

THE MILITARY DRILLS ON 9-11: “BIZARRE COINCIDENCE” OR SOMETHING ELSE?

Four Arrows (aka Don Jacobs)

ABSTRACT

Short-term military simulations of scenarios or conditions that U.S. military personnel might meet are generally the largest, in terms of cost and personnel, of all operational training events. That at least six such exercises were scheduled for September 11, 2001 raises serious questions about whether or not the events of 9/11 were at least partially orchestrated by U.S. command.

In light of the aforementioned military exercises and the fact that the 9/11 Commission's Final Report barely mentions them, neither were they significantly discussed nor investigated during the hearings, this essay briefly explores four key questions that will hopefully stimulate further inquiries, investigations and perhaps subpoenas that will ultimately break the silence and force declassification of the information surrounding the war games.

1. *Has there been a high-level suppression of information about the military drills?*
2. *Might the military drills have been a significant factor in the success of the attacks?*

3. *Who was in charge of the military drills and what motives may have been operating for this person?*
4. *In what way might Zacarias Moussaoui, the only person charged in the United States for the attacks, be a link that connects to the person in charge of the games to another tragedy that may have been “an inside job” – i.e. Senator Paul Wellstone’s death, and how might Moussaoui connect all of this to the Pentagon?*

Thomas H. Kean-9-11 Commission Chairman: Three questions, then I know the general has to leave.

Audience Member: Ask about the war games that were planned for 9/11.

Kean: Commissioner Gorelick?

Audience Member: Tell us about the 9/11 war games!

Jamie S. Gorelick, Commission Member: Could you please be quiet? We have only a few minutes with General Myers, and I’d like to ask a question. General Myers, the – I’m sorry.

Kean: I would ask please people in the audience to be quiet if you want to stay here.

– Testimony as delivered before the Sept. 11 commission on
Thursday, June 17, 2004.¹

During the past decade, nearly 100 pilots have flown through prohibited airspace protecting the white house.² Although the Federal Aviation Association (FAA) has been criticized for not punishing the pilots more stringently, there were seldom problems with scrambling military jets to escort their planes quickly out of the protected area. The FAA hijack coordinator simply requested, “escort service” from the National Military Command Center, then North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) escort aircraft took the required action.³

However, for some reason, normal procedures did not occur on September 11, 2001. In fact, responses at many levels were so unusually slow or absent, many 9/11 researchers have written about the possibility that “stand down” orders had been given prior to the attacks. Others, however, like Michael Ruppert, Michael Kane and Barbara Honegger, believe it is more likely that “war games” that were scheduled for that day were responsible for the problems (Ruppert, 2004).

According to an *Associated Press* release, the U.S. government referred to one of these military drills as “a bizarre coincidence.”⁴ This essay will present evidence with which to consider whether or not the 9/11 pre-planned events were coincidences.

For the purposes of this essay, I will use the word “war games” or “military exercises” or “terrorist drill,” etc., to mean any exercises involving governmental agencies designed to simulate situations involving attacks on the United States and subsequent responses. (Distinctions between war games and terrorist drill may be significant. Although there is a difference, for convenience sake, either “war games” or “drills” will be used here mean to describe military exercises of all varieties.) That such drills or war games occurred on and around September 11th in ways that may have caused people to confuse them with “real time” responses should be of grave concern. It is hoped that this overview, relating to six different drills scheduled for or held on this date, will encourage more in-depth research by official agencies.

9/11 Commissioner Richard Ben-Veniste also expressed the significance of this matter, even if indirectly, in his questioning of Col. Alan Scott and General Craig McKinley about the one of these terror drills, “Amalgam Virgo.” The following exchange can be watched in an actual on-line video segment:

Richard Ben-Veniste, Commissioner: Isn't it a fact, Sir, that prior to September 11th, 2001, NORAD had already in the works, plans to simulate in an exercise, a simultaneous hijacking of two planes in the United States?

Maj. Gen. Craig McKinley: Col. Scott, do you have any data on that? I'm not aware of that, Sir. I was not present at the time.

Richard Ben-Veniste, Commissioner: That was operation Amalgam Virgo.

Col. Alan Scott: Yes, Sir. Specifically, operation Amalgam Virgo, which I was involved in before I retired ...⁵

Ben-Veniste's official position is only that NORAD should have been more prepared for such an event since they had this particular drill just in June 2001. However, the fact that his bringing up this issue or the fact that Amalgam Virgo was not mentioned in the final 9/11 Commission Report should give pause. Why was an exercise, so similar to actual 9/11 events, not given more attention? Perhaps Amalgam Virgo was continuing during 9/11? This is the position of Nico Haupt of *Global Free Press*.⁶

Another exercise that was scheduled on 9/11 was called “Timely Alert II.” Its existence and timing was also officially categorized as a “coincidence.” A U.S. Army Communications-Electronics Command article by Debbie Sheehan of this department's Public Affairs Office quotes a garrison commander named Col. Stephen N. Wood as saying, “By sheer coincidence we were scheduled to conduct ‘Timely Alert II,’ a force protection exercise

on Sept. 11 and because of that, some of the concrete barriers were already in place.” The article continues:

Wood said people on post told him when they first saw live footage of the events unfolding at the World Trade Center, they thought it was some elaborate training video to accompany the exercise. Firefighters here said others told them the same thing. “You really outdid yourself this time,” a worker said to Captain “Jack” Rindt, training officer for the Fort Monmouth Fire Department. Rindt could only express his sorrow while he acknowledged that indeed, what people were seeing was not a movie, even if it looked like one.⁷

“Operation Northern Vigilance” was a third exercise planned for 9/11. For that, according to Alex Jones and Paul Joseph Watson in their online article, “Wargames Were Cover For the Operational Execution of 9/11,” on the morning of 9/11, jets were removed from patrolling the U.S. east coast and sent to Alaska and Canada.⁸ This is confirmed from “the horse’s mouth” in a newsroom release directly from NORAD on September 9, 2001 entitled “NORAD maintains Northern Vigilance.” It states, “The North American Aerospace Defense Command shall deploy fighter aircraft as necessary to Forward Operating Locations (FOLs) in Alaska and Northern Canada to monitor a Russian air force exercise in the Russian arctic and North Pacific Ocean.”⁹

Yet another drill was a bio-warfare exercise called Tripod II. According to Michael Ruppert, “The ‘Tripod II,’ joint New York City-Department of Justice bio-warfare exercise, scheduled for Sept 12th, 2001 at New York’s Pier 29, and mentioned in testimony by former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani at the 9/11 Commission, may become one of the single most important disclosures of 9/11.”¹⁰ Giuliani apparently knew about the exercise because the New York-Department of Justice was a participant in the drill.

“Operation Vigilant Guardian,” a fourth drill, simulated hijacked planes. During this event, Lt. Col. Dawne Deskins, a NORAD control and warning officer, took the call from the Boston Center warning that it was tracking a hijacked airliner. Her first words were, “It must be part of the exercise” (Seely, 2002).

“Operation Northern Guardian” may have been part of Vigilant Guardian, but related to simulating hijacked plans in different sector. Operation Northern Guardian involved deployment of aircraft from Langley Air Force Base to Iceland (Pevey, 2002). In late August 2001, 6 jets and 70 people deployed to Iceland for Operation Northern Guardian. Another 6 jets and 115 people deployed to Turkey to enforce the northern Iraqi no-fly zone. The members in Operation Northern Guardian in Iceland returned on December 3rd, 2001.¹¹ John Fulton of the CIA gave a presentation at a Law

Enforcement Seminar on June 6, 2002 confirming this. He told his audience that on the morning of September 11th, 2001, he and his team at the CIA were running a pre-planned simulation to explore the emergency response issues that would be created if a plane were to strike a building. The keynote speaker for this seminar, coincidentally, was Rudolph Giuliani.¹²

Another drill, "Operation Vigilant Warrior," was referenced in Richard Clarke's book, *Against All Enemies*. He writes that acting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Richard Myers, tells him via video link that "We are in the middle of Vigilant Warrior, a NORAD exercise" (Clark, 2004, p. 5). This exercise may have been the attack component of the Vigilant Guardian exercise. It is also discussed in "*Air Force Magazine Online*."¹³ In a published transcript of the 9/11 hearings, the lead pilot for the exercise who was finally dispatched for the real thing on 9/11 stated, "I reverted to the Russian threat. I'm thinking cruise missile threat from the sea. You know, you look down and see the Pentagon burning and I thought the bastards snuck one by us. You couldn't see any airplanes, and no one told us anything."¹⁴

The Center for Cooperative Research has an extensive time-line relating to the military exercises of 9/11 with ample documentation on a number of them (See footnote 15 for the web address). One of the drills discussed is "Global Guardian" that was scheduled for October 2001 but apparently was rescheduled for early September. According to the Center's research, Stratcom may have incorporated a computer network attack into Global Guardian with the claimed ability to actually shut down its own systems. It is not known if this occurred or what the effects might have been on the air defense system, but it is another item that demands further inquiry.¹⁵ The existence of these drills and others, like "Amalgam Virgo," which is discussed later and others yet unconfirmed, begin to paint a picture that is beyond coincidence.

United States military training exercises had been used as a cover for real events a number of times prior to 9/11.¹⁶ Members of the current federal government administration were in power during all of them.¹⁷ In each case, they have created confusion or fostered assumptions that may have caused "the enemy" to believe that what was happening was merely part of the exercise. Recall that Lt. Col. Dawne Deskins, regional Mission Crew Chief for the Vigilant Guardian exercise, illustrated that this is what happened on 9/11. She also said that everyone at the North East Air Defense Sector (NEADS), part of NORAD, initially thought the first call received about the real 9/11 hijackings was part of the war games scenario (Seely, 2002).

This essay will now briefly explore four key questions that will hopefully stimulate further inquiries, investigations and perhaps enforceable subpoenas that will ultimately break the silence and force declassification of the information surrounding the war and terrorists exercises:

1. Has there been a high-level suppression of information about the exercises?
2. Might they have been a significant factor in the success of the attacks?
3. Who was in charge of the exercises and what motives may have been operating for this person?
4. In what way might Zacarias Moussaoui, the only person charged in the United States for the 9/11 attacks, be a link that connects to the person in charge of the exercises (Dick Cheney) to another tragedy that may have been “an inside job” (the death of Senator Paul Wellstone) and how might Moussaoui connect all of this to the Pentagon?

1. THE BIG HUSH

The U.S. Government Printing Office has made the final 9/11 Commission Report available on the web, all 585 pages of it. It is published as a single PDF file.¹⁸ I used it to search for places in the report where the Commission may have discussed the war games conducted on 9/11. Before doing this, I tested the process with some random key words. For example, I inserted “fire department” and got 13 hits. “Rumsfeld” was mentioned 71 times and Bush 175. The word, “building” was used in the report 105 times and “terrorist” 416 times. I searched for “Zacarias Moussaoui” and found his name in the report in 128 places. I plugged in “plane into building.” This also came up nil, although the word “plane” had 128 references that were not applicable.

I then searched for the specific names of military drills that I understood may have been relevant to 9/11. These were Vigilant Guardian, Vigilant Warrior, Northern Vigilance, Northern Guardian and Tripod II. Still I found nothing except for one reference in the endnotes for Chapter 1 that were cited on page 467 of the Final Report:

116 On 9/11, NORAD was scheduled to conduct a military exercise, Vigilant Guardian, which postulated a bomber attack from the former Soviet Union. We investigated whether military preparations for the large-scale exercise compromised the military’s response to the real-world terrorist attack on 9/11. According to General Eberhart, “it took about 30 seconds” to make the adjustment to the real-world situation. Ralph

Eberhart testimony, June 17, 2004. We found that the response was, if anything, expedited by the increased number of staff at the sectors and at NORAD because of the scheduled exercise. (See Robert Marr interview, January 23, 2004)

The text to which this endnote referred was simply a conversation, noted by the Commission on page 20, between the FAA and the Boston Traffic Management Unit:

FAA: Hi Boston TMU. We have a problem here. We have a hijacked aircraft headed toward New York, and we need you guys to, we need someone to scramble some F-16s.

TMU: Is this a real world or exercise?

FAA: No, this is not an exercise, not a test.

As for the June 17th interview with Eberhart, the Commander of the North American Aerospace Defense Command, recall from the opening transcript dialog that this was the meeting where members of the audience wanted some questions asked about the war games. (Actually, there were two people. One was escorted out. The other was intimidated into silence.) Later, Commissioner Tim Roemer did ask Eberhart the only question about military exercises that would be asked during the entire 9/11 Commission hearings:

Roemer: My question is, you were postured for an exercise against the former Soviet Union. Did that help or hurt? Did that help in terms of were more people prepared? Did you have more people ready? Were more fighters fueled with more fuel? Or did this hurt in terms of people thinking, “No, there’s no possibility that this is real world; we’re engaged in an exercise,” and delay things?

Eberhart: Sir, my belief is that it helped because of the manning, because of the focus, because the crews – they have to be airborne in 15 minutes and that morning, because of the exercise, they were airborne in six or eight minutes. And so I believe that focus helped.

According to researcher and reporter, Michael Kane, of the *Global Free Press*, who was on the scene for this interview, “after General Eberhart’s sworn testimony, I asked him who was in charge of coordinating the multiple war games running on 9/11.” He replied: “No Comment.” Kane goes on to say,

If the war games helped “because of the focus,” why was General Eberhart reluctant to comment on just who was at the center of that focus? Tim Roemer’s question is posed as if there was only one exercise running that morning, but this was not the case. There were at least three, as has been documented by the mainstream press, and there may have been more than five such exercises running.¹⁹

Kyle Hence, the co-founder of 9/11 Citizens Watch, asked Commissioner Gorelick about fighter jets from Andrews Air Force base that were off on a bombing run exercise 200 miles away from Washington, DC on 9/11, leaving the capitol defenseless. Gorelick also refused to comment.²⁰

Col. Robert Marr, commander of the Northeast Defense Sector of the National Guard in Rome, NY, was also mentioned in the endnote. I could not find any statement by him in the published report, however, he did tell the British Broadcasting Corporation on the program, “Clear the Skies,” that he had unarmed jets flying training missions when it became clear the terrorists intended to crash airliners into buildings:

“If you had to stop an aircraft, sometimes the only way to stop an aircraft is with your own aircraft if you don’t have any weapons,” Marr said in an interview on the BBC program, “Clear the Skies.” “It was very possible that would have been asked to give their lives themselves to try to prevent further attacks if need be.” Marr said that “on the morning of the attacks at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, only 14 armed planes were available to defend the U.S. mainland. Only four of those planes were patrolling the Northeast”²¹

Besides the official hush on the war games, mainstream media also neglected the subject by and large. Early in 2004, independent researcher, Mark Robinowitz, published the results of his research for news on the exercises and found mention only in a January 5, 2002 article in *Newhouse News*; an August 21, 2002 *Associated Press* article; a June 3, 2002 *Aviation Week and Space Technology* piece; and a December 9, 2001 news article published in the *Toronto Star*.²² There were undoubtedly more, but the fact remains that most American citizens still have no idea about military exercises scheduled for 9/11 and their possible effects.

As mentioned earlier, Richard Clarke talks about Vigilant Warrior in his best selling book, *Against All Enemies*. Clarke, the counter-terrorism advisor on the U.S. National Security Council and Chair of the Crisis Strategy Group, describes his first minutes after the 9/11 attacks:

They were frantically looking for Norman Mineta, the Secretary of Transportation, and, like me, a rare holdover from the Clinton administration. At first FAA could not find him. “Well, Jan, (Jan Garvey, Federal Aviation Administration administrator) can you order aircraft down? We’re going to have to clear the airspace around Washington and New York.”

“We may have to do a lot more than that, Dick. I already put a hold on all take-offs and landings in New York and Washington, but we have reports of eleven aircraft off course or out of communications, maybe hijacked.”

“I turned to the radar screen” JCS, JCS, I assume NORAD has scrambled fighters and AWACS. How many? Where?

“Not a pretty picture Dick.” Dick Myers, himself a fighter pilot, knew that the days when we had scores of fighters on strip alert had ended with the cold war. “We are in the middle of Vigilant Warrior, a NORAD exercise...” (Clark, 2004, pp. 3-9)

There was also an interesting article on an exercise conducted *prior* to 9/11 in the mainstream news on April 18, 2004. *USA Today* published a piece by Steven Komarow and Tom Squitieri in “Washington/Politics” entitled, “NORAD had drills of jets as weapons.” It opens:

WASHINGTON – In the two years before the Sept. 11 attacks, the North American Aerospace Defense Command conducted exercises simulating what the White House says was unimaginable at the time: hijacked airliners used as weapons to crash into targets and cause mass casualties. One of the imagined targets was the World Trade Center. In another exercise, jets performed a mock shoot-down over the Atlantic Ocean of a jet supposedly laden with chemical poisons headed toward a target in the United States. In a third scenario, the target was the Pentagon – but that drill was not run after Defense officials said it was unrealistic, NORAD and Defense officials say. NORAD, in a written statement, confirmed that such hijacking exercises occurred.²³

Much more could be written about the great hush that clouds information about the 9/11 war games. Of course, Bush’s “secret government” would simply dismiss the problem by saying that military exercises are classified. Or, as some generals have indicated, in any case they probably enhanced the U.S. response to 9/11. Before the truth about the military exercises can illuminate what was really behind 9/11, a full and authentic investigation would have to break through these excuses.

At least one publicly elected official has started asking such questions. Cynthia McKinney, voted back into Congress in 2004 by the people of Georgia’s 4th Congressional District, has a history of asking the hard questions. The following exchange represents one of the few efforts of a congressperson to get people to talk about the 9/11 planned exercises. It is from a transcript of Representative Cynthia McKinney’s exchange with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Richard Myers and Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) Tina Jonas, on March 11th, 2005.

CMK: The question was, we had four war games going on on September 11th, and the question that I tried to pose before the Secretary had to go to lunch was whether or not the activities of the four war games going on on September 11th actually impaired our ability to respond to the attacks.

RM: The answer to the question is no, it did not impair our response, in fact General Eberhart who was in the command of the North American Aerospace Defense Command as he testified in front of the 9/11 Commission I believe – I believe he told them that it enhanced our ability to respond, given that NORAD didn’t have the overall responsibility for responding to the attacks that day. That was an FAA responsibility.

But they were two CPXs; there was one Department of Justice exercise that didn't have anything to do with the other three; and there was an actual operation ongoing because there was some Russian bomber activity up near Alaska. So we –

CMK: Let me ask you this, then: who was in charge of managing those war games?

RM: The important thing to realize is that North American Aerospace Defense Command was responsible. These are command post exercises; what that means is that all the battle positions that are normally not filled are indeed filled; so it was an easy transition from an exercise into a real world situation. It actually enhanced the response; otherwise, it would take somewhere between 30 minutes and a couple of hours to fill those positions, those battle stations, with the right staff officers.

CMK: Mr. Chairman, begging your indulgence, was September Eleventh declared a National Security Special Event day?

RM: I have to look back; I do not know. Do you mean after the fact, or

CMK: No. Because of the activities going on that had been scheduled at the United Nations that day.

RM: I'd have to go back and check. I don't know.²⁴

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WAR GAMES

On September 11, the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) was running a drill simulating an off-course aircraft crashing into NRO headquarters in Virginia at 8:30 a.m., about the same time the real thing was occurring. The NRO is the spy satellite agency and its involvement shows how war games had moved beyond the control of individual services. This is emphasized by Navy Adm. Edmund P. Giambastiani Jr. as quoted in a U.S. Department of Defense news article:

“Before in the Defense Department, war games were essentially just done by services, and they would sprinkle in joint entities,” Giambastiani explained. Now, he said, fundamentally the services are cooperating and co-hosting war games with Joint Forces Command. “I am co-hosting with the chief of a service, a joint war game which the Army and the Joint Forces Command come together to play,” he said. “Primarily, the majority of people in it are actually joint.” “We do it with the Navy, we do it with the Marine Corps, we’ve done it with the Air Force, we’re doing it with agencies such as a National Reconnaissance Office, we’ve done it with other combatant commanders,” he said. “It’s pretty darn significant.” (Sample, 2005)

Associated Press journalist, John J. Lumpkin also wrote about the NRO exercise:

WASHINGTON – In what the government describes as a bizarre coincidence, one U.S. Intelligence Agency was planning an exercise last Sept. 11 in which an errant aircraft

would crash into one of its buildings. But the cause wasn't terrorism – it was to be a simulated accident ...²⁵

American Airlines Flight 77, the Boeing 767 that was supposedly crashed into the Pentagon, took off from Dulles at 8:10 on 9/11, 50 minutes before the exercise was to begin.

Michael Ruppert's research regarding this and other planned military exercises reveals that "possibly many aircraft were posing as hijacked airliners." He claims that on the day of 9/11 The Joint Chiefs of Staff (Richard B. Myers) and NORAD were conducting a joint, live-fly, hijack Field Training Exercise (FTX) which involved at least one (and almost certainly many more) aircraft under US control that was posing as a hijacked airliner" (Ruppert, 2004).

To what degree might knowledge of such exercises influenced responses and non-responses to 9/11? Besides the obvious problem of not being able to tell the difference between real and drill blips on NORAD screens, being on alert for such games generally has a disruptive effect. Col. Steve Jones, the commander of the Air National Guard's 147th Squadron out of Houston, explains this in *Code One*, an official Lockheed Martin publication. The 147th provides air defense for the Gulf Coast region and for the Houston petrochemical base, but also for missions around the world. Jones was on combat alert, sitting in the cockpit of his F-16 when he first heard about the 9/11 attack (after being told to look at the television set!). In describing alert status exercises in general, he stated:

People who are not used to flying alert missions may be a little tense about it ... They can be in such a hurry that they forget something that delays them. They can get bogged down by command and control functions if their units don't have the infrastructure to support an alert mission. They can get bogged down in the notification procedures as well. (Hehs, 2002)

Bogged down may be an understatement if this is what happened on 9/11. One squadron of NORAD fighter planes that was eventually scrambled was sent east over the Atlantic Ocean and was 150 miles from Washington, DC, when the third plane struck the Pentagon, farther away from the scene than when they first took off.²⁶

Besides the general confusion, the NRO exercise also involved an emergency evacuation drill running in the morning of 9/11. As a result, many key people who are responsible for watching images from numerous satellites were not even at their stations when the first plane struck its target! NRO spokesman Art Haubold told *United Press International* (UPI), "It was just

a coincidence. It was an emergency response exercise. It was just a strange coincidence.”²⁷

Another example was reported in the book, *Air War Over America*. This book, which is now already out of print and unavailable is published by the Defense Information Access Network (DIANE). For nearly 14 years, it has focused on researching and making available the very best and most important documents and reports produced by various agencies of governments worldwide. It explains how at the time of the first WTC crash, three F-16s were assigned to Andrews Air Force Base, 10 miles from Washington. They flew an air-to-ground training mission in North Carolina, 207 miles away from their base. Not until they are half-way back does lead pilot Major Billy Hutchison receive orders to return to base (Arnold & Filson, 2004, p. 56).

It seems obvious that war games on the day of 9/11 were and are a matter of significance, but so were war games *prior* to 9/11. For example, one of the exercises prior to 9/11 occurred on November 3, 2000. Don Abbott of Command Emergency Response Training organized a simulated crash on the Pentagon with miniature planes and a model of the Pentagon. Such exercises relating to terrorist attacks similar to those that actually happened might have conditioned military personal to expect more of the same. Considering that Bush, Rice and Rumsfeld have all said that they could not have imagined planes being hijacked and crashed into buildings, it makes these exercises even more suspect.

In his highly regarded book, *9/11: Synthetic Terror: Made in the U.S.*, Webster Tarpley (1992) discusses the significance war games may have had on 9/11. In one section he refers to an exercise called “Amalgam Virgo.” This exercise is a U.S.–Canadian multi-agency, bilateral air security exercise sponsored by NORAD. Now an annual event, it made its debut on the morning of 9/11. (In spite of the fact that information about the war games has been classified, the fact that 9/11 was the premier of Amalgam Virgo was announced by the U.S. Department of Defense “Armed Forces Information Services” a year later in announcing its “second annual” exercise.²⁸ Marine Corps Major, Mike Snyder, called the day-long exercise in 2002 a great success.²⁹)

Tarpley talks about how war games can influence coups in general and then about how Amalgam Virgo specifically might have had a significant effect on the events that played out behind the 9/11 scenes:

Staff exercises or command exercises are perfect for a rogue network which is forced to conduct its operations using the same communications and computer systems used by other officers who are not necessarily party to the illegal operation, coup or provocation

as it may be. A putschist (a person plotting or involved in a coup) officer may be working at a console next to another officer who is not in on the coup, and who might indeed oppose it if he knew about it. The putschist's behavior is suspicious: what the hell is he doing? The loyal officer looks over and asks the putschist about it. The putschist cites a staff maneuver for which he is preparing. The loyal officer concludes that the putschist's activities are part of an officially sanctioned drill, and his suspicions are allayed. The putschist may even explain that participation in the staff exercise requires a special security clearance which the loyal officer does not have. The conversation ends, and the putschist can go on with his treasonous work.

The best working hypothesis is that Amalgam Virgo was the cover story under which the 9/11 attacks advanced through the bureaucracy. Preparations for carrying out 9/11 were conducted under the cover of being preparations for Amalgam Virgo. Most of those who took part in Amalgam Virgo could hardly have been aware of this duplicity Here was an exercise which included many of the elements which were put into practice on 9/11. Amalgam Virgo thus provided the witting putschists with a perfect cover for conducting the actual live fly components of 9/11 through a largely non-witting military bureaucracy. Under the cover of this confusion, the most palpably subversive actions could be made to appear in the harmless and even beneficial guise of a drill. (Tarpley, 2005, p. 3)

3. WHO WAS IN CHARGE AND WHY?

After personally questioning many NORAD, NRO and Department of Defense sources, Michael Ruppert became convinced that Cheney was responsible for the war games. "The war games will tie Cheney and Rumsfeld directly into a complete paralysis of fighter response on 9/11," he stated in an article discussing a military exercise held on 9/11 called "Tripod II" and other exercises orchestrated by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).³⁰ Ruppert has studied the war games issue extensively and covers it in his book, *Crossing the Rubicon*. Michael Kane summarizes this research,³¹ which I have condensed further below. Just as Cheney had taken control of the military after the attacks, he was also in control of the military exercises before and during them.³²

1. In May 2001 Dick Cheney was placed directly in charge of managing the "seamless integration" of all training exercises throughout the federal government and military agencies by presidential mandate.
2. The morning of 9/11 began with multiple training exercises of war games and terror drills, which Cheney, as mandated by the president was placed in charge of managing.
3. Cheney was in charge of the war game known as Tripod 2, an exercise set up in downtown New York that set up a command and control center on 9/11 that was configured exactly like the one lost that morning in WTC 7.

4. Dick Cheney was one of the main government officials deciding that such extensive drills would take place on 9/11, in spite of (or because of) the intelligence warning that terrorists would hijack aircraft and crash them into targets during the week of September 9th, 2001.

As for why the Vice-President may have wanted to use the exercises as a way to assure the success of 9/11 attacks, no one should be surprised to hear that the answer relates to oil. First, Cheney understood well the growing need for oil. In an article for the Center for Research in Globalization entitled, "Iraq and the Problem of Peak Oil," F. William Engdahl states that Cheney knew about this problem in 1999:

In a speech to the International Petroleum Institute in London in late 1999, Dick Cheney, then chairman of the world's largest oil services company, Halliburton, presented the picture of world oil supply and demand to industry insiders. 'By some estimates,' Cheney stated, 'there will be an average of two percent annual growth in global oil demand over the years ahead, along with, conservatively, a three percent natural decline in production from existing reserves.' Cheney ended on an alarming note: 'That means by 2010 we will need on the order of an additional fifty million barrels a day.' This is equivalent to more than six Saudi Arabia's of today's size.³³

Second, the war in Iraq was about oil. President Bush's Cabinet agreed in April 2001 that "Iraq remains a destabilizing influence to the flow of oil to international markets from the Middle East" and because this is an unacceptable risk to the U.S. "military intervention" is necessary.³⁴

Third, the Iraq war has been in the works since 1996.³⁵ Cheney even tried to sell the idea to Bill Clinton in 1998.

Fourth, Cheney's company, Halliburton, got the contract to rebuild Iraq and he knew his company would get it. Halliburton has contracts worth more billions for its work in Iraq.³⁶ In spite of his claims to the contrary, Cheney should receive financial rewards from Halliburton even though he is no longer directly in charge of it (BBC, 2003). During the first 2 years of the war, Cheney's 433,000 Halliburton stock options jumped to \$26 million in worth.³⁷

Fifth, Cheney needed the 9/11 attacks to rationalize the U.S. attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq that would set the stage for his financial and ideological ambitions and to assure that the U.S. would not lose its energy advantage as a result of the peak oil problem (Griffin, 2004).

Sixth, Halliburton, headed by Dick Cheney before he became Vice President, and its Kellogg, Brown and Root subsidiary, has a long history of corrupt money-making practices in countries like Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Libya and Nigeria. Halliburton had extensive investments

and contracts in Suharto's Indonesia. Indonesia Corruption Watch named Kellogg Brown & Root (Halliburton's engineering division) among 59 companies using collusive, corruptive and nepotistic practices in deals involving former President Suharto's family. Still, the Pentagon continues to offer KBR no-bid contracts.³⁸

4. THE ZACARIAS MOUSSAOUI CONNECTION

To suggest that Dick Cheney and other top officials may have intentionally pre-planned military exercises, as part of a conspiracy to use the events of 9/11 to ultimately lead to U.S. occupation of Iraq is obviously a difficult proposition to digest. Yet, if a case could be made that he and others may have also been involved in a political assassination of a U.S. Senator who stood in the way of the Iraq agenda, then this suggestion becomes more plausible. Furthermore, if he was connected to both events, then "coincidence theory" holds even less water.

Zacarias Moussaoui is the only person who has been charged in the U.S. as a conspirator in the 9/11 attacks. In spite of this, no evidence linking him to the attacks has been released. None of his purported accomplices within the U.S. have been arrested. His case is entirely controlled by the Executive Branch of the government. In 2003, Bush personally asked for a hold on his trial.³⁹ It did not plea bargain with him in order to get more information from him regarding the 9/11 conspiracy.⁴⁰ In fact it has gone to great lengths to prevent him from speaking. All his testimony remains classified. He has spent much time in solitary confinement and is not allowed visitors besides family and his attorneys. The government did not allow him to call for witnesses from al-Qaeda, even though this might have resulted in dismissal of his indictment (Maargasak, 2003).

Even before he was arrested, unusual "precautions" with regard to Moussaoui seem to have been common. For example, while he was living in London, he was observed by French intelligence making several trips to Pakistan and Afghanistan. French investigators claimed the British spy agency MI5 was alerted and requested to place Moussaoui under surveillance but the request appeared to have been ignored.⁴¹

When he was arrested in Minnesota just before 9/11, FBI agent Marion "Spike" Bowman, head of the FBI's National Security Law Unit, denied the Minneapolis FBI's request for a warrant to search Moussaoui's belongings and his computer, which contained a flight simulation program obtained at

a flight training school owned by Northwest Airlines. Minneapolis FBI agents applied for the August 2001 search warrant under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Bowman's decision prevented an adequate search of materials. One of the items in Moussaoui's possession was a letter that could have led investigators to an important meeting relating to the 9/11 attacks. He also possessed phone numbers that could have linked him to major planners of the 9/11 attacks.^{42,43} Instead of being punished for giving the local agents information that was "inexcusably confused and inaccurate" he was given an FBI award in December 2002 for "exceptional performance" (Griffin, 2004, p. 122).

Even after the 9/11 attacks began, the Supervisory Special Agent who was most involved in the Moussaoui matter and who, up to that point, seemed to have been consistently, almost deliberately thwarting the Minneapolis FBI agents' efforts, was still attempting to block the search of Moussaoui's computer. And according to the well-known letter from Coleen Rowley, the FBI was "prevented from even attempting to question Moussaoui on the day of the attacks when, in theory, he could have possessed further information about other co-conspirators."⁴⁴

Moussaoui is a man of African ancestry who hailed from France. He possessed a Masters degree from Southbank University in the United Kingdom and traveled widely. According to the Australian Government's Department of Defense and its Defense Science and Technology Department, Moussaoui was a major player in the 9/11 planning. Using their advanced Computer Forensic Investigative Toolkit, this department used relational network analysis to study all of the 9/11 hijackers and found him to be connected to Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, the purported architect of 9/11 and to Mohamed Atta, the leader of the attacks and the presumed pilot of the first plane to crash into the Twin Towers.⁴⁵

Michael Guess, also a man of African ancestry and about the same age as Moussaoui lived in St. Paul about the same time Moussaoui was there. He is the person who let Moussaoui download the flight simulation program for a Boeing 747 onto the laptop computer when he worked in part-time administration at the Pan Am International Flight Academy as a second job. According to an ex-manager of the school, Guess had "inadvertently" placed a CD-ROM containing the 747 software at a workstation in advance of one of the Moussaoui's training sessions, before his flight instructor arrived, and left him in the room alone with it (Four Arrows & Fetzer, 2004). Later Guess was laid off from the school where he had hoped to become a flight instructor. After the event, Guess had gone out of his way to tell people that he played a big role in getting Moussaoui arrested.⁴⁶

Michael Guess was also, “coincidentally,” the co-pilot of the airplane that crashed on October 25, 2002, killing Senator Paul Wellstone. Some believe that he was actually flying the plane when it crashed (Four Arrows & Fetzer, 2004). Perhaps the reason he talked so openly about being a part of Moussaoui’s capture (which of course he was not) was to distance him from the possibility, which in fact was never a topic of any investigation, including the National Transportation Safety Board’s (NTSB) investigation of the Senator’s plane crash. The book, *American Assassination: The Strange Death of Senator Paul Wellstone*, makes a strong case for Dick Cheney and others being the source for a contract on the Senator. Wellstone’s aggressive opposition to the Iraq war and to Cheney’s leadership role in promoting it, and his successful attempts to stop Halliburton from receiving no-bid defense contracts offered billions of dollars worth of motive. If Cheney was responsible for 9/11 war games; if he was part of a duplicitous, pre-planned strategy for implementing 9/11 events that would serve the interests of those who desired to use them to support wars for oil and profit; and if he was willing to arrange for the assassination of a U.S. Senator to help assure that he achieved his 9/11 goals; then the silencing of Moussaoui might have an additional purpose. What if Moussaoui knows about Cheney’s involvement in the Wellstone incident? What if he and Guess worked for the same agent or agency? Perhaps there is a connection beyond our imagination, but in any case, the overlaps and interconnections are beyond coincidence and warrant further investigation!

Consider that Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, expressed his concern about Bowman’s interference with the search warrant, pointing out that Bowman and others gave testimony during a closed Judiciary Committee hearing that indicated that Moussaoui was connected to a major financier of the hijacking plot:

“If the application for the FISA warrant had gone forward,” Grassley wrote, “agents would have found information in Moussaoui’s belongings that linked him both to a major financier of the hijacking plot working out of Germany, and to a Malaysian al-Qaida boss who had met with at least two other hijackers while under surveillance by intelligence officials.”⁴⁷

Making a connection between Michael Guess and Moussaoui is admittedly speculative. Moussaoui was arrested more than a year before Senator Wellstone’s plane crashed. However, there are too many similarities, overlaps and connections between the two men to allow them to stand without calling for more thorough investigations. One can only guess about possible connections Guess might have had, directly or indirectly, with Moussaoui,

besides the “coincidences” mentioned above, we know, from 50 pages of *Star Tribune* interviews, that Guess

- had been a member of the Air National Guard, but little is known about his service;
- and his connection to Moussaoui was never mentioned by the NTSB in their investigation into his background. The NTSB even went so far as to suppress the name of Pan Am’s flight school where Guess had worked, had let Moussaoui download the flight simulator and from where he had recently been laid off 1 month before the tragic flight;
- was considered a very private person;
- flew regularly with Richard Conry, the pilot that Senator Wellstone often asked for;
- was assigned the Wellstone flight by the President of Aviation Charter after the previously scheduled copilot for the Wellstone flight did not answer his phone; and
- had just been laid off, he was seeking employment prior to taking the Wellstone flight.

We also know from the NTSB final report that the pilot of the aircraft, Richard Conry, had a criminal record relating to financial graft.⁴⁸ We know that Dick Cheney knew well in advance of Paul Wellstone’s stand against the Iraq war resolution that Wellstone would indeed oppose it.

What possibilities exist? Perhaps Moussaoui and Guess and maybe even Conry did work for the same “employer.” Maybe Guess brought something aboard the aircraft that enhanced the mechanism for taking it down, thinking he was merely delivering some secret documents? It is hard to imagine given some of the background information about him, but because the effort to locate his friends and family has been difficult, even a suicide mission like that of the 9/11 pilots should not be ruled out. May be Moussaoui can connect the dots. May be not. However, when we consider more information about connections between Moussaoui, the Pentagon and Cheney, we are compelled to demand more information.

On August 27, 2005 article, sub-titled, “9/11 Ringleader Connected to Secret Pentagon Operation,” by Dr. Daniele Ganser of the Zurich Polytechnic, published by the International Relations and Security Network (ISN), identifies the role of 9/11 ringleader Mohamed Atta and three other hijackers in a secret Pentagon operation. It largely refutes the official U.S. government narrative as presented by the 9/11 Commission.

Recall that Atta is considered to be the “tactical leader of the 9/11 plot” and the suicide pilot who purportedly flew the first plane into the towers.

The Australian Department of Defense's highly sophisticated research system showed numerous meetings between Atta and Moussaoui. Ganser reveals that Atta was also connected to a top-secret operation of the Pentagon's Special Operations Command (SOCOM) in the U.S. She says a top-secret Pentagon project code-named, "Able Danger," had identified Atta as a member of an al-Qaeda cell more than a year before the attacks.⁴⁹ What was the role of Atta in this operation? Did anyone in the Pentagon or higher (as in Dick Cheney) know in advance what Atta was planning? Was Atta working for someone in the administration? Who was really in charge?

Lieutenant-Colonel Anthony Shaffer, a 42-year-old native of Kansas City who worked for the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) in Washington at the time of the 9/11 attacks, and had insights into the Pentagon's top secret operation, urged the FBI to arrest Atta but the Pentagon's lawyers intervened and "protected Atta for reasons that remain unclear."⁵⁰ Note how similar this is to how Moussaoui has been "protected." The 9/11 Commission Report also fails to mention Operation Able Danger or any other U.S.-based SOCOM operations.⁵¹

Another "coincidence" is that, just as Moussaoui is the only person in U.S. prison for the 9/11 attacks, another French born man of Moroccan Arab descent, the same age as Moussaoui, is the only person outside the U.S. to be convicted for the 9/11 attacks. According to an Amnesty International report, his name is Mounir al-Motassadeq. A Hamburg Germany high court found the 31-year-old man guilty of being part of a terrorist cell led by Mohamed Atta.⁵² The U.S. has refused his defense access to a person held by U.S. authorities on suspicion of terrorist activities whose statements had been used in that trial. As a result, the German high court has declared a mistrial.

In addition to all of these, the recent news that U.S. senators from both parties accused the U.S. Defense Department of obstructing an investigation into "Able Danger" and claims that its documents and personnel could have identified Mohamed Atta and other hijackers well before 9/11! The Pentagon blocked several witnesses here also from testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Even Republican Senator Arlen Specter regarded the assertions as credible. Democrat Joseph Biden took it further, accusing the Pentagon of a cover-up (Jansen, 2005).

How many more "coincidences" must we endure before we demand that they be explained? The use of six or more planned military/CIA "exercises" on September 11, 2001 and their repercussions are indeed "bizarre" but likely not coincidental.

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