GlobalResearch
Center for Research on Globalization

The Perpetrators of the 2001 Anthrax Attacks Are Still At Large

By Prof. Graeme MacQueen and Lars Schall
Global Research, February 07, 2015
LarsSchall.com

Region: USA

In this podcast interview, German journalist Lars Schall talks with Dr. Graeme MacQueen, founding Director of the Centre for Peace Studies at McMaster University in Canada. Topic of their discussion: the research that MacQueen did for his recent book "The 2001 Anthrax Deception: The Case for a Domestic Conspiracy." Moreover, they address the fact that the 9/11 Commission Report is heavily based on tortured testimony.

Lars Schall: Hello, I am now connected with Professor Graeme MacQueen, founding Director of the Center for Peace Studies at McMaster University in Canada. Hi Graeme!

Graeme MacQueen: Hello Lars!

Lars Schall: You have written a book that was published by Clarity Press in 2014, and the title is "The 2001 Anthrax Deception: The Case for a Domestic Conspiracy." The first question would be, why do you think the topic of the anthrax letter attacks, that were taking place during October 2001, is still relevant today?

Graeme MacQueen: I suppose there is a variety of ways of getting at this, but one thing would be to say the "Global War on Terror" is still very much with us. We see more and more "terrorist attacks" taking place all the time in the West, and we are being told we have to mobilize, we have to pass laws that further restrict our civil liberties, we have to prepare and mobilize our armed forces against this and that group, especially in the Middle East. So this whole "global conflict framework" called the "Global War on Terror" is still alive, is still vital, and therefore the founding acts of this "Global War on Terror" are still relevant. And the two most important founding acts of this phase of the war were in 2001 in the Fall in the United States, namely the 9/11 attacks and the anthrax attacks that came right after them.

Now, the anthrax attacks, in my opinion, are a crime that has not been solved. The FBI claims to have solved it, but their case is ridiculously weak. And that means that somebody other attacked the US Congress, the legislative branch of government, with a weapon of mass destruction, and they are still at large, they are still out there somewhere. That's a pretty big deal. Those are a few of the reasons. The other reason I would say we still need to study this is because the anthrax attacks do not stand by themselves – they are connected to the 9/11 attacks. I argue in my book that those two sets of attacks are really different parts of one single operation. And therefore we have to bear in mind that if we can solve the anthrax attacks, we might be able to solve the 9/11 attacks.

Lars Schall: In what way were the anthrax attacks connected to 9/11?

Graeme MacQueen: First, Lars, a lot of people, in fact, most people in the US, assumed initially that they were connected. That is a good place to start, because sometimes nowadays people think you are saying something terribly new and controversial when you're saying that they were connected, but it was assumed that they were connected. After all, these horrific 9/11 attacks happened, and then, as we subsequently discovered, people started sending out anthrax in letters about a week later. Well, it would seem natural that this is a kind of a one-two punch, in other words, two phases of a single attack, and that the people who did 9/11 are now following up with phase two.

That was assumed, and there was good reason to assume that. I mean, when people finally opened a couple of these anthrax letters and read them, whoever wrote them was basically saying, we are the same guys who just attacked you on 9/11. The date 9/11 is given right at the top of the letters, and then they go on to say stuff like, "Death to America," "Death to Israel," "Allah is great," all those various threats. We know, because of a poll that was taken, that over half of the US population thought that al Qaeda was the likely perpetrator of these attacks in October of 2001, and so did the Department of Homeland Security and the White House. I think it is important to remember that. What I'm trying to do is not to come out with an outlandish new theory that these attacks were connected – I'm trying to re-connect what we initially assumed was connected. The FBI is trying very hard to not let us connect it.

Lars Schall: I assume the media played a role in this, in connecting the anthrax attacks and 9/11, and so people can just go back and read the articles, right?

Graeme MacQueen: That is correct, there are many articles, and again the reasons seemed good. The anthrax letters seemed to come from the same regions of the country where the 19 hijackers, so called, were known to have stayed. The same cities, namely New York and Washington were attacked in the anthrax attacks as have been attacked previously in the 9/11 attacks, And then there's really a whole lot of evidence that I would call circumstantial, but to me convincing – that is, when you got enough circumstantial evidence it can become convincing, and most of this centers around the 19 hijackers – the guys with Arab names who supposedly hijacked planes on 9/11. When I began studying the anthrax attacks it never occurred to me, because I didn't know anything about the anthrax attacks, that these 19 hijackers would show up in connection with the anthrax letter attacks, but in fact they do. For example, you have a couple of [hijacker] guys in Florida, Marwan al-Shehhi and Saeed al-Ghamdi, who have a real-estate agent named Gloria Irish, who turns out to be directly related to the anthrax attacks. Her husband works at the first place that is attacked by anthrax in Florida. You kind of go, how could that be that there is a linking person here directly between anthrax and 9/11? So you look more deeply, and you find a whole series of *events*, *technology*, and what I would call *scenarios* that connect the two. This is scenario-based politics essentially; somebody has gone around and they have dreamt up what we might call dramatic episodes or scenarios.

Lars Schall: Well, there was one scenario, I think, that has to do with the question whether there were concerns about anthrax before the anthrax attacks took place. I am referring here to "Dark Winter". Can you talk about this, please?

Graeme MacQueen: "Dark Winter" was a military exercise or simulation, such as the military conducts all the time – what would we do if such and such happens? Let's simulate it, let's create an exercise. This was in June of 2001, a few months before the actual anthrax attacks occurred. It took place at Andrews Air Force Base [planned / conducted by Johns Hopkins

Center for Civilian Biodefense Strategies / Center for Strategic and International Studies], and it was supposed to simulate a bioweapon attack on the United States. Now, in the June exercise called "Dark Winter" it was smallpox not anthrax, but there were a number of quite striking similarities, actually I list 10 in my book, between this exercise and the actual events. I'll just mention a few of them here.

First of all, the "Dark Winter" attacks involved anonymous letters being send to the media – which is interesting because that of course is exactly what happened when the anthrax attacks began. Secondly, Osama bin Laden is mentioned almost immediately as a suspect. How interesting is that? This is well before 9/11, and of course he is mentioned immediately after 9/11 as a possible suspect when the anthrax attacks begin. Thirdly, in the "Dark Winter" exercise it turns out that a group based in Afghanistan – clearly they are referring to al Qaeda – is the group that is said to have delivered this bioweapon, and they are said to have acquired it from Iraq. This exact same double perpetrator shows up [as a suspect] in the anthrax attacks. Very, very strenuously during October 2001, US authorities are trying to get us to believe that al Qaeda delivered these letters, but that they got the anthrax spores from their state-supplier, namely Iraq. So I thought it was fascinating that the same two perpetrators showed up in June.

Another similarity would be the restriction of civil rights. In the "Dark Winter" exercise it's said, well, we might have to impose a whole bunch of measures restricting the rights of US citizens – rights to free assembly, travel restrictions, suspension of due process in arrest and trial, the possibility of using military trials instead of civilian trials. And of course a lot of these things actually happened, and this is what was, again, strenuously pushed in October – both the Patriot Act was passed and the NSA began the mass spying on civilians. And then finally, some of the people who took part in the simulation are people who played an important role a few months later – less than three months later, in fact, when the actual anthrax attacks began. And I gave examples of several of those people in my book. You can't help but wonder whether "Dark Winter" was to some extant a practice for what they then proceeded to do.

Lars Schall: I would like to ask you about one participant which was Judith Miller of the New York Times. Can you talk about her case, please?

Graeme MacQueen: Judith Miller played a role in "Dark Winter" – she played a reporter, which is of course exactly what she was. She was a well-known New York Times reporter, and over the next couple of years, leading up to the invasion of Iraq, she played an important role – in fact, she started it several years before 2001 and continued it right up to the invasion of Iraq, namely framing Iraq for all kind of crimes. She had co-authored with two other people a book called "Germs", which came out – beautiful timing – in October of 2001, the same time the Patriot Act was being pushed through Congress – a book which talks about the danger of bioweapon attacks and Iraq. She is constantly framing Iraq. She played a very important role in mobilizing the US population against Iraq.

She and her colleagues also talk in that book about the fact that Iraq might not directly attack the US with a bioweapon, but they could use a surrogate, they could use in other words another group, an intermediary to carry it out. Well, guess what, that's the narrative that begins to be pushed in October, and Judith Miller plays a role in that – namely that al Qaeda has done this, but they got it from Iraq, so ultimately we have to attack Afghanistan, because that is where al Qaeda is based, and we have to attack Iraq. Miller is really in the thick of things. And to top it all off, in October she gets her own letter in her New York Times

office with powder and a warning. It turns out it's not real anthrax, it's fake anthrax, but for reasons I won't go into here – it's fairly technical –, I don't think this is a casual letter send by somebody who did not like her reporting, I think this letter was directly part of the anthrax attacks, it was part of the operation. And of course when she got that letter, it gave her a chance to say, oh dear, I have been targeted, and it helped make her book a bestseller, and so frankly she is a very suspect character. She bears some responsibility for the invasion of Iraq, and there she is already in June of 2001 practicing some of the stuff in "Dark Winter".

Lars Schall: Another participant was Jerome Hauer. Who is this fellow and why is he of interest?

Graeme MacQueen: He is kind of a complex character, Jerome Hauer. He had some training in bioweapons attacks / bioweapons warfare in Johns Hopkins University, with which he remain connected. He also has a direct connection to the 9/11 attacks, because he was the guy who was the head of Giuliani's Emergency Office in World Trade Center building 7, which was supposed to handle all kinds of emergencies for New York, including terror attacks. He was the head of that for several years; not on 9/11 itself, as I recall he had resigned or had been replaced a little bit before that. But he played a crucial role in the whole operation, and some say that he played a role in helping to make sure that it was situated in World Trade Center building 7. Well, of course we know what happened to that; it was abandoned immediately on 9/11 – and the whole building came down, World Trade Center 7, without being hit by a plane. On 9/11, Hauer is on TV, saying, well, you know, I've heard some reports that World Trade Center 7 is unstable – and well, sure enough it comes down a little bit later. This is already extremely fishy apart from the anthrax attacks. No [tall] building had ever come down in history from fire [in this manner]; yet here is Hauer predicting it hours before. He played a similar role in the anthrax attacks, framing Muslims and relentlessly pushing the "Global War on Terror," helping to establish that new framework. So to find Jerome Hauer showing up in the "Dark Winter" exercise in June was another enlightening experience for me. Another fishy guy who played a role in both parts of the operation in the Fall of 2001.

Lars Schall: Was Jerome Hauer also part of TRIPOD II, this war game exercise that was scheduled for September 12 in New York and was already prepared on 9/11?

Grame MacQueen: That's true, it was. Barbra Honegger has talked about this. I haven't studied TRIPOD II, so I can't say. I suspect he was part of it, but I'm not absolutely sure.

Lars Schall: OK. Let us now talk about the anthrax attacks. How did they contribute to get the Patriot Act passed?

Graeme MacQueen: I guess the simplest way to answer that is to say that Congress was frightened on 9/11. They fled from the US Capitol and scattered all over the place, because it was said that a plane was coming toward them. And they were kept in a state of fear and intimidation from that point on – actually from September 11 until pretty nearly the end of October. So first they were said to have been targeted by the terrorists who did 9/11. And then the word came out through the mass media and through US intelligence, especially the FBI, that now we have to be worried about a second strike – the people who did 9/11 are probably going to do another thing, and they might target Congress.

So Congress is surrounded by yellow police tape and members of Congress are being told

they shouldn't wear their little badges and pins in public that identify them as members of Congress. They shouldn't have license plates that identify them as members of Congress. In other words, they have to be scared that they are going to be targeted. And this threat becomes then more and more specific. And remember, I am talking about the phase now before we know that anthrax is being sent. In other words, we didn't discover that anthrax was in play until the first diagnosis on October 3, 2001. But between 9/11 and October 3, there was already all this advanced warning about attacks with biological weapons or chemical weapons, and that they might especially choose to attack Congress. So Congress was kept in this constant state of fear, and it was all pretty blatant, there was nothing subtle about this. John Ashcroft, who was the head of the Department of Justice, was repeatedly telling Congress, you need to pass this new legislation – which eventually became called the Patriot Act –, which restricts civil rights of Americans, gives intelligence agencies more power to spy, you've got to pass it and you've got to pass it right away, don't spend too much time reading it or thinking about it, just get it through there, because if you don't it will be your fault if we are attacked.

They kept it up, and then it became very specific, because Congress wasn't moving quite as quickly as the executive branch wanted them to. So then Dick Cheney, the vice president, announced that October 4 was his new deadline. He wanted this new legislation passed both by the House of Representatives and the Senate by October 4. Well, on October 2, two Democratic senators rebelled against this and said that this is moving too quickly. Their names were Tom Daschle and Patrick Leahy. And within a few days after that, both of them had been send anthrax letters.

This is what happened, and this is what continued to happen through October. For example, on October 11 the FBI gave a big warning about an imminent attack. And so that very day [the Senate] passed the legislation. And then finally the whole thing was signed into law on October 26 by George Bush, and he gave a little speech in which he gave the anthrax attacks as one of the things they were worried about. So, the connection between anthrax and the passing of the Patriot Act is very, very close.

Lars Schall: Do we actually know who has written the Patriot Act?

Graeme MacQueen: Well, I can't give the names of people who wrote it, no – but a lot of the Patriot Act had been around for years. There had been an attempt to pass many of those measures right after the Oklahoma bombings a few years earlier. Basically, Congress had resisted. That legislation was weakened or gutted or rejected to the point where the intelligence agencies didn't get the powers they wanted. And this time – that is after 9/11 – they appeared to have been determined to get it through. So they re-named it, re-packaged it, strengthened it and really rammed it through as quickly as they could. Because the research we have suggests that when people are scared and traumatized by an event like 9/11 or anthrax, they will for a while give up certain civil rights and they will give their approval for wars of aggression and so on, but the effect is often quite temporary. I believe that was part of the reason for the anthrax attacks; if you're going to keep up that state of tension and fear after 9/11, you've got to have another attack and you've got to make people feel scared and vulnerable. It is quite possible that if the anthrax attacks hadn't happened to immediately follow up the 9/11 attacks, the Patriot Act would not have gone through again, because the Democrats were in a position in the Senate to reject that legislation.

Lars Schall: But you mention in your book that the two senators were for the Patriot Act basically, but they wanted to slowdown the process?

Graeme MacQueen: Yes, when I first began to study this for my book, I had heard people say before that Leahy and Daschle had been targeted because they opposed the Patriot Act. I looked into it and I thought, they didn't oppose the Patriot Act. I'm not going to blame these guys–they couldn't imagine, I'm sure, that this attack could have come from their own government. But regardless whether they are to be blamed or not, the fact is that they approved of the act itself. They said, yes 9/11 was a terrible thing, yes we need this legislation, yes we will work with you, we will work with the government, we will work with the Department of Justice, we will help you get this passed through Congress. But they were not prepared to completely rubberstamp it – they wanted to change parts of it, they wanted to revise, they wanted to slow down. What I think happened was that key people in the executive branch – who were responsible for the anthrax attacks – were feeling, if this is slowed down it might not get through at all. Because quite rapidly opposition to this Patriot Act stuff began, both in in the Senate and in the House of Representatives, and in the population at large, all kinds of groups, from the left to the right politically, were beginning to organize and resist this. I think there was a sense that we have to move very quickly to get this through or we may never get it through. And that's why these guys were targeted, I think.

Lars Schall: Why did the Bush-Cheney administration wanted the Patriot Act?

Graeme MacQueen: It gave more power to the executive branch, and that includes major intelligence agencies. It gave more power to the FBI, it gave more power to the CIA, it gave more power to the NSA, it gave more power to the president and vice president. Basically, the US Constitution is trying to achieve a balance among the three branches of government, but what you see in 2001 is often referred to as a coup – one way to look at it is the executive branch essentially threatening to kill the legislative branch – first on 9/11 and then in the anthrax attacks –, and frightening it and bullying it into giving up some of its own power, which already had been weakened by then, and increasing its own power. So another way to look at it is of course is just to say that the military intelligence industrial complex, this vast array of well-funded sources in the US, took this opportunity to increase its strength.

Lars Schall: The official story was that it was a failure related to the intelligence agencies, and so they have to expand, they have to get bigger – and this is one of the similarities related to the JFK assassination, because that was one of the recommendations back then, too, right?

Graeme MacQueen: Yes, there are many similarities actually to this phase of the Global War on Terror and to the numerous assassinations that happened in the United States in the 1960's. I think that the 9/11 Commission Report and associated documents are even weaker and even less convincing than the Warren Report was in the 1960's. I'm not sure how we get people to see this, but that is our task, yes.

Lars Schall: What evidence was ever presented to make the case against al Qaeda and/or Iraq with regards to the anthrax attacks in the United States?

Graeme MacQueen: It was a combination of weak circumstantial evidence, fraud, and outright lies in some cases. We were led to believe that al Qaeda had tried to get hold of

anthrax, either to make its own or to get it from someone else – but there was never any good evidence of that. We were told that Iraq had stockpiles of anthrax. Well, that is true that Iraq had anthrax at one point, but it had destroyed it after the 1991 war, and it even destroyed the equipment needed to remake it a few years after that. So that was major fraud, in which US intelligence was deeply involved. We were told at one point, and ABC News was the source of this – in late October 2001 ABC News told us that bentonite had been discovered by scientists in the anthrax. Bentonite is a particular kind of clay that Iraq had supposedly used to help to prepare anthrax spores as a weapon. And because it was a distinctively Iraqi method of weaponization, ABC said, the presence of bentonite in the anthrax is kind of Saddam Hussein's signature, so to speak. That was a big deal. Again, it was a complete lie – there was no bentonite in the anthrax. ABC had eventually to back off. But when they first presented that story, they were very adamant that they got this from multiple independent high-level sources. So of course we would like to know who those sources were, because as Glenn Greenwald said years ago, if we knew who ABC's sources were, we would probably know who carried out the anthrax attacks. (1)

This is the kind of fraud that was used to implicate Iraq and that was used to implicate al Qaeda. And of course those silly letters themselves – "Death to America / Death to Israel" –, you know, that was like a Hollywood-like caricature of an Islamic extremist. We don't have any shred of evidence that any Muslim of any kind wrote those letters. Those letters were part of the fraudulent operation.

Lars Schall: The source of the anthrax for the attacks was an American military bio lab. What is the name and how did anybody found out about this?

Graeme MacQueen: What the FBI claims to be true is not in my opinion true, but at least I have the pleasure of agreeing with the FBI on a couple of things. First of all, yes, I think the FBI and I both agree that it came from a highly secure laboratory in the United States that served the military and intelligence communities, absolutely. And before we go any further, let me just say a couple of things about the evidence for that. Mainly it had to do first with the strain of anthrax, the particular type of anthrax used, it's called the Ames strain. It was first collected in the United States in 1981, the Ames strain. And most of the labs that have it in the world were American. There were a few outside the US, but the FBI investigated all that and decided, no, that this had come from inside the US. Then there was the method of preparation of the spores, because in its natural state anthrax isn't all that dangerous–it is lethal [to individuals], but it is not lethal in a sense that you would use it as a weapon of mass destruction. You have to cultivate it in a particular way, to refine it and have the spores at a certain size and have them float through the air – so you want to turn the spore preparation into a kind of aerosol, so that it floats around like smoke. This isn't easy to do. There are various ways of doing it, and this had the signature of the US method again. For various reasons it became clear, quite quickly, actually, by the end of 2001 it was clear that this came from somewhere within the US bioweapons program.

Now the only question then is, which lab did it come from? There are three main suspects. One is the United States Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID), which is a US Army research institute at Fort Detrick, Maryland – and that is where the FBI says it came from. Another one is the Battelle Memorial Institute, which is a private institute that does a lot of work for the CIA, so that is in effect intelligence. And the third is Dugway Proving Ground, which is US military. The main thing I disagree with the FBI about it is, I don't think this came directly from Fort Detrick, Maryland – I think it came from either Battelle or Dugway. But we perhaps don't need to go into that argument here, because

regardless of which place you choose, this was, if you like, an inside job – it came from the very heart of the US bioweapons program. And whoever took it or prepared it or whatever they did before they put it into letters, was committing not only attempted murder, but major fraud – they were carrying out a false flag operation, they were pretending to be Muslims, they were pretending to be connected to 9/11. It is not that difficult to track it down to the US program. And this was done pretty rapidly.

Lars Schall: What has to be said about the suspects that were presented by the FBI to the public, Steven Hatfill and Bruce Ivins?

Graeme MacQueen: The first thing we need to say here is that once the official story fell apart, which it was starting to by the end of October – I mean, shortly after the Patriot Act was signed into law, the official story about al Qaeda and Iraq as perpetrators began to crumble. There was no evidence, all the evidence was fake, it was fraud, it was starting to crumble. So the FBI had a real job on its hand. You have to remember, the FBI was given jurisdiction. It was the agency that had the power to investigate this, just as it was the same agency that had the authority and the power to investigate 9/11. We have to concentrate on the FBI here. So what did they do? Well, they claim to have considered all options, but if you actually look at their own record of what they did, they pretty quickly start looking for a lone-wolf perpetrator. We hear a lot about lone-wolf perpetrators these days. In other words, a single individual who was responsible for this. And because it became clear that this had come from within the US military intelligence community, obviously choosing a lone person, and especially a lone nut, somebody you can claim as unbalanced or eccentric in some way, serves the purpose of covering the tracks of the real perpetrators. You can limit the damage. You can say, well, you know, it's just a bad apple, it's an unusual individual, we found him, we got him, end of story. Of course, if it became clear that it wasn't a lone individual, that it was a well-funded group or network that was doing this, it would be an entirely different situation – and of course, that's what I argue it was in my book; it wasn't a lone individual.

Anyway, they chose two scientists, one after the other. First it was Steven Hatfill, but he fought back and he successfully sued them for 5 million dollars, because they didn't have good evidence that he had done it. And when that fell apart, the FBI went hunting again. In 2008 they then decided to go after Bruce Ivins, who was a well-respected anthrax researcher at Fort Detrick, Maryland. He had been working to develop an anthrax vaccine. Ivins had been known, it is not like he was a mystery man, he had cooperated with the FBI and their investigation, he wanted to help, he wanted to do his best, but they eventually decided to go after him. And shortly before they were going to try to have him charged by a grand jury in 2008, he died. That of course was of great benefit to the FBI. They could immediately say, oh how wonderful, he killed himself, which just shows his guilt. He had a sense of guilt, so he took his own life, and end of story. It took them a couple of years, but in 2010 they officially closed the case. You can find their record of that, their case against Bruce Ivins, on the internet – the so called "Amerithrax Investigation". In my opinion it's never been anything more than a laughably weak case against Ivins. I think he is completely framed, I think he is an innocent man, and I think if he had lived and this had gone to court, the FBI would have been disgraced. Ivins had a pretty good lawyer, Paul Kemp, and I think he could have made mincemeat out of them in court. But of course he didn't live, he died. And when you have an alleged perpetrator who dies, then the intelligence agencies are very happy, because they can say what they want. This also happened with another case, Lee Harvey Oswald. If he had lived, who knows what would have happened; but he died.

Therefore, the Warren Commission could write whatever nonsense they wanted. They wouldn't be cross examined, they wouldn't be subjected to hard questioning, they could cherry-pick whatever evidence they wanted, and exactly the same thing happened with Bruce Ivins – whether he killed himself or was helped along by someone else, I don't know, but either way it was of great benefit to the FBI.

Lars Schall: You've mentioned anthrax vaccines. Were there not some people who were given drugs against the effects of anthrax before the anthrax attacks occurred?

Graeme MacQueen: Yes, but it wasn't a vaccine you're talking about now, it was an antibiotic, Cipro. Cipro is a strong antibiotic and it was the main one recommended against anthrax, against the disease called anthrax, at the time. This is one of the many kinds of fishy events in the history of the anthrax attacks. You and I wouldn't be surprised to find that people started running to their drugstores and buying Cipro after October 3, when it was first announced somebody had pulmonary anthrax. But the interesting thing is that the run on Cipro, that is to say a great many people running out to buy it, started before October 3, about two weeks before.

In other words, just so that our listeners understand, somebody put anthrax letters in the mail about a week after 9/11, but nobody was supposed to have known about that or discover that until October 3. And yet, in-between 9/11 and October 3, not only are there many warnings in the press about anthrax attacks, but there is a huge run on Cipro – people are running to the pharmacy and buying this antibiotic and they are doing it quite specifically because of anthrax threats and worries and fears.

And this is the kind of foreknowledge that is very suspect and makes us wonder what is going on. And we become even more suspect when we realize that George Bush and Dick Cheney were put on Cipro on 9/11 itself, the very day of 9/11, and were kept on it. And when we discover that journalist Richard Cohen is on record as saying that he was given a tip by some high government official shortly after 9/11 that he should start taking Cipro. And so he did. This he said was well before most people knew anything about Cipro. We have to assume that it was sometime between September 11 and September 23 he goes on Cipro, because he gets a tip from somebody in government. What on earth can that mean, because anthrax is send through the mail at that time, but nobody is supposed to know that, right, it hasn't been discovered yet. This whole story of Cipro illustrates that there was profound foreknowledge, that there was a wide group of people who knew that these anthrax attacks would taking place.

Lars Schall: Actually you argue in your book "that members of the executive branch of the U.S. government had the anthrax attacks carried out in accordance with a plan." (2) How did you reach that conclusion?

Graeme MacQueen: It seemed to me first of all that there's no way a lone-wolf attacker could have done all the things that were done in the anthrax attacks. You have to remember that stories were planted all over the place. In the Washington Post, New York Times, many, many newspapers, The Guardian in the UK, TV stations, before the anthrax attacks even were discovered, all these reports about the fear of anthrax and the threat of anthrax based on fraudulent intelligence [were published]. It seems to me that this would have taken high-level people and it would have taken multiple people. No pathetic lone-wolf perpetrator could have made the media carry all those stories.

Secondly, no pathetic lone-wolf perpetrator could have written all the speeches for members of the executive, in which warnings were given – again, before the anthrax attacks were actually discovered – that we may be about to be attacked with a biological weapon. Who wrote the speech for Donald Rumsfeld, or for Andrew Card, or for Tommy Thompson, or for John Ashcroft? All these guys were out there in public, talking about, oh my God, we may be on the verge of being hit with a biological weapon attack. Again, this shows multiple perpetrators and it shows people in high positions of power, because this was not based on good intelligence – as I show in my book, this was based on fraudulent intelligence. Al Qaeda didn't have anthrax, Iraq didn't have anthrax. Some people come along and say, oh well, it was partially good intelligence, because after all the attacks took place. I say no, that won't work, because when the anthrax attacks took place, they were done by completely different people than these other guys had been predicting, and therefore for completely different purposes.

So what do we see? We see multiple people, we see high-level people, we see that this was coordinated with other initiatives taking place, including the Patriot Act, the NSA spying, the discarding of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with the former Soviet Union – all this things were taking place. This was coordinated. All these things were tied together. And again, all the evidence that the 19 hijackers, who were involved in 9/11, who were also being involved in all these strange little scenarios that had to do with anthrax. They were supposedly running around trying to get hold of crop duster planes so they could disperse biological weapons over the US – the same guys who supposedly did 9/11. There is no Bruce Ivins or Steven Hatfill or anybody who could have done all this – created false scenarios, planted false stories, written false speeches, coordinate this with major treaties the US was rejecting. It all points to powerful people in positions where they could accomplish this. I realize of course that people would say, oh well, in other words, you think it was a conspiracy, you're a conspiracy theorist – and that's precisely true, it was a conspiracy, that is exactly what I am saying in this book.

Lars Schall: I wanted to ask you about this specifically: How would you respond if our listeners / readers dismiss your research as just another whacky conspiracy theory?

Graeme MacQueen: The term "conspiracy theory" is what I refer to as a "thought stopper." It doesn't provoke us to think, it doesn't stimulate thought, it doesn't open up a discussion, it doesn't encourage us to have a debate. What it tries to do is to stop the discussion. It's an anti-intellectual move. It basically says, here is a person who is either immoral or stupid or insane – they're "conspiracy theorists", we're not going to engage in dialogue with them. We are just going to paint them with a brush, they're tainted, they're spoiled, they're taboo, somehow they are outside of the circle of respectable society, and therefore we don't have listen to them, we don't have to look at their evidence, we don't have to read their books, we can just push them outside the circle. That is what the term "conspiracy theorist" does and that what I think it was mainly designed to do. It came into popularity after the JFK assassination, and it has been very useful for governments and intelligence agencies ever since then.

The sad thing is that even people that I personally respect a great deal, especially people on the left, often buy into this whole way of thinking. Where is Mr. Chomsky on 9/11, where is wonderful Chris Hedges, and Glenn Greenwald, and Amy Goodman, all these people who are so important in North America right now and whom I do not demonize by the way, I respect them all, I think they're doing good work, but where are they on 9/11, where are they on the anthrax attacks? Well, they're missing. They seem to have accepted the idea that those of

us who question the official story on this are somehow radically wrong, we're somehow tainted, we're outside the boundaries of thinkable thought, and that's too bad.

What I did in my book, I thought I could run away from this term, or I could run directly toward it, I could embrace it, and that's what I decided to do, and that's why the subtitle of the book is deliberately "The Case for a Domestic Conspiracy". I define conspiracy in my introduction. It's simply a plan made in secret by two or more people to commit an immoral or illegal act. Now, conspiracies in that sense happen all the time. That's why laws are designed to deal with them. There is nothing weird about the fact that I'm claiming there was a conspiracy. What it comes down to is evidence. Do I have the evidence to support my argument? And if a person wants to know, they'll have to read the book because the devil is in the details.

Lars Schall: If our listeners are interested in what you were referring, I think there was a memo in 1967 related to the case of Jim Garrison in New Orleans, where the CIA said, we should use the term "Conspiracy Theory" instead of "Assassination Theory". Anyway, you conclude your book with the chapter "The Unthinkable." What do you mean with that?

Graeme MacQueen: This is how a part of the investigation proceeded. I noticed when I read the newspapers of the time – that is, the newspapers that were dealing with the anthrax attacks back in the Fall of 2001 –, that the term "The Unthinkable" kept coming up again and again. People would say, is it really true that the unthinkable is happening in the United States? Or they would say, it seems like a bioweapon attack is finally happening, we must now think the unthinkable. If you bump into one or two references like that, it's no big deal, but I kept coming up with it again and again. And it wasn't just journalists, because of course journalists borrow from other journalists. If it was just journalists, you could say, well, the guy in the New York Times likes the way the Washington Post did that, so he kind of borrowed it. But it wasn't that simple. There were also scientists and government leaders, everybody seemed to be joining into the chorus. So I thought I would look a little more deeply into it.

I was aware that the term "The Unthinkable" has been a kind of a code word for decades among those who are concerned with nuclear weapons. It was used for a long time, it referred to nuclear warfare – The Unthinkable. This use of the term was probably pioneered, as far as I know, by Herman Kahn, who was an American strategic thinker, a guy who used game theory and so on to figure out how the US could best play this game most fruitfully with the Soviet Union.

Lars Schall: Isn't he the original role-model for "Dr. Strangelove"?

Graeme MacQueen: He could quite possibly be! *(laughs.)* There are a number of people who have been claimed, including Henry Kissinger. But Kahn was certainly in some ways a rather horrific figure. Anyway, he wrote a book, "Thinking about the Unthinkable". And from that point on all kinds of people used the term to refer to nuclear warfare. So I thought, well, that this was interesting – they are now using it to refer to a bioweapons attack. Is there any deep meaning here, is this important? To this day I'm not really sure what the answer is to that, this is a relatively speculative chapter, but I did find a number of things that interested me.

First of all, in 2001 George Bush rejected the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty – by that I mean he gave Russia warning that the US was going to unilaterally withdrawal from that extremely

important treaty. In the speech he gave on May 1, 2001 –this is months before the anthrax attacks — he said the Cold War is over. So forget about the US and the Soviet Union fighting each other, the Soviet Union was a terrible evil thing, of course, but it's gone, we don't have to worry about that anymore, so nuclear weapons aren't really a major threat for the US anymore, the major threat is terrorism and rogue states possessing weapons of mass destruction. In this context, what he's really doing is announcing publicly that we're going to change the global conflict framework – the framework that will divide all of humanity, essentially. It was the Cold War for decades, and now it's going to be a new one. He didn't actually call it "the Global War on Terror," but he was giving us warning that that was going to be. This is a few months before the attacks of the fall – 9/11 hasn't happened, anthrax hasn't happened -, but these are the new dangers, he said, and when he described the new dangers, he said that we need to "rethink the unthinkable" – which I thought was an interesting phrase. The unthinkable had been nuclear war before, and now we have to rethink it – so now the unthinkable is terrorism and rogue states with weapons of mass destruction.

Then 9/11 happens, which is supposedly terrorism, and the anthrax attacks happen, which were initially said to be an attack with a weapon of mass destruction by a rogue state, namely Iraq – how interesting. And then we have all these journalists and leaders and everybody talking, oh, the unthinkable is here, the unthinkable has happened! To top it all off, we then have a letter which was sent in September to NBC. It was part of this general thing we call the anthrax attacks, although the powder in it was fake. For reasons I give in my book , I believe it was part of the anthrax attacks. And this letter starts off with the words: "THE UNTHINKABEL". (3) It was printed in big capital letters and spelled wrong to look like an illiterate radical Muslim extremist had written it. So here we have the anthrax attacks, a letter is being sent to the mass media, saying, the unthinkable has arrived basically, and we have George Bush warning several months earlier, we have to "rethink the unthinkable", and we have all these journalists and government leaders talking about the unthinkable.

It occurred to me that just maybe, just possibly, this expression "the unthinkable" may be part of the discourse or the rhetoric of this new global conflict framework, that we are being given a message here. We are being told that which could not be thought, that which is so evil that our poor little ordinary democratic western minds can't grasp it – it used to be nuclear war, but now there is this switch, now the ultimate evil are these dangerous Muslim guys, who are our enemies in "the Global War on Terror". They don't have nuclear weapons, but they are going to use the best they have, which is biological and chemical weapons – and so now this is the unthinkable. This our poor little humane kind of rational western minds can't quite come to grips with this, this is beyond us, so we call it the unthinkable. So we have to throw ourselves into the arms of our governments leaders to protect us from this horrible evil. I think that's what's going on. As I said before, there is certain amount of speculation in my interpretation here, but I give the evidence and people can make of it what they will.

Lars Schall: There is another thing you took a look at. A few weeks ago, the Senate released the report on the CIA torture program. You are aware that the core of the 9/11 story is based on tortured testimony. Can you talk about this please, because this is very, very crucial.

Graeme MacQueen: I actually mentioned this, Lars, and maybe this is what you are referring to – I was part of a press conference at the Parliament buildings in Ottawa, in my country's capital, not too long ago, when we had managed to get a petition presented to our

Parliament to conduct an independent review of the 9/11 attacks. And the day that I ended up giving that talk in the press conference in the House of Parliament, the Senate report on torture was in the news, and everybody was talking about it and it was being discussed in the Canadian Parliament, and so on. So I decided, even though I had only three minutes for my little speech, I would mention the torture connection – because, as you say, it is extremely important.

The first thing to be said here is that there is nothing outside the mainstream, there is nothing particular radical or controversial about the statement that torture was crucial to that 9/11 Commission Report. In fact, I believe it was NBC of all things who commissioned a study that discovered that over one quarter, over one fourth of the footnotes in the 9/11 Commission Report were based on these interrogations. (4) And of course we know that many of those interrogations involve the use of torture, such as suffocating people with water. And if you look at the footnotes of the Commission Report, well, I was certainly stunned years ago when I first read it by all the references to KSM, KSM, KSM – Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who was supposedly suffocated about a 183 times.

The 9/11 Commission not only used information gathered under torture, it made it central to the report. Chapters 5 ("Al Qaeda Aims At The American Homeland") and 7 ("The Attack Looms") of the report couldn't be written – at least in their current form – without these interrogations.

So it has to do with Osama bin Laden and his group, deciding to carry out these attacks, and the nature of the attacks, how al Qaeda came to the US, and where they went, what their names were – all kinds of things that are central to the official story were supposedly gathered through these harsh interrogations. And the 9/11 Commission collaborated with this. They actually submitted a new bunch of questions to the CIA – so that, as far as we know, these guys were interrogated harshly again specifically to answer questions for the 9/11 Commission. Now, the 9/11 Commissioners of course asked if they could directly talk to these poor guys who were being tortured. They didn't call it torture, they said, can we talk to the people who are being interrogated? No, you can't, you can't see them, you can't talk to them. Well, can we at least interview their interrogators? No, you can't, none of your business, stay away, you interrupt the delicate process of interrogation.

So here we have a 9/11 Commission that has reason to believe people have been tortured to give this testimony, but doesn't have direct access to anybody of any significance in the process, and so therefore decides to just trust the alleged transcripts that they get. It's the weakest, most flimsy, not to mention immoral and illegal kind of evidence you can imagine. Imagine trying to introduce that to any decent court room. So this is what the 9/11 Commission Report, which is the closest thing to an official US document, giving the main story about 9/11, is based on. And this is why we're trying to make the case to the Canadian Parliament that you can't accept this. If you are saying you don't collaborate with torture, then you can't accept this document, you got to have an independent review. I don't expect that we'll be successful anytime soon, but that's an argument we are making.

Lars Schall: Does every country of the West has to make this – to ask their governments to come clean about it?

Graeme MacQueen: I absolutely think they should. I think this is really important, because journalists and government leaders to the extent that they are asked about this they usually try to distant themselves immediately from these horrible interrogation techniques – oh, we

don't do that, oh, we were not collaborating, blah blah blah. It needs to be pointed out publicly, people need to be writing this in Op-Eds in newspapers and in official letters circulating in the internet – every government has to be asked, well, then why do you accept the official story of 9/11, because it is based on torture testimony? Everybody needs to be confronted with that.

Lars Schall: Thank you very much for your efforts and your book!

Graeme MacQueen: Thank you, Lars!

Graeme MacQueen received his Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies from Harvard University and taught in the Religious Studies Department of McMaster University for 30 years. While at McMaster he became founding Director of its Centre for Peace Studies, after which he helped develop the B.A. program in Peace Studies and oversaw the development of peace-building projects in Sri Lanka, Gaza, Croatia and Afghanistan. Graeme MacQueen was a member of the organizing committee of the "Toronto Hearings" held on the 10th anniversary of 9/11 and is co-editor of "The Journal of 9/11 Studies" – a peer-reviewed, electronic-only journal covering research related to the events of September 11, 2001. For an overview of MacQueen's book "The 2001 Anthrax Deception: The Case for a Domestic Conspiracy" see here. And here you can read a review of MacQueen's book by Professor Edward Curtin.

Notes:

(1) Compare Glenn Greenwald: "The unresolved story of ABC News' false Saddam-anthrax reports", published on April 9, 2007 at Salon under:http://www.salon.com/2007/04/09/abc_anthrax/, and: "Vital unresolved anthrax questions and ABC News" published on August 1, 2008 at Salon under:http://www.salon.com/2008/08/01/anthrax_2/.

(2) Graeme MacQueen: "The 2001 Anthrax Deception: The Case for a Domestic Conspiracy", Clarity Press, 2014, page 106.

(3) Ibid, pages 187 – 188.

(4) MacQueen refers to Robert Windrem and Victor Limjoco: "9/11 Commission Controversy", published at MSNBC on January 30, 2008. The article has been taken offline at MSNBC, but here it is still
available: http://911research.wtc7.net/cache/post911/commission/msnbc_commission_torture.html

---

Articles by: Prof. Graeme MacQueen and Lars Schall