

The Bagman Cometh

By William Rivers Pitt

truthout | Perspective

December 4, 2002

Last week, Bush tapped Henry Kissinger to chair the independent investigation into how and why the September 11th attacks took place. This investigation has been hotly sought after for months by many members of Congress and the vast majority of Americans. The Bush administration, however, fought it at every turn, and only assented to the investigation after it was decided that they could choose the chairman. They chose Henry, a man so in love with secrecy that he bugged his own staff while in White House to make sure no one leaked anything. Only if George W. Bush posted a sign on the White House lawn that read, "Dear America - Screw Your Investigation," could the signal be more clear.

We all remember Henry, Bagman Extraordinaire, the diplomat who cannot set foot beyond America's borders for fear of being subpoenaed and/or arrested for his past deeds. One would think the Bush administration would seek to avoid scandal where it could. In the case of Henry, however, it seems the pigs are too fond of the wallow. Much of the world sees Henry as a war criminal, and they have good cause to do so.

Henry fouled the 1968 peace negotiations during the Vietnam War to boost the election fortunes of his doppelganger, Richard Nixon. By tampering with the peace talks in '68, he helped to send tens of thousands of American soldiers to death, and condemned tens of thousands more American soldiers to maiming or psychological rape. After becoming Secretary of State, Henry orchestrated the secret bombing campaign in Cambodia that claimed hundreds of thousands of civilian lives.

Henry made sure the leaders of a military coup against a democratically elected government in Bangladesh, a coup that wound up killing hundreds of thousands of civilians, escaped censure and condemnation from the American government. Henry was up to his eyeballs in the coup that overthrew and ultimately murdered Salvador Allende of Chile, an action that led to years of bloody repression at the hands of dictator Augusto Pinochet. Henry gave American approval for Indonesia's invasion of East Timor in 1975, an action that took tens of thousands of civilian lives.

This list goes on and on, and includes assistance to terrorists associated with Pinochet who murdered Allende's American ambassador with a car bomb on Washington's Embassy Row in 1976.

Writer David Corn said it best in his piece on Kissinger's 9/11 chairmanship that was recently featured in The Nation magazine: "A fellow who has coddled state-sponsored terrorism has been put in charge of this terrorism investigation. A proven liar has been assigned the task of finding the truth."

It serves to remember the prickly details surrounding 9/11 that are assuredly the reason Henry was chosen to chair the investigation. The Bush administration, and the intelligence services designed to serve it, were warned several times of an impending terrorist attack. Months before September, the German intelligence service BND told US and Israeli intelligence that Middle East terrorists were "planning to hijack commercial aircraft to use as weapons to attack important symbols of American and Israeli culture." The BND's information came through Echelon, the American-controlled network of 120 satellites that monitors all worldwide electronic communications.

Egypt voiced similar warnings regarding aircraft attacks. Delivered just before the G-8 summit in Genoa in

the summer of 2001, Egypt's alert carried such weight that anti-aircraft batteries were placed around Columbus Airport in Italy. The Russians warned the US that same summer of 25 pilots who had been trained for suicide missions, and Putin himself delivered the warning "in the strongest possible terms" to the US government. The Israeli intelligence service Mossad warned both the FBI and the CIA, detailing "a major assault on the United States" against "a large-scale target" that was "very vulnerable."

The Bush administration put energy policy before national security concerns. A foundering pipeline project aimed at exploiting natural gas reserves along the Caspian Sea in Turkmenistan was revived by the Bush administration when it arrived in Washington in January of 2001.

The pipeline project, which sought to bring oil and natural gas from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to a warm water port, had been the brainchild of American petroleum giant Unocal for much of the 1990s. After the destruction of two American embassies in Africa in 1998 by Osama bin Laden, the Clinton administration forbade any American companies from doing business with the Taliban, which had been sheltering bin Laden in Afghanistan. Unocal's pipeline project was frozen.

After the Bush administration came to power, reinvigorating the Unocal pipeline project became a high-priority matter of policy. Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca was dispatched to Pakistan to discuss the pipeline with Taliban officials in August of 2001. Rocca, a career officer with the CIA, had been deeply involved in Agency activities within Afghanistan. The main subject of their discussion was oil. A Pakistani foreign minister was also present at the meeting, and witnessed the exchange.

The main obstacle to the completion of the Unocal pipeline was the fact that it had to pass through Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. The project would receive no international support unless the Afghan government somehow became legitimized. In bargaining for the pipeline, the Bush administration demanded that the Taliban reinstate deposed King Mohammad Zahir Shah as ruler of Afghanistan, and demanded that the Taliban hand over Osama bin Laden for arrest. In return, the Taliban would reap untold billions in profit from the pipeline. Part of the Bush administration's bargaining tactics involved threats of war if these conditions for the legitimization of Afghanistan were not met.

The Bush administration very much wanted the Unocal pipeline to go through, and put intense pressure on the Taliban to see it happen. As this was happening, American intelligence services were flooded with warnings of an impending attack upon American targets by bin Laden and Al Qaeda. There is intense speculation that the September 11th attacks were, in fact, a pre-emptive strike from a nation that saw destruction coming no matter what it did.

The Bush administration fundamentally misunderstood the Taliban regime - to bring back the King and hand bin Laden over to the West would have been tantamount to suicide for the Taliban. Instead of acquiescing to the hard-sell tactics of the Bush administration, the Taliban unleashed their pet attack dog, Osama, upon America. They were going to lose everything, and chose to attack first in the hope that all-out war would break out in Central Asia and rally other Muslim nations to their cause.

Henry Kissinger has been a Unocal consultant since 1995, and was present at the October 21st ceremony of that year when the announcement was made that Unocal would get the contract to build the pipeline. A New York Times editorial published on November 29th stated, "It seems improbable to expect Mr. Kissinger to report unflinchingly on the conduct of the government, including that of Mr. Bush. He would have to challenge the established order and risk sundering old friendships and business relationships." One wonders if the "business relationships" obliquely referred to in that editorial have anything to do with Unocal.

As for challenging the "established order," Henry will have to do exactly that if he is to chair an effective investigation. He will have to find answers for a number of very hard and pressing questions. Will he see it done?

Roll them bones...

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