

Overview of event:

On Tuesday, September 11, 2001 there were four organised terrorist attacks upon Washington D.C. and New York City in the United States that were instigated by the Islamic terrorist group called al-Qaeda. These attacks were done via four passenger airliners became hijacked by nineteen members of the al-Qaeda group and were crashed into buildings of the New York City south and north towers of the World Trade Centre complex, the Pentagon and also a field in Pennsylvania. After only two hours the two towers that had been crashed into by two of the airliners had fallen down into a pile of debris and subsequently fires occurred which caused other buildings in the complex to be partially damaged or completely destroyed...

Conspiracy theories

People believe in conspiracy theories about the attacks. People wrote about their unease a few hours after the attacks on things such as the internet; "If, in a few days, not one official has mentioned anything about the controlled demolition, I think we have a REALLY serious problem." As more and more people began to write about their unease on the internet, people became increasingly worried about the security in their country and reliable their border security really was. There were accusations made towards Mossad (National Intelligence Agency for Israel) as no Jews were killed during the attacks which made some people believe that Mossad did the attack not the Islamic terrorists.

There are eight different conspiracy theories that have emerged because of attacks that are as follows: A connection between Column 79 on Floor 13 failed, war games were organised by people who knew the event was going to occur, passports of hijackers were all found intact, excessive amount of money entered into airline stocks, FFA told to stand down by NORAD, The Pentagon was hit by a missile which was launched into the building by the U.S. government, World trade centre had controlled demolition, The Pentagon and Flight 93. The most commonly believed conspiracy theory is that the World Trade Centre and the Twin Towers were destroyed by flights crashing into them and explosives going off a little while later, rather than the event being caused by the buildings structure failing and the fire wrecking the building further than it already was. This was backed up by the support of the civil engineering community and was clarified by the Governor of the 9/11 Commission by Thomas Kean.

- [1] The first theory was that one connection of a long-span girder between Column 79 on Floor 13 failed, which caused the whole building of the World Trade Centre to collapse. It was found that
- [2] the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) had not fully checked this connection and although they did fix part of the problem, it did not fully fix it. If NIST had checked the connection correctly and to the standards they should have been, then that cause would have been ruled out and other causes would have been looked at more in depth. NIST themselves blamed the failure of the connection on the lack of shear studs on the critical girder but later on said that any conspiracy theories other than that of the terrorist group crashing into the buildings were completely untrue.

- [3] The second theory suggests that someone who knew the attacks were going to occur, had organised for 'War games' to be on which were well away from New York and Washington D.C, making the North American Aerospace Defence (NORAD) aircraft unable to help out fast enough. Evidence that supports this theory is when one of the NORAD employees and air-traffic controller were having a conversation and the only thing that the NORAD employee was interested in was, "Is this real world or exercise?" This had been recorded by the air-traffic controller. This meant that the NORAD employee (this person is unknown) thought it peculiar that as they were going through the exercise of 'war games' when such a crisis was on...

- [4] The sixth theory was that the World Trade Centre only collapsed because it was a controlled demolition. A lot of the building was made out of one of the world's most advanced steel and if crashed into even by a large object such as a plane, should have been able to withstand such

[5] impact and still have been standing even when the fires began. It has been suggested that perhaps Nano-thermite and thermite explosive was planted in the buildings' structures before 9/11 and traces of it were found in the remnants of the buildings after they had collapsed. But there was no evidence to show how the thermite would have been smuggled into the building. The theory still has believers because when the clean-up was happening there were no tests done for explosives residues. That is taken as more evidence of a conspiracy. There have been many articles and reports as a result of this conspiracy theory, for example in *The Open Civil Engineering Journal* and *Journal of Engineering Mechanics* and most of them debunk the theory but many people still believe this theory.

[7] **Significance to New Zealand:**

[8] The New Zealand people were affected by the attacks in different ways. One way was that many New Zealanders may have had family members and friends who were in New York, Washington D.C. or anywhere in America at the time and who were affected in some way by the attacks e.g. rescue relief people, people who died or got injured etc. Because of this, fear would have been instilled into families and friends that the American security is not stern enough or safe enough and as a result New Zealanders may want their family members and friends to come home and may not wish to travel on any airline owned by America or travel into or near America as they are scared for their own welfare. People from New Zealand would also be worried in general about travelling anywhere around the world as they may become suspicious of other countries security levels as well. New Zealand then followed many security measures that other countries in the United Nations had like increasing the amount of scanning equipment we had in our border security as well as how thorough they were, introduced different kinds of security at airport terminals like in depth body searches and also they did random background checks on passengers flying from and into New Zealand to find out why they were in New Zealand, why they were leaving etc. The downfall of all these new security measures however was that the amount of time passengers spent in border security was lengthened a lot more which meant that people had to spend longer in airline terminals which created anger and annoyance in the passengers undergoing security checks. Another way the New Zealand people would have been affected is in the way that we showed our support for the United States. Straight after the event happened, New Zealand responded immediately (within 6 weeks) by deploying a large group of our own SAS agents to Tora Bora in Afghanistan where they fought next to American troops as well as the United Kingdom and members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) against the War on Terror. But after a while New Zealand became less involved and supportive of America as the time from when the event actually happened wore on. Two New Zealand people died in the 9/11 attacks and therefore only two members and family groups in New Zealand became affected so not a lot of people were being affected. Now the 9/11 attacks is remembered by perhaps a silence for a few minutes on the actual anniversary day of when the event occurred but that is all now. Which is rather sad considering how large the event was and that a great number of people were killed and the event wasn't just planes crashing into a building and a field but also that it resulted in fires occurring which further damaged buildings around the buildings that were crashed into and that it was the most dangerous event recorded in U.S fire fighter history.

[11] My thoughts:

I think that the most believable story of what actually happened is the one that is the accepted story. The reason I think this is that most of the other theories are too extreme or do not have enough evidence to back them up for example the theory that the Pentagon was hit by a missile which was launched into the building by the U.S. government is rather extreme as a government wanting to harm its own people is a very terrible situation and would result in a lot of rebellion and disbelief in the government from the citizens...