

Conversations with history



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Conversations with History Follow Remark An interesting remark Michael Scheuer makes in the video 'Conversations with History' considers the nature of Osama Bin Laden's development as a sort of anti-American force. The interviewer asks about the creation of Bin Laden and whether it was an American doing -- as in, had America imbued Bin Laden with the weapons and funding, to which were later turned on the United States -- or if Bin Laden was of a Middle Eastern creation. In response, Scheuer indicates that he believes the concept that Bin Laden could be an American creation is a form of extreme American arrogance, and that instead Bin Laden developed out of a number of complex geographical and political elements existing in the Middle East. In large part Scheuer identifies these elements as a sort of religious awakening that occurred in Suni Islam after the Afghanistan war with Russia in the late 1970s. In believing that America was Bin Laden's creator, Scheuer argues that the United States is doing itself a disservice, as Bin Laden transcends such easy categorization and has taken on a sort of mythic Robin Hood like status within the Arab world. Scheuer's comments are interesting, but one wonders a number of questions related to them. For instance, what is the reason behind Bin Laden vengeance against the West? In some regards, one wonders if Scheuer is merely giving the listener the company line and shifting blame for Bin Laden's creation to obscure political and Middle Eastern elements.

2. Remark Critique One remark Michel Scheuer makes concerns the nature of intelligence information. Scheuer had worked for the Central Intelligence Agency and because of his affiliation with this organization has a unique insight into a number of policy and information elements related to their operations. The remarks Scheuer made concerns the nature of gathering intelligence. He argued that in today's world it's

highly important for intelligence officers to be able to discern between real information and false information, despite what the upper level officials are looking to believe. While this appears to be an inconsequential remark, upon deeper reflection one can note a number of troubling elements related to it. One of the most prominent such concerns relates to the nature of the remark as indirectly referencing the intelligence information that was misused to originally invade Iraq upon grounds the country housed weapons of mass destruction. Scheuer seems to be indicating that the Central Intelligence Agency has a problem wherein false information has been gathered and increasingly implemented. While it would go without question that an intelligence officer should most prominently concern themselves with the accuracy of the information, in speaking the remark it's clear that rather than indicating a newfound necessity Scheuer is referring to a problem within the agency itself. Extending this to macro questions, one begins to consider how widespread such bending of intelligence information to fit upper-level policy has become, as the public is largely unaware of the CIA's findings and it seems an agency ripe for such abuses of power.