

**CONNECTING THE DOTS OF 9-11*****How I learned that peace may never be achieved***

by Robert McIlvaine

Since Bobby's death on 9-11, I have been on a journey to find the truth of how and why he died and who really killed him. I was not satisfied, from the beginning, with the official story of his death. I also feared that violence around the world would escalate as a result of this horrendous act.

In 2002, I joined *September 11th Families For Peaceful Tomorrows*, a group of activists whose name was inspired by a Martin Luther King statement: "Wars are poor chisels for carving out peaceful tomorrows." In the early part of the new decade we marched hand in hand for peace in Washington and New York, hoping that 9-11 would not be justification for increased war efforts. I'll never forget the moment when I was arrested on the Capitol lawn, proudly carrying a banner stating, "Not In My Son's Name," which referred to the use of 9-11 by Bush to further any war efforts.

Later, at the World Conference on Victims of Violence in Bogota, Columbia, I told Bobby's story to a packed audience of survivors of various atrocities. I was honored to have the opportunity to share my pain and grief with those who truly understood the price of violence.

Back in the United States, I regularly attended the *9-11 Commission Hearings*, patiently listening to testimony while hoping to find answers to an official story that continued to make little sense. Instead, I felt frustrated with the inability of the Commission to discover anything new or enlightening. Witnesses, including Condoleezza Rice, were not accountable to the Commission or the American people. Ms Rice, to my dismay, filibustered her way through each of the questions posed by the Commissioners. I returned home very discouraged.

In 2005, on the 60th anniversary of the atomic bombing, I was asked to join *Peaceful Tomorrows* on a march from Nagasaki to Hiroshima, honoring those who have died in war. I walked beside the Hibakusha, survivors of the attack. They showed amazing pride, never taking on the role of victim, though many were treated as outcasts by their own people. The Hibakusha's courage impressed in me the need to continue my quest for peace and truth.

I returned home, deciding that if the US government was not going to give me the real answers to 9-11, then I'd find them myself. Why, I wondered, was it so hard to go against the government's version of a story that did not make sense? I wanted to know why the media always seemed as far from a "free press" as one could imagine, often ignoring obvious breakthroughs in information. Why, also, did peace seem even farther away than before 9-11, frustrating the peace community? Our children died that horrible day and it was now being used as fodder for more escalation, more deaths.

My quest for truth took me to both the traditional history sources as well as books written by outstanding authors who questioned the “company line” and sought deeper answers than what was offered in the news or in press conferences. As I searched, I recalled quotes by Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Franklin Roosevelt, initially read years ago by me when their dire warnings meant very little to a young college student studying history.

Eisenhower, in a famous speech in 1961, warned of the dangers of “unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military industrial complex.” Kennedy, later that year, warned of a “monolithic and ruthless conspiracy that relies primarily on covert means for expanding its sphere of influence—on infiltration instead of invasion, on subversion instead of elections, on intimidation instead of free choice, on guerrillas by night instead of armies by day.”

Fascinated with these predictions by such stellar leaders, I began to probe further, seeing patterns, taking a harder look at the circumstances leading to the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. I looked farther back in history, reading about Operation Gladio and the Gulf of Tonkin in a different, more knowledgeable light. Was 9-11 another false flag; I was beginning to see the truth. I wondered if Presidents truly had any power to wage peace. Were special interests groups with unimaginable wealth and power, who were often referred to as “Shadow Government,” controlling the decisions of war?

After more continued research, I learned that these clandestine operatives would never allow control of the government to the people. They would instead rely on disinformation (weapons of mass destruction is a perfect example), fabrication of injustices, and the spreading of propaganda to justify their aggressive acts. Could these elite few be responsible for the upheavals in so many countries when it appeared to the general public that we were in those countries to “promote democracy”? As I continued my reading I recalled a quote by Joseph Goebbels, Hitler’s Propaganda Minister: “You tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people eventually come to believe it.” He went on to say that the truth “is the mortal enemy of the lie, and thus by extension, the truth is the greatest enemy of the state.”

Sadly, I came to a conclusion best said by Woodrow Wilson and unfortunately, true today. “We have come to be one of the worst ruled, one of the most completely controlled and dominated governments in the civilized world, no longer a government by free opinion, no longer a government by conviction and the vote of the majority, but a government by the opinion and the duress of small groups of dominant men.”

From hours and hours of research, I have learned that the truth of 9-11 as well as the truth regarding who really holds the power in this country and throughout the world, are not in our best interests to know, according to those elite few who choose to control our destiny. Unfortunately, peace and the truth are not part of that destiny.