinking, he added, applied to foreign students receiving English language training.

But the assumption that the military had somehow trained some of the hijackers up to incredible skill levels didn't hold water. Venice, Florida, was where several of the hijackers received flight training in small, private aircraft. None received training on Boeing airliners. Only one or two of the 19 had an instrument rating. Over the course of two years Hopsicker not only added information to what was known about military training, he established that some of the hijackers associated with wealthy Floridians who had both intelligence and Bush family connections. Hopsicker also confirmed that within hours of the attacks, Florida Governor Jeb Bush had a military C 130 Hercules transport fly in to the Venice airport where a hastily loaded rental truck, filled with the records of Huffman Aviation — where Atta, Al Shehhi, and others had trained — was driven directly into the plane. The C 130 immediately took off for parts unknown.

Experienced military pilots with thousands of hours in all kinds of aircraft, Gary Eitel for example, have told me that the maneuver performed by Flight 77, as described in official reports, was beyond the capabilities of 90 percent of even the best and most experienced pilots in the world. I talked to Eitel on the day of the attacks and he was amazed by the piloting skill used to steer Flight 175 into the second tower. Flight 77 boggled his mind.

I remembered that the BBC had contributed some interesting material to the stories that some hijackers received military training.

One of the most bizarre ironies of all this is that five of the hijackers lived in a motel right outside the gates of the NSA

When Osama bin Laden first moved to Afghanistan, the NSA listened in to every phone call he made on his satellite phone. Over the course of two years it is believed they logged more than 2,000 minutes of conversation

It all ended when President Clinton ordered the cruise missile strike on his training camp in 1998. Bin Laden narrowly escaped with his life.

He realised that the NSA was listening in and ditched his satellite phone, and ordered his aides never to talk on the phone again about operations.³⁹

Early on the morning of 11 September, when Hani Hanjour and his four accomplices left the Valencia Motel on US route 1 on their way to Washington's Dulles airport, they joined the stream of NSA employees heading to work.

Three hours later, they had turned flight 77 around and slammed it into the Pentagon.⁴⁰

Flight 77 again: the miracle plane. The one that nobody actually *saw* hit the Pentagon; the one that left no recognizable debris matching an airliner; the one French author and investigator Thierry Meyssan did a pretty convincing job of proving never hit the Pentagon because the hole was way too small and the damage pattern (a key forensic technique used by police officers investigating traffic accidents) was totally inconsistent with a mid-sized passenger jet like a 757; the one where the engines melted, disappeared or evaporated, or were transported into space by the Starship Enterprise and never found; the one that flew like a fighter plane or a cruise missile.⁴¹

Meyssan was crucified in the American press, although his book *L'Effroyable Imposture*, or *The Horrifying Fraud*, became a runaway bestseller in Europe. This was another lesson for me about what happens in America when one tries to make a conspiracy case in the public arena, based solely upon physical evidence. That approach gave rise to verbal attacks and politically empty debates that merely wasted time and energy. I have never believed that Flight 77 hit the Pentagon. I also deliberately chose not to pursue it in my newsletter because I couldn't prove it by the rigorous standards of either the law courts or by peer-reviewed forensic science. Of course, like Meyssan and everyone else, I've been dogged by the big question about the alleged Pentagon plane: where did Flight 77 go, and what happened to the passengers?

I was now absolutely convinced that some valuable and highly trained assets were among the so-called hijackers and that those assets could not have accomplished the flying required on 9/11. Their behavior was more consistent with the creation of a detailed "legend" to make the public believe they had done the deed.

Remotely piloted airliners?

The technology to fly airliners by remote control or, what the air force calls remotely piloted vehicles (RPVs), has been around since the 1960s. The famed CIA Predator drone is just one example of how far the technology has advanced. These unmanned, armed attack aircraft have successfully taken out single vehicles from high altitudes in Afghanistan and Yemen. Remote piloting of airliners was even described in the declassified Northwoods documents from 1962, as the Joint Chiefs planned to shoot down American airliners and blame it on Fidel Castro — so that the US could have a nice war with Cuba. In those days the Joint Chiefs apparently thought it was bad form to kill too many American citizens when you were attacking your own people.⁴²

Boeing Aircraft now has an Unmanned Combat Air Vehicle (UCAV) capable of aerial dogfights and killing tanks.⁴³

Shortly after 9/11, investigative reporter Joe Vials reported on some technology that has since been confirmed. While I do not agree with many of Vials's other conclusions or political beliefs, he was right when he wrote:

By the mid-seventies, aircraft systems were even more advanced, with computers controlling onboard autopilots, which in turn were capable of controlling all of the onboard hydraulics. In combination these multiple different functions were now known as the 'Flight Control System' or FCS, in turn integrated with sophisticated avionics capable of automatically landing the aircraft in zero visibility conditions. In summary, by the mid-seventies most of the large jets were capable of effectively navigating hundreds of miles and then making automatic landings at a selected airport in zero-zero fog conditions. All of this could be accomplished unaided, but in theory at least, still under the watchful eyes of the flight deck crews.

In order to make Home Run truly effective, it had to be completely integrated with all onboard systems, and this could only be accomplished with a new aircraft design, several of which were on the drawing boards at that time.

Under cover of extreme secrecy, the multinationals and DARPA went ahead on this basis and built 'back doors' into the new computer designs. There were two very obvious hard requirements at this stage, the first a primary control channel for use in taking over the flight control system and flying the aircraft back to an airfield of choice, and secondly a covert audio channel for monitoring flight deck conversations. Once the primary channel was activated, all aircraft functions came under direct ground control, permanently removing the hijackers and pilots from the control loop.

Remember here, this was not a system designed to 'undermine' the authority of the flight crews, but was put in place as a 'doomsday' device in the event the hijackers started to shoot passengers or crewmembers, possibly including the pilots. Using the perfectly reasonable assumption that hijackers only carry a limited number of bullets, and many aircraft nowadays carry in excess of 300 passengers, Home Run could be used to fly all of the survivors to a friendly airport for a safe auto landing. So the system started out in life for the very best of reasons, but finally fell prey to security leaks, and eventually to compromised computer codes. In light of recent high-profile CIA and FBI spying trials, these leaks and compromised codes should come as no great surprise to anyone.⁴⁴

Back doors? Does that sound like yet another application of the ever-evolving PROMIS software? Remember that DARPA (Defense Advanced Projects Research Agency) is the same group of folks who brought us the Total Information Awareness Program that virtually eliminates any expectation of privacy in the US.

One company in particular, Raytheon, had been directly involved in projects related to the remote piloting of aircraft. The AP wrote about it just after 9/11. That story's name-dropping suggested that people in government were aware that this technology was a hot topic. Raytheon was of interest because it was developing technology to remove pilot-control from airliners under hijack or emergency conditions. Companies like Grumman-Northrop had been flying their Global Hawk RPVs for years.

Are Remote Control Jets Worthwhile?

AP — Several companies and government agencies are developing technology to help aircraft controllers land commercial jets from afar, an effort that could avert future disasters or hijackings.

President Bush has suggested further exploration of the technology since the September 11 terrorist hijackings, but some wonder if moving responsibility for landing planes from the cockpit to ground control is a good idea.

The Raytheon Corp. is one of several companies looking to use new satellite technology that would someday allow jets to be landed by people on the ground, in much the same way that hobbyists bring in their model airplanes by remote control.

Raytheon announced on Monday that the company is working on a secure military and civilian system that relies on ground units to improve the precision of satellite navigation.

The company successfully landed a FedEx Corp. 727 without the help of a pilot at a New Mexico Air Base in August.

'There's some pretty overt national security concerns I would think,' said John Carr, president of the National Air Traffic Controllers Association. 'The devil is in the details. *Is this something we would put on all aircraft? Because I'm sure you can imagine if I can control all aircraft you would create a new target.*'

But according to James Coyne, president of the National Air Transportation Association, the technology could be a way to avert disasters like those in the terrorist attacks or even prevent others like the 1996 ValuJet crash in Florida and the 1998 SwissAir crash where crews were apparently stymied by fire.

'Perhaps in both of those cases, if people on the ground could have been made aware of the problems, those planes could have been brought back to safety,' said Coyne, who thinks remote control could be a good idea.

Military and civilian jets have been landing on autopilot for years, but the Raytheon test used technology that provides the extremely precise navigational instructions that would be required for remote control from a secure location....

Boeing spokesman John Dern said the company is waiting to hear from task forces assembled by Mineta before trying to integrate such technology into its commercial airliners.

“Translating that into the commercial world and certifying such a system would pose big challenges,” he said. “For safety and reliability and redundancy, we’d certainly want to be sure that anything we’d do enhances safety.”⁴⁵

Either NORAD had responsibility for tracking domestically hijacked aircraft or it didn’t. If it didn’t, who did? The Civil Air Patrol? Local police departments? Air National Guard bases are under NORAD control to respond to external threats. Does some other agency control them for domestic threats? The military would never allow such confusing chains of command.

I was approaching one of those moments a detective lives for — when he knows he’s caught the suspect in many, many lies, and the whole pathetic construct begins to fall apart. If only a real detective could get these people into an interrogation room, there would be signed confessions or the certainty of a conviction before the day was over.

It got better, and it got worse: as the logical beauty of the investigation grew, so did the ugliness of the reality it revealed.

Then it hit me. The National Command Authority (NCA) in the United States is the president; in his absence, the vice president, the secretary of defense, and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. NCA meetings and protocols routinely include the National Security Advisor in the role of the president’s top advisor on national security issues. On September 11th the NCA would have extended downward through NORAD commander General Ralph Eberhart and then to General Arnold at Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida. NORAD had just established that, at minimum, Donald Rumsfeld and General Myers were lying about having no conception of such attacks and no preparedness for them. We already know that Condoleezza Rice had been lying all along.

A memorable quotation

Generally it is impossible to carry out an act of terror on the scenario which was used in the USA yesterday... As soon as something like that happens here, I am reported about that right away and in a minute we are all up.

— General Anatoly Kornukov,
Commander in Chief of the Russian Air Force⁴⁶

During the 2000 presidential campaign, George W. Bush vowed that he would not tap into the Social Security trust fund except as a result of war, recession, or a national emergency. On September 11, 2001, shortly after the attacks, President Bush turned to his Budget Director, Mitch Daniels, and said: "Lucky me. I hit the trifecta."⁴⁷

The Russians

I kept seeing the words on Mike Vreeland's note, "Let one happen, stop the rest." He had just returned to Toronto from Moscow in December of 2000 with knowledge of the attacks in the pouches he carried with him. Were the Russians in on it? They certainly had specific knowledge. The *Izvestia* story proved that. Putin had said so on MS-NBC days after 9/11.

Russian intelligence has always been surprisingly effective in penetrating US agencies; only those of Great Britain are historically more vulnerable to Russian infiltration. Neither the FBI nor the CIA has fully recovered from the years when Robert Hannsen and Aldrich Ames (respectively) flipped and served as double agents for the KGB. They did it for money and ego gratification. Could al Qaeda pay that kind of cash, offer that kind of support from its non-existent embassy in Washington? Through its spy satellites, diplomatic pouches, and its large cadre of Caucasian agents free to move around Washington unnoticed and throughout the US with diplomatic immunity?

Running a spy ring is expensive, and it takes a lot of things, especially people, which al Qaeda didn't have. Osama bin Laden and his family did own some satellites, and they hobnobbed with George H.W. Bush and former British Prime Minister John Major. They invested in companies benefiting both Bushes. Dick Cheney's company Halliburton had been involved in joint-venture construction projects with the Bin Ladin Group in the Middle East. But this was truly a case where state sponsorship was the only thing that could explain one or more high-ranking American traitors.

It was becoming clearer that the state sponsor was the United States.

What if Vreeland had been wittingly or unwittingly delivering vague documents in which Russian President Vladimir Putin demanded certain slices of the 9/11 pie in exchange for Russian silence and cooperation? - Immediately after 9/11 Putin was one of America's head cheerleaders. He welcomed George W. Bush to Moscow shortly after the attacks. Did Bush get a look at Putin's intelligence files on how the Bush cabal, its financial backers, and US intelligence agencies had set up the attacks, roughly between 1998 and 2001, by assembling pieces of known terrorist plans already on the shelf; by quietly co-opting some terrorist cells which still believed they were following bin Laden; by arranging for other al Qaeda members who had been "flipped" to recruit the unwitting muscle who would die a martyr's death on September 11th?

It was not until Iraq became the Bush administration's *raison d'être* that the Russian relationship went sour. Iraq had 11 percent of the world's oil, and Russia

had around \$8 billion of contracts to refurbish the oil infrastructure and \$4 billion worth of Saddam's unpaid IOUs.

So where could a few key al Qaeda operatives, some of whom had trained at a CIA sponsored training camp in Chechnya, have possibly gotten detailed information about multiple wargame exercises on 9/11 so that they could complete movements that would fill out the legend of their crime? From their handlers perhaps?

Unlike a police detective, I had no badge, no authority, no legal mandate, no ability to compel people to show me records or even talk to me. But one thing was absolutely certain.

It was time to go out and start asking questions.