

The PNAC and Other Myths: A Short List of Observations

James Bennett

Chiefb@gmail.com

Abstract

This is a rebuttal of the paper titled "9/11 Evidence Suggests Complicity: Inferences from Actions" (available at <http://www.journalof911studies.com>) by Frank Legge (Ph D) of the group Scholars for 9/11 Truth. While no attempt can be made to address every single issue in his paper, I will proceed to show how his conclusions are based on the misrepresentations of evidence, unreliable accounts, and wild assumptions, as to how the US government, or some unnamed entity in control of US government agencies were behind the September 11, 2001 attacks.

1. PNAC

Mr. Legge, like many critics of the administration in recent years, attributes both the 9/11 attacks, and the subsequent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to a plan produced by the group Project For a New American Century (PNAC). From the introduction to his paper:

It is certain that there was a strong desire on the part of some members for a "catalyzing event", like Pearl Harbor,³ in order to provide the impetus of the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq; however desire is not proof of complicity.

The footnote supporting this argument then points to:

³. A plan existed. The Project for the New American Century (PNAC)

"The process of transformation." The plan said, "is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event- like a new Pearl Harbor."

While the somewhat edited quote¹, is superficially accurate, the conclusion which is drawn from it, is completely wrong. This is not only "not proof of complicity", this is such a mischaracterization of what that quote says as bordering on academic fraud.

The author states that the "Pearl Harbor" they are referring to is "in order to provide the impetus of the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq". The invasions of these two countries, however, are nowhere mentioned in the PNAC document, they are not even vaguely alluded to. It exists purely in the imagination of the person writing this paper. In fact the only time the paper mentions Iraqi policy at all, is in regards to continuing the containment policy around Iraq with regards to the no-fly zones², not in invading it.

Afghanistan only merits a brief historical mention, in regards to the cruise missile attacks carried out by President Clinton in 1998, and only while discussing the Navy's decreased staffing.³

A researcher does not need to try and infer what PNAC is talking about, however, the "process of transformation" that they are referring to is specifically discussed on the page previous to the "Pearl Harbor" quote (emphasis added):

To preserve American military preeminence in the coming decades, the Department of Defense must move more aggressively to experiment with new technologies and operational concepts, and seek to exploit the emerging revolution in military affairs. Information technologies, in particular, are becoming more prevalent and significant components of modern military systems. These information technologies are having the same kind of **transforming** effects on military affairs as they are having in the larger world. The effects of this military **transformation** will have profound implications for how wars are fought, what kinds of weapons will dominate the battlefield and, inevitably, which nations enjoy military preeminence.⁴

It is no surprise that proponents of this theory only quote the one sentence, not even the whole sentence in this case, because if you read the rest of the paragraph, it becomes abundantly clear, that this has absolutely nothing to do with US international policies after 9/11 (emphasis added):

Further, the process of **transformation**, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event – like a new Pearl Harbor. **Domestic politics and industrial policy will shape the pace and content of transformation as much as the requirements of current missions.** A decision to suspend or terminate aircraft carrier production, as recommended by this report and as justified by the clear direction of military technology, will cause great upheaval. Likewise, systems entering production today – the F-22 fighter, for example – will be in service inventories for decades to come. Wise management of this process will consist in large measure of figuring out the right moments to halt production of current-paradigm weapons and shift to radically new designs. The expense associated with some programs can make them roadblocks to the larger process of transformation – the Joint Strike Fighter program, at a total of approximately \$200 billion, seems an unwise investment. **Thus, this report advocates a two-stage process of change – transition and transformation – over the coming decades.**⁵

Furthermore, there is no "strong desire" for this "catalyzing change", not even the technological transformation which they are actually talking about. They are merely pointing out the likely timetable for these changes to take place, thus the sentence at the end about the process taking decades.

And regards to the Pearl Harbor reference, what precisely were they talking about? A sneak attack by terrorists using fanatical devotion combined with box cutters? Well, curiously enough, the PNAC document uses this Pearl Harbor reference in another part, which despite clarifying the meaning, didn't manage to make Mr. Legge's paper.

Absent a rigorous program of experimentation to investigate the nature of the revolution in military affairs as it applies to war at sea, the Navy might face a future Pearl Harbor – as unprepared for war in the post-carrier era as it was unprepared for war at the dawn of the carrier age.⁶

They aren't just talking about a sneak attack, they are talking about a sneak attack using a technology that we are unprepared for, just like the Japanese aircraft carriers on December 7th, 1941. Arabs with box cutters and fake bombs may be a sneak attack, but they were hardly something that could have been prevented by this technological transformation they have spent the entire paper advocating.

An in-depth analysis of this 90 page document also shows that an invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq not only fails to assist them in their "transformation", but it would most likely hinder them. In fact the study points to the increased operational tempo of the operations in the Balkans as detracting from needed R & D funds.⁷ It also discusses the difficulty of carrying out this transformation without impacting even the current international obligations.⁸ Somehow we are to believe that two expensive and manpower intensive wars would improve this process.

Mr. Legge then continues this paragraph with:

The fact that the air attack on Afghanistan commenced on October 9, less than a month later, is not proof either, but does suggest the possibility that plans for the invasion were already in place.

This is one of many cases where the author "suggests" things that he admits he can't prove. I am not aware of the academic merit of just suggesting things. If you have no proof, or even a logical hypothesis, then why are you bringing up the subject? Perhaps if he had done some research on this area he wouldn't need to suggest as much. One good example is General Tommy Franks' autobiography, "An American Soldier", which describes the hectic process and frantic international negotiations needed to prepare for the invasion.

In regards to the "less than a month" part, on August 7, 1998 over 200 people were killed in near simultaneous bombings at US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.⁹ Less than 2 weeks later, on August 20th, the US carried out attacks against suspected terrorist targets in Afghanistan and the Sudan.¹⁰ Is Mr. Legge going to "suggest" that Clinton had plans prepared ahead of time?

2. Denial of explosives

In a rather bizarre sequence, the author doesn't use the allegations of explosives at the World Trade Center as evidence, but the fact that the government is "denying" there were explosives at the World Trade Center is the evidence. I am personally amazed at the circular argument. Assume someone committed a crime, and then prove it off of the basis that they give no evidence for the crime they have committed. The author argues:

How then was it possible that three substantial investigations could have been carried out without examining the possibility that explosives were used?

Could it be, because there was no indication that there were explosives? The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has performed an engineering study, involving dozens of specialists, over the last 5 years. What do they have to say regarding this:

NIST found no corroborating evidence for alternative hypotheses suggesting that the WTC towers were brought down by controlled demolition using explosives planted prior to September 11, 2001. ¹¹

What about the 9/11 commission, who looked into the intelligence aspects of this. The online magazine Salon asks this question to Jamie Gorelick, a former Clinton administration official and member of the 9/11 commission:

I asked Gorelick if she believed the commission had been sufficiently open to investigating the idea that the government, and not terrorists, was behind the attack. "I think it's fair to say that our assumption going in was not that the World Trade Center was blown up by our own government," she said, "but had the facts led us there we would not have hesitated to go there. And we ourselves blew up lots of myths -- for example, that the 19 hijackers were undetectable, or that there was a relationship between 9/11 and Saddam." ¹²

One could logically make the argument that the investigation had flaws, but one must remember, if you are going to label this a conspiracy because of a "cover-up" of the use of explosives, you are not just accusing whichever body planned and carried out the attacks, you are also accusing those that participated in the aftermath. This would include the Federal Emergency Management Agency, The Federal Bureau of Investigation, the New York Police Department, the New York City Fire Department, The National Institute of Standards and Technology, the American Society of Civil Engineers, the National Transportation Safety Board, the union ironworkers who worked on the clean-up, the bipartisan 9/11 commission, the list goes on.

3. The collapse of WTC2

In this section, the paper takes a bizarre twist into weird pseudo-engineering theories and compassionate mass murderers. Beginning with:

In the case of the north tower, WTC 1, sufficient time was allowed between the plane impact and the demolition for evacuation of the building, at least for the part below the impact zone. This did not happen however with WTC 2, the south tower, the top of which started to topple over. This building started to collapse downwards within one second of it starting to tilt, which suggests the timing of the demolition was under the control of a close observer. The collapse started long before evacuation was complete, causing much loss of life.

There are several logical and factual errors with this paragraph alone. First the idea that some secret observer was able to watch the towers, notice its slight lean through all the fire and smoke, make the decision to detonate it prematurely, activate whatever detonation device they were using, and have the demolition charges start the controlled demolition, all “within one second of it starting to tilt” is a bit much to accept.

Secondly, this requires the reader to accept completely contrary views regarding our unnamed conspirators. They are supposedly callous enough to hijack 4 airliners, make the passengers disappear in cold blood, crash those planes into skyscrapers, and kill thousands of people, then demolish those buildings for no logical reason, continuing on to demolish WTC7, also for no reason other than to make their plot appear more suspicious, but they were still kind enough to make sure as many people as possible had a chance to get out of the buildings first, even at the risk of exposing their plot. One gets the feeling that the author is stretching to make this theory, to put it kindly.

Thirdly, as the author says more specifically in the next paragraph, this “tilt” supposedly is going to lead to the top of the towers tipping over:

If the top of WTC 2 had tipped right over and had fallen to the ground the perpetrators would have found themselves in a dilemma.

This theory, however, shows no understanding of structural engineering or physics whatsoever. As Thomas Eager, Thomas Lord Professor of Materials Engineering at MIT, explained:

It's really not possible in this case. In our normal experience, we deal with small things, say, a glass of water, that might tip over, and we don't realize how far something has to tip proportional to its base. The base of the World Trade Center was 208 feet on a side, and that means it would have had to have tipped at least 100 feet to one side in order to move its center of gravity from the center of the building out beyond its base. That would have been a tremendous amount of bending. In a building that is mostly air, as the World Trade Center was, there would have been buckling columns, and it would have come straight down before it ever tipped over.¹³

Zdenek Bazant, professor of Civil Engineering at Northwestern University explains this in more technical terms:

Before disappearing from view, the upper part of the South tower was seen to tilt significantly (and of the North tower mildly). Some wondered why the tilting (Fig. 1d) did not continue, so that the upper part would pivot about its base like a falling tree (see Fig. 4 of Bazant and Zhou 2002). However, such toppling to the side was impossible because the horizontal reaction to the rate of angular momentum of the upper part would have exceeded the elasto-plastic shear resistance of the story approximately $10.3x$ ¹⁴

And lastly, the fact that the building was on the verge of collapse, contradicts the assertions of just about every other 9/11 “skeptical” out there. I understand that Mr. Legge is under no obligation to endorse the work of every scholar researching in his field, but when his work directly contradicts the views widely held by his peers, such as those in the “Scholars for 9/11 Truth”, many of whom whose work he draws on, it should at least merit a mention in the text. Not to mention a stern rebuke from his associates.

War Games in the Face of Warnings

This short section alleges that “[war games] would obviously have had the potential to cause confusion and thus appear to have been an essential part of the plan.” First of all, what is the proof of his speculation that the war games would have caused confusion? One could also speculate, with even more justification, that having exercises going on at the time would ensure that the command centers were fully prepared and staffed with senior personnel. If you want to slow down their response, wait until after a big exercise, when people go on vacation, and those remaining go back to their routines.

We are talking about trained military personnel here, their lives are on the line every day. They are trained in the difference between simulation and reality. Secondly, this event has already happened, if this was a factor then why is he talking about its “potential”, rather than the fact that it already happened. The reason is, because it had no affect. There was certainly a lot of confusion, the US had not experienced a hijacking in over 20 years, and the systematic response definitely needs improvement, but this had nothing to do with the exercises that were going on.

The assumption on the part of Mr. Legge’s paper is presumably that those in command were confused by whether this was a real life crisis, or part of the exercise, but the testimony during the investigation never supports that. For example, Major General Larry Arnold, a regional commander of NORAD at the time,

And I was upstairs in our facility, immediately went downstairs, picked up the phone, asking on the way to my staff, “Is this part of the exercise?” Because quite honestly and frankly, we do do hijacking scenarios as we go through these exercises from time-to-time. But I realized that it was not – that this was real-life..¹⁵

So that was it. He asked if it was real, a quite reasonable question given how rare hijackings were, found out it was, and went back to work. Not much confusion involved.

Exclusions of independent observers

The very premise of this section is questionable, since when were independent observers supposed to investigate crime scenes, like Jimmy Carter certifying an election in Venezuela or something? The author goes as far as to allege The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) had its investigation “hindered”. The source given for this is a conspiracy theory website 9-11 Review¹⁶, which mostly on the basis of an anonymous source, concludes that the investigation was poorly done. In fact, this website asserts, that rather than FEMA having its investigators hindered, it was in charge of the investigation.

FEMA themselves report extensive access to the site, and even produced the first report:

The Team conducted field observations at the WTC site and steel salvage yards, removed and tested samples of the collapsed structures, viewed hundreds of hours of video and thousands of still photographs, conducted interviews with witnesses and persons involved in the design, construction, and maintenance of each of the affected buildings, reviewed construction documents, and conducted preliminary analyses of the damage to the WTC towers.¹⁷

This also ignores the investigations conducted by the FBI, and the extensive, in fact it is still ongoing, engineering investigation being conducted by NIST¹⁸, as well as the Pentagon crash report done by the ASCE.¹⁹

Rapid removal of debris

This line of reasoning continues, by alleging that the World Trade Center steel was “shipped away for scrapping, mostly overseas”. Given the size of the World Trade Centers, an estimated 500,000 tons each²⁰, it would obviously be impossible to just leave the debris there forever while they investigated, especially given there was a massive rescue operation going on for the first couple of weeks, and even after that, there was obviously no way to go over every piece of steel. Regardless, this ignores the fact that the steel was investigated; in fact NIST even dedicates a webpage to how they did this, with pictures of this steel which supposedly was shipped away without investigation.²¹



In any investigation, one could certainly argue that it needs to be done better, but there is a difference between questioning the methods of an investigation, and stating that it never took place at all.

Withholding the black box records

The author writes:

It was initially stated that no black boxes from the planes were found although workers reported otherwise. Later it was stated that some had been found but were not readable. Eventually some black box information was released. Given the chain of lies it is highly likely that the released material has been edited to the advantage of the official story and will not be reliable.

This account is so misleading and confusing it is difficult to figure out how to address it. First of all, the black boxes from the crashes in Pennsylvania and at the Pentagon were found almost immediately, Pennsylvania on the 13th of September²² and the Pentagon the next day²³.

His reference to “workers reported otherwise” only makes sense when you investigate the footnote, in which you notice he is citing an article in the neo-Nazi²⁴ newspaper the American Free Press²⁵, in which “honorary firefighter” Mike Bellone alleges that, while he was at ground zero with three federal agents, from agencies he apparently cannot even identify, he found 3 of the 4 black boxes. First of all, it should be noted that Mr. Bellone gave this interview in trying to promote a book he had written nearly 2 years after the fact, and to my knowledge he has never repeated these statements to the 9/11 commission, or any other investigators. Additionally, one has to wonder why a scholar in a “peer reviewed” paper is citing a tabloid newspaper, which among other things runs ads for “white heritage” websites, and sports inflammatory headlines like “Zionists Benefit From WTC Collapse”.²⁶ This would hardly be keeping with high academic standards for sources.

The credibility of the newspaper aside, Mr. Bellone himself is hardly the most reputable source. After making a reputation for himself running around the country making speeches and promoting his book, he was later deemed a “fraud” by New York Fire Marshal Conrad Tinney, and arrested for stealing fire department property.²⁷ This is in addition to the fact that the story is illogical on its own merits. If shadowy federal investigators were to search for these black boxes in order to hide them as part of a cover-up, why would they bring along an “honorary” firefighter?

Then, after half-heartedly conceding that the black boxes were found, presumably referring to those at the Pentagon and Pennsylvania, Mr. Legge immediately tries to ignore them as evidence. He does not point out even a single lie here, much less a “chain of lies” as he alleges, but then dismisses the evidence of black boxes as not being reliable on that basis. This is despite the fact that the black boxes were not only found, they were handled properly, analyzed by the NTSB, and introduced into evidence in the Zacarias Moussaoui trial.²⁸ This court admitted evidence featured the tape recording from the cockpit voice recorder of men speaking in Arabic while flying a plane into the ground, hardly evidence of a government conspiracy.



Summary

In his summary, the author makes an allegation that is catching on in the conspiracy community as of late. It makes one think that this paper is based less on any type of scholarly research, than on whatever rumor happens to be circulating among his peers on the Internet. This allegation is that Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta testified that Dick Cheney, who was in charge of the response on September 11th, indicated that he gave an order that the plane, which was in the process of crashing into the Pentagon, not be shot down.

This charge, however, is not only unsupported by an examination of Mineta's testimony before the 9/11 Commission, easily obtainable from their website, it is directly contradicted by it.

MR. HAMILTON: But there very clearly was an order to shoot commercial aircraft down.

MR. MINETA: Subsequently I found that out.²⁹,

Conclusions

There are more errors and misleading statements I could point out in this paper, but these are the main ones I will rest my argument on. While I do not have anything against people questioning what happened on September 11th, 2001, in fact I think people have every right to ask questions, they should be responsible about it. Making unsupported allegations based on quotes taken out of context, misrepresented evidence, unreliable sources and illogical conclusions, do not do a service to the victims of that tragic event. In fact it is an insult to their memories. Unfortunate wording regarding the pace of a technological project, does not constitute proof of a desire for an attack. The lack of findings in an investigation that support your theories, do not prove the corruptness of the investigation. Even an investigation which some people may consider to be poorly conducted, do not prove a cover-up. All these facts are especially true, if in order to support these charges, one must rely on the selective and improper use of evidence.

It is important that these events be preserved, not through inaccurate rumors and speculation cherry-picked off the Internet, but through logical analysis done in keeping with high academic standards of research, evidence, and logic. Speculations, suggestions, vague questions, and innuendo are not in keeping with these standards. A "peer reviewed" paper, conducted by an academic, should keep to these high standards, and not the specious standards of Internet chat rooms.

Endnotes:

¹ This quote from the paper titled "Rebuilding America's defenses" available here <http://www.newamericancentury.org/publicationsreports.htm> actually reads in full from page 51 "Further, the process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event – like a new Pearl Harbor."

² Page 73-74 "Likewise, terminating the no-fly zones over Iraq would call America's positions as guarantor of security in the Persian Gulf into question; the reaction would be the same in East Asia following the withdrawal of US forces or a lowering of American military presence."

³ Ibid page 40

⁴ Ibid page 50

⁵ Ibid page 51

⁶ Ibid page 67

⁷ Page 50 “Moreover, the Pentagon, constrained by limited budgets and pressing current missions, has seen funding for experimentation and transformation crowded out in recent years.”

⁸ Ibid page 50 : The United States cannot simply declare a "strategic pause" while experimenting with new technologies and operational concepts.”

⁹ http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/terrorism/embassy_bombings.html

¹⁰ <http://www.cnn.com/US/9808/20/us.strikes.01/>

¹¹ <http://usinfo.state.gov/media/Archive/2005/Sep/16-241966.html>

¹² http://www.salon.com/ent/feature/2006/06/27/911_conspiracies/index4.html

¹³ Nova, Why the Towers Fell, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/wtc/collapse2.html>

¹⁴ Mechanics of Progressive Collapse June 26, 2006

<http://www.civil.northwestern.edu/people/bazant/PDFs/Papers/ProgressiveCollapseWTC-6-23-2006.pdf>

¹⁵ [http://permanent.access.gpo.gov/websites/www.9-11commission.gov/archive/hearing2/9-](http://permanent.access.gpo.gov/websites/www.9-11commission.gov/archive/hearing2/9-11Commission_Hearing_2003-05-23.htm#panel_one)

[11Commission_Hearing_2003-05-23.htm#panel_one](http://permanent.access.gpo.gov/websites/www.9-11commission.gov/archive/hearing2/9-11Commission_Hearing_2003-05-23.htm#panel_one)

¹⁶ http://911review.com/coverup/fema_wtc.html

¹⁷ http://www.fema.gov/pdf/library/fema403_execsum.pdf

¹⁸ <http://wtc.nist.gov/>

¹⁹ <http://www.pubs.asce.org/ceonline/ceonline03/0203feat.html>

²⁰ Scientific American, October 9, 2001 [http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?articleID=000B7FEB-A88C-](http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?articleID=000B7FEB-A88C-1C75-9B81809EC588EF21&pageNumber=3&catID=4)

[1C75-9B81809EC588EF21&pageNumber=3&catID=4](http://wtc.nist.gov/media/gallery.htm#recover)

²¹ <http://wtc.nist.gov/media/gallery.htm#recover>

²² <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/13/penn.attack/>

²³ <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0109/14/se.42.html>

²⁴ The American Free Press was started by Willis Carto, a man the ADL refers to as “one of the most influential American anti-Semitic propagandists of the past 50 years”. This bias is also apparent from reading their website.

http://www.adl.org/learn/ext_us/carto.asp?LEARN_Cat=Extremism&LEARN_SubCat=Extremism_in_America&xpicked=2&item=carto

²⁵ http://www.americanfreepress.net/html/black_box.html

²⁶ <http://screwloosechange.blogspot.com/2006/05/who-is-american-free-press.html>

²⁷ http://www.gmtoday.com/news/local_stories/2005/October_05/10182005_10.asp

²⁸ <http://www.rcfp.org/moussaoui/>

²⁹ http://www.9-11commission.gov/archive/hearing2/9-11Commission_Hearing_2003-05-23.htm