The New Pearl Harbor
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The current (22-26 March 2004) "independent commission investigating the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001", appears to be seeking explanations how and why the attacks were not anticipated and stopped by our and other intelligence agencies, prior to the event. In his new book, The New Pearl Harbor - Disturbing Questions About the Bush Administration and 9/11 [Olive Branch Press, imprinted by www.interlinkbooks.com ISBN 1-56656-552-9 US$15.00], David Ray Griffin, a professor of Philosophy of Religion at Claremont [CA] College of Theology, explores a litany of discrepancies in the official record and account of the events of that day to consider the same questions from a different perspective.

This book is concise synthesis and extension of three somewhat less readily available works - Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed's "The War on Freedom", Michel Chossudovsky's "War and Globalisation: The Truth Behind September 11", and Thierry Meyssan's "9/11: The Big Lie" - to make the essence of their combined content accessible to the general public. Griffin's approach is utterly admirable: coherently, systematically and objectively, he scrupulously and minutely documents the flaws, contradictions, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the 'official version' of the events of that day. Ultimately he assembles and tabulates a list of thirty-eight apparent irregularities in the timeline of, and evidence remaining from, these attacks and asks how they might plausibly be reconciled:

- Why were the 'standard operating procedures' for the emergency scrambling of fighter jets in the event of a commercial airplane's hijacking not implemented until after the crash at the Pentagon?
- Why was there no evidence of a passenger jet debris at the Pentagon crash site?
- What happened on UA flight 93? Did the passengers regain control of the aircraft from the hijackers? If so, why and how did it crash in Pennsylvania?

Griffin refuses to throw out possibilities simply because they are outrageous, outlandish or shocking; he lets the evidence speak for itself. As the book's subtitle declares, the results are deeply disturbing.

He then examines the larger perspective, some of which has been publically considered by the "independent commission investigating the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001"; much of which appears not to have been at least publically:

- What relevant information did the administration have prior to the event and was its investigation obstructed?
- What is the record of the financial markets in the days prior to the attacks?
- Who would have benefited from the attacks and has an investigation into that question been obstructed after the fact?

Griffin proposes eight alternative scenarios to the official version of events and, although he obviously credits two or three over the others, is careful to maintain an air of objectivity, posing the questions for the reader to ponder rather than pronouncing judgment.
For conspiracy theorists, this will ultimately be an unsatisfying book: with admirable academic objectivity, Griffin refuses to indict or endorse any specific hypothesis. Rather he presents a substantial body of very disturbing evidence and calls for a real, open, hardnosed investigation that does not begin with the proposition that only those scenarios in which the assumption that our government or its members play only a benign and benevolent role - seeking only the welfare and best interests of its citizenry - will be considered.

"The New Pearl Harbor - Disturbing Questions About the Bush Administration and 9/11" is a book that ought to be thoughtfully read and considered by every thinking, voting member of the electorate.

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