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"Now the Taliban will pay a price" vowed President George W. Bush, as American and British fighter planes unleashed missile attacks against major cities in Afghanistan. The US Administration claims that Osama bin Laden is behind the tragic events of the 11th of September. A major war supposedly "against international terrorism" has been launched, yet the evidence amply confirms that agencies of the US government have since the Cold War harbored the "Islamic Militant Network" as part of Washington's foreign policy agenda. In a bitter irony, the US Air Force is targeting the training camps established in the 1980s by the CIA.

The main justification for waging this war has been totally fabricated. The American people have been deliberately and consciously misled by their government into supporting a major military adventure which affects our collective future.

"OSAMAGATE"

by Michel Chossudovsky
Professor of Economics, University of Ottawa

Centre for Research on Globalisation (CRG), Montréal
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Confronted with mounting evidence, the US Administration can no longer deny its links to Osama. While the CIA admits that Osama bin Laden was an "intelligence asset" during the Cold War, the relationship is said to "go way back". Most news reports consider that these Osama-CIA links belong to the "bygone era" of the Soviet-Afghan war. They are invariably viewed as "irrelevant" to an understanding of present events. Lost in the barrage of recent history, the role of the CIA in supporting and developing international terrorist organisations during the Cold war and its aftermath is casually ignored or downplayed by the Western media.

Yes, We did support Him, but "He Went Against Us"

A blatant example of media distortion is the so-called "blowback" thesis: "intelligence assets" are said to "have gone against their sponsors"; "what we've created blows back in our face."¹ In a twisted logic, the US government and the CIA are portrayed as the ill-fated victims:

The sophisticated methods taught to the Mujahideen, and the thousands of tons of arms supplied to them by the US - and Britain - are now tormenting the West in the phenomenon known as 'blowback', whereby a policy strategy rebounds on its own devisers. ²

The US media, nonetheless, concedes that "the Taliban's coming to power [in 1995] is partly the outcome of the U.S. support of the Mujahideen, the radical Islamic group, in the 1980s in the war against the Soviet Union".³ But it also readily dismisses its own factual statements and concludes in chorus, that the CIA had been tricked by a deceitful Osama. It's like "a son going

against his father".

The "blowback" thesis is a fabrication. The evidence amply confirms that the CIA never severed its ties to the "Islamic Militant Network". Since the end of the Cold War, these covert intelligence links have not only been maintained, they have in become increasingly sophisticated.

New undercover initiatives financed by the Golden Crescent drug trade were set in motion in Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Balkans. Pakistan's military and intelligence apparatus (controlled by the CIA) essentially "served as a catalyst for the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the emergence of six new Muslim republics in Central Asia." 4

Replicating the Iran Contragate Pattern

Remember Ollie North and the Nicaraguan Contras under the Reagan Administration when weapons financed by the drug trade were channeled to "freedom fighters" in Washington's covert war against the Sandinista government. The same pattern was used in the Balkans to arm and equip the Mujahideen fighting in the ranks of the Bosnian Muslim army against the Armed Forces of the Yugoslav Federation.

Throughout the 1990s, the Pakistan Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) was used by the CIA as a go-between -- to channel weapons and Mujahideen mercenaries to the Bosnian Muslim Army in the civil war in Yugoslavia. According to a report of the London based International Media Corporation:

"Reliable sources report that the United States is now [1994] actively participating in the arming and training of the Muslim forces of Bosnia-Herzegovina in direct contravention of the United Nations accords. US agencies have been providing weapons made in ... China (PRC), North Korea (DPRK) and Iran. The sources indicated that ... Iran, with the knowledge and agreement of the US Government, supplied the Bosnian forces with a large number of multiple rocket launchers and a large quantity of ammunition. These included 107mm and 122mm rockets from the PRC, and VBR-230 multiple rocket launchers ... made in Iran. ... It was [also] reported that 400 members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard (Pasdaran) arrived in Bosnia with a large supply of arms and ammunition. It was alleged that the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had full knowledge of the operation and that the CIA believed that some of the 400 had been detached for future terrorist operations in Western Europe.

During September and October [1994], there has been a stream of "Afghan" Mujahedin ... covertly landed in Ploce, Croatia (South-West of Mostar) from where they have traveled with false papers ... before deploying with the Bosnian Muslim forces in the Kupres, Zenica and Banja Luka areas. These forces have recently [late 1994] experienced a significant degree of military success. They have, according to sources in Sarajevo, been aided by the UNPROFOR Bangladesh battalion, which took over from a French battalion early in September [1994].

The Mujahedin landing at Ploce are reported to have been accompanied by US Special Forces equipped with high-tech communications equipment, ... The sources said that the mission of the US troops was to establish a command, control, communications and intelligence network to coordinate and support Bosnian Muslim offensives -- in concert with Mujahideen and Bosnian Croat forces -- in Kupres, Zenica and Banja Luka. Some offensives have recently been

conducted from within the UN-established safe-havens in the Zenica and Banja Luka regions.

(...)

The US Administration has not restricted its involvement to the clandestine contravention of the UN arms embargo on the region ... It [also] committed three high-ranking delegations over the past two years [prior to 1994] in failed attempts to bring the Yugoslav Government into line with US policy. Yugoslavia is the only state in the region to have failed to acquiesce to US pressure.⁵

"From the Horse's Mouth"

Ironically, the US Administration's undercover military-intelligence operations in Bosnia have been fully documented by the Republican Party. A lengthy Congressional report by the Republican Party Committee (RPC) published in 1997, largely confirms the International Media Corporation report quoted above. The RPC Congressional report accuses the Clinton administration of having "helped turn Bosnia into a militant Islamic base" leading to the recruitment through the so-called "Militant Islamic Network," of thousands of Mujahideen from the Muslim world:

Perhaps most threatening to the SFOR mission - and more importantly, to the safety of the American personnel serving in Bosnia - is the unwillingness of the Clinton Administration to come clean with the Congress and with the American people about its complicity in the delivery of weapons from Iran to the Muslim government in Sarajevo. That policy, personally approved by Bill Clinton in April 1994 at the urging of CIA Director-designate (and then-NSC chief) Anthony Lake and the U.S. ambassador to Croatia Peter Galbraith, has, according to the Los Angeles Times (citing classified intelligence community sources), "played a central role in the dramatic increase in Iranian influence in Bosnia.

(...)

Along with the weapons, Iranian Revolutionary Guards and VEVAK intelligence operatives entered Bosnia in large numbers, along with thousands of mujahedin ("holy warriors") from across the Muslim world. Also engaged in the effort were several other Muslim countries (including Brunei, Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Turkey) and a number of radical Muslim organizations. For example, the role of one Sudan-based "humanitarian organization," called the Third World Relief Agency, has been well documented. The Clinton Administration's "hands-on" involvement with the Islamic network's arms pipeline included inspections of missiles from Iran by U.S. government officials... the Third World Relief Agency (TWRA), a Sudan-based, phoney humanitarian organization ... has been a major link in the arms pipeline to Bosnia. ... TWRA is believed to be connected with such fixtures of the Islamic terror network as Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman (the convicted mastermind behind the 1993 World Trade Center bombing) and Osama Bin Laden, a wealthy Saudi émigré believed to bankroll numerous militant groups. [Washington Post, 9/22/96] 6

Complicity of the Clinton Administration

In other words, the Republican Party Committee report confirms unequivocally the complicity of the Clinton Administration with several Islamic fundamentalist organisations including Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda.

The Republicans wanted at the time to undermine the Clinton Administration. However, at a time when the entire country had its eyes riveted on the Monica Lewinsky scandal, the Republicans no doubt chose not to trigger an untimely "Iran-Bosniagate" affair, which might have unduly diverted public attention away from the Lewinsky scandal. The Republicans wanted to impeach Bill Clinton "for having lied to the American People" regarding his affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky. On the more substantive "foreign policy lies" regarding drug running and covert operations in the Balkans, Democrats and Republicans agreed in unison, no doubt pressured by the Pentagon and the CIA not to "spill the beans".

From Bosnia to Kosovo

The "Bosnian pattern" described in the 1997 Congressional RPC report was replicated in Kosovo. With the complicity of NATO and the US State Department. Mujahideen mercenaries from the Middle East and Central Asia were recruited to fight in the ranks of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in 1998-99, largely supporting NATO's war effort.

Confirmed by British military sources, the task of arming and training of the KLA had been entrusted in 1998 to the US Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) and Britain's Secret Intelligence Services MI6, together with "former and serving members of 22 SAS [Britain's 22nd Special Air Services Regiment], as well as three British and American private security companies".⁷

The US DIA approached MI6 to arrange a training programme for the KLA, said a senior British military source. 'MI6 then sub-contracted the operation to two British security companies, who in turn approached a number of former members of the (22 SAS) regiment. Lists were then drawn up of weapons and equipment needed by the KLA.' While these covert operations were continuing, serving members of 22 SAS Regiment, mostly from the unit's D Squadron, were first deployed in Kosovo before the beginning of the bombing campaign in March. 8

While British SAS Special Forces in bases in Northern Albania were training the KLA, military instructors from Turkey and Afghanistan financed by the "Islamic jihad" were collaborating in training the KLA in guerilla and diversion tactics.⁹:

Bin Laden had visited Albania himself. He was one of several fundamentalist groups that had sent units to fight in Kosovo, ... Bin Laden is believed to have established an operation in Albania in 1994 ... Albanian sources say Sali Berisha, who was then president, had links with some groups that later proved to be extreme fundamentalists. 10

Congressional Testimonies on KLA-Osama links

According to Frank Ciluffo of the Globalized Organised Crime Program, in a testimony presented to the House of Representatives Judicial Committee:

What was largely hidden from public view was the fact that the KLA raise part of their funds from the sale of narcotics. Albania and Kosovo lie at the heart of the "Balkan Route" that links the "Golden Crescent" of Afghanistan and Pakistan to the drug markets of Europe. This route is worth an estimated \$400 billion a year and handles 80 percent of heroin destined for Europe. 11

According to Ralf Mutschke of Interpol's Criminal Intelligence division also in a testimony to the House Judicial Committee:

The U.S. State Department listed the KLA as a terrorist organization, indicating that it was financing its operations with money from the international heroin trade and loans from Islamic countries and individuals, among them allegedly Usama bin Laden". Another link to bin Laden is the fact that the brother of a leader in an Egyptian Jihad organization and also a military commander of Usama bin Laden, was leading an elite KLA unit during the Kosovo conflict. 12

Madeleine Albright Covets the KLA

These KLA links to international terrorism and organised crime documented by the US Congress were totally ignored by the Clinton Administration. In fact, in the months preceding the bombing of Yugoslavia, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was busy building a "political legitimacy" for the KLA. The paramilitary army had --from one day to the next-- been elevated to the status of a bona fide "democratic" force in Kosovo. In turn, Madeleine Albright has forced the pace of international diplomacy: the KLA had been spearheaded into playing a central role in the failed "peace negotiations" at Rambouillet in early 1999.

The Senate and the House tacitly endorse State Terrorism

While the various Congressional reports confirmed that the US government had been working hand in glove with Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda, this did not prevent the Clinton and later the Bush Administration from arming and equipping the KLA. The Congressional documents also confirm that members of the Senate and the House knew the relationship of the Administration to international terrorism. To quote the statement of Rep. John Kasich of the House Armed Services Committee: "We connected ourselves [in 1998-99] with the KLA, which was the staging point for bin Laden..." 13

In the wake of the tragic events of September 11, Republicans and Democrats in unison have given their full support to the President to "wage war on Osama".

In 1999, Senator Jo Lieberman had stated authoritatively that "Fighting for the KLA is fighting for human rights and American values." In the hours following the October 7 missile attacks on Afghanistan, the same Jo Lieberman called for punitive air strikes against Iraq: "We're in a war against terrorism... We can't stop with bin Laden and the Taliban." Yet Senator Jo Lieberman, as member of the Armed Services Committee of the Senate had access to all the Congressional documents pertaining to "KLA-Osama" links. In making this statement, he was fully aware that that agencies of the US government as well as NATO were supporting international terrorism.

The War in Macedonia

In the wake of the 1999 war in Yugoslavia, the terrorist activities of the KLA were extended into Southern Serbia and Macedonia. Meanwhile, the KLA --renamed the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC)-- was elevated to United Nations status, implying the granting of "legitimate" sources of funding through United Nations as well as through bilateral channels, including direct US military aid.

And barely two months after the official inauguration of the KPC under UN auspices (September 1999), KPC-KLA commanders - using UN resources and equipment - were already preparing the assaults into Macedonia, as a logical follow-up to their terrorist activities in Kosovo. According to the Skopje daily Dnevnik, the KPC had established a "sixth operation zone" in Southern Serbia and Macedonia:

Sources, who insist on anonymity, claim that the headquarters of the Kosovo protection brigades [i.e. linked to the UN sponsored KPC] have [March 2000] already been formed in Tetovo, Gostivar and Skopje. They are being prepared in Debar and Struga [on the border with Albania] as well, and their members have defined codes. 14

According to the BBC, "Western special forces were still training the guerrillas" meaning that they were assisting the KLA in opening up "a sixth operation zone" in Southern Serbia and Macedonia. 15

"The Islamic Militant Network" and NATO join hands in Macedonia

Among the foreign mercenaries now fighting in Macedonia (October 2001) in the ranks of self-proclaimed National Liberation Army (NLA), are Mujahideen from the Middle East and the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union. Also within the KLA's proxy force in Macedonia are senior US military advisers from a private mercenary outfit on contract to the Pentagon as well as "soldiers of fortune" from Britain, Holland and Germany. Some of these Western mercenaries had previously fought with the KLA and the Bosnian Muslim Army. 16

Extensively documented by the Macedonian press and statements of the Macedonian authorities, the US government and the "Islamic Militant Network" are working hand in glove in supporting and financing the self-proclaimed National Liberation Army (NLA), involved in the terrorist attacks in Macedonia. The NLA is a proxy of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). In turn the KLA and the UN sponsored Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) are identical institutions with the same commanders and military personnel. KPC Commanders on UN salaries are fighting in the NLA together with the Mujahideen.

In a bitter twist, while supported and financed by Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda, the KLA-NLA is also supported by NATO and the United Nations mission to Kosovo (UNMIK). In fact, the "Islamic Militant Network" --also using Pakistan's Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) as the CIA's go-between-- still constitutes an integral part of Washington's covert military-intelligence operations in Macedonia and Southern Serbia.

The KLA-NLA terrorists are funded from US military aid, the United Nations peace-keeping budget as well as by several Islamic organisations including Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda. Drug money is also being used to finance the terrorists with the complicity of the US government. The recruitment of Mujahideen to fight in the ranks of the NLA in Macedonia is implemented through various Islamic groups.

US military advisers mingle with Mujahideen within the same paramilitary force, Western mercenaries from NATO countries fight alongside Mujahideen recruited in the Middle East and Central Asia. And the US media calls this a "blowback" where so-called "intelligence assets" have gone against their sponsors!

But this did not happen during the Cold war! It is happening right now in Macedonia. And it is confirmed by numerous press reports, eyewitness accounts, photographic evidence as well as official statements by the Macedonian Prime Minister, who has accused the Western military alliance of supporting the terrorists. Moreover, the official Macedonian New Agency (MIA) has pointed to the complicity between Washington's envoy Ambassador James Pardew and the NLA terrorists. 17 In other words, the so-called "intelligence assets" are still serving the interests of their US sponsors.

Pardew's background is revealing in this regard. He started his Balkans career in 1993 as a

senior intelligence officer for the Joint Chiefs of Staff responsible for channeling US aid to the Bosnian Muslim Army. Colonel Pardew had been put in charge of arranging the "air-drops" of supplies to Bosnian forces. At the time, these "air drops" were tagged as "civilian aid". It later transpired --confirmed by the RPC Congressional report-- that the US had violated the arms embargo. And James Pardew played an important role as part of the team of intelligence officials working closely with the Chairman of the National Security Council Anthony Lake.

Pardew was later involved in the Dayton negotiations (1995) on behalf of the US Defence Department. In 1999, prior to the bombing of Yugoslavia, he was appointed "Special Representative for Military Stabilisation and Kosovo Implementation" by President Clinton. One of his tasks was to channel support to the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which at the time was also being supported by Osama bin Laden. Pardew was in this regard instrumental in replicating the "Bosnian pattern" in Kosovo and subsequently in Macedonia...

Justification for Waging War

The Bush Administration has stated that it has proof that Osama bin Laden is behind the attacks on the WTC and the Pentagon. In the words of British Prime Minister Tony Blair: "I have seen absolutely powerful and incontrovertible evidence of his [Osama] link to the events of the 11th of September." 18 What Tony Blair fails to mention is that agencies of the US government including the CIA continue to "harbor" Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda.

A major war supposedly "against international terrorism" has been launched by a government which is harboring international terrorism as part of its foreign policy agenda. In other words, the main justification for waging war has been totally fabricated. The American people have been deliberately and consciously misled by their government into supporting a major military adventure which affects our collective future.

This decision to mislead the American people was taken barely a few hours after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre. Without supporting evidence, Osama had already been tagged as the "prime suspect." Two days later on Thursday the 13th of September --while the FBI investigations had barely commenced-- President Bush pledged to "lead the world to victory". The Administration confirmed its intention to embark on "a sustained military campaign rather than a single dramatic action" directed against Osama bin Laden. 19 In addition to Afghanistan, a number of countries in the Middle East were mentioned as possible targets including Iraq, Iran, Libya and the Sudan. And several prominent US political figures and media pundits have demanded that the air strikes be extended to other countries "which harbour international terrorism." According to intelligence sources, Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda has operations in some 50 to 60 countries providing ample pretext to intervene in several "rogue states" in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Moreover, the entire US Legislature --with only one honest and courageous dissenting voice in the House of Representatives-- has tacitly endorsed the Administration's decision to go war. Members of the House and the Senate have access through the various committees to official confidential reports and intelligence documents which prove beyond doubt that agencies of the US government have ties to international terrorism. They cannot say "we did not know". In fact, most of this evidence is in the public domain.

Under the historical resolution of the US Congress adopted by both the House and the Senate on the 14th of September:

The president is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on Sept. 11, 2001, or

harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.

Whereas there is no evidence that agencies of the US government "aided the terrorist attacks" on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, there is ample and detailed evidence that agencies of the US government as well as NATO, have since the end of the Cold War continued to "harbor such organizations".

Patriotism cannot be based on a falsehood, particularly when it constitutes a pretext for waging war and killing innocent civilians.

Ironically, the text of the Congressional resolution also constitutes a "blowback" against the US sponsors of international terrorism. The resolution does not exclude the conduct of an "Osamagate" inquiry, as well as appropriate actions against agencies and/or individuals of the US government, who may have collaborated with Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda. And the evidence indelibly points directly to the Bush Administration.

Notes

1. United Press International (UPI), 15 September 2001.
2. The Guardian, London, 15 September 2001.
3. UPI, op cit,
4. For further details see Michel Chossudovsky, Who is Osama bin Laden, Centre for Research on Globalisation, 12 September 2001, <http://globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO109C.html>.
5. International Media Corporation Defense and Strategy Policy, US Commits Forces, Weapons to Bosnia, London, 31 October 1994.
6. Congressional Press Release, Republican Party Committee (RPC), US Congress, Clinton-Approved Iranian Arms Transfers Help Turn Bosnia into Militant Islamic Base, 16 January 1997, available on the website of the Centre of Research on Globalisation (CRG) at <http://globalresearch.ca/articles/DCH109A.html>. The original document is on the website of the US Senate Republican Party Committee (Senator Larry Craig), at <http://www.senate.gov/~rpc/releases/1997/iran.htm>
7. The Scotsman, Glasgow, 29 August 1999.
8. Ibid.
9. Truth in Media, Kosovo in Crisis, Phoenix, Arizona, 2 April 1999
10. Sunday Times, London, 29 November 1998.
11. US Congress, Testimony of Frank J. Cilluffo , Deputy Director, Global Organized Crime, Program director to the House Judiciary Committee, 13 December 2000.
12. US Congress, Testimony of Ralf Mutschke of Interpol's Criminal Intelligence Division, to the House Judicial Committee, 13 December 2000.

13. US Congress, Transcripts of the House Armed Services Committee, 5 October 1999,
14. Macedonian Information Centre Newsletter, Skopje, 21 March 2000, published by BBC Summary of World Broadcast, 24 March 2000.
15. BBC, 29 January 2001, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/europe/newsid_1142000/1142478.stm
16. Scotland on Sunday, Glasgow, 15 June 2001 at http://www.scotlandsonunday.com/text_only.cfm?id=SS01025960, see also UPI, 9 July 2001. For further details see Michel Chossudovsky, Washington behind Terrorist Assaults in Macedonia, Centre for Research on Globalisation, August 2001, at <http://globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO108B.html>.)
17. Macedonian Information Agency (MIA), 26 September 2001, available at the Centre for Research on Globalisation at <http://globalresearch.ca/articles/MNA110A.html>
18. Quoted in The Daily Telegraph, London, 1 October 2001.
19. Statement by official following the speech by President George Bush on 14 September 2001 quoted in the International Herald Tribune, Paris, 14 September 2001.

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