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CIA admits foreknowledge of 9/11

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May 6, 2002—On April 11, 2002, CIA Deputy Director James Pavitt delivered an address to the Duke University Law School Conference. This speech was covered by AgenceFrance-Presse (AFP) on Sunday April 28, 10:59 AM in an article titled “Top CIA official warns next terror attack unavoidable” <<http://sg.news.yahoo.com/020428/1/2onzj.html>>. The CIA has released the transcript of Pavitt’s speech, which is posted at the CIA web site.

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/public_affairs/speeches/pavitt_04262002.html>

The following are excerpts taken directly from Pavitt’s address.

In this speech, Pavitt states clearly that the CIA had foreknowledge of the September 11 attacks. My emphasis are in bold and my comments are in italics, followed by the initials “LC.”

Jim Pavitt, CIA Deputy Director for Operations

Excerpts from Address to Duke University Law School Conference

April 11, 2002

We had very, very good intelligence of the general structure and strategies of the al Qaeda terrorist organization. We knew and we warned that al Qaeda was planning a major strike. There need be no question about that. [my emphasis—LC]

[After seven months of CIA, the Bush administration and the mainstream corporate media aggressively pushing the idea of an “intelligence failure” and that the CIA was “caught unaware” by the September 11th attacks, the Deputy Director of the CIA is clearly admitting foreknowledge.— LC]

What didn’t we know? We never found the tactical intelligence, never uncovered the specifics that could have stopped those tragic strikes that we all remember so well.

[This is flatly contradicted by what Pavitt states in another part of this address, which is detailed below. It is also contradicted by credible and extensive reports of successful pre-9/11 penetration of the bin Laden operation by the US intelligence community, including CIA and National Security Agency, and the significant technical expertise possessed by the US government, including Echelon and Promis software. It is also contradicted by the fact that intelligence agencies throughout the world had specific information on the attacks, and that these agencies issued specific warnings. Certain segments of Wall Street and US financial community knew of the pending attacks. An extensive accounting of these reports can be accessed at From The Wilderness publications (www.copvcia.com) and at http://www.fromthewilderness.com/free/ww3/042202_bushknows.html—LC]

And as a reality of that difficult and often frustrating fight against terror, the terror cells that we're going up against are typically small and all terrorist personnel in those cells, participating in those cells, perpetrating the acts of terror, all those personnel were carefully screened. The number of personnel who know vital information, targets, timing, the exact methods to be used had to be smaller still.

Against that degree of control, that kind of compartmentation, that depth of discipline and fanaticism, I personally doubt, and I draw again upon my 30 years of experience in this business, that anything short of one of the knowledgeable inner circle personnel or hijackers turning himself in to us would have given us sufficient foreknowledge to have prevented the horrendous slaughter that took place on the 11th.

[Pavitt is inflating the operational capabilities and fanaticism of Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda, which to a large degree are creations of CIA, while deflecting focus on the extensive penetration and capabilities of CIA and its terrorist surrogates (Pakistani ISI, etc.).—LC]

Some of you out there may have heard bin Laden himself speak about this on that shocking videotape that we recovered in Afghanistan. On that tape when he was speaking to friends as he sat around in a little room, he talks about the fact that some of the hijackers, indeed, some of the most senior members of his inner circle had been kept in the dark about the full extent of that destruction operation that took place in New York and in Washington on the 11th of September.

[The authenticity and relevance of the "notorious smoking bin Laden video" has not been confirmed. In fact, questions abound. <http://www.onlinejournal.com/12-18-01_Chin-printable.pdf>—LC]

While we did not stop the awful carnage that day our years of preparation and our experience allowed us to respond to the challenges of war quickly and effectively. From the moment the second tower was hit in New York, CIA began to shift resources to both collection and analysis. We knew from the start that our key contribution would come not in now numbers but in expertise.

Teams of my paramilitary operations officers trained not just to observe conditions but if need be to change them, were among the first on the ground in Afghanistan. With a small logistical footprint they came with lightning speed. We were on the ground within days of that terrible attack.

They came with knowledge of local languages, whatever you heard to the contrary notwithstanding, terrain, and politics.

None of this came easy. You cannot learn Pushtan overnight, and you can't truly understand the complexities of tribalism, regionalism, and personalism in Afghanistan by reading the newspaper or a learned book. My people learned about this by years of study and years of practice often in difficult, hostile places and yes indeed, on the ground in Afghanistan itself.

If you hear somebody say, and I have, the CIA abandoned Afghanistan after the Soviets left and that we never paid any attention to that place until September 11th, I would implore you to ask those people how we were able to accomplish all we did since the Soviets departed. How we knew who to approach on the ground, which operations, which warlord to support, what information to collect. Quite simply, we were there well before the 11th of September. [my emphasis—LC]

[Pavitt is stating clearly that that, contrary to arguments by some current and former CIA operatives such as Reuel Marc Gerecht and Robert Baer (who have published articles and books about the CIA's lack of human intelligence in the Middle East and Central Asia), that CIA had never left Afghanistan in the wake in the 1989 Soviet withdrawal from the country.]

Pavitt is in fact lauding CIA capability, penetration and presence. He also confirms here that existing CIA penetration in the region was vital to the speed and success of Operation Enduring Freedom, an operation of a magnitude that requires months—not weeks—of planning. Contrary to Pavitt's assertion that CIA "responded within days" to the 9/11 attacks with "lighting speed," it is impossible to build an intelligence network of such scope in a short period of time. Bottom line: CIA was already there, and has been for decades.—LC]

In a run-up to the millennium celebrations the CIA warned the President of the United States of serious terrorism conspiracies around the world. We predicted, we told the President, that there would be between five and 15 serious attacks against on U.S. soil. But we did much much more than warn. With our allies and our partners around the world we launched immense efforts to counter those threats. Hundreds of terrorists were arrested, multiple cells of terrorism were destroyed. One terrorist cell planned to blow up a hotel, buses and holy cites in both Israel and Jordan. It had also planned to use chemical weapons.

We knew then just as we know now that al Qaeda and those who would continue its mission of murder were nothing if they're not resilient. Remember, the World Trade Center was attacked once before.

[Particularly in light of the years of information gathered in the investigations of the prior World Trade Center bombings by FBI and CIA, claims of a dearth of sufficient intelligence are implausible. LC]

Because the networks of terror are fluid and dynamic, because they learn from their past and from ours—from our past, from our action—I'm not at liberty tonight to describe to you every thing we've done against them. You would not want me to do that.

Today, the year 2002, I have more spies stealing more secrets than at any time in the history of the CIA. [my emphasis—LC]

[Which means what was already powerful is now super powerful, and nightmarishly so. In with all due respect, Mr. Pavitt, we do want you to come clean with the citizens you work for.—LC]

Now for the hard truth. **Despite the best efforts of so much of the world, the next terrorist attack—it's not a question of if, it's a question of when. With so many possible targets and an enemy more than willing to die, the perfect defense isn't possible. [my emphasis—LC]**

[Without providing any specifics, Pavitt is announcing that new “terrorist attacks” are “unavoidable” and even “impossible” even before they have occurred—as in “CIA can't and/or won't do anything about whatever happens.” Why is he issuing this vague and very public warning?—LC]

If I knew any society that would mount such a perfect defense devoid as it would be of the liberties that makes us great, is not worth defending. [my emphasis—LC]

[Pavitt is suggesting that mounting foolproof countermeasures against terrorism would require sacrificing civil liberties and, as a result, would produce a system that, in his view, “is not worth defending.” This statement is disingenuous. It is an inarguable fact that civil liberties, and the Bill of Rights, have already been gutted post-9/11. America is already a virtual police state. Pavitt knows this. In order to get “foolproof” protection, Americans should and will relinquish what little is left of their civil liberties and accept a full dictatorship. In the wake of another major “terrorist atrocity,” Americans would be frightened enough to do so.—LC]

After the deep, debilitating cuts of the 1990s [my emphasis—LC], when any thought that the end of the Cold War would bring us a safer, more predictable world, one in which intelligence was not important, a world in which intelligence officers were no longer as necessary, we now continue to rebuild, back to essential strength where we can continue to do what you and others ask me to do. **In the Directorate of Operations alone, since just five or six years ago, we are training more than 10 times as many operations officers. [my emphasis—LC]**

[The CIA budget, which has been estimated at approximately \$35 billion, has been increased post 9/11. That is not counting untold amounts funneled through budgets of other government agencies.—LC]

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