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What really happened surrounding the terrorist attacks of 11th September?

Terror, lies and deception

Four years to the day after the devastating terrorist attack on the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York, the culture institution "Rote Fabrik" invited the peace researcher Daniele Ganser from ETH Zurich to a lecture and discussion evening on 11th September. (1) Under the title "9/11: what really happened" the ETH specialist for undercover military operations explained to the large audience, what else happened on 11th September in addition to the official version.

By Jakob Lindenmeyer

To begin with the most important conclusion: what really led up to the terrorist attack on 11th September 2001 was something that security specialist Ganser was not able to give a decisive answer to either. What he did do, however, was deliver a plausible background together with three logically structured explanatory theories and a systematic analysis of twelve central, disputed factors to the roughly 150 participants who filled the club room of the Rote Fabrik in Zurich.



Daniele Ganser, peace researcher and specialist for undercover military operations.

ETH research on undercover military operations

Daniele Ganser is Senior Researcher at the ETH Center for Security Studies (CSS) and peace expert (2) . Undercover military operations are the focus of his research (3) , about which ETH Life reported at the beginning of the year (4) .

In order to bring light into the darkness surrounding the biggest and most complicated of all conspiracies ever, Ganser organised a seminar last summer semester at the Historical Seminar of the University of Zurich entitled "9/11 – Writing history in the USA". His aim was to compare

the US government's official 9/11-Reports (5) with two alternative histories of 9/11.

Ganser examined the historical sources with his students. Although the participating students were obliged to wade their way through a total of 1,800 pages of American source literature covering the 11th September and take a test afterwards (5) 25 history and political science students were nevertheless interested in participating the seminar. In a talk, each student expounded one contended factor of the various histories, and these provided the basis for a systematic classification of 9/11 theories into SURPRISE, MIHOP and LIHOP.

Al-Qaeda conspiracy under Osama bin Laden

The best-known conspiracy theory, which is also the official version of the US government's 9/11 reports (5), is the so-called SURPRISE theory, the proposition that it was an al-Qaeda conspiracy under the leadership of Osama bin Laden. Emanating from Afghanistan, this conspiracy purportedly misled the US government and its 15 secret service agencies so successfully that they were not able to prevent the attack. According to Ganser, the reason why even today most people still consider this explanation to be the only possible one has to do with the fact that the SURPRISE theory enjoyed the highest level of coverage in media reports pertaining to the 11th September, the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the fight against the al-Qaeda's terrorist network.

"Inside Job": Attacks against the own population

The direct opposite is contended by the MIHOP theory. The acronym stands for "Make It Happen On Purpose". Based on numerous contradictions in the official version and a lot of evidence for undercover secret service and Pentagon operations before and during the attack, those who favour the MIHOP theory start from the principle that US federal authorities—above all secret services agencies and the Pentagon—were directly involved in the 11th September attacks. Specialist circles call such a targeted and long premeditated action against a country's own population with the aim of justifying other wars—for example, because of scarcer oil resources—an "inside job".

Kennedy prevents the Pentagon's "malicious plan"

The oldest evidence that such a MIHOP conspiracy is at all conceivable goes back to 1962, according to ETH researcher Ganser. After Fidel Castro's revolution in Cuba in 1959 the US's foreign secret service, CIA, failed in its 1961 "Bay of Pigs" operation to overthrow Castro. In the following year the Pentagon launched "Operation Northwoods", a plan for an attack against its own population in order to justify military action against Cuba. This operation foresaw the shooting down of one of its own planes—an empty one—over Cuba, and also included plans to carry out bomb attacks in Florida and Washington DC, both events to be blamed on the Cubans, which would have led to all-out war between the two countries. John F. Kennedy, who was president at the time, and his defence secretary McNamara stopped this "malicious plan" and prevented it from being carried out.

The view of adherents of the LIHOP conspiracy theory lies somewhere between MIHOP and SURPRISE. LIHOP stands for "Let It Happen On Purpose" and starts with the assumption, like SURPRISE, that an al-Qaeda conspiracy existed, that this was discovered by the US secret services already in 2000, but that, instead of taking steps to prevent it, the agencies involved used it to further their own interests and knowingly let it happen.



Impact of the second plane crashing into the South Tower of the World Trade Center in New York on 11th September 2001 at 09:03 EST (from top left to bottom right).

Did the Pentagon protect terrorists from the FBI?

Support for a LIHOP conspiracy comes from the very latest research on 9/11. Only a few weeks ago Anthony Shaffer, a 42-year old agent from the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), revealed that the—until then—unknown Pentagon operation "Able Danger" was led by a Special Operations Command (SOCOM) in Tampa, Florida. The operation "Able Danger" had had Mohammed Atta, the leader of the 9/11 terrorists, and another one of the 9/11 suicide pilots under surveillance since spring 2000, already, and had even actively protected them from being arrested by the FBI, according to Shaffer. US Congress Representative Curt Weldon is of the opinion that the operation "Able Danger" played an important part in the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Weldon severely criticises that the official 9/11 Commission judged this operation to be "historically irrelevant" and makes no mention of it in its report (5) even though the commission had been informed of the matter by Shaffer.

Mysterious collapse

Where, then, does the truth lie? Ganser was unable to answer this question, and instead points to a long list of controversial points. One of the most incomprehensible omissions in the official 9/11 report revolves around the 48-storey skyscraper known as WTC-7 (Z) that collapsed entirely on the afternoon of 11th September even though it had not been hit by a plane like the twin towers of the World Trade Center. MIHOP and LIHOP researchers contend that WTC7 was blown up. But the installation of explosives would have taken several days and presuppose allowed access to the secured parts of the building. ETH researcher Ganser can find no explanation as to why the investigating report on the collapse of WTC-7 was not included in the official historical report of 11th September (5) .

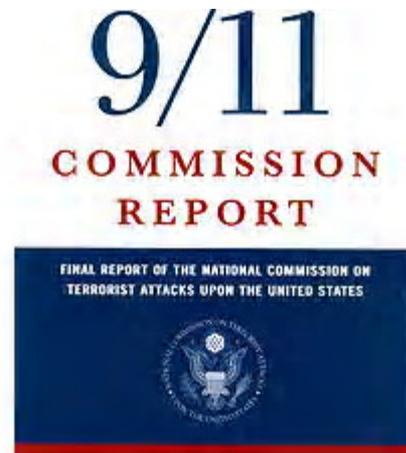
Another issue that was taken up in the seminar concerns the contradictions between the diverse theories with regard, for example, to the abducted planes, especially A77, the one that, according to the official explanation, crashed into the Pentagon and UA93, which purportedly crashed near Shanksville following an altercation. As far as the twin towers are concerned, it was a controversial point whether they had collapsed because planes crashed into them or whether they were blown up.

Unresolved insider dealings and anthrax attacks

It only became known a year ago, according to Ganser, that precisely on the day of the attacks fighter pilots belonging to NORAD, the organisation responsible for air defence, had carried out a war training exercise based on the simulation of a terrorist attack. Owing to this, their defence capacity was strongly undermined. This is why, for more than an hour, they were unable to intercept even a single one of the four abducted planes. A further point that still remains unclear concerns insider trading on the stock exchange, which, according to the official US investigation were not carried out by al-Qaeda but for which foreknowledge had been prerequisite. Unsolved, too, to date is the question of who was responsible for the subsequent anthrax attacks, which further increased the level of fear in the population.

Overcoming fear fosters peace and freedom

"There seems to be a veritable systematic strategy to sow fear and set cultures against one another," criticises peace researcher Ganser. "Peak oil" plays a major part here, i.e. the struggle for ever decreasing oil resources. This is not a good development for Switzerland either. This is why open questions on 9/11 need to be scientifically analysed and answers sought for. We must succeed to coexist peacefully and with mutual respect in a free society within a globalised world where different cultures are strongly intermingled. To succeed in this it was necessary to overcome fear, as made clear by ETH President Olaf Kübler in the symposium on "Fear and Anxiety" (8), which took place during the Dalai Lama's visit to Zurich in August this year.



"Extremely contradictory and therefore unsatisfactory", is Ganser's assessment of the official final report from the "National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States" (also known as The 9/11 Commission).

Call for an independent investigation

The US government's official inquiry (5) is highly contradictory and therefore insufficient from Ganser's point of view. "It would be best to set up a new and independent international inquiry because the attacks of 11th September and the subsequent wars still touch the lives of a lot of people," concludes ETH scientist Ganser.

Footnotes:

- (1) Background information to the event "9/11 - whatreallyhappened": www.bigbrotherawards.ch/2005/911/ (www.bigbrotherawards.ch/2005/911/)
- (2) Homepage of the ETH Center for Security Studies (CSS): www.css.ethz.ch/ (www.css.ethz.ch/)
- (3) ETH research project on Nato's secret armies: www.isn.ethz.ch/php/collections/coll_gladio.htm (www.isn.ethz.ch/php/collections/coll_gladio.htm)
- (4) Cf. ETH Life report on the conference "Nato's secret armies", "The dark side of the West": www.ethlife.ethz.ch/articles/NatoGeheimarmee.html (www.ethlife.ethz.ch/articles/NatoGeheimarmee.html)
- (5) Final report from the "National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States" (also known as The 9/11 Commission): www.9-11commission.gov/report/index.htm (www.9-11commission.gov/report/index.htm)
- (6) 9/11test: How much time passed between the first plane hitting the World Trade Center and second? When did the towers collapse? What do you still remember about the attacks on 11th September 2001? Test yourself with the same test taken by the students who attended the seminar. On-line at: www.lindenmeyer.ch/911/selbsttest.pdf (www.lindenmeyer.ch/911/selbsttest.pdf)
- (7) Websites with background information and videos on the collapse of the skyscraper WTC-7: www.wtc7.net (www.wtc7.net) and www.whatreallyhappened.com/wtc7.html (www.whatreallyhappened.com/wtc7.html)
- (8) "Ocean of wisdom meets science", ETH Life report on the Dalai Lama's visit during the ETH symposium "Fear and Anxiety": www.ethlife.ethz.ch/articles/dalailama.html (www.ethlife.ethz.ch/articles/dalailama.html)