

The Phantom Victory

The Power of Nightmares

Transcript of Episode 2, "The Phantom Victory"

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VO: In the past, politicians promised to create a better world. They had different ways of achieving this. But their power and authority came from the optimistic visions they offered their people. Those dreams failed. And today, people have lost faith in ideologies. Increasingly, politicians are seen simply as managers of public life. But now, they have discovered a new role that restores their power and authority. Instead of delivering dreams, politicians now promise to protect us from nightmares. They say that they will rescue us from dreadful dangers that we cannot see and do not understand. And the greatest danger of all is international terrorism. A powerful and sinister network, with sleeper cells in countries across the world. A threat that needs to be fought by a war on terror. But much of this threat is a fantasy, which has been exaggerated and distorted by politicians. It's a dark illusion that has spread unquestioned through governments around the world, the security services, and the international media.

VO: This is a series of films about how and why that fantasy was created, and who it benefits. At the heart of the story are two groups: the American neoconservatives, and the radical Islamists. In this week's episode, the two groups come together to fight the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. And both believe that they defeat the Evil Empire, and so had the power to transform the world.

[SUBTITLE OVER CROWD SCENE : We will fight for an Islamic State, we will die for it!]

VO: But both failed in their revolutions. In response, the neoconservatives invent a new fantasy enemy, Bill Clinton, to try and regain their power; while the Islamists descend into a desperate cycle of violence and terror to try and persuade the people to follow them. Out of all this come the seeds of the strange world of fantasy, deception, violence, and fear in which we now live.

[OPENING TITLES : THE POWER OF NIGHTMARES / THE RISE OF THE POLITICS OF FEAR

Part Two: THE PHANTOM VICTORY]

AFGHAN BOY (holding a gun and making gun noises): Ka-choo! Daga daga daga daga! Pum pum pum! (etc.)

VO: In 1982, Ronald Reagan dedicated the Space Shuttle *Columbia* to the resistance fighters in Afghanistan.

President RONALD REAGAN : Just as the *Columbia*, we think, represents man's finest aspirations in the field of science and technology, so too does the struggle of the Afghan people represent man's highest aspirations for freedom. I am dedicating, on behalf of the American people, the March 22nd launch of the *Columbia* to the people of Afghanistan.

VO: Since 1979, the *mujaheddin* resistance had been fighting a vicious war in Afghanistan against the Soviet invasion. But now, a small group in the Reagan White House saw in these fighters a way of achieving their vision of transforming the world. To them, they were not just nationalists; they were freedom fighters, who could bring down the Soviet Union and help spread democracy around the world. It was called the Reagan Doctrine.

JACK WHEELER , Adviser to the Reagan White House, 1981-1984: It was a small group of people and—yes, we did have. Everyone thinks, “oh, the Reagan Doctrine, the Reagan Administration,” like everybody was for. No. It was a small little cabal within the Soviet—within the Reagan White House, that really pulled this off. What united this small group of ours was the vision of bringing more freedom to the world, more security to the world, to actually get rid of the Soviet Union itself. As a result, supporting the freedom fighters became the premier cause for the entire conservative movement during the Reagan years.

VO: But the Americans were setting out to defeat a mythological enemy. As last week’s episode showed, the neoconservatives, who were now in power in Reagan’s White House, had created an exaggerated and distorted vision of the Soviet Union as the source of all evil in the world. One of their main influences were the theories of the philosopher Leo Strauss. He believed that liberal societies needed simple, powerful myths to inspire and unite the people. And in the 1970s, the neoconservatives had done just this. Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, and other neoconservatives had set out to reassert the myth of America as a unique country, whose destiny was to struggle against evil throughout the world. Now in power, they had come to believe this myth. They saw themselves as revolutionaries who were going to transform the world, starting with the defeat of the Evil Empire.

RICHARD PERLE , Assistant Secretary of Defense 1981-1987: We’re closer to being revolutionaries than conservatives, in the sense that we want to change some deeply entrenched notions about the proper role of American power in the world. We want to see that power used constructively, and to enlarge the opportunity for decent governance around the world. We’re not happy about the old, cozy relationships with dictators.

VO: And the man who was going to help the neoconservatives do this was the new head of the CIA, William Casey. He was convinced that Afghanistan was one of the keys to this aggressive new policy. America was already sending limited amounts of aid to the *mujaheddin*. But now, Casey ordered one of his agents to go and form an alliance with the freedom fighters, and give them as much money as they wanted and the most sophisticated weapons to defeat the Soviet military forces.

MILTON BEARDEN , CIA Field Officer, Afghanistan, 1985-89: For Casey, Afghanistan seemed to be possibly one of the keys. So he tapped me one day to go. He says, “I want you to go out to Afghanistan, I want you to go next month, and I will give you whatever you need to win.” Yeah. He said, “I want you go to there and win.” As opposed to, “let’s go there and bleed these guys,” make a [unintelligible] Vietnam, “I want you to go there and win. Whatever you need, you can have.” He gave me the Stinger missiles and a billion dollars.

[SUBTITLE OVER AFGHAN WAR SCENE : God is great!]

VO : American money and weapons now began to pour across the Pakistan border into Afghanistan. CIA agents trained the *mujaheddin* in the techniques of assassination and terror, including car bombing. And they gave them satellite images of Russian troops to help in their attacks.

[SUBTITLE OVER AFGHAN WAR SCENE : Move your fat arse and shoot the f...ing rocket!]

VO: At the very same time, another group began to arrive in Afghanistan to fight alongside the *mujaheddin*. They were Arabs from across the Middle East, who had been told by their religious leaders that their duty was to go and free Muslim lands from the Soviet invader.

ABDULLAH ANAS , General Commander Afghan Arabs, Northern Afghanistan, 1984-1989: I saw the *fatwa*, the order saying that every Muslim has a duty to help the Afghans to liberate their land. But I had no idea, where is this Afghanistan? How can I go there? I've never heard about Afghanistan, and I've never heard—in the map. Which airline goes there? From where can I take the visa? It—100 questions! But I did meet Abdullah Azzam.

VO: Abdullah Azzam was a charismatic religious leader who had begun to organize the Arab volunteers in Afghanistan. He had set up what he called the Services Bureau, in Peshawar on the Afghan border. It became the headquarters of an international brigade of Arab fighters. Azzam quickly became one of the most powerful figures in the battle against the Soviets. He was allowed to visit America on many occasions, both to raise funds and recruit volunteers for the *jihād*.

Dr. AZZAM TAMIMI , Institute of Islamic Political Thought: When, Abdullah Azzam became so instrumental in marketing the Afghan cause among the Arabs, he became very important. He became called "the emir of the Arab *mujaheddin*." The leader of the Arab *mujaheddin*. And he set up an office in Peshawar which provided services to Arabs who came and wanted to participate in the *jihād*. There were no doors closed, so all doors were opened, because the Americans, the Saudis, the Pakistanis, and many other people wanted the Soviet Union to lose in Afghanistan, and to be humiliated. That brought about huge numbers of Arabs from different backgrounds in the *jihād* in Afghanistan. He went to America, he went to Saudi Arabia, he traveled wherever he wanted, because the Afghan cause was a cause that everybody was happy supporting.

VO: But like the neoconservatives, Azzam also saw the struggle against the Soviets as just the first step in a much wider revolution. He was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, who wanted Islam to play a political role in governing Muslim societies. And Abdullah Azzam believed that the Arabs in Afghanistan could be the nucleus of a new political force. They would return to their own countries and persuade the people to reject the corrupt, autocratic régimes that dominated the Middle East. But these régimes, Azzam insisted, must be overthrown by political means. He made every fighter pledge they would not use terrorism against civilians in the pursuit of their vision. One of Azzam's closest aides was a Saudi, Osama bin-Laden.

ANAS : Osama came to participate in '85. When he was—when he came, as you know, he is, he came from a rich family from Saudi, and he had much, much money to spend. Sheikh Abdullah Azzam was a scholar, he can organize the Afghans, but he

is not a rich man. So when Osama came, he filled in this gap. So the main duty of Osama at that time was spending money. Beside his good personal qualities.

VO: But then, in 1985, a new force began to arrive in Afghanistan, who were going to challenge Azzam's approach. They were the extreme radical Islamists, who were being expelled from prisons across the Arab world.

BEARDEN : And then, very quietly, most of the governments in the Middle East, the Arab governments, began to empty their prisons of their bad guys and send them off to the *jihad* with the very fondest hope that they would become martyred. Many of them were the people in Egypt that had not been executed after the murder of Sadat, but were implicated in it and had been in prison. Off they go.

VO: One of the most powerful of these newcomers was Ayman Zawahiri. He was the leader of a radical faction from Egypt called Islamic Jihad. And he was convinced that they, not the moderates, were the true Islamists.

AYMAN ZAWAHIRI , in cage: We are here! We are here! The real Islamic front! We are here! The real Islamic front and the real Islamic opposition against Zionism. We are here! The real Islamic front against Zionism, Communism, and imperialism.

VO: Ayman Zawahiri was a follower of the Egyptian revolutionary Sayyed Qutb, who had been executed in 1966. As last week's program showed, Qutb believed that the liberal ideas of Western societies corrupted the minds of Muslims, because they unleashed the most selfish aspects of human nature. Zawahiri had interpreted Qutb's theories to mean that this corruption included the Western system of democracy. Democracy, Zawahiri believed, encouraged politicians to set themselves up as the source of all authority, and by doing this, they were rejecting the higher authority of the Koran. This meant they were no longer true Muslims, and so they, and those who supported them, could legitimately be killed. The terror this created, he said, would shock the masses into seeing the truth behind the corrupt façade of democracy.

ANAS : When the Egyptians, the *jihadi* group, came from Egypt with their own explanation, with their own ideas, that anybody participating in any parliament, or any political party, or going to elect, or call people for the election, and sort of these activities, is totally rejecting the Koran. So when you say that, it means when a Muslim is rejecting the Koran, simply must be killed. And should be killed, must be killed! And that's what happened.

VO: Zawahiri and his small group settled in Peshawar. They began to spread this new idea among the foreign fighters, radicalizing the Islamist movement. It was not only a direct challenge to the moderate ideas of Abdullah Azzam, but it also involved a militant rejection of all American influence over the *jihad*, because America was the source of this corruption.

BEARDEN : The only times that I ever ran into any real trouble in Afghanistan was when I ran into these guys. You know, there'd be kind of a moment or two, where it looked a little bit like the bar scene in *Star Wars*, each group kind of jockeying around, and finally somebody has to sort of defuse the situation.

[TITLE : MOSCOW 1987]

NEWS ANNOUNCER (speaking in Russian, subtitled): The indicator lights aren't on. Please adjust them. (pause) Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev has issued a decree...

VO: Then, in 1987, the new Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev decided he was going to withdraw Russian troops from Afghanistan. Gorbachev was convinced that the whole Soviet system was facing collapse. He was determined to try and save it through political reform, and this meant reversing the policies of his predecessors, including the occupation of Afghanistan.

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV , General Secretary, Soviet Communist Party (speaking in Russian, via interpreter) : The state of the Soviet Union and its society could be described very simply with a phrase used by people across the country: "We can't go on living like this any longer." And that applied to everything. The economy was stagnating. There were shortages. And the quality of goods was very poor. We had to finish this war, but in such a way that the Russian people would understand why tens of thousands had died. We couldn't just run away from there in shame, no. We needed to find a process.

VO: Gorbachev asked the Americans to help him negotiate a peace that would create a stable government in Afghanistan. But the hard-liners in Washington refused point-blank. They would continue to help the *mujaheddin* until the last Russians left, without any negotiation. The future of Afghanistan would then be decided, they said, by the freedom fighters.

VLADIMIR POZNER , Soviet Spokesman in the United States, 1987: I think that basically, we've asked the United States to help us get out, if you're really interested in stopping the bloodshed.

MODERATOR : But can you get out and leave a government in Afghanistan that supports, that is a friend of the Soviet Union?

POZNER : I believe that we can get out, provided that no more aid is given to what people here call freedom fighters, and we call counterrevolutionaries. I believe that's possible, provided that the United States is also interested in the same.

RICHARD PERLE , Assistant Secretary of Defense 1981-1987 : Well, it's not very complicated. They arrived in a matter of days, on Christmas Eve in 1979; they could be home by Christmas Eve, if they decided to leave Afghanistan and let the Afghans decide their own future. If you leave, the problem of support to the *mujaheddin* solves itself.

VO: Gorbachev was shocked by the intransigence of the U.S. Administration. He sent a private message through the KGB, warning the Americans that if they allowed the *mujaheddin* to take control in Afghanistan, it would not produce democracy. Instead, he predicted, the most extreme forms of Islamism would rise up and triumph. But Gorbachev's warning was ignored. As Soviet troops left Afghanistan, both the Americans and the Islamists came to believe that they had not only won the battle for Afghanistan, they had also begun the downfall of the entire Evil Empire.

BEARDEN : I felt we won, because I was part of it; I'm sure that the Afghan Arabs thought "we won," and then all summer long, the East Germans begin to gather—a hundred here, a thousand there, tens of thousands—until November 9th, when the wall was opened. And that's it. Start the clock running on the Soviet Union. And it was over. So the Soviet Union was all crapped up and broken. And that was done.

VO: For the neoconservatives, the collapse of the Soviet Union was a triumph. And out of that triumph was going to come the central myth that still inspires them today: that through the aggressive use of American power, they could transform the world and spread democracy. But in reality, their victory was an illusion. They had conquered a phantom enemy, an exaggerated and distorted fantasy they had created in their own minds. The real reason the Soviet Union collapsed was because it was a decrepit system, decaying from within.

MELVIN GOODMAN , Head of Office of Soviet Affairs CIA, 1976-1987: I think probably one of the greatest myths in America, in the political discourse now, right now, is that actions of the American government were responsible for the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union collapsed like a house of cards because it was a house of cards. It rotted away from within. The economy was rotten, the political process was rotten, they had developed a central government that was no longer believed by people outside of Moscow, there was total cynicism throughout the Soviet system of governance, there was no real civil society. But the Reagan Administration and their—the minions of the Reagan Administration, will tell you that Afghanistan led to the collapse of the Soviet Union itself—the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the collapse of the East European empire. We were saying that this was entirely fanciful. And the United States missed all of this, because they believed their own myths and their own fanciful notions. They had become their own victims of their own lies.

VO: And for the Islamists too, a great myth was born out of the struggle in Afghanistan—that it was they who had conquered the Soviet Union.

[SUBTITLES OVER *MUJAHEDDIN* GATHERING : God is great! Death to Gorbachev! Long live Afghanistan!]

VO: The Islamists believed that this great victory would start a revolution that would sweep across the Arab world and topple the corrupt leaders. But as with the neoconservatives, this dream was built on an illusion.

GILLES KEPEL , Historian of the Islamist Movement: The Islamists were convinced that they were the key instrument in the demise of the Soviet Army in Afghanistan. They just would not like to remember that without U.S. military help and training, they couldn't have done anything. And also the Afghans were the ones who ousted the Soviets, not the Arab *jihadis*, who didn't really fight, who were trained, but they were not the fighters. But the myth has it that they were the ones who won. I mean, this was a *jihad* that had triumphed. This was something very powerful that was a mobilizing force for Islamists worldwide.

VO: But there was a deep rift within the Islamist fighters based in Peshawar—between the moderates, led by Abdullah Azzam, who believed this revolution could be accomplished politically; and the extremists, like Ayman Zawahiri, who saw violent revolution as the only way. And Zawahiri now set out to extend his influence over the movement, and to undermine Abdullah Azzam. To do this, he seduced Osama bin-Laden—and his money—away from Azzam. He promised bin-Laden that he could become the emir, the leader of Zawahiri's small extremist group, Islamic Jihad.

ANAS : Ayman Zawahiri and another group of Egyptians, they refused to pray behind Abdullah Azzam in Peshawar. They used to create rumors in Peshawar against Abdullah Azzam. That's why we became angry about Osama, why he became—he

closed these people to him. They accepted him as an emir, and he accepted them as a group. Finally, I don't know who did use the other.

INTERVIEWER (off-camera): What do you think?

ANAS : I think the other used him.

INTERVIEWER : Because he had the money.

ANAS : Yes.

VO: Then, at the end of 1989, Abdullah Azzam was assassinated by a huge car bomb in Peshawar. It is still unknown who carried out the assassination. But despite his death, it seemed as if Azzam's vision of a political revolution might prevail. In the early '90s, in countries across the Arab world, Islamist parties began to gather mass support.

[SUBTITLE OVER POLITICAL RALLY : Islamic State!]

VO: In Algeria, the Islamic Salvation Front won overwhelming victories in local elections, and looked certain to win the coming general election. And at the same time in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood began to win mass support, and a growing number of seats in Parliament. Both parties were riding to power on an idealistic vision. They would use Islam in a political way to create a new type of model society through peaceful means.

SAIF AL BANNA , Senior member, Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt (speaking in Arabic, subtitled): We can change people through education and religious conviction. We want to build a popular base. This is the right way. We do not want a military coup; we do not want violence; we want our rights. If people believe in us, the government must comply with the people's wishes.

VO: But the governments in both Egypt and Algeria faced a terrible dilemma. At the heart of the Islamist vision was the idea that the Koran should be used as the political framework for the society. An absolute set of laws, beyond debate, that all politicians had to follow. The implication of this was that political parties would be irrelevant, because there could be no disagreement. The people were about to vote in parties that might use that power to end democracy.

ALI HAROUN , Algerian Minister for Human Rights (1991-1992) (speaking in French, subtitled): But what a dilemma! Do you find a way of stopping the electoral process and cancelling the second round? Or do you let power go to a party which claims: "One man, one vote, but only once! We won't have any elections after this, because democracy is non-religious. Once we're in power, we'll stay there forever, because we alone are the keepers of religious truth, and we alone shall apply the Koran."

VO: Faced by this dilemma, in Algeria the army decided to step in, and in June 1991 they staged a coup d'état and immediately canceled the elections. Mass protests by the Islamists were repressed violently, and their leaders arrested. At the same time, in Egypt, the government also clamped down. They arrested hundreds of Muslim Brotherhood members, and banned the organization from any political activity.

ESSAM EL ERIAN , Senior member of the Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt: What happened is a wave of arresting Muslim brothers, a wave of military courts for Muslim brothers, going to kill some of Muslim brothers under torture. They stopped all the free elections in all of their society and institutions. And this wave, in this manner, you open the doors of hell for the violent groups who were hidden underground—and stopped the moderates, open the door for the violence.

VO: For Ayman Zawahiri, this was a dramatic confirmation of his belief that the Western system of democracy was a corrupt sham. Groups of radical Islamists who had developed his theories into even more extreme forms now set out to create violent revolutions in Algeria and Egypt. It would be the start of a *jihad* that would liberate the Muslim world from corruption.

OSAMA BIN-LADEN (speaking in Arabic, subtitled): The only way to eradicate the humiliation and Kufr that has overcome the land of Islam is *Jihad*, bullets, and martyrdom operations.

KEPEL : Bin-Laden and the others started, from now on, to wage their own *jihad*, i.e. not to compromise, not to try to compromise with more moderate groups, but thinking that an armed vanguard would be able to implement the seizing of power. They were convinced that they could duplicate the Afghan victory, quote-unquote victory, that they could establish an Islamist state in Algeria, in Egypt, and the like. They thought that would capture the hearts and minds of of the Muslim masses, that people realize that the strength and victory were on the side of the *jihadis*.

[TITLE : AMERICA 1991]

VO: At this same time, in Washington, the other group who believed that they had brought down the Soviet Union—the neoconservatives—were also determined to push on with their revolutionary agenda. They were convinced that the Soviet Union was just one of many evil régimes in the world led by tyrants that threatened America. Régimes they had to conquer to liberate the world and spread democracy.

MICHAEL LEDEEN , Neoconservative theorist: We want, you know, down with tyranny. We want free countries. We think that America is better off if we live in a world primarily populated with free countries, who have to appeal to their own people for the source of their power, and to ratify their decisions. And we think that if the whole world were like that, then we would be much more secure, and that typically we were attacked by tyrants. I think it's America's destiny, because I think that America's always going to come under attack from tyrants. So I think that our only choice is whether we're going to win or lose, and when we will fight, and under what circumstances, but that we're gonna have to fight. That's automatic, because they're gonna come after us.

VO: One of the most evil of these tyrants, the neoconservatives decided, was Saddam Hussein. In the 1980s, Saddam had been America's close ally. But in 1990, he invaded Kuwait. The neoconservatives now saw him as a key to pursuing the next stage of their transformation of the world. An American-led coalition had been created by President Bush senior, to liberate Kuwait. But the neoconservatives, like Paul Wolfowitz, who was Undersecretary of Defense, wanted to push on to Baghdad,

and bring about a transformation of the Middle East. It would fulfill America's unique role to defeat evil in the world.

Professor STEPHEN HOLMES , Political Philosopher: You see already, in 1991, the hopes of Wolfowitz and others, that the battle against Saddam Hussein, or other petty tyrants, could take the place of the battle against the Soviet Union, and could bear this interpretation of a battle between good and evil. So, what you're seeing is the attempt to keep alive the idea that America is engaged in a battle of pure good against pure evil, and to preserve that framework for a world after the end of the Soviet Union.

VO: But President Reagan was no longer in charge. The neoconservatives now had a leader who did not share their vision.

President GEORGE HW BUSH : Kuwait is liberated. Iraq's army is defeated. Our military objectives are met. And I am pleased to announce that all United States and Coalition forces will suspend combat operations.

VO: Once Kuwait was freed, Bush ordered the fighting to stop. His view was that America's role was to create stability in the world, not to try and change it. Like Henry Kissinger, who had been the enemy of the neoconservatives in the 1970s, Bush saw questions of good and evil as irrelevant. The higher aim was to achieve a stable balance of power in the Middle East.

BRENT SCOWCROFT , National Security Adviser to President George Bush Snr., Interviewed in 1996: Saddam Hussein is not a threat to his neighbors. He's a nuisance; he's an annoyance; but he's not a threat. That we achieved. It was never our objective to get Saddam Hussein. Indeed, had we tried, we still might be occupying Baghdad. That would have turned a great success into a very messy probably defeat.

VO: In private, the neoconservatives like Paul Wolfowitz were furious. Not just because Saddam Hussein had been left in power, but because they saw this as a clear expression of the corrupt liberal values that dominated America—a moral relativism that was prepared to compromise with the forces of evil in the world.

HOLMES : Wolfowitz' anger is fundamentally an anger against the weakness of American liberalism: the compromising nature of a man like George Bush senior. His willingness to make concessions, to negotiate, not to drive to the bitter end. And his anger is motivated, interestingly, less by hatred of Saddam Hussein, than by hatred of American liberals, who are a source of weakness, and a source of rot, and a source of relativism, that had been corroding American society for decades.

VO: Faced by this defeat, the neoconservative movement now turned inwards, to try and defeat the forces of liberalism that were holding it back. And to do this, they turned again to the theories of Leo Strauss. Strauss believed that good politicians should reassert the absolute moral values that would unite society, and this would overcome the moral relativism that liberalism created. One of the most influential Straussians was the new assistant to the Vice-President, William Kristol.

WILLIAM KRISTOL , Chief of Staff to the Vice President, 1988-92: For Strauss, liberalism produced a decent way of life, and one that he thought was worth defending, but a dead end where nothing could be said to be true; one had no

guidance on how to live, everything was relative. Strauss suggests that maybe we didn't just have to sit there and accept that that was our fate. Politics could help shape the way people live, that politics could help shape the way that people live, teach them some good lessons about living decent and noble human lives. And can we think about what cultures, and what politics, what social orders produce more admirable human beings? I mean, that whole question was put back on the table by Strauss, I think.

VO: The neoconservatives set out to reform America. And at the heart of their project was the political use of religion. Together with their long-term allies, the religious right, they began a campaign to bring moral and religious issues back into the center of conservative politics. It became known as the "culture wars."

[TITLE : Christian Coalition commercial]

VO (on commercial) : Your tax dollars are being used to sponsor obscene and pornographic displays.

PAT ROBERTSON : I don't like Jesus Christ, who is my Lord and Savior, being dumped in a vat of urine by a homosexual, and then have my money to pay for it! I think that's obscene.

ROBERTSON : Satan, be gone! Out from this [unintelligible]! C'mon!

VO: For the religious right, this campaign was a genuine attempt to renew the religious basis of American society. But for the neoconservatives, religion was a myth, like the myth of America as a unique nation that they had promoted in the Cold War. Strauss had taught that these myths were necessary to give ordinary people meaning and purpose, and so ensure a stable society.

TV COMMERCIAL MOM : Do you ever worry that they're playing too much Nintendo?

MOM 2 : Oh, not anymore. See, Matt has *Bible Adventures*. They're actually learning Bible stories while they're playing Nintendo.

MICHAEL LIND , Journalist and former neoconservative: For the neoconservatives, religion is an instrument of promoting morality. Religion becomes what Plato called a "noble lie." It is a myth which is told to the majority of the society by the philosophical elite in order to ensure social order.

ANNOUNCER ON CHRISTIAN FITNESS COMMERCIAL : What better way to enjoy God's creation than a Praise Walk?

[TITLE : INTEGRITY MUSIC FITNESS]

LIND : In being a kind of secretive elitist approach, Straussianism does resemble Marxism. These ex-Marxists, or in some cases ex-liberal Straussians, could see themselves as a kind of Leninist group, you know, who have this covert vision which they want to use to effect change in history, while concealing parts of it from people incapable of understanding it.

VO: Out of this campaign, a new and powerful moral agenda began to take over the Republican Party. It reached a dramatic climax at the Republican Convention in 1992,

when the religious right seized control of the party's policy-making machinery. George Bush became committed to running for President with policies that would ban abortion, gay rights, and multiculturalism. Speakers who tried to promote the traditional conservative values of individual freedom were booed off the stage.

WILLIAM WELD , Republican Governor of Massachusetts : I happen to think that individual freedom should extend to a woman's right to choose.

CONVENTION DELEGATES : (whistles and boos)

WELD : I want the government out of your pocketbook and your bedroom!

VO: For the neoconservatives, the aim of this new morality was to unite the nation. But in fact, it had completely the opposite effect. Mainstream Republican voters were frightened away by the harsh moralism that had taken over their party. They turned instead to Bill Clinton, a politician who connected with their real concerns and needs, like tax and the state of the economy.

DIANE BLAIR , Clinton Campaign : In the week after the Republican Convention, Republican moderates, young people, and particularly women saying, "I've been sort of torn between the two parties, but where do I sign up to help Clinton get elected? I am frightened by this ultraconservative agenda that I hear coming out of Houston."

BOB MATERA : I've been a lifelong Republican. I'm a registered Republican. I am voting for Bill Clinton this time. Enough is enough. It is time for a change.

VO: At the end of 1992, Bill Clinton won a dramatic victory. But the neoconservatives were determined to regain power. And to do this, they were going to do to Bill Clinton what they had done to the Soviet Union: they would transform the President of the United States into a fantasy enemy, an image of evil that would make people realize the truth of the liberal corruption of America.

[TITLE : ALGERIA 1992 / June 1992]

UNIDENTIFIED POLITICIAN (speaking in Arabic, subtitled): We realize that other nations have surpassed us. In what? In knowledge. And Islam—

[GUNSHOTS , CHAOS]

VO: In the early '90s, Algeria, Egypt, and other Arab countries were being torn apart by a horrific wave of Islamist terror. The jihadists who had returned from Afghanistan were trying to topple the régimes. At the heart of their strategy was the idea that Ayman Zawahiri and others had taught them: that those who were involved in politics could legitimately be killed, because they had become corrupted and thus were no longer Muslims. This violence, they believed, would shock people into rising up, and the corrupt régimes would then be overthrown.

ABDULLAH ANAS , Member of the Political Council, Islamic Salvation Front, Algeria 1993: "They must die!" Not only "must die," they DID kill. They did kill people. Not just any—it's not just an idea from far, it became true. People were killed.

[TITLE : 4th June 1993]

ANAS : Many many rulers; many many holy men; many many scholars; many many politicians in Islamic world have been killed because of these ideas. Why? Because

simply they are against the Koran. They rejected the Koran. Why they rejected the Koran? Because they did elect.

VO: Ayman Zawahiri was now based with bin-Laden on this farm in the Sudan. He used it as a base for his group, Islamic Jihad, to launch attacks on politicians in Egypt. But as one of the leading ideologues of the revolution, he also traveled throughout the Arab world, advising other groups on their strategy. But the revolutionaries soon found that the masses did not rise up and follow them. The régimes stayed in power, and the radical Islamists were hunted down. Faced by this, the Islamists widened their terror. Their logic was brutal: it was not just those who were involved with politics who should be killed, but the ordinary people who supported it. Their refusal to rise up showed that they, too, had become corrupted, and so had condemned themselves to death.

Dr. AZZAM TAMIMI , Institute of Islamic Political Thought: There was definitely a logic. The logic is that you assault the leaders, you assault those who are associated with them, and eventually you assault the people who have consented to the presence of such a despotic leader, even if they are passively supportive through their silence. And then you start attacking economic institutions, you start attacking the tourists, because the tourists bring money to the country, and that money goes into the pockets of the corrupt élite. So, it is an endless process.

VO: In Algeria, this logic went completely out of control. The Islamist revolutionary groups killed thousands of civilians, because they believed that all these people had become corrupted.

MAN (speaking in Arabic, subtitled): All these innocents, what did they ever do? Legs blown off! Such horror! Even the French extremists never did things like this. Why? What have we done? What have our children done? Leave me alone! I want to die!

VO: In turn, the generals running Algeria infiltrated the revolutionary groups. They told their agents to persuade the Islamists to push the logic even further, to kill even more people. This would create such horror that the groups would lose any remaining support, and the generals could use the fear and revulsion to increase their grip on power.

ANAS : The generals infiltrated the *jihad* ideas, the *jihad* groups, to put the society under fear. By creating terror and violence, [unintelligible] everything in the society, no politic, no economy, no everything, just to stay and saying to the West, "we are facing terror."

INTERVIEWER (off-camera): Using fear.

ANAS : Using fear to stay on the power.

MAN WITH GUN (speaking in French, subtitled): Today they kill, they kill everybody: innocent people, children, old people. They have even cut up their victims. Who will trust them if tomorrow they take power?

DEMONSTRATORS (shouting in French, subtitled): Down with fundamentalism! Down with fundamentalism!

VO: By 1997, the Islamist revolution was failing. There were mass demonstrations against the Islamist groups by thousands of people horrified by the violence. And

then, in June of that year, a group of Egyptian Islamists attacked Western tourists at the ruins of Luxor. 58 were killed in three hours of random violence. The massacre shocked the Egyptian people, and the leaders of the revolutionary groups agreed to call a cease-fire. In Algeria, a few groups held out. But they began to tear each other apart, as they followed the logic that had driven their revolution to its ultimate—and logical—end: they started to kill each other.

TAMIMI : It led to their own destruction. A group that believes in 100% pure Muslim will not see that purity in anybody else but themselves. So whoever disagrees with them becomes the enemy, becomes out of the House of Islam, and then if they happen to disagree with each other themselves, then they will start liquidating each other. And they keep fighting each other; there will be infighting. Eventually it ends in suicide.

VO: The main Islamist group in Algeria, the GIA, ended up being led by a Mr. Zouabri, a chicken farmer, who killed everyone who disagreed with him. He issued a final communiqué, declaring that the whole of Algerian society should be killed, with the exception of his tiny remaining band of Islamists. They were the only ones who understood the truth.

[TITLE : AMERICA 1996]

VO: By the mid-'90s, politics in Washington was dominated by one issue: the moral character of the President of the United States.

WOMAN IN TV COMMERCIAL : If you believe you've been a victim of sexual harassment by the President, we want to help.

VO: Behind this were an extraordinary barrage of allegations against Clinton that were obsessing the media. These included stories of sexual harassment; stories that Clinton and his wife were involved in Whitewater, a corrupt property deal; stories that they had murdered their close friend Vince Foster; and stories that Clinton was involved in smuggling drugs from a small airstrip in Arkansas. But none of these stories were true. All of them had been orchestrated by a young group of neoconservatives, who were determined to destroy Clinton. The campaign was centered on a small right-wing magazine called the *American Spectator*, which had set up what was called the "Arkansas Project" to investigate Clinton's past life. The journalist at the center of this project was called David Brock.

CROSSFIRE ANNOUNCER : Tonight, the Arkansas allegations. In the crossfire: David Brock, of the *American Spectator* magazine.

DAVID BROCK : She was dressed in a raincoat and a hat, and came in at 5:15 in the morning, and had a liaison with Clinton in the game room in the bottom floor of the Governor's mansion.

CROSSFIRE HOST : David, this is getting a little bizarre. Next thing, we're gonna see... Jane Fonda's gonna...

BROCK : It's bizarre! But hey, Bill Clinton is a bizarre guy.

HOST : Wait a sec.

VO: Since then, Brock has turned against the neoconservative movement. He now believes that the attacks on Clinton went too far, and corrupted conservative politics.

INTERVIEWER (off-camera): Was Whitewater true?

BROCK : No! I mean, there was no criminal wrongdoing in Whitewater. Absolutely not. It was a land deal that the Clintons lost money on. It was a complete inversion of what happened.

INTERVIEWER : Was Vince Foster killed?

BROCK : No. He killed himself.

INTERVIEWER : Did the Clintons smuggle drugs?

BROCK : Absolutely not.

INTERVIEWER : Did those promoting these stories know that this was not true, that none of these stories were true?

BROCK : They did not care.

INTERVIEWER : Why not?

BROCK : Because they were having a devastating effect. So why stop? It was terrorism. Political terrorism.

INTERVIEWER : But you were one of the agents.

BROCK : Absolutely. Absolutely.

VO: The stories began to grip America, and despite Clinton's denials, the Republicans in Congress seized on the scandals and began to press for investigations into this immorality at the heart of government.

President BILL CLINTON : Basically, the press has editorialized and pressured the politicians into saying, "Here's a guy that as far as we know hasn't done anything wrong, nobody's accused him of doing anything wrong, there's no evidence that he's done anything wrong, but we think the presumption of guilt almost should be on him. You should somehow prove his innocence."

VO: Out of this pressure, Clinton was forced to agree to an independent investigation into Whitewater. It was headed by a senior judge in Washington called Kenneth Starr. But what was not widely known was that Starr was a member of a right-wing group of lawyers called the Federalist Society, that had financial and ideological links to the neoconservatives. And like the neoconservatives, they saw Clinton as a danger to the country, and they were determined to prove this to the American people.

Judge ROBERT BORK , Senior member, Federalist Society: In the Merck manual—Merck is a pharmaceutical company—they have a manual listing various disorders, and they listed "sociopath." And if you look at "sociopath," it describes Clinton exactly. Somebody who's charming, who has no particular feeling at all for the people he's charming, unable to resist instant gratification, and so on and so on. Goes right down the list. We had a very dysfunctional man in the Presidency. That was very

dangerous, both as a model and as, if a crisis had arisen, I had no confidence that he would meet it.

VO: But despite all his efforts, Kenneth Starr could find no incriminating evidence in Whitewater. Nor could he find any evidence to support any of the sexual scandals that had come from the Arkansas Project. Until finally, his committee stumbled upon Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky, which Clinton denied. And in that lie, the neoconservative movement believed they had found what they had been looking for: a way to make the American people see the truth about the liberal corruption of their country. A campaign now began to impeach the President. And in the hysteria, the whole conservative movement portrayed Clinton as a depraved monster who had to be removed from office. But yet again, the neoconservatives had created a fantasy enemy by exaggerating and distorting reality.

JOE CONASON , Author 'The Hunting of the President' : They were trapped by a mythological person that they had constructed, or persons—the Clintons, these scheming, terrible people who they, the noble pursuers, were going to vanquish. I think, in the leadership of conservatism, during the Clinton era there was an element of corruption. There was an element of a willingness to do anything to achieve the goal of bringing Clinton down. There was a way in which the people who perceived Clinton as immoral behaved immorally themselves. They ended up behaving worse than the people who they were attacking.

VO: But all the moral fury, and the deception, came to nothing. The impeachment failed because the polls consistently showed that Americans still did not care about these moral issues. One leading neoconservative, William Bennett, wrote a book called *The Death of Outrage*, which blamed the people. He accused the public of making a deal with the devil. Their failure, he said, to support the impeachment, was evidence of their moral corruption.

[TITLE : AFGHANISTAN 1997]

VO: By 1997, bin-Laden and Ayman Zawahiri had returned to Afghanistan, where they had first met ten years before. Back then, it had seemed as if Islamism might succeed as a popular revolutionary movement. But now, they were facing failure. All attempts to topple régimes in the Arab world had not succeeded. The people had turned against them because of the horrific violence, and Afghanistan was the only place they had left to go.

GILLES KEPEL , Historian of the Islamist Movement: Well, 1997 was their failure. Egypt, Algeria; it worked nowhere. It went wrong because populations would not back them. Because even people who were sympathetic to them in the beginning were frightened away by their violence, by their incapacity to communicate and to have access to the people, and this was very clear in Zawahiri's book *Knights under the Prophet's Banner*, where he sort of goes back from this experiment, and laments over their incapacity to raise the consciousness of the masses, and feels that, you know, as a vanguard they did not manage to communicate. They remained isolated, and this is why they failed. And this is when they started this new strategy.

VO: In May, 1998, bin-Laden and Zawahiri invited a group of journalists to this press conference, where they announced a new *jihad*. Zawahiri was convinced that it was not their theories that were to blame for the failure; it was the fault of the Muslim masses. Their minds had been corrupted by the liberal ideas from the West. But

rather than give up, they believed that the solution was to attack the source of the corruption directly. The new *jihad* would be against America itself.

MAN (reading from paper): As I mentioned before, we focus our efforts to fight against the Jews and Christians or Americans. We have no objection against any party or any person who fights Americans all over the world. And we want to carry it out within the war against Americans. America will be defeated. Americans know our power, and...

VO: This was a strategy of desperation, born out of failure by a small group whose revolution had failed. And the anger that came from that failure was about to be directed at the United States. What Zawahiri and bin-Laden were about to do would dramatically affect the future of the neoconservative movement. By 1998, all their attempts to transform America by creating a moral revolution had failed. Faced with the indifference of the people, the neoconservatives had become marginalized, in both domestic and foreign policy. But with the attacks that were about to hit America, the neoconservatives would at last find the evil enemy that they had been searching for ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union. And in their reaction to the attacks, the neoconservatives would transform the failing Islamist movement into what would appear to be the grand revolutionary force that Zawahiri had always dreamed of. But much of it would exist only in people's imaginations. It would be the next phantom enemy.

[END CREDITS]