



Peter Kuznick on Chile and 9/11

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Zain Raza (ZR): Thank you for joining us today Peter! When the date 9/11 comes around, media coverage is devoted to the 2001 terrorist attacks in New York. Little to no coverage is devoted to the 1973 Chilean coup d'état that was initiated by the US government. Could you provide some context to this coup and talk about its implications?

Peter Kuznick (PK): Well, you know, the point you're making, the broad point is a really important one, and that's that we like to talk about their crimes, especially make ourselves the victims in the United States. We don't like to talk about the crimes where the United States is the aggressor, the perpetrator, the exploiter, the condemner. And so 9/11 has a very different meaning in Chile and much of the rest of the world than it does in the United States. And it's one of the most tragic and criminal and flagrant and blatant acts of US aggression and US hypocrisy. The United States likes to think of itself as a defender of democracy. Well, in this case, it was just the opposite. Chile had had a democracy since 1932. It was a shining example of democracy in Latin America, but it wasn't going to survive Nixon and Kissinger. And it's very, very sad. The CIA had been involved in Chile since at least 1958. And the CIA, you know, the United States had always looked upon Central America and South America as America's backyard. It was 1823 when the United States announced the Monroe Doctrine, which said to the Europeans, keep your hands off this hemisphere, as we called it then. Stay out of Latin America, this is America's province. We're going to control this area. So even though the United States didn't have formal colonialism, the United States thought of itself as really the dominant force in Central America and South America.

And that was very important because of the US control over the economies. The original banana republic was Honduras, the 1898 war, which the United States supposedly fought over Cuba. And the United States does control the Cuban economy after we kicked the Spanish out. But it was a broader global war. The first shots were fired in Manila Bay by Dewey, Commodore Dewey and the United States goes after the Filipinos there. And it goes against, as we've talked about, Aguinaldo's uprising and the attempt to establish a republic

there. But Chile is one of the most egregious examples. And in Chile, the significant interest was Chilean copper. Chile was the world's leading copper producer. The United States had extensive interests there. It was US multilateral corporations, especially Kennecott and Anaconda, that controlled Chilean copper and had been exploiting the hell out of the Chilean people for decades. Also, ITT was heavily involved in Chile. So between the three of them, when the CIA got heavily involved in 1964, when the United States supported Eduardo Frei over Salvador Allende, Allende was not thought to be a communist, but he was thought to be a radical and likely a socialist who ran against US multinational corporations and their control over the Chilean economy. And so the United States intervenes in the 1964 elections to make sure that Allende is defeated. Then in 1970, there was a three way election, and Allende clearly won overwhelmingly, while the United States decides that it's going to have a two track policy.

This is now the reign of Kissinger and Nixon with Dick Helms as the head of the CIA. And the track one was going to be a massive propaganda effort in order to terrify the Chilean people into what the US said was going to be the tyranny of the undemocratic government of Salvador Allende. And the US also began bribing legislators in Chile to not certify Allende if he got elected. That was track one. That was the good track. Track two was a coup, and the US planned from the beginning for a military coup, and that was actually the preferred course of events for Nixon, certainly, and to a large extent Kissinger. And they worked with the CIA chiefs down there. They set up a CIA task force under David Atlee Phillips, who already had been involved in overthrowing the government in Guatemala, had been involved in the Dominican Republic, knew how to do these things, was an expert at it, and they initially began to apply economic pressure. The idea was to collapse the Chilean economy to create chaos in Chile. But that was somewhat successful in terms of hurting the Chilean economy, but it wasn't successful in stopping Allende. So the CIA goes further and the CIA does organize a coup. Now, the US had already trained 4,000 Chilean military officers in the School of the Americas. So we had a base in the military there. However, General Schneider was a strict constitutionalist and was not going to go along with this kind of hanky panky, this kind of dirty tricks and this kind of coup. So the United States proceeded to have its allies assassinate General Schneider, and he was killed. And that was really opening the door to this coup that's going to occur in 1973.

But we knew what was happening, it was very out in the open. And the CIA was doing this. And the idea was not so much that Chile was so important. What does Kissinger say? Chile is a dagger pointed at the heart of Antarctica. Right? So they made fun. They knew strategically, aside from the copper that Chile was not important to the United States or America's strategic interests. However, they could not allow Allende to set an example for the rest of the world, that you can nationalize American corporations, and not only nationalize them, they said that Kennecott and Anaconda had exploited the Chilean people, that they had invested (what did they say?) less than \$30 million and they had made more than \$4 billion in profits off the Chilean people. They said they were not going to pay them a penny in reparations. And

furthermore, this was going to be an example, just like the Iranian coup in 1953 or Mosaddeq. Mosaddeq was an example for the Arab masses in Iran, or Guatemala in 1954. And so the United States says that it's going to have to make an example out of Chile and out of Allende. And so it's a military operation run through Augusto Pinochet with the support of the US embassy, with the support of the US State Department, with the support of the CIA.

And Allende knew what was coming. And he goes before the United Nations and he makes an incredible speech, one that's worth me reading a little bit of. And it says December 4th, 1972, when he goes before the United Nations and before a packed General Assembly with them all standing and yelling, "viva Allende, viva Allende". He's talked about the attempt, quote, to prevent the inauguration of a government freely elected by the people and to bring it down ever since. (He) said its action is, it tried to cut us off from the world to strangle our economy, to paralyze our principal export, copper, to deprive us access to sources of international financing. And then he talked about how Chile was ruthlessly exploited by multinational corporations. It says our economy could no longer tolerate the subordination implied by having more than 80% of its exports in the hands of a small group of large foreign companies that have always put their interests ahead of those of the countries where they make their profits. And he said these same firms exploited Chilean copper for many years, made more than \$4 billion in profit in the last 42 years alone with their initial investments of less than 30 million. He says "We find ourselves opposed by forces that operate in the shadows without a flag, with powerful weapons from positions of great influence. We are potentially rich countries, yet we live in poverty. We go here and there begging for credits in aid. Yet we are great exporters of capital. It is a classic paradox of the capitalist economic system". I've got to shut up my tree frog over here.

Okay, good. And he got a standing ovation. And in fact, the US representative to the United Nations was George H W bush. He was even giving him part of the standing ovation. He was standing and cheering. And it was so infectious, so powerful. But I think that day he signed his own death warrant, because with that kind of leadership of the third world, of the underdeveloped sector of the countries that were being exploited by the United States, they were not going to let him survive. So just like a lot of people today say that Prigozhin signed his death warrant with that coup, that Putin couldn't let him survive after that. Well, there was no way that Nixon and Kissinger were going to let Allende survive after that. And they're very open about it in their communications. And I'll read a little bit of that later. And so they started a coup on September 11th, 1973. Pinochet seized power. When the coup started and they took to the radio he (Allende) made one final address. And he says there "for the presidential palace, I will not resign". He said "foreign capital, imperialists united with reaction, created a climate for the army to break with their tradition. Long live Chile. Long live the people. These are my last words. I am sure that my sacrifice will not be in vain. I am sure it will be at least a moral lesson and a rebuke to crime, cowardice and treason". And then he took his own life with a rifle he had been given as a gift by Fidel Castro. And then the

United States took power through Pinochet, who immediately set out and killed thousands, tortured tens of thousands.

There's a great movie title called Missing about the torture that went on there and the death squads, Operation Condor, The Caravan of Death. The United States, led by Kissinger, not only committed crimes in Chile, but committed crimes throughout Latin America. And the exchange between Kissinger and Nixon is classic, you know, in which they openly brag about the fact that they were behind this, but that their fingerprints don't show except that we have all the documents in which it shows that they ordered it, their exact words: "that would be a military coup, that the United States set an example to the rest of the world. If anybody is thinking of messing with American interests anywhere this is the fate that they're going to be getting". And it's tragic what happened that day, much more tragic than what, you know, what happened to the United States on September 11th, another year.

ZR: Let's turn to the terrorist attacks that took place in New York on September 11th, 2001. We feel that the media and the education system do not provide sufficient context about US foreign policy before the attacks., nor about how it evolved and affected the world thereafter. Could you address those issues?

PK: The US had provoked a lot of hostility in the Middle East. And George W Bush said about al Qaeda, "they hate us for our freedoms". That was such nonsense. They didn't hate the United States for its freedoms. They hated the United States for its blind support of Israel, against the Palestinians and for its military involvement, especially beginning with Carter and the Carter Doctrine, and then with the first Gulf War and the US sending troops to Saudi Arabia and Mecca, and Osama bin Laden, and al Qaeda hated the US for those two reasons especially. And they began a series of attacks. Now the United States had actually helped support and found Al Qaeda and a lot of the Islamic terrorism, because the United States decided that if they roused up Arab nationalism, then they would be aroused against the Soviet Union. After the Soviets invaded Afghanistan stupidly and criminally in many ways in 1979, the United States helped provoke that. This Brzezinski is doing more than anybody else's. And Brzezinski thought, if we can build up this kind of Arab nationalism, we can rouse opposition to the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, and the Soviets will have to invade Afghanistan. And he sent a memo to Carter on July 4th saying that we're now going to give the Soviet Union its own Vietnam, because what we're stirring up by giving military aid to these Islamic extremists, these fanatics, these zealots, these jihadis, are going to force the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan. And he was right. And it occurs on Christmas Day. And the Soviets are going to be bogged down in Afghanistan for another decade. And Brzezinski didn't bemoan that fact, he celebrated it. He thought this was great, exactly what we wanted. And so that's the background.

And Al Qaeda then turns against the United States after getting all this training, all these arms, and they wage a series of attacks on US interests in the Middle East as well. Well, the United States knew and American experts knew that Al Qaeda, which was training and based

in Afghanistan, posed a real threat to the United States. So George W Bush steals the election effectively in 2000. Al Gore won the popular vote. Al Gore really won the state of Florida, except that the governor of Florida was George Bush's brother. The co-campaign director there was the Secretary of State. She was in charge of certifying the elections. There were all kinds of shenanigans and dirty tricks, and they threw the election to George W Bush. He takes office, he doesn't know anything right? The guy's an idiot and relies upon these advisers for their Project for a New American Century. The Project for a New American Century had been founded in 1997. These were the neocons that had finally gotten into power. And their obsession was the obsession of Paul Wolfowitz, and Rumsfeld, and Cheney, and Richard Perle, and that was Iraq. But from the very beginning Richard Clarke, who was the counterterrorism expert, tried to get the attention of George W Bush, of Cheney, of Condoleezza Rice, of Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, in order to focus them on the terrorist threat, because the intelligence community was putting out one warning after another that al Qaeda was about to attack in the United States. And as George Tenet said, this was going to be the big one, this was the devastating one.

And all these reports, and the FBI in Minneapolis was issuing warnings that Islamic Muslims in Minneapolis are learning to fly and have no interest in learning how to land. And so they knew, and Condoleezza Rice was getting these reports saying that these Muslim extremists are planning attacks using airplanes as missiles. And George W Bush got a briefing on August 6th, a month before the 9/11 attack at his ranch in Texas: 'they are heading here'. But I think it's called, the one in August, this is called 'Bin Laden determined to strike in US'. And George Bush's response was to brief her "okay, you've covered your ass, get out of here". None of them wanted to hear a word of it, although they would all say later if we had any idea, any forewarning, any inkling at all that Bin Laden was planning an attack on the United States, we would have raised mountains in order to stop it. Nonsense! They all had the warnings! They all knew it was about to happen. They also knew that the Afghani leadership under Omar was trying to get rid of Bin Laden and Al Qaeda. The CIA station chief during the Soviet invasion had been Milton Bearden, and Bearden had said that the Afghans were desperate to get rid of Bin Laden. The US had had more than 30 meetings with Afghan leaders to turn Bin Laden over. They wanted to do so. And Bearden had said they were just looking for some help from the United States. Some excuse, some cover to do so Bearden said that the United States never understood it and never gave them what they needed in order to turn Bin Laden over to the United States. And so they hit the United States on September 11th.

It should have been prevented. These people were asleep at the switch. And so they hit the World Trade Center. They hit the Pentagon. The US loses what 2,800, 2,900? A lot of people were killed, including people from all over the world. And that was 9/11. By 9/12, George W Bush is echoing the sentiment of Wolfowitz and the others and asking Richard Clarke "see, see if Saddam did this. See what Iraq's involvement was". Iraq wasn't involved. Clarke couldn't believe it. He said his deputy heard George W Bush, and she stood there with her

mouth open. She said they've gotten to him and the people have gotten to him with the Project for a New American Century. They were obsessed with Iraq from the beginning. And they said the next week that even if Iraq is not involved, we have to go after Iraq anyway. But that first day we saw it from Richard Perle. We saw it from Paul Wolfowitz. We saw it from Cheney. We saw it from George W Bush. Rumsfeld says Afghanistan doesn't have any good targets, we've got to bomb Iraq instead. And Clark says "Bomb Iraq? That would be like when the Japanese hit us at Pearl Harbor, the US decided to invade Mexico. Why would we invade Iraq?"

In fact, Saddam Hussein was an enemy of Al Qaeda. He hated Al Qaeda. Saddam Hussein had no involvement in this at all and Iraq wasn't involved. Yet they kept on trying to create, you know, Hadley and Libby, Libby and Wolfowitz. They talked about Mohamed Atta at his meeting with Iraqi intelligence. And Clarke says we knew that they didn't, and Tenet even knew they didn't meet with Iraqi intelligence, that Mohamed Atta had not left the United States when that meeting took place, that he was living in the shadow of the CIA, the shadow of the Pentagon. So these were the lies that were concocted. And it's amazing to me because the US gets involved. So first we attack Afghanistan, but we don't send any boots on the ground, we don't catch Bin Laden. We don't catch Omar, they get out because the US was so incompetent. But the real goal was, of course, to go after Iraq. And so, when the American public was not buying it and the world was not buying it. Going after Iraq, the US kept saying "oh, they've got weapons of mass destruction and we don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud". But the reality was that that was nonsense, that Iraq did not have weapons of mass destruction and we knew it. And Hans Blix, the head of the UN weapons inspectors, kept saying, "well, they're so sure that we've got weapons that the US and CIA so sure that they've got weapons of mass destruction, but they can't tell us where they are. You know, and we looked at every site one after another". Scott Ritter, the former UN weapons inspector, said this is nonsense. They've already given up all their weapons, which is true. But then Colin Powell gets chosen by George W Bush to go before the United Nations.

And Colin Powell is the most respected person in that administration. Nobody else was respected. And so Powell there makes a speech: 'they've got these mobile bio labs and we've got this anthrax', and he holds it up. And then immediately American public opinion changes. Powell and Blair were responsible, and support for the US invasion of Iraq goes from 33% to 50% overnight after the Powell speech. But the person I want to single out was Joseph Biden. Joseph Biden was the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Powell visited the Senate Foreign Relations Committee the next day. And Biden says, I would like to move the nomination of Secretary of State Powell for President of the United States. You know, Biden is not just a dope when it comes to foreign policy now and a warmonger, he's had this history for a long time, being a domestic liberal and supporting a lot of very good programs in the United States by supporting every American war. And so but not only when the vote came down about giving Bush the power to invade Iraq effectively, only one senator opposed that, or the Patriot Act vote. Only one senator opposed that, and that was Russ

Feingold of Wisconsin. But Kerry supported that, Hillary Clinton supported it, they supported the war resolution. And the United States, while it lost interest in Afghanistan quickly and invades Iraq, but it also does away with freedom in the United States. The Patriot Act allows surveillance at an unprecedented scale.

The US under Bush in response to 9/11, has read renditions all over the world: Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo. Torture is authorized around the world. CIA black sites are set up. In fact, one was set up under Mubarak in Egypt. Another was set up under Saddam Hussein, under Assad in Syria. And there the worst kinds of techniques were used. It got so bad that Major General Taguba issued a report and said that the US is conducting the worst terror, the worst torture imaginable. He said of course we're committing war crimes, the only question is whether these people are going to be held accountable, and were they held accountable? No! And so what the US unleashed in the world, there was a survey in 2003: which country represented the greatest threat to world peace? If I remember the results, 84% said the United States represents the greatest threat to world peace. And something like 6% said Iraq did and Saddam Hussein. And so, you know, Americans forget this. Americans have a very short attention span and short memory. But the rest of the world doesn't.

And when we wonder why the world does not go along with US sanctions against Russia and US sanctimony, it's because they see the United States as the world's leading hypocrite - that the United States is outraged about the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which is outrageous. But the United States does not in any way apologize for invading Iraq, invading Afghanistan, and supporting the NATO invasion of Libya. The US has done this over and over and over again, and the global South remembers it! And so they don't go along with the US outrage and high dudgeon over the invasion of Ukraine, partly because they know the United States is the worst perpetrator and has been, as America's best ex-president Jimmy Carter said two years ago, I think it was two years ago. He said that the United States has been a country for 242 years and during that time, the United States has been at peace for 16 years. He says China has not invaded anybody since 1979. He says the United States is the world's biggest warmonger and has been so since the Cold War. But we were obsessed with China and the threat posed by China that this is totally irrational and illogical. Well, I think the world sees through the facade, and that's part of the price the US is paying now for all this aggression. First response to 9/11 for the crimes that it committed in response. So even though what Al Qaeda did on 9/11 and killing so many innocent people is unconscionable and unforgivable, the US responds with a magnitude hundreds of times worse than what it did to the world, and the number of people killed. And finally the United States got out of Afghanistan after 21 years there. You know it's just appalling. And the chaos persists in Afghanistan and Iraq and the other places the US invaded.

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