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Reality Check

## 11 September 2001: The conspiracy theories still spreading after 20 years By Shayan Sardarizadeh

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ITED HERMITE DTW MI OL How did 3 DUST skyscrapers **GETTY IMAGES** The 9/11 Truth movement organises annual rallies

the facts have been hidden. Some leading members of the movement have also embraced conspiracies about Covid-19 and vaccines.

And some senior politicians, celebrities and media figures have also disputed the official account.

'World government'

The rise of **new conspiracy movements online, such as QAnon**, whose

And online clips from a series of films known as Loose Change have reinforced many of the falsehoods circulating.

## Some claim the US government staged the attacks or knew of them in

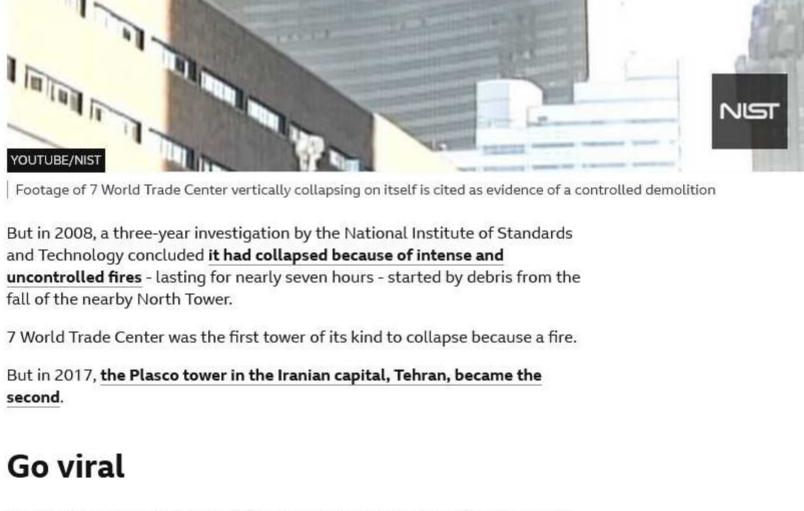
And these falsehoods mesh with more recent online movements' belief global elites plan to curtail civil liberties in response to the attacks and facilitate the establishment of an authoritarian world government.



the Office of Emergency Management - collapsed hours after the Twin Towers without being hit by a plane or directly targeted.

The evolution of 9/11 conspiracy theories

This building - containing offices of the CIA, the Department of Defense, and



BIBICWORLD

**ERRORISM ATTACKS IN US** The 47 storey Salomon Brothers building close to the World Trade Centre has also collapsed.

7 World Trade Center was still standing while its collapse was erroneously reported on BBC World News

Reuters later issued a correction - but clips of the report continue go viral in the days leading up to 9/11 anniversaries. Was the BBC part of the 9/11 conspiracy? **Business jet** Some online conspiracy theories suggest US missiles were fired at the Pentagon, as part of a government plot, and the hole left in the building was too small to have been caused by a passenger plane. But a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers told Popular Mechanics magazine the size and shape of the hole was due to one wing of the Boeing 757 hitting the ground and the other being severed on impact with the building.

Theories suggest a missile, not a Boeing 757, actually hit the Pentagon

nearby airport.

of it.

But aviation officials had requested the jet inspect the area, which it did,

reporting back evidence of a big hole in the ground with smoke coming out

Vice-President Dick Cheney later revealed in his autobiography that following the attack on the Twin Towers, he had ordered the shooting down of any commercial airliner believed to have been hijacked. But in the chaos and confusion that followed the attack, his order was not passed to fighter pilots, according to the 9/11 Commission report.

Another theory falsely claims no Jewish people were killed in the attacks

## because 4,000 Jewish employees at the World Trade Center had received advance notice not to turn up for work.

'Jewish elites'

Believers conclude the Israeli government mounted the attacks to goad the US into attacking its regional enemies or responsibility lies with powerful Jewish elites who control world events from the shadows.

But of the 2,071 victims of 9/11 who worked at the World Trade Center, 119 were confirmed to be Jewish and at least a further 72 were believed to be Jewish.

commuting population believed to be Jewish at the time.

**BBC** Monitoring September 11 attacks The Open Chemical Physics Journal, onna, 2, 7-31

The first 9/11 conspiracy theories appeared on the internet just hours after the attacks, on 11 September 2001, and with the rise of social media, have grown in scope and scale ever since. Extensive reports by the 9/11 Commission, US government agencies and expert groups have refuted the existence of any hidden conspiracy. But activist groups in the US and elsewhere, the 9/11 Truth movement, say

followers, among other conspiratorial views, believe a US "deep state" responsible for the attacks, has kept these conspiracy theories in circulation and brought them to a far larger audience.

advance and allowed them.

Uncontrolled fires The collapse of 7 World Trade Center, a 47-storey skyscraper in the vicinity of the Twin Towers, has attracted many conspiracy theories, some of which were trending on major social networks on last year's 9/11 anniversary.

The fact the collapse of 7 World Trade Center was announced in a live report by BBC News correspondent Jane Stanley - while it was still visibly standing behind her - has been cited by conspiracy theorists as evidence major media organisations were part of the inside-job plot.

The Reuters news agency had mistakenly reported the collapse of the building, which was also picked up by CNN, just before the live report.

Meanwhile, United Airlines Flight 93 crashed near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, after passengers tried to take control of the plane from the hijackers. Online theories claim it was shot down by a white business jet flying into a

REUTERS A theory claims wreckage of United Airlines Flight 93 proves it was shot down

That would constitute 9.2% of the victims, according to research by BBC documentary Conspiracy Files, broadly in line with the 9.7% of New York's

And some estimate up to 400 Jewish people might have died that day.