

The Secret Lie That Started the Afghan War

TRANSCRIPT

Yet another surge of violence in Afghanistan, including suicide bombings by the Taliban and retaliatory airstrikes by US forces, is reminding the world once again of the fact that the Afghan war is far from over.

AMY GOODMAN: In Afghanistan, a fierce battle is continuing over the control of the strategic city of Ghazni, four days after the Taliban attacked the city, killing more than 200 people—including over 100 soldiers and police officers. Many residents have fled the city.

SOURCE: [*Democracy Now, August 13, 2018*](#)

CHARLOTTE BELLIS: Ghazni morphed into an urban battlefield last Friday. People were trapped for five days in their homes as thousands of Taliban fighters and Afghan soldiers fought in the streets. U.S. helicopters, drones and a B-1 bomber patrolled overhead.

SOURCE: [*UN: Ghazni still dangerous for all after Taliban pushed out*](#)

JUDY WOODRUFF: In Afghanistan, Taliban fighters overran a military base, killing at least 17 soldiers. They attacked the site in Northern Faryab province and claimed dozens of soldiers surrendered.

SOURCE: [*PBS NewsHour August 14, 2018*](#)

HEATHER NEUERT: The horrific attack is a clear effort to foment sectarian violence and hold back the Afghan peoples' hopes for a future of peace and security. It reminds us, once again, the importance of reaching a peaceful solution to the conflict in Afghanistan. The United States continues to stand with the Government of Afghanistan and the people of Afghanistan and will continue to support their efforts to achieve peace and security in their country.

SOURCE: [*State Department Press Briefing – August 15, 2018*](#)

“Peace” and “security.” For 17 years now the American people (and the people of the world) have listened to the US State Department tell us how the American military is working to bring “peace” and “security” to Afghanistan. But this lie is self-refuting.

At 17 years, the Afghan war is now the longest war in American history, and, despite [recent reports](#) about negotiations between the US and the Taliban, the deployment of troops in the country has [actually increased](#) in the Trump era.

JUJU CHANG: Breaking news on the nation's long war in Afghanistan: President Trump in a prime time address declaring the US must continue the fight.

DONALD TRUMP: The consequences of a rapid exit are both predictable and unacceptable.

[...]

MARTHA RADDATZ: And while he didn't commit to a specific number of additional troops (although he said we will see “overwhelming force”), the president has given Defense

Secretary Mattis the authority to set troop levels, and Mattis has favored sending in about 4,000 more US troops.

SOURCE: [*Trump announces US troop increase in Afghanistan*](#)

But as the US falls deeper and deeper into the Afghan quagmire, we risk forgetting how this war was actually authorized. The public is merely reminded, in Pavlovian fashion, that:

TRUMP: 9/11, the worst terrorist attack in our history, was planned and directed from Afghanistan.

SOURCE: [*Trump announces US troop increase in Afghanistan*](#)

But how was that determination made? Who made it? When? And how did NATO become involved in this conflict? *These* details are never discussed because they have for nearly two decades, been hidden behind a shroud of secrecy. As we shall see, the entire war was waged on a false pretense, based on supposed evidence that was classified and withheld from the public.

But now, after nearly two decades of lies, the remarkable truth about the secret documents that helped launch the Afghan war can finally be revealed.

This is the story of **The Secret Lie That Started the Afghan War.**

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Just one day after 9/11, while the toxic dust was still settling on Ground Zero, the North Atlantic Council—NATO's decision-making body—[met to discuss NATO's response](#) to the attacks.

NATO SEC. GEN. LORD ROBERTSON: On September the 12th the North Atlantic Council met again in response to the appalling attacks perpetrated yesterday against the United States of America. The Council agreed that if it is determined that this attack was directed from abroad against the United States it shall be regarded as an action covered by article 5 of The Washington treaty which states that an armed attack against one or more of the allies in Europe or in North America shall be considered an attack against them all.

[...]

Article 5 of the Washington Treaty stipulates that in the event of attacks falling within its purview, each Ally will assist the Party that has been attacked by taking such action as it deems necessary. Accordingly, the United States' NATO Allies stand ready to provide the assistance that may be required as a consequence of these acts of barbarism.

SOURCE: [*NATO Press Briefing September 12, 2001*](#)

The "Washington Treaty," more formally known as the [North Atlantic Treaty](#), is the founding document of NATO. Consisting of 14 articles, it lays out the obligations of the signatory nations to their fellow NATO members. Article 5 states that:

“The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.”

That the North Atlantic Council discussed the invocation of Article 5 on September 12th, 2001, is no small matter. It had never been invoked in the history of NATO up to that point, and its invocation would commit NATO forces to whatever war the US launched in the wake of the 9/11 attacks.

But *who* directed those 9/11 attacks? *That* was the question, and, as Lord Robertson indicated, it would require the US to demonstrate that the attack “was directed from abroad.”

On October 2, 2001, the US government’s official answer to that question was provided by Ambassador Frank Taylor, the United States State Department Coordinator for Counter-terrorism. On that day, Taylor briefed the North Atlantic Council on Al Qaeda’s alleged connection to the events of 9/11.

LORD ROBERTSON: This morning, the United States briefed the North Atlantic Council on the results of their investigation into who was responsible for the horrific terrorist attacks which took place on 11 September.

The briefing was given by Ambassador Frank Taylor, the United States Department of State Coordinator for Counter-terrorism.

[...]

The briefing addressed the events of 11 September themselves, the results of the investigation so far, what is known about Osama bin Laden and the Al Qaeda organisation and their involvement in the attacks and in previous terrorist activity, and the links between Al Qaeda and the Taleban regime in Afghanistan.

The facts are clear and compelling. The information presented points conclusively to an Al-Qaida role in the 11 September attacks.

SOURCE: Statement by NATO Secretary General, Lord Robertson, October 2, 2001

So “clear and compelling” was Taylor’s briefing that the Council agreed to invoke Article 5 and commit NATO’s forces to the US government’s war of terror.

LORD ROBERTSON: On the basis of this briefing, it has now been determined that the attack against the United States on 11 September was directed from abroad and shall therefore be regarded as an action covered by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, which states that an armed attack on one or more of the Allies in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all.

I want to reiterate that the United States of America can rely on the full support of its 18 NATO Allies in the campaign against terrorism.

And, just like that, NATO members were committed to an operation in Afghanistan that sees their troops remaining in the country [to this very day](#).

So what information did Ambassador Taylor present in that briefing? The 9/11 Commission, which would go on to deliver the official government conspiracy theory of 9/11 in its 2004 final report, still had not even been established. In fact, the establishment of such a commission was at the time still being [actively blocked](#) by the Bush Administration. And the mistranslated tape that the Pentagon would later [falsely label](#) the Osama Bin Laden “confession” tape had still not been magically “discovered” in a random house in Jalalabad. At this point, there had been no official evidence presented to the public that demonstrated that the operation was directed and coordinated from Afghanistan by Al Qaeda. Surely, then, the Taylor briefing would be filled with evidence that would put to rest any “[outrageous conspiracy theories concerning the attacks of September the 11th](#).”

. . . But there’s just one problem. The Taylor report was classified and any evidence it contained showing an Al Qaeda link to 9/11 was hidden from the public.

LORD ROBERTSON: Today’s was a classified briefing and so I cannot give you all the details. Briefings are also being given directly by the United States to the Allies in their capitals.

And so, for nearly a decade, the US government’s evidence that Al Qaeda had directed the 9/11 attacks—the very evidence that was used to launch the war on Afghanistan in particular and America’s war of terror in general—was forbidden to the public, hidden behind a cloud of official secrecy.

But then, in 2009, intelwire.com quietly posted [a document](#) online under the title “[Secret Post-9/11 Briefing to World Leaders](#).” The document is a US State Department cable addressed to the American Embassies in the NATO countries and American allies around the world under the subject line “September 11: Working together to fight the plague of global terrorism and the case against Al-Qa’ida.” The cable is dated October 1, 2001—the day before Ambassador Taylor’s meeting with the North Atlantic Council—and instructs its recipients to brief their host countries’ government on “the information linking the Al-Qa’ida terrorist network, Usama Bin Laden, and the Taleban regime to the September 11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon and the crash of United Airlines Flight 93.”

The document went largely unnoticed until earlier this year, when Professor Niels Harrit wrote an article, “[The Mysterious Frank Taylor Report: The 9/11 Document that Launched US-NATO’s ‘War on Terrorism’ in the Middle East](#),” connecting the dots between this document and the briefing that Ambassador Taylor gave to the North Atlantic Council.

HARRIT: This is a nice little story about grassroots activism, actually, and it starts in 2009 when I got an email from a Norwegian truth activist. His name is Torstein Viddal, and he sent me this PDF with a message, “Did you see this?” And I hadn’t seen this. And I opened it and read it, and it appeared to be the instructions going from the American State Department to all representations in the world—American representations in the world, embassies, consulates—about what to think and what to say about 9/11. And I did not find the contents particularly controversial (this is in 2009) because what was in there was completely in accordance with the official version. That is, nothing, basically. But it was very long and it was meticulous in instructing the recipients of this *dépêche*, I suppose you call it in English, about what to do with it. Not to put it anywhere, only to use it for oral presentations.

But at that time I did not realize the importance of this document because it wasn't until 2012 as I recall that Michel Chossudovsky came out . . . he wrote [a paper](#) about what happened in Brussels in the days after 9/11.

[...]

...So and still this document was sitting on my hard drive. But about a year ago another activist, a brilliant Danish journalist, his name is Tommy Hansen and he should be mentioned he's a beacon on our local scene and unfortunately he passed away very recently but I want his name to be mentioned in this connection because when I was talking with Tommy I said casually that I have the *dépêche* which was sent to the American representations about what to say and what to think about 9/11. And he said, "Well, I would like to see that."

Alright, so I went back home and dug it out from my archives and at that moment for the first time I looked at the date. Because according to the the email address it had been sent out on October 2nd and the document itself is dated October 1st. And then it struck me. So that, what a coincidence, because this was the same day as when Frank Taylor was giving his presentation in Brussels and about a day before all the national governments were briefed. So I started to take a closer look and then some details appeared that was striking. One thing is that Lord Robertson [...] in his press conference is reading a section from this document.

ROBERTSON: The facts are clear and compelling[...] We know that the individuals who carried out these attacks were part of the world-wide terrorist network of Al-Qaida, headed by Osama bin Laden and his key lieutenants and protected by the Taliban.

There, in Lord Robertson's own mouth at the press conference announcing the delivery of the Taylor report are the very words from the document itself. The connection is undeniable: this State Department cable contains the talking points for the briefing that Taylor delivered to the North Atlantic Council.

Crucially, if unsurprisingly, the document presents absolutely no proof or evidence establishing a link between Al Qaeda and 9/11. After spending a full 15 pages talking in generalities about terror, about the US government's officially-sanctioned history of Al Qaeda, and of previous attacks linked to Al Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden, the document finally arrives at "Part III" purporting to demonstrate Al Qaeda's involvement in the attacks. But Part III begins by admitting that the investigation into the attacks is "still in the early stage" and that "[t]here are still gaps in our knowledge." It then goes on to detail circumstantial "evidence" that would not even rise to the level of warranting an indictment, let alone a conviction in a court of law.

After asserting without evidence that several of the alleged hijackers had been identified as "known Bin Laden associates" without clarifying the source of that identification, let alone how their identities and status as hijackers had been determined, we are then told that "Bin Laden and his associates seemed to be anticipating what we could only identify as an important event or activity." Finally, the document talks about how the incident is "tactically similar to earlier attacks" because it involved planning and a desire to inflict mass casualties.

And that is it. That is the sum total of the evidence that both the document itself and Lord Robertson, evidently reading notes from Taylor's briefing, calls "clear and compelling."

HARRIT: This is in my mind with no doubt simply the legal basis for 18 years of perpetual war in the Middle East. This is the basis for for NATO’s activation of Article 5. And so what is in the document and what is the evidence? What is the evidence which Lord Robertson calls clear and compelling none there’s absolutely no evidence in that paper. It’s free for everyone to see and I’m sure you will present it to your audience.

All of this is in keeping with what we have long known about the war on Afghanistan: It was not waged in response to the 9/11 attacks, but was in fact prepared well in advance. Al Qaeda and the events of September 11th were nothing more than a convenient pretense for the US government to justify their illegal invasion and occupation of a key geostrategic landmass in South Asia.

In 1997, just four years before the NATO invasion, former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski [wrote](#) that “For America, the chief geopolitical prize is Eurasia[...]. Now a non-Eurasian power is preeminent in Eurasia—and America’s global primacy is directly dependent on how long and how effectively its preponderance on the Eurasian continent is sustained.”

Specifically, Brzezinski pinpointed Afghanistan and its neighbours—an area he called the “Eurasian Balkans”—as the most geopolitically significant region to control for its gas and oil reserves and mineral deposits. He argued that some form of extended American military intervention in the region would be necessary, warning that a global consensus on its foreign policy imperatives would be impossible “...except in the circumstance of a truly massive and widely perceived direct external threat.”

Later that year, a senior delegation from the Taliban came to the United States for [meetings with Unocal](#) about securing the rights for a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan across Afghanistan. In 2002, it was [revealed](#) that the United States had been negotiating with the Taliban to secure those oil interests, and that American negotiators had told the Taliban that they had a choice: “You have a carpet of gold, meaning an oil deal, or a carpet of bombs.” Shortly after the 9/11 attacks, a former Pakistani foreign secretary [revealed](#) to the BBC that a senior American official had told him in mid-July of 2001 that military action against Afghanistan would go ahead by the middle of October.

When the Bush administration came into office, its first substantive national security decision directive, [NSPD-9](#), called for “military options against Taliban targets in Afghanistan, including leadership, command-control, air and air defense, ground forces, and logistics” and was presented to the president on September 4, 2001, seven days *before* 9/11.

CONDOLEEZZA RICE: Although this National Security Presidential Directive was originally a highly classified document, we arranged for portions to be declassified to help the Commission in its work, and I will describe some of those today. The strategy set as its goal the elimination of the al Qaeda network. [. . .] And it ordered the leadership of relevant U.S. departments and agencies to make the elimination of al Qaeda a high priority and to use all aspects of our national power — intelligence, financial, diplomatic, and military — to meet this goal. [. . .]

And it directed the secretary of defense to — and I quote — “ensure that the contingency planning process include plans: against al Qaeda and associated terrorist facilities in Afghanistan, including leadership, command-control-communications, training, and logistics facilities; against Taliban targets in Afghanistan, including leadership, command-control, air

and air defense, ground forces, and logistics; to eliminate weapons of mass destruction which al Qaeda and associated terrorist groups may acquire or manufacture, including those stored in underground bunkers.”

SOURCE: [September 11 Commission: National Security Council](#)

DONALD RUMSFELD: Dr. Rice has stated that she asked the National Security Council staff in her first week in office for a new presidential initiative on al Qaeda. In early March, the staff was directed to craft a more aggressive strategy aimed at eliminating the al Qaeda threat. The first draft of that approach, in the form of a presidential directive, was circulated by the NSC staff in June of 2001, and a number of meetings were held that summer at the deputy secretary level to address the policy questions involved, such as relating an aggressive strategy against Taliban to U.S.-Pakistan relations.

“By the first week of September, the process had arrived at a strategy that was presented to principals and later became NSPD-9, the President’s first major substantive national security decision directive. It was presented for a decision by principals on September 4th, 2001, seven days before the 11th, and later signed by the President, with minor changes and a preamble to reflect the events of September 11th, in October.”

SOURCE: RUMSFELD 9/11 COMMISSION TESTIMONY MARCH 23, 2004

The invasion of Afghanistan was not about Al Qaeda. It was not the response of the US government to the “evidence” connecting the Taliban to Al Qaeda and Al Qaeda to 9/11 that was missing from Ambassador Taylor’s report. It was a geopolitical gambit in search of a justification. And the events of 9/11 were the justification that the US used to sell NATO, and the world, on the war in Afghanistan.

Worse, 9/11 was the excuse for the entire war of terror itself, the complete transformation of the Middle East that is taking place thanks to American military might. The Taylor report was a blank check drawn on the events of that day. A check that is still being cashed.

HARRIT: This is the legal and the moral foundation and political foundation for the launch of the uninterrupted destruction of the Middle East. That’s what it is. The 18 years of wars.

We have refugees running all over the the highways in Europe. Europe is going down for the load of refugees and migrants, and it all started there. It all emerges from this single document, legally, morally, and politically. That’s why this document is important. It is the Achilles heel like Building 7 is the Achilles heel of the destruction of the World Trade Center.

So you may you may be cynical. OK, then you can be cynical about everything. But if there is any moral left in our Western society, then light should be shined on this document because this document is the legal and—I’ll say it again—the legal and the moral basis for launching of the NATO wars in the Middle East. And that’s something, I think.

17 years of warfare and bloodshed. 17 years of attack and counter-attack. 17 years of tears and shattered lives. 17 years of lies. And all of it based on the foundational lie of 9/11, and this virtually unknown document.

But now the truth of this deception is in our hands. And it is only by exposing that deception that we can ever hope to derail the wars waged in its name, and stop the death and destruction it has wrought.

Source: <https://www.corbetteport.com/afghanwar/>