

The Power of Nightmares: The Phantom Victory
The Power of Nightmares continues its assessment of whether the threat from a hidden and organised terrorist network is an illusion. Part two, the Phantom Victory looks at how two groups, radical Islamists and neo-conservatives with seemingly opposing ideologies came together to defeat a common enemy.

THE POWER OF NIGHTMARES

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On 25 December 1979, Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan.

Moscow was able to install a friendly government in a neighbouring country but at a price.

The invasion gave a common cause to an extraordinary alliance of radical Islamists in Afghanistan and around the world and to the neo-conservatives in the US.

It was a key battleground of the Cold War.

Washington provided money and arms including even Stinger missiles capable of shooting down Soviet helicopters.

But it was Islamic Mujahideen fighters who would fire them.

Among the many foreigners drawn to Afghanistan was a young, wealthy Saudi called Osama Bin Laden.

Long before 9/11, he would have been seen by neo-conservatives in Washington as one of their foot soldiers, helping fight America's cause.

After nearly 10 years of fighting, Soviet troops pulled out of Afghanistan.

Both the neo-conservatives and the Islamists believed that it is they who defeated the "evil empire" and now had the power to transform the world.

But both failed in their revolutions.

In response, the neo-conservatives invented a new fantasy enemy, Bill Clinton, focusing on the scandal surrounding him and Monica Lewinsky.

Meanwhile, the Islamists descend into a desperate cycle of violence and terror to try to persuade the people to follow them.

Out of all this comes the seeds of the strange world of fantasy, deception, violence and fear in which we now live.

The Power of Nightmares, the second episode of a three part series was broadcast on Wednesday, 27 October 2004 at 2100 BST on BBC Two with The Phantom Victory.

THE POWER OF NIGHTMARES

Part II: The Phantom Victory

Wednesday 27 October

2100 BST on BBC Two

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The Power of Nightmares: Baby It's Cold Outside

Should we be worried about the threat from organised terrorism or is it simply a phantom menace being used to stop society from falling apart?[Click here to send us your comments](#)

In the past our politicians offered us dreams of a better world. Now they promise to protect us from nightmares.

The most frightening of these is the threat of an international terror network. But just as the dreams were not true, neither are these nightmares.

In a new series, the Power of Nightmares explores how the idea that we are threatened by a hidden and organised terrorist network is an illusion.

It is a myth that has spread unquestioned through politics, the security services and the international media.

At the heart of the story are two groups: the American neo-conservatives and the radical Islamists.

Both were idealists who were born out of the failure of the liberal dream to build a better world.

These two groups have changed the world but not in the way either intended.

“ Those with the darkest fears became the most powerful

”

Together they created today's nightmare vision of an organised terror network.

A fantasy that politicians then found restored their power and authority in a disillusioned age. Those with the darkest fears became the most powerful.

The rise of the politics of fear begins in 1949 with two men whose radical ideas would inspire the attack of 9/11 and influence the neo-conservative movement that dominates Washington.

Both these men believed that modern liberal freedoms were eroding the bonds that held society together.

The two movements they inspired set out, in their different ways, to rescue their societies from this decay. But in an age of growing disillusion with politics, the neo-conservatives turned to fear in order to pursue their vision.

They would create a hidden network of evil run by the Soviet Union that only they could see.

The Islamists were faced by the refusal of the masses to follow their dream and began to turn to terror to force the people to "see the truth".

The Power of Nightmares, a three part series begins on Wednesday, 20 October 2004 at 2100 BST on BBC Two with Baby It's Cold Outside.



THE POWER OF NIGHTMARES

Three part series

Wednesdays from 20 October

2100 BST on BBC Two

[I: Baby It's Cold Outside](#)

[II: The Phantom Victory](#)

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THE POWER OF NIGHTMARES

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The Power of Nightmares: The Shadows In The Cave

The Power of Nightmares assesses whether the threat from a hidden and organised terrorist network is an illusion. In the concluding part of the series, the programme explains how the illusion was created and who benefits from it.

THE POWER OF NIGHTMARES

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In the wake of the shock and panic created by the devastating attack on the World Trade Center on 11 September, 2001, the neo-conservatives reconstructed the radical Islamists in the image of their last evil enemy, the Soviet Union - a sinister web of terror run from the centre by Osama Bin Laden in his lair in Afghanistan.

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THE POWER OF NIGHTMARES

Part III: Shadows In The Cave

Wednesday, 3 November, 2004

2100 GMT on BBC Two

[I: Baby It's Cold Outside](#)[II: The Phantom Victory](#)[III: The Shadows In The Cave](#)

There are dangerous and fanatical individuals and groups around the world who have been inspired by extreme Islamist ideas, and who will use the techniques of mass terror - the attacks on America and Madrid make this only too clear.

But the nightmare vision of a uniquely powerful hidden organisation waiting to strike our societies is an illusion.

Wherever one looks for this al-Qaeda organisation, from the mountains of Afghanistan to the "sleepers cells" in America, the British and Americans are chasing a phantom enemy.

But the reason that no-one questions the illusion is because this nightmare enemy gives so many groups new power and influence in a cynical age - and not just politicians.

Those with the darkest imaginations have now become the most powerful.

In part one, the programme looked at the origins of the neo-conservatives and the radical Islamists in the 1950s.

The second part of the series examined how the radical Islamists and neo-conservatives came together to defeat the Soviet Union in Afghanistan.

The Power of Nightmares, the final episode of the three part series will be broadcast on Wednesday, 3 November 2004 at 2100 GMT on BBC Two with The Shadows In The Cave.

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[World](#) [E-mail this to a friend](#) [Printable version](#)[UK](#) The Power of Nightmares: Your comments[England](#) **The Power of Nightmares examines how politicians have used our fears to increase their power and control over society. It looks at the American neo-conservative movement and its depiction of the threat first from the Soviet Union and then from radical Islamists.**[Northern Ireland](#)[Scotland](#)[Wales](#)[Business](#)[Politics](#)[Health](#)[Education](#)[Science/Nature](#)[Technology](#)[Entertainment](#)[Have Your Say](#)[Magazine](#)[In Pictures](#)[Week at a Glance](#)[Country Profiles](#)[In Depth](#)[Programmes](#)[Click here to send us your comments](#)

Part one, [Baby It's Cold Outside](#), traces the origins of the modern neo-conservative and radical Islamist movements in the post-war period, how they both saw modern liberal freedoms as a threat to society and how the Soviet Union was represented as "the evil empire".

The second programme, [The Phantom Victory](#) explores how the two groups with seemingly opposing ideologies, the radical Islamists and neo-conservatives, came together to fight and defeat Soviet forces in Afghanistan.

Finally, [The Shadows In The Cave](#), looks at how in the wake of the attacks on the World Trade Center, the neo-conservatives reconstructed the radical Islamists in the image of their last evil enemy, the Soviet Union - a sinister web of terror run from the centre by Osama Bin Laden in his lair in Afghanistan. And asks who benefits from this?

There have been well over 1,000 comments about the series and a selection of these are shown below, reflecting the balance and range of views we have received.

[Click here to read a second page of your comments](#)**Your comments:**

The Englishman William Ockham (Ockham's razor) would be proud. Adam Curtis has fit the pieces together nicely. Thankyou.
Tom, Santa Fe, NM

I add my voice to the others before me. I, too, was directed to this programme on an American website, and I have, in turn, tipped off my (college-level) Religious Studies students. "The Power of Nightmares" programme will be required watching in Fall 2005 when my new course on World Religions is launched.
Melanie Mineo, Westhampton, NY

Your readers should know about an article entitled "Did North Korea cheat?" by Selig Harrison, in the journal, Foreign Affairs where he develops the argument that something quite similar has been happening with regard to North Korea and its presumed enriched uranium programme.
Chuck Cliff, Copenhagen

I watched this documentary in a sociology class and was thrilled that finally someone was saying what I had been suspicious of all along. As a college student, I have been increasingly angered by the political policy in this country and The Power of Nightmares to me is a priceless piece of work. This is a documentary that everyone - especially Americans - should see.



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Kelly O'Dell, Laramie, Wyoming

Although this is brilliant, the documentary suffers from a similar malady to one it condemns, simplicity. I understand this is necessary for storytelling, however the return of the neo-cons wasn't so much due to 9/11. They were already in power, due to a potentially stolen election, and had been desperate for such power and had proven so with their forming of the "project for a new American century" and their letter as such to then President Bill Clinton in 1998 to attack Iraq. This was always their plan, and 9/11 became their tool. They were/are well aware of the global rise in demand for oil, the rise in the cost of supply, and the potential global power which comes with dominating these diminishing resources necessary for the economy of the past - the industrial, take to waste economy based on natural resources. But, I guess that would be its own documentary. Great work explaining the phenomenon of fundamentalism on both sides!!!

Patrick Kennedy, Dallas, Texas

This series is one that every American should be forced to see. It is an eye-opening, slap in the face not only to the ignorant American public, but also to two-faced, deceptive politicians everywhere. A documentary using overemphasis and clear delineations on how fear is used as a tool to rule was well overdue. Thank you. Well done.

Luman Walters, Syracuse

The culture of fear that has steadily grown over the years in nearly every aspect of our daily lives reached its apotheosis on September 11, 2001. This obsession with risk and danger has gone virtually unchallenged in the media reporting of our daily lives year after year after year. It has become so woven into our society that no business, no legal institution or government department has remained un-touched. The events of September 11 were a response to this, as well as an invitation to our society, now so indoctrinated with this fear, to respond with predictable paranoid hysteria. It amazes me that a documentary, which can no doubt be discussed and criticised for many failings, should be so heavily attacked by so many desperate people for its bravery in putting forward an argument that did nothing but present a point of view in opposition to what our media and our government have been telling us for years.

Joseph James, Bath

I would like to congratulate the BBC and Adam Curtis on a thoughtful and thought-provoking series. The BBC must continue to produce and support this type of questioning and analytical journalism, simply because there is virtually no one else left in the world you could or would make this programme. People will misunderstand what Curtis was saying: he never claimed there isn't international terrorism, simply that there is not an organised network led by Bin Laden. The US don't want to admit this because it would take such a fundamental change in their policy. This was brave journalism and does require a bit of a 'leap of faith' from the viewer, and I'm sure many will be quick to dismiss the arguments put forward.

What shocked me most was how much of modern political history I was entirely unaware of because it appears to have never been reported before. I feel BBC News needs to reassess how it covers politics. What the documentary did best, and what the news is often very bad(!) at is asking the question "Why". The news is so preoccupied with what is happening. They struggle to explain why these things happen. Why have I only just found out that Bin Laden only used the term "Al Qaeda" after he heard the Americans use it?

Politicians now attempt to shape our reality but the media also has a crucial role in filtering and critically assessing the politicians' views. The media has become so obsessed with sleaze that wider and more complex issues get lost. You just need to look at the new "60 second" bulletin for evidence of how the news focuses simply on what is happening with not enough of this documentary's insight and analysis. Please BBC remember that producing documentaries of this calibre is your most vital role in today's scary world.

Andy Heather, Darlington

There's not much I could add here without echoing others' comments, but to say that this programme should've been shown in the US for educational purposes. I'm astounded by it's depth - this is the most detailed exposé on Straussian utopians' intrigues in American politics I have yet seen. The American public failed to pay any

“ I watched this documentary in a sociology class and was thrilled that finally someone was saying what I had been suspicious of all along ”

Kelly O'Dell, Laramie, Wyoming

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attention to it and happily lets these nihilists draw their own grim future. An atavistic instinct of fear usurped the one to question the authority, which - very much like in the 1930's - can be easily dismissed as "unpatriotic".

Rod, Chicago, IL

I thought the series was great. I watched it in tandem with Jonathon Dimbleby's "The New World War" on ITV, which made both programmes even more relevant and informative. They complemented one another. The point the series basically seemed to make was that those in power or craving power can manipulate the masses into believing what they want us to believe in order to hold onto or obtain power. The truth I gained from both shows is that the problems of the world (be they real, imaginary, manipulated or otherwise) are linked together ie global terrorism, global poverty and global warming.

Cristian Ramis, Southend-on-Sea

I really enjoyed this documentary series. I do accept that it was one-sided. However, it is necessary to be one-sided if you want to question existence of the "threat of global terrorism". This is because the news media takes the threat of Al-Qaeda for granted. I would like to see more investigative journalism like this that questions these received wisdoms. And another thing! Why is it that MPs never question whether UK is really in more danger since September 11th? Everybody in the House of Commons takes it for granted that we live in a more dangerous world than we did before. When was this proved and who proved it?

Ben Hughes, Somerset

The Truth will always be revealed. Thanks for starting us on that path.

Paul, London

In the 30 odd years I have been living in the UK this is by far the most open and so well researched program on such a topic. It has been widely know and for many years that politics are driven by big business, but was never stated so openly. There is of course a terrorist threat, but it was courageous for the BBC to show that it is led and driven by the superpowers.

Saddam and Bin Laden are the product of the CIA who used them when they needed and demonised them afterwards when their value to the USA diminished, or they did not toe the line. US politics are driven by commerce and the UK are following in their footsteps willingly. The biggest terrorism is in fact from the superpowers who invade countries for flimsy reasons, that they manufacture anyway, and depose freely elected presidents if the policies of that country does not suit them.

Who has used weapons of mass destruction so far? USA. Also who wiped an entire ethnic population to grab land? USA. Is this a good base to claim higher moral ground that people like Bush posture from? Is the UK much better with its colonialist past and behaviour in Aden, Sudan and many other parts of the world? Bravo to the Beeb for having, once again, shown that decent programmes can be made, and more importantly, that there is a public keen to watch and appreciate something other than voyeurism telly.

Kader Ziriati, London

A fantastic documentary, the best so far in addressing how psychology is being used by a few to control the many! Using fear is not something new. There are lots of examples from history, the Spanish Inquisition, the rise of Adolph Hitler and the Nazis are two examples from the many. When I was studying psychology at university I found that some theories which were called "rubbish" by the psychology powers that be i.e. Freud's theories, were used to great effect by private and/or government agencies. This documentary has shown to date the largest application of psychology in the last 200 years. To finish on an ironic note, anyone who has ever wanted to achieve success has always been told: "If a way does not exist, make one"! This is I believe what the underlying message of these three programmes was, politicians finding a way to control the masses.

Tom Chrysostomou, London

“ A fantastic documentary, the best so far in addressing how psychology is being used by a few to control the many ”

Tom Chrysostomou, London

I was just wondering how the creators of "The Power of Nightmares" series can justify their claims that the terrorist threat is an illusion, when there is so much evidence to contradict those claims. All one has to do is observe the deteriorating situation in Iraq, Afghanistan and many of the worlds' hotspots to see that there is a great terrorist threat. What is more, Blair and Bush have never implied that Al-Qaeda is the sole source of this threat, nor have they and the Neo-Conservatives been the only people trying to highlight this threat. Pakistan (an Islamic country) has made it

quite clear through its gathering of intelligence via espionage activities, that there is a terrorist threat numbering hundreds of thousands, stationed globally. Despite these blatant inaccuracies, I found this to be a very interesting piece of anti-Republican propaganda by a Social Democrat.

Matthew Winfield, Pershore

A fascinating but unfortunately rather deliberately blinkered portrait of a selective part of the truth. How could a three hour documentary not once mention the driving force behind most of the West's evil machinations - the greed of

over-powered corporations and their total influence over the US government? How

could it gloss over the very real and stated reasons for Bin Laden's crusade - the plight of the Palestinians and other occupied and oppressed peoples in the Middle East? The facts uncovered and reiterated by this programme alone make it necessary viewing for anybody with an interest in the mess the world is in, but the premises and conclusion leave much to be desired. The programme itself could be accused of being part of a sinister conspiracy - the diversion of people's minds away from the fight against global capitalism.

Mark, Sheffield

“ **How could it gloss over the very real and stated reasons for Bin Laden's crusade - the plight of the Palestinians** ”

Mark, Sheffield

It would be churlish not to praise many elements in this series, and the archive research especially. Also, I am sure it is not easy to reach the programme's conclusions in the current climate, both internationally and inside the BBC. That said, however, I found the theme vaguely implausible. Are we really expected to believe that we have our current American empire solely because of the neo-con influence? Even I find it hard to subscribe to that theory. Isn't it really about how corporate elites, ie "big business", want to shape our futures and spread the wonders of the free market whatever the cost to the planet and relations between nations and cultures. A little more sophistication would be appreciated - though, I dare say, would not be broadcastable.

Jonathan Cook, Nazareth, Israel

It is difficult to know who to believe, but to me, Adam Curtis's explanation of events was far more coherent than the US/UK government's, and therefore more credible. (In addition he hasn't been caught misleading the public yet.)

Aidan, Nottingham

I found this program on an American website, and was so impressed I hope to share it with everyone I know. It was the first explanation (whether completely accurate or not) that truly seemed to make sense of the events unfolding around us. Particularly interesting to me was the depiction of the rise of neo-conservatism, and the belief of Strauss (or at least his

students) that they must advocate the national myth, but need not really believe what they espouse. It seems disturbingly similar to Orwell's concept of "double-think;" and as in "1984" the ruling class seems to both understand that the threat does not really exist - that it is to some degree manufactured - while at the same time honestly believing that it is real. I hope this program becomes available on DVD, and that follow-ups are planned; I am once again astounded at the quality of British television in comparison to all but a tiny selection of American programmes, and am very envious of those who have regular access to BBC programs.

Jon, Portland, Oregon

“ **I am once again astounded at the quality of British television in comparison to all but a tiny selection of American programmes** ”

Jon, Portland, Oregon

Definitions of "network" and official membership in particular organizations aside, Mr Curtis seems to have got at least the basic philosophical positions right. Here is a quote from a column in today's Washington Times, regarding the nomination of Ms Rice for Secretary of State, and the difficulties she will face: "The State Department is generally regarded as hidebound, slow to move and interested more in stability than in the export of freedom and other U.S. ideals." The basic ideological battle seems to be between realists and idealists, or perhaps more accurately, between realists and people who believe they can create their own reality.

Steven Sidman, Scarborough, Maine

Congratulations on a remarkably achieved documentary, especially given the climate of fear which has gripped the media itself. This is a very fine piece of investigative journalism of the highest quality. Please try to rebroadcast soon - it is of immense value and importance - and please also retain the early timeslot. This kind of programming is almost essential viewing. Alarming, totally compelling, a wake up

call of the most critical nature to our fast overwhelming culture of compliant media and spin. Very well done.

Eugene O'Reilly, Dublin

A fantastic documentary, integrating the political, psychological and historical components of the culture of fear. The naming of these nightmares made a powerful and positive programme, and challenges us to face our humanity and the reality of the world we live in.

Understanding something of the

bloodshed, torture and poverty that leads to fundamentalism is one thing, but this programme added an understanding of the West: the susceptibility to fear, need to be "good" and the projection of evil onto others. I thought it was great.

Robyn Vesev, Norwich

“ This programme added an understanding of the West: the susceptibility to fear, need to be "good" and the projection of evil onto others. I thought it was great ”

Thank you BBC2 & Adam Curtis for a most stimulating series that puts modern American & British politics firmly in its place. More so following the US elections which were devoid of any great visions (or policies) for the populace by either candidate, but degenerated into a battle of who could alleviate a nation of its fears the better. Ironically gay marriage and abortion seems to scare the "moral majority" more than terrorism does, nevertheless it was still a vote of fear (or negativity) that ultimately carried the day. A triumph of paranoia over understanding. Without vision there is no enlightenment, & America it would seem is now the undisputed leading light of the Western world in this respect.

Whatever transpires in the future, a decision or vote sponsored on blind fear is as questionable a decision as one based on hate. The Power of Nightmares is a wake up call, but, to those who refuse to think for themselves, who follow the political and social doctrines of the day, who in turn rubbish any voices of dissent as dangerous, misinformed and/or unpatriotic. Adam Curtis's views are likely to fall on deaf ears. Fear it would seem paralyses all reason.

Jess Fabian, Penzance

This TV series was another source of information. If you find it stimulating, whether through repulsion or attraction, you should inform yourself more. Read, research, discuss - then vote (in the election, obviously, wherever you're from).

Both sides of the argument are highly charged, reflected in audience reactions to any presentation both pro- and anti-war. It's good that different people are receptive to both sides, but a degree of healthy scepticism seems to be lacking from many comments here. This type of television is designed to inform and entertain. Which parts relate to which aim is for your judgement to call. But don't swallow everything you hear whole!

Charlie Taylor, Oxford

“ A degree of healthy scepticism seems to be lacking from many comments here ”

If accurate this series is the most important contribution to our democracy in decades. It cries out though for the other side, the fear mongers, to give their view and counterevidence. Yes the public is manipulated but how can I be sure that the evidence presented here is balanced, that the author has not left out essential "inconvenient data". The Islam scholar Gilles Keppe on whose views this series draws heavily is one of the foremost analysts in the field. But his approach has weaknesses too and these went unmentioned in this series.

One last point: Israel was entirely left out of the argument, even though the politics of fear were perfected over there, and even though many neo-cons are closely cooperating with people like Netanyahu, who I believe does not at all share the neo-con social agenda but who has first and foremost geopolitical designs.

Joris Luyendijk, Amsterdam

Most profound research and analysis. Letting it all come out of the horse's mouth lent huge credibility to the theme of illusion and self-deception. I hope public opinion will start to shift away from viewing Muslims as hell bent blood thirsty terrorists and that in a circular world, extremes do meet, even if most unpredictable at first. For the BBC to show this programme during prime time wipes away the tarnish of post-Hutton.

Ahmad, London

Is this supposed to be original? The propaganda technique of instilling fear into the populace in order to control it was most famously commented upon by Herman Goering. This series is an attempt to portray any public concerns or fears which tend to stand in the way of the PC steamroller, as manifestations of insanity.

This is typical of the left. Anyone who disagrees with them is insane, just like Stalin's Russia. Modern terror operates as a nexus, not as a network as did terrorist groups of the eighties. This is the age of the internet. Concrete connections and personal relationships are redundant. Freedom of information and travel in the computer age creates an environment for broad transgressive movements without clearly defined structure. It does not surprise me that the BBC have failed to notice this and instead pretends that, because the new terrorism does not conform to the modality of the old it does not exist.

Blaine Montgomery, Edinburgh

“ This is typical of the left. Anyone who disagrees with them is insane, just like Stalin's Russia ”

Blaine Montgomery, Edinburgh

While this fascinating and shrewdly insightful series, reminiscent of political satires such as GK Chesterton's 'The Man Who Was Thursday' and Philip K Dick's 'The Penultimate Truth', deserves to be widely seen, I suspect it wasn't intended to be taken at face value as The Real, Secret Truth About Our World (as though such a thing were possible) - rather as food-for-thought to help restore a much-needed sense of proportion. Perhaps it occasionally veers too close to conspiracy theory by underplaying the role of accident, ignorance and sheer human stupidity in international affairs, but, unlike so much TV, it does at least encourage the viewer to think and ask questions. Great stuff.

Richard, London

I am an American living in the UK and want to thank the BBC for "connecting some dots" that not only explains a few things about current US politics but also about this strange, new religiosity that is now strangling the US. I think I am now more afraid than ever! How do I get my friends and family in the US to watch?

Laurie Veninger, Lancashire

As one of the few remaining unbiased and uncensored bodies of information, it is vital that the BBC continue to expose the lies and machinations behind Republican power. It would however, also be pertinent at this point to explain the global economic imperialism and financial slavery that ensure an inexhaustible supply of damaged, desperate terrorist recruits.

K Page, London

This programme had as much relationship to reality as a Harry Potter novel. Apparently 9/11, Bali, Madrid, attacks on Christians in Iraq and Pakistan etc, are all fantasies whereas the so-called "Neo-Cons" are all too real and are the cause of today's problems. All this programme does is confirm the BBC as an anti-Bush, anti-Israel, anti-democracy pressure group for which we, the licence-payers, are forced to pay.

Andrew, Bournemouth

“ This programme had as much relationship to reality as a Harry Potter novel ”

Andrew, Bournemouth

An excellent and enthralling documentary. Many of the points to be quite frank, have been repeated many a time amongst the Muslim community ever since Sept 11th, only now people are beginning to believe the impossible. Please tell me how I can get a copy.

Majad Hussain, London

Interesting, but in many ways wrong. The American's reasons for creating its dossier on the Soviet Union's involvement in terrorism was largely to persuade the Saudis to overproduce oil in order to make the USSR's economy collapse (see Schweizer's 'Victory'). In fact there are many economic reasons for creating an imaginary enemy and the US administration is mainly guided by dollars not ideology.

Andrew, London

What a scary documentary to watch. The current action to curb "terrorism" by the free world, are in effect creating them. The so called nightmare may not currently truly exist in the West but it does exist in those who have to feel the end of the stick of the American and the 51st State of Great Britain's fight for "Freedom". The poor Iraqis, Afghanis and the thousands of innocent souls who are kept in prison in Guantanamo Bay and across the world.

A. Adhal, London

This was probably the most interesting programme I've seen in a while. It feels like my eyes have been opened to what is behind terrorism and the threat that we feel. I had never thought about the philosophies that were behind the fundamentalists (from both sides), and although I'd always found similarities between the two, it was fascinating to discover how similar they really are. Everyone knows that Bush rules

by a culture of fear, but what was really scary was the extent to which the media seems to support these ideas - and even in Britain. Why do they not state the research that was put forward in their news reports, and challenge the politicians with it?

Although this programme will have brought the material to many more people, saying these things on the news would make even more people aware of this. Isn't the news meant to show all sides of a situation?

“ What was scary was that I saw how much this culture of fear has got to me - I remember being afraid to use the Underground ”

Corinne Gurvitz, London

Secondly, what was also scary was that I saw how much this culture of fear has got to me - I remember being afraid to use the Underground when there was an apparent threat on it and staying away from central London for a while. I think that there should still be much caution, because there are groups out there who would carry out similar attacks like in Sept 11th, but the big issue that this programme raised was the question of where the caution ends and the unnecessary panic begins. How long will governments be able to keep us afraid? If the problem of terror is to be solved pre-emptively, then let's just all go to jail in case we might even think of something that's wrong - that way we'll all be safe. 'War is Peace' - 1984, anyone?

Corinne Gurvitz, London

While the documentary was well presented, it seemed to conclude quite naively the non existence of Al-Qaeda. In truth, the activities of these groups have existed for over a decade before Sept 11th, long before Bin Laden. The now scattered Taliban in Afghanistan, the Kashmiri militants in India, the "Jehadis" of Central

“ Call it Al-Qaeda or anything else, a powerful and a dangerous network does exist. And I say this because I have seen it in person ”

V. M., London

Asia (former USSR states) and the "tribals" in North Pakistan, are geographically, culturally and ideologically in fact part of that network. They have the deadliest of small arms, some of the most sophisticated communications networks and cadre based regimental military system. The American support to Taliban (when operating as freedom fighters from Soviet occupation) provided them with a huge manpower resource of men hardened by war, with a bleak future and an extreme Islamist ideology to turn to, coupled with Bin Laden's money and a global vision have catalysed a growing group that we know as Al-Qaeda. Whether they have a dirty bomb or not is speculative. What is not is the fact that they will (and I presume do) aggressively pursue to acquire and use these. It is true that the media has in fact served their purpose by excessively over-highlighting the twisted philosophy of hate, but its dramatic spread could only have been achieved with the existence of a network. Call it Al-Qaeda or anything else, a powerful and a dangerous network does exist. And I say this because I have seen it in person.

V. M., London

The Christian evangelists now seem to hold power in the US, whilst if Iraq held its elections today then the Islamic Clerics would get all the votes. I despair that the world still seems to be governed by religions created millennia ago by half-literate desert-dwelling goat-herders. Great programme by the way!

Jon McCrae, Bolton

Well done Adam Curtis. Like Century of the Self, an excellent attempt to unravel a complex subject often obscured by ludicrous journalism. I'm sure it is much closer to the truth than most of what is dished up. However, it did seem to have one glaring error and one unfortunate piece of bias. Firstly, in Episode one Henry Kissinger was portrayed as the good guy, for liberal secular democracy and against the neo-cons. Nothing could be further from the truth really. Kissinger is a key player in the financial and banking power elite that go hand in hand with the neo-con agenda. Indeed episode one briefly mentioned the role the intervention of American banks had in the uprisings in Egypt and Iran.

For the next series Adam, take a close focus on the web of mirage created by absolute power of financial institutions and their absolute power in holding the rest of us in slavery. (Mortgage - mort-death gage-grip) Secondly, the comparison between the Green movement's precautionary principle and pre-emptive neo-cons is misleading. The Green movement's precautionary principle arose from the extremely advanced understandings of science, from Rachel Carson's silent Spring to James Lovelock's Gaia. These are highly acclaimed scientists. The Green movement does not build huge military establishments to kill those who don't agree with it and nor does it jail or imprison those it sees as threats. Indeed the precautionary principle advocates working with nature rather than imposing revolution on it.

Chris Hart, Lancaster

Along with the Jonathan Miller series on atheism, your Power of Nightmares documentary is a landmark in British journalism. Taken together they make a devastating case against blind faith religion of any kind, and illustrate the catastrophic consequences of politicians using the "fact" that they have God on their side to do things which are self-evidently wrong in human terms. Pre-emptive strikes and detention without trial are equally wrong in their way as the 9/11 attacks. Your programmes were brave to take on the Bush/Blair axis on these issues and I hope that you will continue to develop the arguments further. True democracy is at stake as well, perhaps, as the security of the world as we know it.

Bernard Rimmer, London

This has been an engaging and thought provoking series. There is a tendency to condemn programmes such as these as conspiracy theory writ large. However it merely holds up a mirror to those for whom such theory forms a large part of their political rationale. It is easy 50 years afterwards to observe the excesses of McCarthyism and think of this as a malaise of a particular place & time. However what has been spoken of in these programmes is every bit as dangerous and corrosive to civil society and civil liberty.

Gerry Hoey, Drogheda, Ireland

A wake up call to all who have fallen deeply into the sleep of neurosis, paranoia and fear that so serves those that propagate it. How astonishing it is that this is the first intelligent voice to call the great bluff. We need more analysis of how a society as strong as we thought we were could so quickly dismantle so many of the fundamental freedoms that took centuries to acquire, in just a few short years, for a handful of shadows. Thank you for an extraordinary programme.

Frank Rickett, London

The way this programme was constructed - (particularly the music used) was a stroke of genius. I found myself laughing out loud in Part Three, not at terrorists but at ourselves. Thank you for a brilliant programme which I hope will be repeated soon. I think as many people as possible should see this.

J Dennis, London

Why do many of us tend to believe what politicians tell us, of course they lie to get in power, they lie to keep us in our place in fear of overexaggerated risk of terrorism and terror networks. What we need are governments worldwide who care about REAL issues like global warming, famine, world peace and not something that is for the most part a fantasy.

Helen Smith, North Yorkshire

“ What we need are governments worldwide who care about REAL issues like global warming, famine, world peace ”

Helen Smith, North Yorkshire

What a fabulous series. Well done to all who were part of it. I continue to be impressed by the ability of politicians to play the tricks of power with the finesse of a magician. You can't tell what they are doing even though it is happening in front of your eyes. Orwell's constant battles between the three powers was war without end, though this is an ancient theme of history. Yet here we are in the 21st Century with the same story playing out.

Chris, Coventry

Thank you BBC. I am known as the paranoid landlady of my public house. I've spent the last four years trying to enlighten my customers with very marginal successes. Your wonderful programme helped my cause. I only wish more of them had watched it. One complaint; I found the trailers misleading and could have deterred some viewers. I also wish there had been more public feedback via the media. But then... They are also in on it.

Di Easton, Exeter

Some mentioned: "I am concerned about the message about "dirty bombs" being presented by the BBC. In the "Power of Nightmares", a number of experts suggested that the risk from such devices was minimal. A Sunday night BBC factual drama about 2 months ago, Dirty War described the consequences of exploding such a bomb in the centre of London, again supported by expert advice." I recall Richard and Judy doing a piece about this programme when it was aired. The experts behind that programme also said that the radioactivity on a dirty bomb would not be a big threat - that it can be countered just by getting everyone in the area to wash the dust off. The people in "Power of Nightmares" were saying the same thing - the real danger of the "dirty bomb" is its power to cause panic and get people to do the wrong things. The question asked by the earlier program was whether the emergency services themselves have the knowledge and plans in place to counter such a threat. Paul

Paul Hammond, Peterborough

Where can I get this video in the United States? Will it be shown or is it being shown on BBC America? Half of us in the States are terrified and disheartened at the state of our government and what it is doing to the world and its own citizens? We need help from the European news media to keep pounding on this story because the message is not getting through to the American people unless they are really dedicated about finding the truth. And evidence suggests that the reality is much worse than most people can imagine. The premise of this documentary is right on. We are being manipulated and terrorized into submission to the neoconservative police state. How long will the world community allow this to continue?

Elliott Shannonhouse, San Fransisco

This series is the most profound series we have ever watched. Every single person in the Western and Arabic world should be made to sit down and watch this- especially the world leaders. Thank you!

Nancy Coppock, Bath

A friend in London showed me the 3rd Power of Nightmares episode which I thought was brilliant. Is there any way to view or buy this series here in the States? We need it! Please let me know.

Karen Kohlhaas, New York

[Click here to read a second page of your comments](#)

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The Power of Nightmares: Your comments

The Power of Nightmares examines how politicians have used our fears to increase their power and control over society. It looks at the American neo-conservative movement and its depiction of the threat first from the Soviet Union and then from radical Islamists.

[Click here to send us your comments](#)

Part one, [Baby It's Cold Outside](#), traces the origins of the modern neo-conservative and radical Islamist movements in the post-war period, how they both saw modern liberal freedoms as a threat to society and how the Soviet Union was represented as "the evil empire".

The second programme, [The Phantom Victory](#) explores how the two groups with seemingly opposing ideologies, the radical Islamists and neo-conservatives, came together to fight and defeat Soviet forces in Afghanistan.

Finally, [The Shadows In The Cave](#), looks at how in the wake of the attacks on the World Trade Center, the neo-conservatives reconstructed the radical Islamists in the image of their last evil enemy, the Soviet Union - a sinister web of terror run from the centre by Osama Bin Laden in his lair in Afghanistan. And asks who benefits from this?

There have been well over 1,000 comments about the series and a selection of these are shown below, reflecting the balance and range of views we have received.

[Click here to read a second page of your comments](#)**Your comments:**

I don't like conspiracy theories. But which is the conspiracy theory? Is there a cabal in Washington pretending that there is an international terrorist network, or is there an international terrorist network co-ordinating attacks the world over. Occam's Razor makes me think that the smaller conspiracy must be true.

Adam, Cambridge

And now what shall become of us without any barbarians?

Those people were some kind of solution.

Constantine P. Cavafy (1904)

Horace, Hants

Brilliant! Excellent series both for its content and its technical merit. I was in New York on Sept 11th and lived there for two years afterwards. I saw all the flag-waving begin, and watched in dismay as it developed into paranoid hatred and aggression. I sincerely hope this program reaches the US and is seen by many.

The only other thing I can say is make another series! We need more information about the events of 9/11, and the terrorist attacks in Madrid, Bali, the ricin finds in London, etc, or at least we need to know what has been made up. Congratulations to Mr Curtis for keeping the spirit of imaginative and open media strong.

Robin, Toronto

THE POWER OF NIGHTMARES

[Part I: Baby It's Cold Outside](#)[Part II: The Phantom Victory](#)[Part III: The Shadows in the Cave](#)[Your comments: Page 1](#)[Your comments: Page 2](#)

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Reading these replies has been a very depressing experience. Just how many people have these BBC producers deceived? This cynical attitude that fails to believe anything any more is a disease of this age. A disease of the political left. The threat from those who wish to "Islamise" the world, is real and is dangerous. Enough Muslims are prepared to die for this cause (and much less), and some rich Arabs are prepared to fund them to this end. In an age of nuclear proliferation, if the BBC producers of The Power of Nightmares cannot perceive such simple realities, they are themselves the ones who are deceived (and deceiving).

Steven Smith, Birmingham

“ **The threat from those who wish to "Islamise" the world, is real and is dangerous** ”

Steven Smith, Birmingham

This series of programmes provided stunningly exciting and compelling viewing, being controversial and intelligent, and as such, deserved a huge audience. I agree with many of the arguments that the terrorist threat has been far over-hyped, and is in fact a creature largely of our own politicians' making, although I would not say it's as much of a fantasy as the programme makes out. However, it did seem one-sided. The editing and narration is largely biased, and is something I'd not have expected to come from the BBC. However, I think this was valid and necessary. The key points raised by the programme would not be changed by a fuller and more balanced analysis. I think for all those of us who have caught up in the fantasy portrayed, this programme gives a hard kick in the other direction, the 'red pill' as Morpheus said, from which the viewer can look for the balanced view in a new light. And hopefully, the BBC are working on a further series of programmes that will do just that.

Damian, London

A very interesting and thought-provoking programme! I am concerned about the message about "dirty bombs" being presented by the BBC. In the "Power of Nightmares", a number of experts suggested that the risk from such devices was minimal. A Sunday night BBC factual drama about 2 months ago (can't remember its name) described the consequences of exploding such a bomb in the centre of London, again supported by expert advice. Which one was correct in its description of the effects???

Paul Harrison, Taunton

I certainly wish, what sounds like a fascinating series, had been shown in the US prior to our election! Might have made a difference. Any chance of us seeing it sometime?

Nicholas Downey, New York

“ **Any chance of us seeing it sometime?** ”

Nicholas Downey, New York

I lived in London for two years, now my son lives there. I have great respect and appreciation for the integrity of the BBC. I was able to view the first two episodes of "The Power of Nightmares" on an American website. I can hardly wait to see number three. It has moved me to rethink many assumptions that I have closely held. I was working with the Republican Party in the early '80's. I witnessed the "coup" by the religious Right, and was a victim of it. I knew 25 years ago that the US was in for a drastic culture clash. Thank you for exposing this nefarious force that now threatens the world, with their Right-eous Rage.

Lin Volpe, Ohio

Nothing is as simple as this documentary tries to describe. There is always a grey area between black and white but thank you for showing a bit of the white side. Let's just not take it as the whole truth though.

Anna, Nottingham

About time something like this was broadcast. The BBC has long been a leader in producing propaganda wrapped up as "impartiality". A study by Cardiff University found that the BBC aired less "dissenting" opinions during the initial invasion of Iraq than did the Fox network. The Power of Nightmares was welcome relief from the relentless peddling of inflated fears and the parroting of government spokesmen. Terrorists have killed fewer people in the last 10 years than the number of Iraqis who died every month (for 12 years) under US/UK enforced sanctions. That's the real picture. Indeed it was one of the rationales claimed by bin Laden.

Grant Wakefield, Marlborough

I don't believe either that there is an organised group with sleeper cells because the problem is being shown as a gang who should be rounded up and everything will be OK. The real problem was mentioned in one sentence - young Muslim males who are taking up the cause of Islamic fundamentalism worldwide. All they need is focus,

money and the equipment to do the job. Once they get it, the foregoing Dave Sparts who lead safe supermarket lives that have commented on here are going to be eaten alive. In case you think I am some "neo-con" I have spent the past 34 years on and off in the Middle East and I would suggest that you buy yourself a ticket out there and listen to what is coming out of the mosques and what is being talked about in the shops and streets. It has been coming for some time and last but not least these people don't want! to be your best mate either.

Keith, West Berks

I admit bewilderment and a certain disillusionment regarding this entire situation. A good hard kick in the head was what I for one needed to restore some sense of proportion and a healthy level of scepticism to what are potentially mind-boggling world events. This programme did that for me with big black army boots. I think the posted criticisms of lack of depth are justifiable but its clearly

“ A good hard kick in the head was what I for one needed to restore some sense of proportion... This programme did that for me with big black army boots ”

unreasonable to expect too much from a three hour summary of 30 years of events. Where are the in depth follow ups? People like me want to see them. I only take a passing interest in current news and events and I expect there are many others like me. This programme spoke to me, a verifiable news recluse, and made me want to think. I think the narrator helped. It wasn't over the top. I didn't feel I was being badgered into how to think, so much that it became overwhelming anyway. Thanks. Don't just repeat it make more. More TV like this please. Whatever the BBC is smoking let me have some.

John Marshall, Sheffield

Incredible! I'm not sure whether to laugh at the absurdity of the cynicism it instils; or allow it to grow on the cynicism that is already there.

Johnson, Texas

I feel I'm following the herd in applauding one of the best documentaries ever made (in my humble opinion). More heartening is the quality and quantity of positive feedback. For me the series preached to the choir, but before watching and reading I didn't feel part of a choir, just a "naive and trusting" lone voice. The path of fear leads to a world none of us deserve to live in. Faith in your fellow man is the path to a brighter future. Terrorism is real, but you're more likely to meet your maker on your daily commute or handling of a badly wired plug. Television like this offers perspective, while also hammering home the value of public service broadcasting. Congratulations to all involved, a BAFTA should be a formality. A quick DVD release would really simplify my Christmas shopping :). Intellectual liberals of the world unite and provide the neo-conservatives with something real to concern themselves with.

“ Terrorism is real, but you're more likely to meet your maker on your daily commute or handling of a badly wired plug ”

Carl Wilson, Leeds

Carl Wilson, Leeds

A few people seem to misunderstand Adam Curtis's argument or are judging it from the trailers alone without seeing the programme itself. He is not arguing that Bin Laden and terrorists do not exist or are no threat, just that the potential power of Al-Qaeda has been grossly exaggerated based on speculation and our own fears rather than any actual evidence. There is a threat, but it must be put in proportion and our governments should act accordingly. This series is a wonderful follow-up to Adam Curtis's last piece - "Century of the Self". I have been waiting for a long time for this to be released on DVD, so with all the voices asking for "The Power of Nightmares" to be released on DVD, may I hope for a joint release with "Century of the Self"?

Daryl Millar, Mildenhall, Suffolk

Suddenly paying the TV licence makes sense again. Thanks for such a brave documentary.

Jordi Bares, London

The programme did not say that there is no terrorist threat, rather that the threat has been massively and deliberately exaggerated. The best TV I've seen this year - when will it be repeated?

Paul, UK

The programme dealt extremely effectively with debunking many of the myths surrounding al-Qaeda. However it does beg the question that if al-Qaeda is not what it is popularly conceived to be, what in fact is it? It is too simplistic to state that there is

no al-Qaeda whatsoever, and I would venture that it is far more helpful to view al-Qaeda as an ideology or a methodology. After all as well as 'The Base' al-Qaeda also translates as 'The Basic Rules or Principles.' (Jason Burke explains this in greater detail in his book.) There are other examples, perhaps most significantly a statement by bin Laden's mentor Abdullah Azzam who envisioned a vanguard of Muslims who would create 'al-Qaeda al-Sulbah' (the strong foundation) for the expected society. This is an area of analysis which has not been focused on greatly, and should perhaps be examined in greater detail.

Chris Slater, London

Not since the last Adam Curtis venture, *The Century of the Self*, has British TV dared to risk dealing with such big and complex ideas, especially ones so counter-intuitive to the public. The central argument of the series, I believe, is more or less correct and is desperately in need of as much exposure as possible. So, congratulations to the BBC for backing this ambitious series.

However, there were flaws. Jason Burke's excellent work on demystifying Al-Qaeda was given prominence in the third episode. The programme gave the impression that Al-Qaeda doesn't really exist. This is not what Burke argues in his book. Burke argues that Al-Qaeda exists not as a highly organised and structured group but as a terrifically powerful ideology, capable of mobilising very disparate groups to act more or less independently of any central organising structure. The difference is important and one of Burke's central arguments is that the inchoate nature of Al-Qaeda makes it more dangerous, not less so.

While effectively debunking the tragi-comic delusions of Blair and the neo-cons that highly organised cells are invading our body politic, the programme failed to give due prominence to the success of Al-Qaeda as a call to arms which has inflamed the passions of young Muslims in many different parts of the world to seek revenge on what they perceive as a corrupt and imperialistic new world order. Rightly in my view, Burke sees much to worry about in the rapid spread of a murderous ideology but he suggests that our fears should be rational rather than irrational and that we attempt to deal with a very real problem armed with a clearer and deeper understanding of its true nature. The rather flippant end to *The Power of Nightmares* seems to suggest that we should merely ignore any attempt to construe Al-Qaeda as a serious threat.

Nick Haeffner, London

What a brilliant programme this was (all three parts). That is the journalism badly needed in this day and age where we are all being spun propaganda to entice fear in order for us to agree with what the American government wants the British one to do. I cannot agree with the view expressed by some that the programme was not balanced. I would like to see a rerun, a book and a DVD coming out - would even buy a DVD recorder if that happened. This is something that should be shown in schools, under the subject "Citizenship"!!!

“ We need more of this type of programme which investigates the truths, however much unpalatable to some people ”

Rose Greenbank, Chester

We need more of this type of programme which investigates the truths, however much unpalatable to some people.

Rose Greenbank, Chester

Presumably the 4,000 people murdered by Al-Qaeda and its affiliates in the last 3 years in New York, Washington, Madrid and Bali are just a nightmarish figment of our collective imaginations. A manipulative and distorting series. But as many of these comments attest, glossy and watchable enough to make useful idiots feel they're hearing the truth.

Ian Stewart, London

Quo usque tandem patiemini? Very happy to see so many comments on Adam Curtis' brilliant work. We old Europeans haven't lost our confidence in you British. We watch the BBC.

How you British have endured all this is rather baffling to us. We hope you tell him what in the next election. If not, he'll be turning you into 'the living dead'

Incidentally another stupendous thrilloogy by Adam Curtis.

Jo Smets, Belgium

Simplistic ideas, repeated over and over, followed by a voiceover "the fact that.." to hypnotise us into believing these selected talking heads. Not all of the viewing public can be fooled that simply. There is plenty to gain in promoting cynicism and paranoia - the BBC uses it to increase its viewing figures in everything from disaster-scenario panel programmes to the trailers for this stuff. Total hypocrisy to level the same

accusation against governments.

If the promotion of murder in the name of religion is a fantasy, what about the victims in New York, Bali, Madrid, Beslan, Istanbul? Worse still, the program claims that political ideology is dead. Are

Capitalism, Marxism and Establishment Liberalism the only ideas on offer? Practical political ideology is alive and well, promoting universal access to food, democracy, education, work, healthcare, justice, opportunity, safety, housing, free speech. Throw away your television, you don't have to accept this propaganda.

Steve, London

“ **Throw away your television, you don't have to accept this propaganda** ”

Please release this excellent series on DVD/video so I can pass it on to all my friends who missed it for Christmas!

Ruth Hutt, London

It is time to focus on the real problem and that is global warming.

David, London

Last week a famous Dutch film maker, Theo van Gogh, was killed near where I live. Apparently a 26 year old Islamist shot and stabbed him on religious grounds. Yesterday 8 friends of the accused have been arrested on the grounds of belonging to a "terrorist-cell", possibly with ties to al-Qaeda. After seeing your documentary I'm suddenly not so ready to believe that any more. How sad to see "western society", especially governments and media, creating this monster by themselves. Maybe we should pay less attention to "world-wide terrorist networks" and more to what's going on in the minds of young people from minority cultures in our countries. Make more of an effort towards integration and accept the IDEA of Al-Qaeda as the more manifest danger: It seems to give some people some kind of moral right to put their twisted ideas into action. Please show more of these well-researched documentaries!

Martin van den Oetelaar, Amsterdam

Starting from Episode one the mind is spun by what are simple historical truths which are presented here with such horrifying clarity and in true context. Will people stop insinuating that Adam Curtis is in denial about terrorist threats. He is asking you to only accept them for what they are not what Tony and George Dubya want you to believe. I had lost respect for television in this country but this series is one I will tell my grandchildren about.

Jack McCann, London

Brilliant series which should become compulsory viewing for all citizens of the world.

Paul Davis, London

I only saw the final episode but it seemed to be a programme as unbalanced as the neo-conservatives it was attacking. I'm not saying the programme was lying but it was omitting some events such as the terror arrests in London where ricin was found or the Arabian males attempting to buy radioactive materials from reporters. These events may have ended up being blown out of proportion, but as they weren't addressed it seems that the journalist wanted to omit events which took credence from the story he was trying to sell. I enjoyed the programme thoroughly but wanted balanced journalism, not an entirely one-sided view. Otherwise very good programming.

Glyn Martin, Manchester

Naturally, this excellent programme will be repeated at prime-time on BBC1, discussed at length on Today, and available immediately on DVD. Won't it?

Twizzle, Leeds

Fabulous TV - the argument was convincing, but even those who disagree with it should accept that having their beliefs challenged in this way now and again is intellectually healthy: Nietzsche called it philosophising with a hammer. Quite aside from that, the series showed what TV can do as a medium in its own right: as a piece of programming, it was artful and smart. There really ought to be a DVD, book, or at least a rerun of this series. And then a BAFTA. Incidentally, a couple of correspondents to this site has criticised the programme for liberalism and intellectualism. Since when have these been vices? Personally, I've always thought that if there is a liberal and intellectual elite, it'd be rather nice to think I could join it.

Iain, Newcastle-under-Lyme

“ **A couple of correspondents to this site have criticised the programme for liberalism and intellectualism. Since when have these been vices?** ”

Iain, Newcastle-under-Lyme

I wasn't overly impressed as I felt the programme had many flaws. In particular it felt as if you were downplaying the risks as much as the Bush administration overplays them. Tony Blair seems damned if he does and damned if he doesn't. If he came on TV and said 'don't worry, it all seems much worse than it is and there's not a lot I need to do'. If he ignored 9/11, Bali, Madrid, the bombing in Turkey etc.. he'd be ripped apart by the media. Probably in a very clever and quite smug BBC2, 3 part documentary.

Andy Jones, Wolverhampton

Like most people I have to say thank you. Myself and my family thought this was an excellent documentary, even though it was preaching to the converted. Like most people have said, repeat on BBC 1 with book and DVD release.

Lance, Sunderland

Congratulations to the BBC for having the courage to deliver probably the most watchable, incisive and thought-provoking documentary I have EVER witnessed. One of the comments on this 'feedback section' stated: "It surprises me that the BBC allowed three hours for this drivel". Forgive me, but I would rather pay 10 times the licence fee and watch 300 hours of this 'drivel' instead of 30 minutes of Big Brother, Eastenders or any other so-called 'entertainment'. Please get this series out on DVD as soon as possible. It will be in the Christmas stockings of all of my large family.

Tony Roberts, Bournemouth

Stephen Franklin's comments are spot on. This programme assumed what it wanted to prove. The research sources were incredibly partisan, for one side or the other. It would have been interesting to hear whether the French Intelligence Service agreed with your conclusions. They have been studying Islamic fundamentalism for years, yet are certainly not pro-Bush

Steve Souhami, Camberley

What on earth is the BBC smoking? And what are most of the readers above smoking? Terror is very real, and linking the Islamic jihadis with the neo-conservative movement is ludicrous.

Eva, Wisconsin, USA

“ What on earth is the BBC smoking? And what are most of the readers above smoking? ”

Eva, Wisconsin

I think some of the critics in these comments are guilty of inventing their own fantasy adversary: 'The Liberal Elite' - no doubt a shady bunch of bearded pipe smoking intellectuals who gather in darkened rooms to plot the downfall of conservatism. Resorting to baseless ad-hominem attacks doesn't nullify the argument! Excellent programme, I hope there are plans to loop it continually on BBC America.

Toby, London

This is the most important television programme of our troubled times. It should be repeated on a loop, and given much higher profile and an international DVD release. The programme raised such fundamental issues that I fear the content available on this website is insufficient. Viewing this programme was like seeing a jigsaw come together - I knew what the final picture was, for I had seen the packaging. However witnessing its formation was alarming, astounding and terrifying. All presented in a perfectly understated manner, by (the voice, at least, of) the brilliant Adam Curtis and his team, this was a credible series of an incredible story that impacts upon all of our lives and it ought to send shock waves around the world.

James Mulligan,

Thank you for an entertaining and fascinating documentary. Congratulations to both the film-makers and those with the courage to run the programme on national television.

Simon, London

Thank you for saying very clearly that much of the fear of terrorism is fear of a phantom. I thought the series was well put together and makes Guantanamo Bay look more and more like a Salem witch hunt all over again.

Louis Priest, London

This has been the most inspirational TV in decades - since Bronowski, Clarke and Cooke! (though mustn't forget Jonathan Miller's Disbelief.) Not just brilliant political analysis, but the artistic film creativity - from the "Baby It's Cold Outside" of both the US prom dancers and the Taliban youths in the first episode to the schmaltzy music and the Hollywood Ali Baba of the third - wonderful stuff!

Dr Christine Allen, Carlisle

Your whole series is doing exactly what it accuses the US and British governments of doing. It starts with conclusions and makes up the evidence to support it. The neo-conservatives didn't come to power in the US as a result of 9/11. Rumsfeld and

Wolfowitz were already in the Defence Department before 9/11. No intelligent person could call Colin Powell, the Secretary of State a neo-colonialist.

“ **Your whole series is doing exactly what it accuses the US and British governments of doing** ”

Al Qa'ida is not a vast terrorist organisation. It is a co-ordinating body financed by various sources including money originating from Bin Laden business consortium. They provide training and expertise to Islamic fundamentalist groups around the world and in return members of these groups carry out acts against parties of Al Qa'ida's choosing with Al Qa'ida's logistical support and expert guidance.

Stephen Franklin, London

The threat is not a fantasy it is real and attacks in the UK and elsewhere have been intercepted. Other attacks around the world have not been prevented with horrible consequences. There is no doubt that if Al Qa'ida got hold of small lightweight WMD (such as those developed by former Soviet scientists, a few of whom may now be available to the highest bidder) they would use them. A dirty bomb may not be the most effective, but some types of biological or chemical (or even suitcase atom bombs such as those hidden in various parts of the west 20 years ago by Soviet special forces) could be very effective.

It would be both stupid and dangerous to underestimate the very real threat. I wish the threat were a fantasy invented by the politicians but it isn't.

Stephen Franklin, London

In 2001 (the very worst year for terrorism in America), you were more likely to die of malnutrition than terrorism. You were 10 times more likely to die in a shooting, about 7 times more likely to die from alcohol, 6 times more likely to die from drug mis-use, 18 times more likely to die in an automobile accident, and a massive 260 times more likely to die from a heart attack. Maybe we all, but particularly the Americans need to get a sense of proportion. The risk from co-ordinated terrorism may be real or imagined. In either case it is vanishingly small when compared to other more mundane risks that get taken for granted.

Nigel, Farnham

Overall a very good series, but why so little on the actual events of 9/11? This meticulously planned attack on 4 key US sites including most spectacularly the Twin Towers is too key to the whole issue to be dismissed casually in one sentence - and excuse me what was the name again of the Sheikh who planned and executed it? And where is he now, and what's happened to him and his associates? This was reality and not fantasy. By copping out of analysing it fully the series undermined its basic premise.

Michelle Russell, London

This kind of bold, innovative programming would be impossible without the license fee and is what makes the BBC so valuable. Regardless of whether the viewer ultimately agreed with its conclusions, no one could say that this was TV that had failed to make them think.

Stephen Rylance, London

I watched the final programme of the power of nightmares and was very surprised at how laughably one sided the viewpoint of this programme was. I've heard many concerns about the bias of the BBC but this programme was a joke. In fact it became almost hypocritical by the narrow one-sided view that it put across on this subject. The BBC needs to take a good look at itself. Its claims of impartiality have been shown to be completely false. It's disgusting that I have to pay a license fee to pay for this kind of drivel.

Tom Wooding, London

I spent most of the 1980's in the US Navy and saw first hand that the Soviet Union was not the power the West had painted them to be. They never had the capacity we did and never posed any real threat to the West just as we posed no threat to them. It was a mutual exercise in controlling their own citizenry.

Alan D., Dublin

A breath of fresh air to cut through government propaganda, presented to us daily as if it were objectively culled "news". Unfortunately, when the BBC did start to question the rubbish they are fed, a careless mistake allowed the government to crush the organisation and cause them to cower again.

Peter Williams, Billingshurst

Challenging, cogently argued, brilliantly interwoven. Programming at its best and definitely worth my whole licence fee. thank you.

Susan Lea-Wilson, Nottingham

Since the invasion of Iraq I've been waiting for the BBC to make this programme. Prophetic journalism at its best. If there was ever any doubt about who we can trust, the BBC has removed it. Please get this series on DVD and in the shops as soon as possible.
Nigel Dawkins, Cambridge

“ Since the invasion of Iraq I've been waiting for the BBC to make this programme ”

Nigel Dawkins, Cambridge

A question for all interested. If Bin Laden and al-Qaeda don't exist, who planned the 9/11 attacks? And how are the so-called top aides to al-Qaeda related to this organisation and Bin Laden himself?
Adnan Kadir, London

I suppose that the BBC is entitled to give us the benefit of its views on the "war on terror", however I really do believe the producers of the programme Nightmares are the ones living in cloud cuckoo land! That's not to say that a few of the points made in the program were not good ones. However the program is simplistic in its paradigm that all the world's problems are driven by a general loss of belief and that all firm leadership based on "a belief" is (by BBC definition) a delusion that we the public crave for. Sorry BBC, but could you be the ones who are deluded? However some of the points made will no doubt make for a good debate.
Mike Weekes, Redhill

The power of nightmares - what an outrageous programme. The over-riding impression given was that there is no terrorist threat in the world, only a conspiracy by a few people in power to convince the population that we are in danger. Making the claim that the Al-Qaeda network is not real may be valid, but the concept of Al-Qaeda is real, as is the tangible evidence of activity associated with this imaginary network.
Andy, Derby

That programme was typical naive liberal nonsense. The producers clearly have no real understanding of the mindset of radical apostate Islam. These individuals will eventually acquire nuclear weapons and unlike any previous terror organisation or nation state, will not hesitate to use such weapons. Unfortunately the mindset of those liberals that cynically believe it is all a fantasy represent just the kind of weak liberal naive mindset that will sow the seeds of our own destruction and defeat.
Russell Brown, Coventry

The most stunning series of programmes I have watched in years. Please replay this at prime time on BBC and follow it with a Question Time special with Blair among the guests to put the case made in the programme. Equally, let's hear the case for the defence, assuming there is one! Well done the BBC. Scrap the home improvement programmes and give us more of this!!
Julian R

It is quite simply the best piece of television I have ever seen, what inspired use of footage, what an incredible narrative!
Paul Evans, Somerset

Is this the best you can do? No discussion board, just a filtered view of some peoples comments on Thursday. If this is not manufacturing consent then what is? I understand that TV costs £100,000 an hour on average and yet your web pages show not much effort beyond £1000.
Peter Bone, Norwich

I think that the "Nightmares" series is the most important the BBC has ever made. I am so grateful that they made the programmes and feel angry that we have been deceived by our leaders. But how would I feel if I had sent my son to die in Iraq for this imaginary "cause"?
Amelia Bennett, Maidenhead

After 38 years of paying a licence fee I have finally seen a programme which has made it worth the money. This series of visual essays should be repeated on BBC1 at prime time giving more people the opportunity to see the way in which we allow ourselves to be 'ruled' and increase our awareness of our own capacity for self delusion. Allied with the recent series by Jonathon Miller on disbelief, a strong antidote to the dumbing down of society which ,unfortunately, the BBC have been at the forefront of. Take a lesson - less Llewellyn Bowen, more BRAINS!!! - There is an audience

“ After 38 years of paying a licence fee I have finally seen a programme which has made it worth the money ”

Simon Higgins, Brighton

Simon Higgins, Brighton

It all now makes complete sense. What an excellent series! Fear is also being used more and more in other situations, such as mobile phone masts, bicycle helmets, the need to carry a mobile phone, insurance for everything. We really need to understand and teach the nature of risk more comprehensively. Only then will people be able to put fear into perspective, and be free from intimidation by terrorists and our leaders.

Anthony Cartmell, Worthing

Utterly compelling, from beginning to end. Illuminating, frightening and a brilliant example of documentary-making at its best. Adam Curtis should be applauded and rewarded for this series. Could this and the equally brilliant Century Of The Self be made available to buy, please?

Helen McLaughlin, Lancs

At last. Someone prepared to question the codswallop we have been fed since 11 September 2001. Full marks to the BBC for presenting this incisive series, and for having the courage to do so. I just hope it reaches a wide audience. Well done!

Derek Robinson, Ipswich

That's my licence fee's worth, right there. This series of programmes is superb. Full marks for starting so far back, for establishing your premise so early before applying it to current events. I understand that citizenship is to be part of the school curriculum in the UK. "Power of Nightmares" should be on the syllabus. The very best quote is at the end; for those who believe in nothing, there is only fear. Fear of those who believe in anything.

Dave, Walsall

This was one of the best contributions from any mass media about the phenomenon of the bogus war on terror. Well done BBC!

Eric Cross, London

Peter in London, you seem to have missed the point completely. There is a terrorist threat, but not on the scale that Blair and Blush would have us believe. There is no such thing as al-Qaeda, but that doesn't mean that disaffected individuals won't attack us... of course they will. You obviously watched the programme with your ideas already formed. Open your eyes and get your facts right!

Jenny, Taylor

Have never before felt the need to say well done to any media organisation, but, erm, well done - FANTASTIC series, especially last night's.

Jon Baker, Tunbridge Wells

“ It was utterly compelling and one of the best programmes I've seen this year ”

Lynne Trenery, Oxford

Congratulations to the BBC for finally making a documentary that makes real sense of the fearful world we are now living in. A job very well done!

Martyn, Manchester

Totally with Megan here. This should not have been put out against British Isles. You guys wasted a lot of the impact that this excellent program could have had on a much bigger audience.

Dave, UK

Congratulations Adam Curtis and well done BBC Two for giving this series a decent schedule time. It was utterly compelling and one of the best programmes I've seen this year. Narrative argument was simply told supported by great research. Deserves to win awards - but probably won't.

Lynne Trenery, Oxford

Lies work best when they're based on a grain of truth. In order to expose the lies you have to work right back to that grain and expose the small untruth which first skewed the story. Then you can start to tell the story again. I wish I had time to do that kind of thing for myself but I haven't, and it's because of that I'm truly thankful this programme was made.

Tom, Leeds

“ It surprises me that the BBC allowed three hours for this drivel ”

Stephen Lyall, Farnham

Thank you for The Power of Nightmares, a series of unprecedented intelligence. This alone is worth my licence fee for the year, and is exactly the kind of programme the BBC should be making - a little heard voice which is truly in the public interest.

Josh Cunliffe, London

It surprises me that the BBC allowed three hours for this drivel. Come on Beeb! You can do better than this.

Stephen Lyall, Farnham

My thanks to Adam Curtis for a refreshing blast of reality. Perhaps the whole BBC news department could be encouraged to view it and learn not to be so gullible. But then that would not be fashionable.

John Ryan, Stockport

While I enjoyed episodes one and two, episode three is ludicrous. It almost suggests that 9/11, Bali, Madrid, USS Cole, Kenya etc, were all fantasies! They were committed by real live living terrorists, not fantasies as you put it. You harp on about the al-Qaeda "organisation not existing". Yes it didn't exist because.... it wasn't an "organisation"! It was a network, something that Adam Curtis obviously does not understand.

Networks don't have leaders, or strong links, but they exist and support each other loosely. The neo-conservatives who help protect us by admittedly exaggerating the threats to us should be given medals. I feel much safer, only one suicide bomb by one nut would be too much and a high state of alert prevents that. Liberalism puts us into a weakened state of inertia which is exploited by some groups. 9/11 proved that.

Andy Mitchell, London

This programme is the perfect antidote to the lies told to us by politicians and the media (including the BBC). A must see for everyone with a mind of their own.

Harry

I often wonder how the government aims to create a "multicultural society" when it begins to persecute people without evidence and hold people without trial.

Claire Burnell-Hornby, London

“ In this day of sound bites and five minute analysis it was so refreshing to see an in-depth consideration of a complex issue ”

Thank you BBC. This is true public service broadcasting.

BG, London

Asker Husain, London

Everything about it impressed: the depth and precision of the argument, the quality of the evidence presented, the calibre of the interviewees, the visual imagery and the music. I watched the first episode with a friend and we both kept looking at one another in amazement. This is a very brave piece of programming, and I hope for the sake of the country the BBC will be bold enough to commission more documentaries of this extremely high standard.

Nigel Shardlow,

Wonder why Curtis left out Abdullah Azzam? Azzam helped Bin Laden start the Maktab Khadamat al-Mujihideen. In 1989 renamed al-Qaeda (the Base) The real Nightmare is the BBC wasted money on this rubbish.

S L Garbutt, Leeds

Absolutely marvellous programme. In this day of sound bites and five minute analysis it was so refreshing to see an in-depth consideration of a complex issue. It has said what I am sure many have been thinking but have not had the opportunity or the ability to voice. This programme has said what needed to be said. I congratulate the BBC for making and airing this incredible piece of investigative and intellectual journalism.

Asker Husain, London

I want to thank the BBC for airing this excellent and insightful series. As an ex-American, who fled that country when I saw the current situation forming, I'm still amazed at the incredible gullibility and isolationist views of the American (and British) people. Yesterday's re-election of Bush only serves to underscore the power of nightmares.

D Cooper, Amsterdam, Netherlands

The emperor marched in the procession under the beautiful canopy, and all who saw him in the street and out of the windows exclaimed: "Indeed, the emperor's new suit is incomparable! What a long train he has! How well it fits him!". Nobody wished to let others know he saw nothing, for then he would have been unfit for his office or too stupid. Never were emperor's clothes more admired.

"But he has nothing on at all," said a little child at last. "Good heavens! Listen to the voice of an innocent child," said the father, and one whispered to the other what the child had said. "But he has nothing on at all," cried at last the whole people. That

made a deep impression upon the emperor, for it seemed to him that they were right; but he thought to himself: "Now I must bear up to the end." And the chamberlains walked with still greater dignity, as if they carried the train which did not exist.

Paul Rivers, Farncombe, Surrey

An excellent series and a final episode which owes much to Jason Burke's analysis of al-Qaeda. It deserves the widest audience and discussion possible. Please repeat it with a studio audience discussion to follow. I hope it will be shown in the US.

Iskra Begum, Karachi, Pakistan

I agree with pretty much everything the programmes have been saying. However, I think this programme could have produced more damning evidence. There were places where I felt the evidence given was just as flimsy as that given by the CIA etc.

Ian Miller, Oxford

Finally someone said it. I salute you for broadcasting this programme, I only wish that everyone saw it.

Adham Ghos, London

As someone who has barely been able to believe the twaddle of this Anglo-American fantasy, I have persisted in criticising and condemning the media for being so uncritical of the established view. Will you now stop playing their game? Will you stop banging on about the "War of Terror"? Will you stop banging on about the "terror network"? In a few moments we will get Newsnight. Paxman has already done a promo in which he referred to terrorism again. Will you stop this - TONIGHT?

Kris Harris, Birmingham

Best documentary programme on TV this year, and arguably for a number of years. If the issues at stake weren't so devastating it would all be quite amusing.

Innes Ferguson, London

The programme confirmed a trend long predicted that governments are heading towards failure. Your programme's final comment was the most chilling that nobody believes anything and thus fear rules. Well you should read biblical prophecy as this is exactly what is predicted. So what next - the anti-Christ who is a man of solutions for a shattered disillusioned world? Thanks for reminding me to pray for our rulers, they obviously need a wake-up call.

Ivor, Aldershot

Absolutely fantastic television, beats Fahrenheit 9/11 hands down, a real eye opener. Wrap it up, slap it on DVD and sell a million copies.

Tom Norman, Carlisle

“ **Absolutely fantastic television - beats Fahrenheit 9/11 hands down, a real eye opener.** ”

Tom Norman, Carlisle

“ **The programme was ruined by sledgehammer-subtle arguments and incredibly one-sided editing** ”

The thing that struck me most was a quote:

"A society that believes in nothing, fear is the key for controlling the masses." My point is this is nothing new. Governments have been doing this for a very long. Our insecurities keep us sleeping. I think it's time we awoke. And that's the governments' fear, that we might wake up.

Yasser Kassana, Slough

Dave Fuller, Southampton

This program brought tears from many emotions to my eyes this evening, fantastic! Probably the only programme God himself would have watched.

Anthony, Brighton

Very very poor. Reflecting the liberal elite's prejudices back at them is hardly brave television. There was a decent show in there trying to get out, but it was ruined by sledgehammer-subtle arguments and incredibly one-sided editing. This is not what the BBC should be doing - there was no attempt at balance or nuance or even trying to get beneath the surface of the issues. Lazy television.

Dave Fuller, Southampton

I have long disbelieved the imagined nonsense put forward by the US administration. It was good to see a well-written and well-researched programme that gives the lie effectively to the outlandish claims that have been put forward. It's all totally depressing on a day when Bush got back in - but even more depressing is the fact that Kerry, even if he secretly disbelieved the big lie, would not have been able to admit that to the hoodwinked US public.

Paul Cardin, Wallasey

Hopefully this might make a few people wake up and take notice of what this government is doing - frightening the people into giving up their rights and creating an Orwellian state.

Rich Manley-Reeve, Newcastle

“ **One of the most convincingly researched pieces of documentary journalism I believe I am ever likely to see** ”

Thanks for showing a most excellent series of films. It has gone a long way to restoring my faith in the BBC as an independent broadcaster. If only you had been showing it in the US.

Rob Belcham, Stourport-On-Severn

P Bates, Windsor

Jump cuts, irrelevant archive, and an unfashionably complex polemic delivering one of the most perceptive insights into our mad mad world I've seen on television. If my entire licence fee went on this series, I'd consider it good value. The best thing Curtis has done since Pandora's box.

Denman Rooke, London

If only the majority of Americans had seen this series before the election. I am certain the outcome of the election would have been different.

Chris, Edinburgh

I am a US citizen and would like to share this brilliant documentary with friends and family at home. It is a shame this could not have been broadcast on prime time television there.

Maggie Pullen, London

One of the most convincingly researched pieces of documentary journalism I believe I am ever likely to see. I slept better after the final programme than after any "reassurance" provided by Bush or Blair.

P Bates, Windsor

“ **Quite simply television at its finest** ”

Greg Thomas, Swindon

A fascinating, thoroughly absorbing series. Little presented to the viewer is based on speculation, affording the series the kind of integrity other documentaries so often fail to achieve.

Ben, Hertfordshire

Quite simply television at its finest. Educational, persuasive, thought-provoking and gut-churningly enthralling in its descriptions of recent history and, worse, the future. A compelling vision.

Greg Thomas, Swindon

Let's hope that this programme helps bring rationality back into debates on security and allows people to sleep easier, without lowering people's guard too much against the non-imaginary threat of Madrid-style attacks.

Richard Stone, Bath

I would like to thank the BBC for showing this powerful piece of TV. Presented in a coherent way, it explained how and why the world is the way it is today. Bravo for intelligent film making!

Richard, Croydon

The real nightmare is Bush's re-election. If only this had been broadcast in America instead. Anyway, congratulations on perhaps the best programme I've seen from the BBC in years. When is it going to be repeated?

Mark Jervis,

A powerful and chilling description of the character of modern politics. Creating an illusion has made true the idea that a frighten society is a compliant society.

However, if we know and understand this illusion, we have only to fear our leaders, not our "enemies". The next phase of political momentum will be in deciding how to redress the balance in our society and acting on it.

Steve, Lampeter, West Wales

“ **Put up giant video screens across the world and play it 24 hours a day until everyone sees it** ”

Paul, Newton Aycliffe

What a great serious! Brilliant research, excellent presentation, the best documentary on TV in years.

Mark Featherstone, Keele, Staffordshire

A superb programme without the political or tabloid hype associated with the subject.

Would it have made a difference if it had been shown in the US before the election?

Adrian Dorling, Oxford

An astonishingly well researched programme. A welcome breath of fresh air in a bizarre media frenzy of fear. Put up giant video screens across the world and play it 24 hours a day until everyone sees it.

Paul, Newton Aycliffe

This programme should be on every American history curriculum to show every child just how scary their country has become. Truly saddening that the masses buy these fantasies so willingly - a fantastic series.

Jonathan Cosgrove, Bristol

That was the most amazing show I've ever seen. It makes me wonder on the purpose of even the most critical mainstream journalism in our society. It should be about criticising politics and the society it creates. Yet even though I work with these issues every day, I have never heard much of the information in your programme before, and I'm pretty ashamed and also angry. Really really cool.

Nick Dearden, London

The last interviewee said that it was because our society "does not believe in anything" that it has only fear and targets any sort of fundamentalist. But surely both Bush and Blair both call themselves Christians. And are there not a lot of churchgoing Americans?

Jennifer Smith, Oxford

A good programme showing how much we can trust the media and the governments.

Gregory, London

Brilliant, brilliant documentary. If only this could have been shown in the USA instead of Fahrenheit 9/11 in the run up to the elections. Thank you BBC.

Matthew, London

“ This is without a doubt the most important three hours of programming I have ever seen ”

This is a most biased programme. It is very easy with the benefit of hindsight to pick out certain events while playing the theme music to Riley Ace of Spies and put a liberal spin on them. Has Adam Curtis forgotten the last 30 years in Ulster, the bombs in both Ireland and UK for which very few were convicted. The problem there is still not solved.

Sheila Bagliami, Co Galway

Dennis Knowles, Northam, Devon

Excellent Programme. Opened blind eyes!

Ahmed, Poole

Why, in the name of heaven, was this not shown in the States BEFORE the elections??!! From an ex-Pat Yank (who did NOT vote for GWB)

John Snyder, Ludlow

This is without a doubt the most important three hours of programming I have ever seen, I just had to say thank you and wished that it had been seen by more or even all people. World changing.

Dennis Knowles, Northam, Devon

The best programme on television in a long long time - I hope Tony Blair was watching. I am so angry right now about the US election result, it was nice to have the programme end with a positive message! There is still hope for the world as long as programmes like this still get made.

Paul Smith, Kings Lynn

“ This refreshing programme has affirmed our faith in free speech and free information at a time when those things are becoming all too rare ”

Cuil Short, Rochdale

Excellent researched and argued series, thought-provoking and informative. Now I am left to wonder: my government claims to be trying to protect me from terrorists, with its identity cards, justice "short cuts" and surveillance. Who or what will protect me from my government?

Liz Tyndall, Newark

This was a brilliant series - very depressing at times but brilliantly uplifting in another sense. If we can dispel the myths of fear we start to live and behave in a way that safety allows - a world where we are not afraid to trust, to share and to believe in humanity. Thanks. Can i get the series on DVD? I want to send it to everyone I know!

Olivia Knight, London

Thank you BBC. This refreshing programme has affirmed our faith in free speech and free information at a time when those things are becoming all too rare.

Cuil Short, Rochdale

The programme seemed focussed towards the suggestion that the "al-Qaeda" network was a myth created by the American government to create a prosecution against Bin Laden. It may well have been created but to suggest that it was not a network that existed is surely wrong. Everything needs a name.

Although it may not be referred to by its Western name by the Islamic rebels or even acknowledged by sceptics, there should be no doubt that an organisation exists and is well funded. It should also be apparent that all terrorists are dangerous no matter what their cause.

Vaughan Jones, Nuneaton

“ This is all true but you're playing the game too ”

Craig Clarke, London

What a refreshing, interesting and challenging series. Somewhat sad and ironic that the final part should be shown today of all days - given it's content. In some ways it made me less fearful - of terror and the myths surrounding it - however in other ways it scared me more - that is, the neo-conservatives in the USA! Is the BBC planning a DVD or book release for the series?

Kes Moore, Tamworth

Fair enough. This is all true but you're playing the game too.

Craig Clarke, Lincoln

Stunning series. The first open progressive unashamed journalism post-Hutton. Please release on DVD.

Dave,

Brilliant, brilliant, brilliant. Thank you for the best and most thoughtful analysis of the so-called "war on terror" that we have been given so far. A real eye-opener. Should be shown at peak time on BBC1.

Tom Gosling, St Albans

Excellent series and so well put together. Takes a serious topic and presents it with such simplicity and clarity that I found myself asking how we can all be so damn stupid as to let ourselves be fooled! Our "leaders" on both sides have fooled us and continue to do so. As a Muslim, I am appalled at the way some have chosen to manipulate Islam. As a Westener, I am appalled at how some have chosen to manipulate democracy. Now tell me, how'd I get a copy of the series?

Ann, London

Amazing, the best thing I have seen on TV in the better part of 10 years. I have long been a doubter of the war on terror, barely daring to raise an opinion in the prevailing hysterical atmosphere. It is good to know that there is alternative reading to the rubbish we are all force-fed 24/7. Without

“ The world needs this perspective on global political manipulation ”

Rod Evan, The Netherlands

doubt the best revelation of this whole production so far was the delicious irony that both the neo-conservatives and Islamic Jihad/al-Qaeda can trace the root of their ideology back to the same place. Many thanks for having the confidence and balls to commission and show this, it can't have been an easy call. How about a DVD release?

Robert, Worthing

This is a documentary that I believe everyone in the US should watch. Both terrifying and fascinating.

Karl Jackson, Oregon, USA

Great television and powerful investigative journalism. Please give these programmes a wider audience by screening them on BBC World. The world needs this perspective on global political manipulation, from the lies that were spread against the Soviet Union to the current "enemy" terrorism.

Rod Evan, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

I am an American living temporarily in Scotland. This is by far the best documentary I have seen that assesses the current geopolitical situation. I have to say, much of what The Power of Nightmares says about the US is spot on. Please make this available in the US. It should be

“ What absolute rubbish to suggest there is no terrorist threat ”

Peter, London

required viewing for everyone.

Jason, Edinburgh

I find the programme quite misleading and full of lies. The coverage is very superficial which shows the lack of very understanding of the problem. I can strongly confirm that especially when the Algerian crisis was covered. This is because I lived there during that bloody decade, and I was myself exposed to the horrors and violence and we know exactly what happened and who was behind it. This is a very poor programme which rushes in accusing Islamists. It is full of lies. It really gives the impression of being deliberately produced to stigmatise the image of the Islamic religion and produce more fanatic people. That programme contributes greatly to destabilising the world.

Shasa, London

What absolute rubbish to suggest there is no terrorist threat. Who carried out 9/11, Bali, Istanbul, Madrid etc etc? I can't think whose interests programmes like this serve, except those who so-called "liberal intellectuals" who will side with anyone who wants to destroy Western civilisation. There is no "moral equivalence" between the US and the terrorists - just moral bankruptcy from those who try to pretend there is.

Peter, London

I sympathise with this view of the neo-conservatives, who now seem set for a further four years of crusading. Thankfully, the grip of these semi-fanatics has not yet extended beyond US borders, so that discussions like this can continue. Also, the grip can't be that tight even inside the US, otherwise people like Michael Moore would not be able to publish books and films attacking the neo-conservatives so viciously.

John, Hitchin

Instead of all the dumbed-down politics, sound bites and banner and flag waving, the American public should have been forced to watch this outstanding series. This has revealed to the neutral viewer the mindsets that have influenced world politics over the last few decades. I for one view things completely differently now.

“ Had this not come from the BBC, I would have thought it to be a fantastic story from a crackpot

”

Camden, New Mexico, US

Seeing how the American public have seemingly voted in again such an ill-informed puppet of the neo-conservatives and evangelical right - a decision that affects all of us - I really begun to question whether we are indeed living in a democracy and are as free as we think. This is, in a twisted way, exactly what the terrorists who have attacked the West believe, and it is worrying that if you look behind the smokescreens and mirrors, it is increasingly easy to see their point.

Ben Gibney, Douglas, Isle of Man

Is this series going to be repeated? I can't believe the BBC was so nearsighted as to think that people who wanted to watch the British Isles wouldn't be interested in this... sort out your scheduling!

Megan, London

Had this not come from the BBC, I would have thought it to be a fantastic story from a crackpot. Its implications are truly mind-boggling.

Camden, Socorro, New Mexico, US

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