



"Free" U.S. Suppresses and Censors Alternative 9/11 Narratives for Decades

This transcript may not be 100% accurate due to audio quality or other factors.

Glenn Greenwald (GG): I know I spent a good amount of time at the start of the show talking about the underlying causes of 9/11 and the like. And there's a few things that we have prepared that I'm going to leave out and omit. But there's a couple of things that I absolutely think are necessary to complete the conversation, one of which is to point out that the idea that Al-Qaeda was motivated not by a hatred of our freedoms, but by our government policy in that region was not some idea relegated to the fringes of radical extremists, but was something that was openly discussed, including by the CIA for many, many years. Hear from the BBC in July of 2004: *Al-Qaeda's origins and links*. "Al-Qaeda, meaning, quote, 'the base', was created in 1989 as Soviet forces withdrew from Afghanistan and Osama bin Laden and his colleagues began looking for new jihads". "The organisation grew out of the network of Arab volunteers who had gone to Afghanistan in the 1980s to fight under the banner of Islam against Soviet Communism. During the anti-Soviet jihad, Bin Laden and his fighters received American and Saudi funding. Some analysts believe Bin Laden himself had security training from the CIA. The, quote, 'Arab Afghans', as they became known, were battle hardened and highly motivated". In fact, a lot of those fighters who were fighting to eject not American influence, but Soviet influence from Afghanistan actually were called to the United States and met with President Reagan in the White House, where he held them as freedom fighters. Because that time they were fighting to eject Soviet occupiers from Afghanistan rather than American occupiers from their lands. And back then, we fully understood that that was their motive, not that they hated the freedoms of the Soviet Union, but they wanted to get the Soviet Union to cease interfering in their lands. And we consider them heroes for doing that. Here from NBC News, December 10th, 2003: *Bin Laden comes home to roost*. "Michael Moran looks at U.S. ties to Osama bin Laden, trained and funded by the CIA to wreak havoc on the Soviet army and now turning his talents on Americans". "At the CIA, it happens often enough to have a code name: Blowback". That's a CIA term, Blowback. "Simply defined, this is the term describing an agent, an operative, or an operation that has turned on its creators. Osama bin Laden, our new public enemy number one is the personification of blowback. And the fact that he is viewed as a hero by millions in the Islamic world proves again the old adage: Reap what you sow. Though he has come to represent all that went wrong with the

CIA's record strategy there, by the end of the Afghan war in 1989, bin Laden was still viewed by the agency, by the CIA, as something of a dilettante – a rich Saudi boy gone to war and welcomed home by Saudi monarchy he so hated as something of a hero".

I think one of the most important moments in our public debate when this idea finally entered the mainstream was when Ron Paul ran for president in 2008, had a much more successful outcome than anyone anticipated, especially given what he was saying. And he got into a very vitriolic argument with another one of the candidates seeking the Republican nomination, which was Rudy Giuliani when Ron Paul expressed the view that the reason 9/11 happened was because of our actions, and not because they hate us for our freedom. Ron Paul was very difficult to demonise as a traitor, given his long time service in the US military as compared to Rudy Giuliani, who never spent a day in the military, somehow avoided the war in Vietnam like most of the people who call any dissenters, traitors or whatever. Kind of like the way Hillary Clinton said Tulsi Gabbard was a traitor to the United States because she was being groomed by the Russians, even though Tulsi Gabbard spent her whole adult life in the US military defending the country in combat, etc. And Hillary Clinton obviously never did, nor did her husband. But I think this exchange was so important because it was a Fox News debate. And you can tell the entire room, the entire stage was absolutely against Ron Paul. But I think this is one of the first times that Americans really heard this theory of causation.

Ron Paul (RP): Early intervention was a major contributing factor. Have you ever read about the reasons they attacked us? They attacked us because we've been over there. We've been bombing Iraq for ten years. We've been in the Middle East. I think Reagan was right. We don't understand the irrationality of Middle Eastern politics. So right now, we're building an embassy in Iraq, that's bigger than the Vatican. We're building 14 permanent bases. What would we say here if China was doing this in our country or in the Gulf of Mexico? We would be objecting. We need to look at what we do from the perspective of what would happen if somebody else did it to us.

Interviewer: Are you suggesting we invited the 9/11 attack, sir?

RP: I'm suggesting that we listen to the people who attacked us and the reason they did it. And they are delighted that we're over there because Osama bin Laden has said: "I am glad you're over on our sand because we can target you so much easier". They've already now, since that time, killed 3400 of our men. And I don't think it was necessary.

GG: Well, let me just say that what Ron Paul is saying there, you can disagree or agree with it to whatever extent you want. I think it was a crucial moment for the truth to be heard by the American public, even though they may not have been ready for it, even though they may not have been prepared to ingest it at the moment. But the only reason why he was able to make that argument and he kept referring to it was because he was able, as a free person, to read the statements of the people in that region who hate the United States. And he was saying, go read what they say. And that's exactly what was censored in the United States through a collaboration and an agreement between media outlets on the one hand and the government on the other, an agreement not to allow Osama bin Laden or any one of his comrades or

people with whom he worked to be heard in the United States by inventing this insanely insulting excuse that he might use some sort of hidden code to activate a sleeper cell, but having said like, we think it's propaganda. And as our guest from the FCC, Brendan Carr, just explained, there's a constitutional right that you have to access foreign propaganda if you want. That's part of free speech; you get to access the information you want. Which is why when the EU banned or made it criminal for social media platforms to platform RT, it was so offensive that you're an adult citizen of the EU, even if you want to hear from the Russian government, you're now banned from doing so. That was the censorship that happened in 2001, but it's also the censorship that happened just last year when The Guardian got pressured to remove a historical document of great importance, which is the bin Laden letter that Ron Paul was using to make this argument, and that people on Tik Tok were banned from speaking about forcibly. Here's the rest of this exchange.

Rudy Giuliani (RG): May I make a comment on that? That's really an extraordinary statement. It's an extraordinary statement as someone who lived through the attack of September 11th, that we invited the attack because we were attacking Iraq. I don't think I've ever heard that before. And I've heard some pretty absurd explanations for September 11th.

GG: Now, as we know, Rudy Giuliani was the owner of 9/11. He had full rights over how it was understood, how it was talked about. I'm not really sure why. He was the mayor of New York at the time that it happened. He sort of got a reputation for doing heroic things, I'm not really sure what it was that he did that was so heroic, but obviously he was going to seize that moment. And you heard the reaction with people in the room. These are mostly Republican operatives. We've talked before. We went to the RNC debate, the first one in Milwaukee, how that room is filled, where the people who get heard the loudest are all party operatives, lobbyists, donors. So, of course, they're going to be Rudy Giuliani's side of that debate. But what's so notable is, Rudy Giuliani said, I've never heard that before, this theory. That the reason we got attacked on 9/11, because of what we were doing in places like Iraq where our sanctions regime killed 500,000 children, which Madeleine Albright told 60 Minutes she thought was worth it, in her words, or that we were overthrowing their governments and imposing dictators. He said he never heard this before, even though that was the version of events; the argument, the rationale that Al-Qaeda, that Osama bin Laden, that many, many people in that region had been giving for many, many years. And the fact that someone like Rudy Giuliani had never heard that before, according to him, until Ron Paul said it, doesn't really surprise me because it has been a great aggressive act of repression to ensure that doesn't remain in our discourse. Here is the rest of this exchange.

RG: And I would ask the congressman to withdraw that comment and tell us that he didn't really mean that.

Interviewer: Congressman.

RP: I believe very sincerely that the CIA is correct when they teach and talk about blowback. When we went into Iran in 1953 and installed the Shah. Yes, there was blowback. The reaction to that was the taking of our hostages. And that persists. And if we ignore that, we

ignore that at our own risk. If we think that we can do what we want around the world and not incite hatred, then we have a problem. They don't come here to attack us because we're rich and we're free. They come and they attack us because we're over there.

GG: I mean, that has so much logic to it that it's shocking that people react to it with such venom. I think precisely because it has so much logic to it. Here, just to underscore, the empirical foundation of that vision is the fact that there's a lot of research linking what was called suicide terrorism, the willingness of people to give up their own lives, to kill other people from that part of the world. Obviously, their Islamic beliefs are in part what enables them to give up their own lives because of what they believe about the afterlife and the like. But Islam itself is not sufficient to do it. They need some motive to hate the people that they're attacking. And this University of Chicago political science professor, Roger Pape, did a lot of research to find out what motivated that. And here you see the Politico headline in October of 2010: *Researcher: Suicide Terrorism is Linked to Military Occupation*. "Robert Paper, a University of Chicago political science professor and former Air Force lecturer, will present findings on Capitol Hill on Tuesday that argue that the majority of suicide terrorism around the world since 1980 has had a common cause: namely military occupation. Pape and his team of researchers draw on data produced by a six year study of suicide terrorist attacks around the world that was partially funded by the Department of Defence Threat Reduction Agency. They have compiled the terrorism statistics in a publicly available database comprising some 10,000 records and some 2,200 suicide terrorism attacks dating back to the first suicide terrorism attack of modern times – the 1983 truck bombing of the US Marines barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, which killed 241 US Marines". And I should note that Ronald Reagan, despite having an enormous amount of pressure to avenge that attack – Israel was demanding that they build a massive force to attack Hezbollah and the Lebanese who were responsible for that attack on the US military base – instead said: What are we doing? Why do we have a huge military base in Lebanon? Where we're not wanted? And he pulled out that military base, understanding that it was highly provocative and was not in the American interest. The article goes on, quote, "'We have lots of evidence now that when you put the foreign military presence in, it triggers suicide terrorism campaigns, ... and that when the foreign forces leave, it takes away almost 100% of the terrorist campaign,' Pape said in an interview last week on his findings. Paper said there had been a dramatic spike in suicide bombings in Afghanistan since U.S. forces began to expand their presence to the south and east of the country in 2006. While there was a total of 12 suicide attacks from 2001 to 2005 in Afghanistan, when the US had a relatively limited troop presence, ... since 2006, there have been more than 450 suicide attacks in Afghanistan – and they are growing more lethal, Pape said. Deaths due to suicide attacks in Afghanistan have gone up by a third in the year since President Barack Obama added 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan. Quote, 'It's not making it any better,' Pape said".

Honestly, it's stunning that we even need empirical evidence on this. It just takes a little bit of apathy. As Ron Paul said, think about it, if that were being done to our country, if there were some foreign power arming Mexico and Canada, say China, to intervene in our country, to blow things up, to undermine our government, and then train itself, starting occupying our

government; or Russia or whomever you want to fantasise about. There's actually 1984 film, a very popular film where the Russians invaded and occupied the United States, and it glorified the people who were using, what would you call terrorism, resistance, violent resistance against them, which is, of course, what you would do if people are interfering in your country. You'd be very angry at the outside forces responsible for that, which is so blatantly obvious. Now, I just want to show you this one clip where I, I guess, debated this issue with my friend Megyn Kelly on her program. And I consider Megyn Kelly very smart, very sophisticated, a very insightful analyst. But she came out of Fox News, and that's where a lot of this mythology about 9/11 originated, the idea that if you say anything like what Ron Paul said, you're sort of a traitor, that it's of course all about Islam, has nothing to do with us. And I guess I was kind of surprised that even 22 years later, she still believes that. And so we were able to explore in a very civil way, but I think also the spirited way and therefore revealing what the foundations of these views are and how valid they are. I just want to show you a little bit of this exchange.

Megyn Kelly (MK): I get that and I see that point. But I also feel like, Glenn, they hate us. Not the Iranian people, but like the leaders over in Iran. They're going to hate us less if we don't back Israel? I don't buy it. Hell no. They hate us because of our principles, because of our Constitution, because of the way we live. Because when we walk around in tank tops, we could go down the list. But it's not going to go away if we stop supporting Israel.

GG: Megyn, this was the debate about 9/11. Why did they hate us? Why did they attack us? And the neocon narrative was, oh, they hate us for our freedoms. And bin Laden repeatedly said there was that letter that recirculated that was banned from Tik Tok: We are angry at America because they are constantly insinuating themselves into our region. They imposed their sanctions regime on Iraq that killed hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children. They put troops on Saudi soil. The reason Iran hates us and I am not justifying it at all, but I think it's very important to have open eyes about your own country, is that in 1954 we overthrew their democratically elected government. The CIA did, and we imposed on them for the next 25 years, one of the most savage and brutal dictatorships in the world. The Shah of Iran. And so when Iran had its revolution and finally deposed their dictator, the Shah of Iran, of course, they knew the United States was responsible for his imposition on them for all those decades. And so they had a lot of animosity toward the United States. There are all kinds of countries in the world, Korea, Japan and Brazil.

MK: ... And they took all our hostages. Yeah, but, Glenn, I mean, you're looking at a country, Israel. Israel has a sense of due process and fairness. And Iran is hanging people from cranes. Iran is stoning women to death for not wearing the damn hijab. How the hell are we going to have a relationship with them? It's a no.

GG: Megyn, we have relationships with the most savage dictators on the planet, our close allies.

MK: But in this instance, we do need to choose.

GG: We have close allies in Egypt. Okay, but you have Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, all of which are American allies that are among the most brutal and savage dictatorships in the world. We're fine with having relationships, good relationships and alliances with countries that are extremely repressive as long as they...

MK: One of the reasons...

GG: ...do the bidding of the United States.

MK: One of the reasons is their hatred of Iran and vice versa. I mean, those two groups are Shiite versus Sunni, and there's a long standing hatred between them. One of them wants to completely annihilate Israel and one of them was actually open minded to doing a deal with Israel and getting to a better place. When we were backing Israel under Trump, when we were helping making it stronger, and these other allies, Saudi Arabia and the others, were starting to look at it like, you know what? Maybe we are going to have to deal with this country. We were moving toward peace.

GG: It's true. The dictators of Egypt and Saudi Arabia and the Gulf state regions understand that there can be economic benefits from a relationship with Israel. But they don't represent the people of those countries. These are dictators imposed by military coups that the United States propped up. And all I'm saying is, we're very tribal as human beings. We always like to see things through the perspective of our side, to believe that we're the morally superior ones, we're the victims, they're the aggressors, they're evil. I understand the appeal of that narrative, but you were just talking about the multiple wars that we fought in the Middle East. We invaded Iraq and destroyed it. That strengthened Iran by strengthening the Shiite militias. Saddam Hussein was a vehement opponent of Iran. We created a vacuum out of which ISIS emerged. Even Tony Blair says that. We were in Afghanistan for 20 years. We've been bombing that region for a long time. I think on some level, we have to take some responsibility for why there's anti-American resentment in that region and ask whether that's worth it.

MK: I agree with that. I don't disagree with you at all on that.

GG: So, you can watch the whole debate if you did not want me to select a certain part, but I felt like it was a pretty good representative sampling. And as I was listening to this, I'm honestly amazed by the need to point these things out that I think should be so self-evident. But I also understand that even the smartest people are vulnerable to propaganda. We all are. Every single one of us. I mean, when I started writing my politics full time, one of the things that started to shock me was how many beliefs I had ingested that were just false, that just kind of I absorbed from the aether because I wasn't focussed on politics. I wasn't deconstructing the premises of it. I didn't have time to investigate it, go to original sources. And only once I started to do that and I wasn't 20 years old, I was in my late 30s, I saw how many things I had ingested that were absolutely false, including some of that mythology about 9/11. But I do think that's amazing, but I think the most amazing thing and honestly, that's why I want to just use the opportunity one more time to stress this, because I haven't

thought about this incident for quite, quite some time, but having revisited it today when planning the show and talking about it, I just want you to focus and remember how unbelievable it is that as soon as young Americans started to discover the bin Laden letter and questioned the narrative that they've been fed for 20 years about why the 9/11 attack happened and started to make links between our involvement in the region, our support for Israel, our bombing of that those countries, our overthrowing of their governments, our imposition of the dictators, when they started to make that link, oh, wow, this has been going on for a long time, and it's actually part of why 9/11 happened, it's not because they hated us for our freedoms, there was an immediate, systemic, successful attempt to wipe that letter from the Internet so that no one could read it anymore. I cannot believe that The Guardian removed that document from its website. What kind of media outlet would do that? Oh my God, these people are reading this document. We better take it down. We can't have them reading this and consuming it and debating it. And the Tik Tok, desperate to stay in the country, was easily pressured within 24 hours to just ban any discussion. They took down every video talking about that bin Laden letter. They banned the hashtags that people were using to find it. The link to the document no longer worked. That is real censorship. It's been going on for 23 years in this country, starting from that time when the government and the media collaborated to prevent bin Laden from being heard based on blatant bullshit excuses that he was going to blink or tilt his head and activate a sleeper cell, all the way up until last year when that letter was banished. And that's the reason why very smart people still believe that the 9/11 attack happened because we were innocent victims who were just minding our own business, just being free, got attacked. Not because of everything that we've been doing in that region, to those people, to those countries for many, many decades, all for our own interest and against theirs.

Thanks for watching this clip from System Update, our live show that airs every Monday through Friday at 7 p.m. Eastern exclusively on Rumble. You can catch the full nightly shows live or view the backlog of episodes for free on our Rumble page. You can also find full episodes the morning after they air across all major podcasting platforms, including Spotify and Apple. All the information you need is linked below. We hope to see you there.

END

Thank you for reading this transcript. Please don't forget to donate to support our independent and non-profit journalism:

BANKKONTO:
Kontoinhaber: acTVism München e.V.
Bank: GLS Bank
IBAN: DE89430609678224073600
BIC: GENODEM1GLS

PAYPAL:
E-Mail: PayPal@acTVism.org

PATREON:
<https://www.patreon.com/acTVism>

BETTERPLACE:
Link: [Click here](#)

The acTVism Munich e.V. association is a non-profit organization with legal capacity. The association pursues exclusively and directly non-profit and charitable purposes. Donations from Germany are tax-deductible. If you require a donation receipt, please send us an e-mail to: info@acTVism.org