



While denying involvement, Osama bin Laden did say he believed the attack on New York was in part motivated by Israel's destruction of downtown Beirut during its 1982 invasion of Lebanon that inflicted some 18,000 civilian deaths.

By the way, I've said ever since 9/11 that the danger and size of al-Qaida has been vastly exaggerated – as an explosive report this week by the London's esteemed International Institute for Strategic Studies has just confirmed. Al-Qaida, dedicated to fighting the Afghan Communists, never had more than 300 members at its peak.

Today, according to CIA chief Leon Panetta, there are no more than 50 al-Qaida men in Afghanistan. Yet President Barack Obama has tripled the number of US troops in Afghanistan to 120,000 because of what he calls the al-Qaida threat. What is going on?

So what, in the end, can we conclude? 1. We still do not know the real story about 9/11. 2. The official version is not credible. 3. 9/11 was used to justify invading strategic Afghanistan and oil-rich Iraq. 4. The attacks plunged America into wars against the Muslim world and enriched the US arms industry. 5. 9/11 boosted pro-Israel neoconservatives, formerly a fringe group, into power, and with them America's totalitarian far right. 6. Bush's unprovoked war against Iraq destroyed one of Israel's two main enemies. 7. 9/11 put America in what may turn out to be a permanent state of war with the Muslim world – a key goal of the neoconservatives .

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