

## **9/11: WHO KNEW WHAT AND WHEN, AND WHAT, IF ANYTHING, DID HE DO?**

*The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, shocked the nation. But what may be nearly as shocking is how much information the government had beforehand, and how stupendous were the incompetence and chicanery that attended its failure to prevent that catastrophe.*

I was less than a year old on December 7, 1941, but as the youngest of eight children, I was later told the stories of where and how we all learned about the attack on Pearl Harbor as a part of our family's oral history. Similarly, the events of September 11, 2001 are imprinted in our consciousness.

We've had 60 years to figure out why the Japanese government decided to start a war with the United States, but we've yet to answer why the hijackers, primarily highly skilled, well educated, middle-class professionals, acting contrary to their own government's policies, would want to simultaneously commit suicide in violently attacking the most visible symbols of American culture.\*

We will never know why each individual terrorist participated, since they all died in the plane crashes, but if we are to begin to comprehend their motivation, we must try

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\* Although President Bush's most common explanation is that the terrorists hate freedom, a more thoughtful analysis by political scientist Gilles Kepel reveals, "The terrorism of September 11 was above all a provocation - albeit a provocation of gigantic proportions. Its purpose was to provoke a similarly gigantic repression of the Afghan civilian population and to build universal solidarity among Muslims in reaction to the victimization and suffering of their Afghan brothers." (Miller, Mark Crispin, *The Bush Dyslexicon*, p. 331) The hijackers could not seriously have expected to defeat America and eliminate our freedoms, but as we will see, they were wildly successful in causing our own government to take away our freedoms *and* to violently repress the Afghan people.

looking at things from their point of view. If we are to make rational decisions leading to peace with our neighbors and security in our neighborhoods, we must be prepared to abandon some deep-seated prejudices and to draw some uncomfortable conclusions.

America is not blameless. We, regrettably, have a long history of having violently interfered with the societies, cultures and governments of other peoples, beginning with annihilation of the indigenous inhabitants of this country. We enslaved millions of Africans and we denied the rights of citizenship to Asian immigrants. It was not that long ago that we colonized Hawaii and the Philippines, killing hundreds of thousands of natives; that we routinely rotated the leadership of the republics of Central and South America at will; and, more recently, that we conspired in the removal of lawfully elected leaders of nations such as Chile and Iran.

We have allied ourselves with repressive regimes and supported their brutal policies. Commencing in 1965, the United States backed the Indonesian army as it took control of the country and organized the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of people, mostly landless peasants.<sup>209</sup> Between 1984 and 1990, the United States provided 80 percent of the arms for Turkey's counterinsurgency campaign against its Kurdish minority. Tens of thousands were killed, and 2-3 million were driven from their homes, leaving 3,500 villages destroyed.<sup>210</sup>

President Reagan came into office in 1980 proclaiming that "international terrorism" sponsored by the USSR was the greatest threat faced by the United States. To combat Russian influence in Nicaragua, we mined its harbors and supported a "Contra" army that regularly and routinely engaged in terrorist activities.

After Nicaragua filed a lawsuit, the United States was condemned by the World Court of Justice for its unlawful acts and was ordered to desist and to pay reparations. We vetoed a United Nations Security Council resolution calling on all states (including the U.S.) to adhere to international law, and we and only two other nations, Israel and El Salvador, voted against the same resolution in the U.N. General Assembly.<sup>211</sup>

In 1985, the United States sponsored the setting of a truck bomb outside a mosque in Beirut, targeted at a Muslim cleric who had angered us. The bomb was timed to kill the maximum number of people as they left prayer services. It missed the cleric, but it killed 80 and wounded 250, mostly women and children. Wouldn't we define this as an act of terrorism had it occurred in the United States?<sup>212</sup>

There is more, much more, but this is enough. It is one thing to acknowledge our past policies of failure, which we are slowly doing, but it is another to understand that history and to adopt successful policies for the future based upon that understanding.

### **Sowing the Wind and Reaping the Whirlwind**

President Carter's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, claims that he instigated secret support for the Mujahideen, who were fighting against the communist government of Afghanistan in 1979, in an effort to draw the USSR into what he called an "Afghan trap."<sup>213</sup> After the USSR sent in its army to prop up the government, the United States and its allies organized, trained, and armed a mercenary army of more than 100,000 to resist the "invasion." Many of the Mujahideen were drawn from the most militant fighters available, the radical Islamists, who viewed the Russians as infidels and occupiers of Muslim lands. The United States encouraged these extremist views as "war values" that made the Mujahideen fierce fighters.

Osama bin Laden, a Saudi citizen, joined the fighters sometime in 1980. He was one of nearly two dozen sons born to Sheikh Muhammad bin Laden, who established a family construction company that built roads, airports and other infrastructure projects in the Middle East. The firm grew into a conglomerate of companies and had become the largest private construction contractor in the world by the time Sheikh Muhammad died in a plane crash in Texas in 1966. One of his older sons, Salem bin Laden took over control of the business. Both the family and the Saudi government supported a younger son, Osama bin Laden, in Afghanistan as he and the family

company, under contract with the CIA, brought in engineers and heavy equipment to build roads and warehouses for the fighters.

Osama bin Laden obtained millions of dollars from his family and his own inheritance to fund the establishment of al Qaeda\* in 1985. Osama bin Laden went on to supervise construction of an extensive tunnel complex near the Pakistan border used to store armaments and as a training and medical facility. He also established extensive funding networks, which remained in existence after the USSR retreated from Afghanistan in 1989. In all of this, bin Laden worked closely with his friend, Saudi Prince Turki Bin Faisal al-Saud, head of the Saudi intelligence service.<sup>214</sup>

Through al Qaeda, bin Laden continued to associate with other fundamentalist Islamists, who believe they are fighting a "Holy War" against the corrupt, repressive, and "un-Islamic" regimes of the region and their supporters.† They believe it is their duty to support Muslims everywhere who are defending themselves against the invasion of infidels. It was for this reason that Egyptian President Sadat was assassinated in 1981, and the Marine barracks were bombed in Beirut in 1983, driving the United States out of Lebanon. The Islamists consider the governments of Saudi Arabia and others in the region, including Iraq, to be corrupt, repressive, and not truly Islamic.

Following the Gulf War and the establishment of permanent U.S. military bases in Saudi Arabia (where Mecca, Islam's holy city is located), bin Laden and the organizations he was associated with zeroed in on America as an infidel invader.

Not only did the USSR abandon Afghanistan in 1989, but Bush Sr. did as well. Following the Russian withdrawal, the United States did nothing as Afghanistan suffered through a continuing civil war in which tens of thousands of civilians were killed. A collection of warlords known as the "Northern Alliance" brutally established limited control between 1992 and

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\* In Arabic, "al Qaeda" means a register (*not* "base"). It was a record book of visitors to the bin Laden guesthouse in Peshawar.

† Islamists comprise a number of factions in Islam that want to rely upon the Sharia (Islamic Law) to govern all aspects of their societies.

1995. The Alliance engaged in drug trafficking into Tajikistan, a major way station for drugs en route to Europe and the United States. The Alliance left a trail of burned out villages, and carried out such terror that the population generally welcomed the Taliban, a movement of fundamentalist Islamists with which bin Laden and his al Qaeda network became associated.<sup>215</sup>

The CIA was involved in the training and arming of Islamist fighters against the USSR, bringing many of them to the United States on visas issued in Saudi Arabia, and some of these relationships were maintained. In 1990, during the administration of President Bush Sr., a radical Islamist Egyptian cleric by the name of Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman entered the United States with the full knowledge of CIA officials. Sheikh Rahman was a member of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, which had affiliated itself with al Qaeda. Rahman, who was wanted by Egypt on charges of terrorism, quickly attracted a following of young radical Islamists.<sup>216</sup>

In 1993, the Pentagon commissioned a study that discussed how airplanes could be used as suicide bombs by terrorists to crash into national landmarks, such as the CIA headquarters, the White House or the Pentagon. The study was circulated through the Pentagon, the Justice Department and the Federal Emergency Management Service, but it was not publicly released because of fears it might give terrorists ideas.<sup>217</sup>

On February 26, 1993, the group of Islamists associated with Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman parked a rented truck containing a huge fertilizer bomb and tanks of hydrogen in the underground parking basement of the World Trade Center, and set off an explosion intended to topple one tower into the other. The explosion killed six and injured a thousand.<sup>218</sup>

Within days, law enforcement authorities were able to trace the vehicle to the Islamists associated with Sheikh Rahman and to begin making arrests. One of the primary organizers, Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, escaped and became a fugitive. During subsequent criminal trials, ten of the conspirators, including Sheikh Rahman, were convicted of conspiring to wage a war of urban terrorism against the United States, including planned attacks against the United Nations building and the bridges and

tunnels leading into New York City. All were sentenced to prison, with the Sheikh receiving a life term. Osama bin Laden was named in the case as an unindicted co-conspirator.<sup>219</sup>

In 1994, Clinton directed an extensive review of the administration's terrorism policy. Once agreement was reached between the various agencies and departments, Clinton signed Presidential Decision Directive 39 (PDD-39), "U.S. Policy on Counterterrorism." The Directive outlined actions to "reduce terrorist capabilities" in order to "reduce vulnerabilities at home and abroad." The Directive established there would be "no greater priority than preventing the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction" by terrorists. Failing that, there was no greater priority than "removing that capability."<sup>220</sup>

Although President Clinton was shrinking the overall federal budget, he increased the counterterrorism budget from \$5.7 billion in 1995 to \$11.1 billion in 2000. During the same period, he increased the FBI counterterrorism budget over 280 percent.<sup>221</sup>

Following the first World Trade Center bombing, Ramzi Yousef escaped from the U.S. and lived for a time in a boarding house in Pakistan operated by Osama bin Laden. In January 1995, Yousef was in the Philippines, where he and others were conspiring to blow up eleven U.S. commercial airplanes in one day, or as an alternative, to simultaneously crash the planes into symbols of American culture, such as the CIA headquarters, the Pentagon, the World Trade Center, the Sears Tower in Chicago, the TransAmerica Tower in San Francisco, and the White House. One of the conspirators had obtained a commercial pilot's license from a U.S. flight school. Fate interrupted these plans when Yousef accidentally started a fire while mixing explosives in a Manila apartment. He had to flee, but computer data found in the room led to his arrest a month later by Pakistani authorities.<sup>222</sup>

Yousef was extradited to the United States and as a helicopter transported him into New York City, an FBI agent pointed out the World Trade Center towers and said, "They're still standing." Yousef said, "Next time, if I have more money, I'll knock it down."<sup>223</sup> Yousef was tried and convicted of both the World Trade Center bombing and the conspiracy to destroy

the eleven aircraft. He was convicted on *September 11, 1996* and was sentenced to 240 years in federal prison.<sup>224</sup> Exactly five years later, the World Trade Center towers were no longer standing!

In 1995, the United States began to back the Islamist Taliban organization in its civil war against the Northern Alliance for control of Afghanistan. While the Northern Alliance was supported by Russia and Iran and was recognized by the United Nations, the Taliban's march on Kabul was encouraged by the CIA and funded with Saudi petrodollars. The Taliban took power in 1996, with the support of the Pakistani secret service.<sup>225</sup>

In 1996, the FBI began to investigate why so many Arab students were attending flight schools in the United States to learn how to fly commercial airplanes.<sup>226</sup>

On June 25, 1996, Islamist terrorists associated with the radical Saudi Hezbollah group exploded a truck bomb loaded with 5,000 pounds of plastic explosives at the Khobar Towers in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. The goal of the terrorists was to drive the United States military from Saudi Arabia. The Towers were used as dormitories for U.S. Air Force personnel, 19 of whom were killed and 372 injured. Following a comprehensive FBI investigation, 14 members of Hizballah were indicted.<sup>227</sup> During a trial of four defendants between February and July 2001, there was testimony that two of bin Laden's operatives had received pilot training in the United States.<sup>228</sup>

Another seemingly unrelated event that was to become critically significant in the future occurred on October 27, 1997, when following a feasibility study by Enron Corporation, six international oil companies (led by the Union Oil Company of California (Unocal) and the Delta Oil Company, Ltd., of Saudi Arabia) incorporated Central Asia Gas Pipeline, Ltd. (CentGas) along with the Government of Turkmenistan to build a 48-inch pipeline across Afghanistan to Pakistan. The Afghan Taliban had selected Unocal (which owned 46.5 percent of CentGas) over a Brazilian competitor.<sup>229</sup>

In February 1998, bin Laden issued a religious announcement known as a "fatwa," which stated, "The ruling to

kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to.”<sup>230</sup>

In May 1998, President Clinton appointed Richard A. Clarke as the first National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection, and Counterterrorism. Clarke was the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence in the Reagan administration and was the Assistant Secretary of State for Politico-Military Affairs in the Bush Sr. administration. He had been a member of Clinton’s National Security Council staff with the primary responsibility for counterterrorism.

Clarke chaired meetings of the Counterterrorism Security Group and four committees made up of senior and midlevel managers from the departments. The four committees reported to the Cabinet-level Principals Committee, chaired by the national security advisor, with cabinet-level representatives from the departments and agencies. Clarke became a member of the Principals Committee<sup>231</sup>

On August 7, 1998, Islamists bombed the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, killing 257 people and injuring thousands. A suspect, Mohammad Sadik Howaida, escaped from Nairobi but was arrested soon after his arrival in Karachi, Pakistan.<sup>232</sup> Howaida, an associate of bin Laden, was extradited to Kenya.

Two weeks later, the Clinton administration lashed out with a barrage of ship-based Tomahawk missiles launched at al Qaeda training bases in Afghanistan and at the al-Shifa Pharmaceutical Company in Khartoum, Sudan, believed to be linked to bin Laden, where the CIA thought a component of nerve gas was being produced. It is not known what damage was done at the training camps, but the pharmaceutical building was destroyed. The Sudan attack was a horrible mistake because the plant actually produced at least half of the nation’s essential medicines for the Sudanese and their herds of cattle.<sup>233</sup>

On November 4, 1998, bin Laden was indicted in the Manhattan federal district court for the embassy bombings and for conspiring to kill Americans. The indictment alleged that bin

Laden and four others were members of al Qaeda, and that they conspired with a number of other terrorist organizations, including one led by Sheik Rahman.<sup>234</sup>

President Clinton issued a presidential order authorizing bin Laden's assassination. President Clinton ordered two Tomahawk cruise-missile submarines to remain on standby in waters near Afghanistan, and he exhausted intelligence sources attempting to pinpoint the time and location when bin Laden could be hit with a missile attack.<sup>235</sup>

On December 4, 1998, in another seemingly unrelated event, Unocal withdrew from the CentGas consortium for "business reasons" and denied that it had ever entered into a commercial agreement with the Taliban, although it had provided support.<sup>236</sup> However, as we will see, the pipeline deal was not dead.

The United Nations imposed economic sanctions on Afghanistan that further isolated the Taliban, whose "government" was only recognized by three countries, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates.<sup>237</sup>

From at least 1998 forward, the Clinton administration was entirely hostile to the Taliban regime. It made repeated requests to the Taliban to arrest bin Laden and extradite him to the United States. In April 2000, the Taliban were informed that "If bin Laden or any of the organizations affiliated with him attacks the United States or United States interests, we will hold you, the leadership of the Taliban, personally accountable."<sup>238</sup>

In 1999, the National Intelligence Council prepared a report seeking to anticipate the al Qaeda response to Clinton's bombing of the bin Laden camps in Afghanistan. The report stated, "Suicide bomber(s) belonging to al-Qaida's Martyrdom Battalion could crash-land an aircraft packed with high explosives (C-4 and semtex) into the Pentagon, the headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), or the White House." The report referred to Ramiz Yousef's plans to engage in a suicide jetliner mission.<sup>239</sup>

In December 1999, the CIA learned that al Qaeda was planning an attack in the U.S. around the Millennium rollover. President Clinton instructed his national security advisor to hold

daily meetings with the attorney general and the directors of the FBI and CIA to brief Clinton on what they had done and learned in the last day about the al Qaeda terrorism threat.<sup>240</sup>

When a U.S. Customs agent attempted to question Ahmed Ressay as he was crossing into the United States from British Columbia, he ran from the ferry. Ressay was arrested after a brief chase, and an intensive federal investigation ensued. Information was developed which led to an al Qaeda sleeper cell in Montreal. Other leads resulted in at least one additional arrest of an al Qaeda member in New York City.<sup>241</sup>

Security planning for the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia included the danger of a fully loaded, fueled airliner crashing into the opening ceremony before a worldwide television audience, and bin Laden was the top suspect. Similar concerns had caused the prohibition of aircraft above event venues in Atlanta during the 1996 Olympic Games and the deployment of military helicopters to intercept aircraft that strayed into the restricted airspace.<sup>242</sup>

On October 12, 2000, al Qaeda operatives set off a bomb alongside the USS *Cole*, which was being refueled in the harbor at Aden, Yemen. Seventeen U.S. sailors were killed, and 39 were injured. President Clinton, who had increasingly concentrated on the terrorist threat during his administration by doubling counterterrorism funding and by identifying, arresting and convicting individual terrorists, turned to Richard Clarke, the White House Chief of Counterterrorism, and instructed him to develop a plan to destroy the al Qaeda terrorist network.<sup>243</sup>

Clarke immediately developed a comprehensive program to: (1) target al Qaeda cells and arrest their members; (2) track and attack al Qaeda financial networks; (3) freeze its assets and block its funding through charity fronts; (4) support other governments fighting against al Qaeda; (5) engage in covert actions in Afghanistan against al Qaeda training camps; and (6) go after bin Laden directly and forcefully.<sup>244</sup>

On December 20, 2000, Clarke presented the program to President Clinton's National Security Advisor, Sandy Berger, who immediately approved it. However, since the U.S. Supreme

Court had just decided on December 12, 2000, that George W. Bush could have the presidency as a gift, the Clinton administration decided to hold off launching any immediate attacks against bin Laden and al Qaeda to avoid spoiling Bush's Christmas and to allow him to implement the plan.

Two former counterterrorism officials of the Reagan administration evaluated the Clinton administration's fight against terrorism. Robert Oakley said, "Overall, I give them very high marks. ... The only major criticism I have is the obsession with Osama, which made him stronger." L. Paul Bremer (the current administrator of Iraq) believed that Clinton had "correctly focused on bin Laden." The *Washington Post* agreed, "By any measure available, Clinton left office having given greater priority to terrorism than any president before him. ... [It was] the first administration to undertake a systematic anti-terrorist effort."<sup>245</sup>

### **Neglect of Duty**

On the day he left office, Bill Clinton took a few minutes to discuss with the new president what he considered to be the most urgent matters. "First," he said, "There is bin Laden. He is angry, and we have intelligence that indicates he is coming after us, somehow. We've put together a plan to deal with terrorist threats, and my people will brief you and your staff on its details. I consider this the top priority." Clinton went on to warn about the dangers of the Israelis and Palestinians, North Korea, and Pakistan and India. He concluded, "Lastly, I'd watch Saddam Hussein very closely. He's got oil money and anger against the U.S." Bush responded, "I think you've got your priorities wrong, I'm putting Saddam at the top of the list."<sup>246</sup>

At Clinton's instructions, Sandy Berger met with Bush's new National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice, during one of the ten briefing sessions he arranged for her that was dedicated to terrorism. He told her, "I believe that the Bush administration will spend more time on terrorism in general, and on al Qaeda specifically, than any other subject." Rice continued the meeting with Richard Clarke, who fully briefed her on the plan he had developed to combat bin Laden and al Qaeda, and Rice decided

to keep Clarke on as the head of counterterrorism.<sup>247</sup> However, Rice downgraded Clarke's position and ordered that the Counterterrorism Security Group would no longer report to the Principals Committee.

In addition to Rice, Clarke also briefed her deputy, Steve Hadley, Vice President Cheney and Secretary of State Powell. Clarke provided the same warning to each: "al Qaeda is at war with us, it is a highly capable organization, probably with sleeper cells in the U.S., and it is clearly planning a major series of attacks against us; we must act decisively and quickly, deciding on the issues prepared after the attack on the *Cole*, going on the offensive."<sup>248</sup>

Immediately following the Inauguration, Clarke wrote to Rice and Hadley urgently requesting a meeting of the Principals Committee to discuss the imminent al Qaeda threat. Rice decided that the Principals would not discuss terrorism policy until it has been "framed" by the Deputy Secretaries.<sup>249</sup>

In the meantime, the Bush administration had other more pressing priorities than terrorism. Bush's Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, testified at his Senate confirmation hearing, "We must develop the capabilities to defend against missiles, terrorism and newer threats against our space assets and information systems." He said, "The American people ... must be protected against the threats with which modern technology and its proliferation confront us." Rumsfeld said that improving force readiness and strengthening intelligence and space capabilities should be top priorities.<sup>250</sup>

On February 9, 2000, Robert Walpole, the National Intelligence Officer for Strategic and Nuclear Programs, testified in Congress that while missile defense was an issue, an attack with weapons of mass destruction delivered by non-missile means was a significant concern, because these weapons are less expensive than ICBMs, they "can be covertly developed and employed; probably would be more reliable, accurate and effective" and they would "avoid missile defenses."<sup>251</sup>

Undeterred, the Bush administration continued to go forward with Rumsfeld's expensive missile defense system and

did nothing immediate to defend against the most critical threat, the hijacking and use of civilian aircraft to crash into America's major cultural landmarks.

On February 7, 2001, CIA Director George Tenet testified before Congress and stated Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda network were the single greatest threat to U.S. interests here and abroad. He said: "Terrorists are also becoming more operationally adept and more technically sophisticated in order to defeat counter-terrorism measures. For example, as we have increased security around government and military facilities, terrorists are seeking out "softer" targets that provide opportunities for mass casualties. Employing increasingly advanced devices and using strategies such as simultaneous attacks, the number of people killed...Usama bin Laden and his global network of lieutenants and associates remain the most immediate and serious threats."<sup>252</sup>

On February 15, 2001, former senators Gary Hart and Warren Rudman issued the final report of their commission that had studied national security over a period of years. The report warned that "mass-casualty terrorism directed against the U.S. homeland was of serious and growing concern," and that America was not prepared for a "catastrophic" terrorist attack. The report concluded, "This commission believes that the security of the American homeland from the threats of the new century should be *the* primary national security mission of the U.S. government." The report called for better information sharing between federal agencies, and called for the establishment of a National Homeland Security Agency to combine some of the government's national security agencies and departments. Bush opposed creation of such an agency, and ignored the report.<sup>253</sup>

On April 30, 2001, Clarke presented his al Qaeda plan to a meeting of second-tier deputies of the Vice President, the Defense Department, State Department, and CIA. The deputies agreed to a leisurely meeting schedule to individually consider the issues of al Qaeda, Pakistan, and the India-Pakistan relationship, and to then to meet a fourth time to integrate the issues.<sup>254</sup>

Rumsfeld's deputy secretary of defense, Paul Wolfowitz, said, "I just don't understand why we are beginning by talking about this one man bin Laden." Clark replied, "We are talking about a network of terrorist organizations called al Qaeda, that happens to be led by bin Laden, and we are talking about that network because it and it alone poses an immediate and serious threat to the United States."<sup>255</sup> As the spring wore on, Clarke e-mailed Rice and her deputies warning them that "al Qaeda was trying to kill Americans, to have hundreds of dead in the streets of America."<sup>256</sup>

On May 1, 2001, Bush gave a speech in which he argued the necessity of a missile defense system because "today's *most urgent threat* stems not from thousands of ballistic missiles in Soviet hands, but from a small number of missiles in the hands of ... states for whom terror and blackmail are a way of life. (emphasis added)"<sup>257</sup> Bush was determined to spend billions of dollars to fight a threat that did not exist, and to ignore, generally, the most dangerous threat, the use of civilian aircraft as fuel-loaded missiles.

To avoid congressional hearings on the Hart-Rudman report, Bush announced formation of an antiterrorism task force on May 8, 2001. The task force was to be chaired by Vice President Cheney to develop a plan to counter domestic terrorist attacks, and Bush said that he would "periodically chair a meeting of the National Security Council to review these efforts." Cheney's task force never met, and Bush never chaired a meeting to review the efforts. Instead, the national security agency deputies began to attend their schedule of meetings and to leisurely talk about the issues.<sup>258</sup>

In May 2001, the Bush administration made it easier for Saudi visitors to come to the United States by allowing them to arrange visas through 10 travel agencies, avoiding the necessity of being interviewed and identified at the U.S. Embassy or consulate offices.<sup>259</sup>

On June 7, 2001, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice addressed the Council on Foreign Relations on "Foreign Policy Priorities and Challenges of the [Bush] Administration. While she discussed the "values gap" and "strategic split" between the

U.S. and Europe, she did not mention terrorism as a priority or challenge of the Bush administration.<sup>260</sup>

On July 10, 2001, an FBI agent stationed in Phoenix, Arizona, became concerned about the number of Middle Eastern students attending a local flying school. He sent a report to Washington D.C. in which he suggested al Qaeda operatives might be trying to gain access to the United States civilian aviation system. He recommended that the FBI contact other intelligence agencies to determine if they had related information and to canvass other flying schools to identify other Arab students.<sup>261</sup> The report was laid aside because it was too “speculative.”<sup>262</sup> Nothing was done.

In the meantime, Clarke and CIA Director George Tenet were becoming increasingly concerned about the likelihood of an imminent major domestic terrorist attack. America’s allies were forwarding highly specific warnings that could not be ignored. In June, Germany warned that Middle Eastern terrorists were “planning to hijack commercial aircraft to use as weapons to attack important symbols of American and Israeli culture.”

On June 13, Egypt warned that a plane stuffed with explosives could be used as a weapon against Bush, possibly at the Genoa summit of industrialized nations. Russia warned the CIA that 25 terrorist pilots had been specially trained to execute suicide missions against civilian buildings.<sup>263</sup> Tenet, “nearly frantic” with worry, informed Rice in mid-July that there was going to be a major attack.

On July 5, 2001, Clarke warned all of the domestic security agencies, including the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the FBI, to increase their security because of the impending attack. The FAA, which had received specific warnings in the past about the vulnerability of cockpit doors, failed to take any steps to prevent hijackers from taking control of commercial aircraft.<sup>264</sup>

In July 2001, the CIA issued an intelligence briefing to “senior government officials” that predicted that Osama bin Laden was going to attack “in the coming weeks.” The report

stated "The attack will be spectacular and designed to inflict mass casualties against U.S. facilities or interests. Attack preparations have been made. Attack will occur with little or no warning."<sup>265</sup> As you will see later, the names of the recipients of the briefing (including you-know-who) have been classified.

In July 2001, several FBI agents contacted an attorney, David Philip Schippers, the former head prosecutor of Clinton's impeachment trial, with their concerns about a massive attack being planned by terrorists targeted against the financial district of lower Manhattan (where the World Trade Center is located) and their frustration at being restrained by their superiors. Schippers attempted to personally contact Attorney General Ashcroft with their concerns; however, his attempts were rebuffed.

Prior to September 1, the FBI agents confirmed that such an attack by bin Laden was imminent; however, they were ordered by their superiors to shut down their investigation, and they were threatened with prosecution under the National Security Act if they went public with the information they had learned in their investigation.<sup>266</sup>

On July 12, 2001, Osama bin Laden was in the American Hospital in Dubai for treatment. He had received visits from many members of his extensive family and from Prince Turki al Faisal, the head of Saudi intelligence, but on this day his guest was CIA agent Larry Mitchell, an Arab specialist.<sup>267</sup> Although bin Laden was wanted on an American arrest warrant for murder, he was not arrested, nor did we hear about the visit.

On July 16, 2001, after three months of talking, the second-tier national security agency deputies held their fourth meeting and agreed to recommend Clarke's program to the Principals Committee, composed of Cheney, Rice, Tenet, Powell, and Rumsfeld. An attempt was made to schedule the meeting in August; however, too many of the participants were unavailable.<sup>268</sup>

So what did Bush do? He did what he did best. On August 3, he took his dogs, Barney and Spot, on an extended vacation to his Texas ranch. At this point in his term, when America's "most

productive workers on earth” are lucky to get a two-week paid vacation, Bush had spent 42 percent of his first seven months on the job taking it easy at his ranch, at Camp David, or the Bush family retreat in Kennebunkport. He had earned another month off.<sup>269</sup>

On August 6, 2003, the CIA delivered an intelligence report entitled “Bin Laden Determined to Strike in U.S.” to Bush at his ranch. Bush briefly interrupted his vacation to read the page-and-a-quarter-long document. The briefing reported that al Qaeda was active in the United States, that it was suspected of recent surveillance of federal buildings in New York and that it could be planning domestic hijackings. The report referred to “patterns of suspicious activity in this country consistent with preparations for hijackings or other types of attacks.”<sup>270</sup>

Prior to 9/11, Tenet attempted to warn Bush in more than 40 briefings of threats involving al Qaeda. Among the titles of the briefings were: “Bin Laden planning multiple operations,” “Bin Laden network’s plans advancing,” and “Bin Laden threats are real.”<sup>271</sup>

If you recall, when President Clinton was presented with intelligence that warned of possible terrorist attacks during December 1999, he ordered the heads of the FBI and the CIA to report to the White House on a daily basis and account for what they were doing to counter the threats. As a result, a terrorist who was bringing explosives into the U.S. to attack the Los Angeles airport was arrested, an intensive federal investigation ensued, an al Qaeda sleeper cell was located in Montreal, and another al Qaeda member was arrested in New York City. What did President “What, me worry?” Bush do? He continued to relax, played a little golf, cleared a little brush, and watched his dogs chase the armadillos.<sup>272</sup> Nothing too brain taxing.

In August, the Israeli Mossad warned the CIA and the FBI that as many as 200 al Qaeda members were infiltrating the United States and were planning a “major assault” in the U.S. against “a large-scale target” where Americans would be “very vulnerable.”<sup>273</sup>

Bush's attorney general, John Ashcroft, did not list counterterrorism as one of his seven goals in a draft of his "Strategic Plan" dated August 9, 2001. Fighting terrorism was a secondary subgoal under gun violence and drugs. In April 2000, Clinton's attorney general, Janet Reno, had called terrorism "the most challenging threat in the criminal justice area."<sup>274</sup> She ordered the preparation of an elaborate counterterrorism plan known as MAX CAP 05, or Maximum Capacity by 2005 that called for a huge build-up in the FBI's counterterrorism operations. Ashcroft declined to adopt the plan once he took office.<sup>275</sup>

On August 16, 2001, the Immigration and Naturalization Service arrested Zacharias Moussaoui, who had earlier flunked out of a flight school in Oklahoma, and who was taking flight simulator training for commercial airplanes at a flying school in Minnesota. He was turned in by an instructor, who became worried that Moussaoui had more interest in how much fuel a commercial jet carried and how much damage it could do if it hit anything and less interest in learning how to actually take off or land an airplane. The instructor told agents, "Do you realize that a 747 loaded with fuel can be used as a bomb?" The arresting agent wrote that Moussaoui was "the type of person who could fly something into the World Trade Center," and an FBI agent seeking permission to obtain a search warrant to review Moussaoui's computer files suggested that a 747 airliner loaded with fuel could be used as a missile.

FBI Headquarters refused to allow its agents to seek a search warrant, even after France disclosed that Moussaoui had connections with bin Laden and al Qaeda. Of the 12,000 applications for national security search warrants made since they were authorized in 1978, only one had ever been denied.<sup>276</sup> There was no plausible reason to not obtain a warrant to follow up on Moussaoui's arrest.

Another terrorist, who *was* subject to telephone surveillance (by the Egyptian secret service) and whose movements *were* being monitored by the FBI, Mohamed Atta, had been allowed to reenter the United States on January 10, 2001, on an expired tourist visa, even though he informed immigration officers that

he was taking flying lessons in the United States, which violated his expired visa. Moreover, Israel had earlier notified the United States that Atta had been involved in a bombing there even before he was issued his original visa.<sup>277</sup>

During the week before September 11, 2001, Lt. General Mahmoud Ahmad, the Director-General of Pakistani military intelligence, came to the United States to consult with high-level officials of the CIA and the Pentagon. Before the trip, he had ordered the transfer of \$100,000 to Mohamed Atta in the United States!<sup>278</sup>

Meanwhile, down in East Texas, Bush continued to laze about with Barney and Spot.<sup>279</sup>

Back in Washington, Thomas J. Pickard, the acting Director of the FBI, read a top-secret review of the Bureau's counterterrorism programs calling for a dramatic increase in funding. Concerned, Pickard met with his boss, Attorney General John Ashcroft, and requested an additional \$58 million to improve the Bureau's capacity to deal with terrorist threats.<sup>280</sup> Note what later happens to Pickard's request in evaluating the priority that the Bush administration placed on the counterterrorism effort.

On September 4, 2001, the national security principals, Cheney *et al.*, met and discussed Clarke's plan. They agreed to implement it in phases by first demanding cooperation from the Taliban and by establishing liaison with the Northern Alliance.<sup>281</sup> In preparation for the meeting, Clarke asked Rice "to put herself in her own shoes when in the very near future al Qaeda had killed hundreds of Americans." He asked her "What will you wish then that you had already done?"<sup>282</sup>

On September 7, 2001, the U.S. State Department issued a worldwide alert warning that "American citizens may be the target of a terrorist threat from extremist groups with links to the al Qaeda organization."<sup>283</sup> However, the FAA did not take any steps to put the domestic airline industry on high alert. Are you beginning to get the feeling that there was little concern for the safety of ordinary citizens? Read on.

On September 9, 2001, Congress was considering an increase of \$600 million for antiterrorist programs, with the funds to be taken from Rumsfeld's missile defense program. Rumsfeld sent a letter to Senator Carl Levin, then chairman of the Armed Services Committee in response to Levin's attempt to transfer money to counterterrorism. Rumsfeld said he would urge Bush to veto the measure.<sup>284</sup>

On September 9, 2001, two North African suicide bombers posing as journalists from "Arabic News International" exploded a bomb concealed in a video camera as they interviewed Ahmed Shah Massoud, the popular leader of the Northern Alliance and primary opponent of the Taliban. Massoud died while being transported by helicopter to Tajikistan.<sup>285</sup>

The National Security Agency began to intercept multiple phone calls from Abu Zabaida, bin Laden's chief of operations, to the United States. The U.S. had broken the al Qaeda code; however, the contents of these communications have never been officially disclosed.<sup>286</sup> However, Sibel Edmonds, a former FBI translator has come forward with detailed information that specific intelligence documents pointing to the use of aircraft against skyscrapers in major U.S. cities were in existence in April and May 2001.<sup>287</sup>

It has been revealed that bin Laden telephoned his mother on September 9<sup>th</sup> and told her that "In two days you're going to hear big news, and you're not going to hear from me for a while." The call was monitored by a foreign intelligence service and was passed on to U.S. intelligence.<sup>288</sup>

On September 10, 2001, Ashcroft turned down Pickard's request for additional funding. The budget he did send to Congress included spending increases in 68 different programs. None had anything to do with terrorism.<sup>289</sup> (A month after the 9/11 attack, the FBI requested an additional \$1.5 billion to create 2,024 positions to staff an enhanced counterterrorism effort. However, the White House Office of Management and Budget cut that request to \$531 million. In response, Ashcroft cut the FBI's request for "items such as computer networking and foreign language intercepts by half, cut a cyber-security request

by three quarters and eliminated entirely a request for ‘collaborative capabilities.’”<sup>290</sup>

As for Ashcroft personally, he had stopped flying on commercial jets, choosing to use a luxurious \$40 million FBI Gulfstream 5 intended for special investigations and the transportation of terrorists instead.<sup>291</sup> An interesting coincidence?

The Pentagon had been on high alert for several weeks; however, a particularly urgent warning was received on the evening of September 10, 2001, causing a number of top officials to cancel their air travel plans for the next morning.<sup>292</sup> Why wasn’t the American public given the same warning?

Without a doubt, if the American public were provided the same information available to the top government officials, many may also have chosen to avoid commercial air travel. The airlines may have suffered a loss of revenue, but it is equally likely that an informed and alert public might have focused attention on some, if not all of the hijackers before they were able to board the planes.\*

On September 11, 2001, the United States suffered the first major attack on its “homeland” since the War of 1812. The White House escaped being burned this time, but in a 2-hour, 11-minute attack, 19 Islamist terrorists simultaneously hijacked and converted four commercial airliners into low-tech weapons of mass destruction which they piloted into their targets, killing over 3,000 in New York City, almost 200 in Washington, D.C., and 40 in Pennsylvania. The attack resulted in losses of hundreds of billions of dollars to United States property and its economy, and inflicted a massive blow to our collective sense of security from which we may never recover. Certainly not, unless we learn what went wrong and make changes for the future.

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\* Eleanor Hill, the staff director of the Congressional Committee that subsequently investigated the 9/11 attacks, noted that “prior to September 11<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. intelligence and law enforcement communities were fighting a war against terrorism largely without the benefit of what some would call their most potent weapon in that effort: an alert and committed public. One need look no further for proof of the latter point than the heroics of the passengers on Flight 93.”

Do you think that Bush and his administration considered the fight against terrorism to be a priority? Do you believe Bush took all appropriate steps to protect the American people? You're not stupid! Get the truth.

### **The Attack**

On September 10, 2001, President Bush spent the night at the Colony Beach and Tennis Resort on Longboat Key, Florida, in preparation for a political visit to Booker Elementary School in Sarasota the next morning to push his education plan. His schedule for the day was a matter of public record.

On September 11, 2001, Bush was awake at 6:00 a.m. and preparing for his daily run when several Middle Eastern men approached the Colony's guard station. They told the guard they had an appointment to conduct a "pool side" interview with the president and asked for a particular Secret Service agent by name. The message was relayed to a Secret Service agent inside the Colony, who had never heard of the requested agent, nor was he aware of any scheduled interview. He instructed the guard to turn the van away and to tell the men to contact the White House public relations office in Washington, D.C. for an appointment.<sup>293</sup>

It is not known whether this was a suicide assassination attempt similar to the one that had killed Ahmed Massoud two days earlier in Afghanistan. However, once the men were turned away without further investigation, they were never identified or located. At the same time, a total of 19 hijackers were preparing for and boarding at least four scheduled flights. Nine of the hijackers were selected for special screening. Of these, six were further selected for extra attention by a computerized selection process to scan their checked baggage for bombs or weapons, three because of irregularities in identification documents. The names of two hijackers, who had not been selected for special screening, were on a terrorists watch list for international flights; however, the FAA had not given this information to the domestic airlines. All 19 were allowed to board their scheduled flights.<sup>294</sup>

A brief summary of each flight and the day's major events follows:\*

**American Airlines Flight 11:**

7:59 a.m. Departs Boston.

8:13 a.m. Becomes unresponsive to ground control.

8:20 a.m. Veers dramatically off course; considered to be hijacked.

8:35 a.m. President Bush departs in motorcade for Booker Elementary School (there are media reports that Bush was informed of the hijacking of Flight 11 before he departed the hotel).<sup>295</sup>

8:40 a.m. North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) notified.

8:46 a.m. Plane piloted into the World Trade Center North Tower; FAA establishes open line with Secret Service.

8:48 a.m. Presidential Spokesman Ari Fleischer notified of first crash while presidential motorcade still en route to school; CNN broadcasts first film.

8:55 a.m. President Bush arrives at school. Rice notifies him of the first crash; however, he apparently was not advised that it was the result of a hijacking nor that there was a second hijacking, or he was so advised and failed to comprehend. He engages in photo opportunities.

9:00 a.m. President Bush enters classroom and begins the planned event.

9:03 a.m. Vice President Cheney is forcibly removed from his office by Secret Service agents and moved to a secure bunker.

9:07 a.m. President Bush notified of second crash in the classroom. He continues with the reading program and photo opportunity.

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\* Following the attack on September 11, 2001, there have been numerous time lines published. For more detail, see: [www.cnparm.home.texas.net/911/911/911.html](http://www.cnparm.home.texas.net/911/911/911.html) and [www.geocities.com/spdster2003/dtail3.html](http://www.geocities.com/spdster2003/dtail3.html).

- 9:12 a.m. President Bush leaves the classroom, goes to vacant classroom, meets with staff, watches television, and prepares speech.
- 9:26 a.m. National ground stop issued by FAA, freezing all takeoffs.
- 9:30 a.m. President Bush gives a brief speech at the school to students, teachers and reporters. He announces that two airplanes have crashed into the World Trade Center in an apparent terrorist attack.
- 9:34 a.m. Presidential motorcade leaves school en route to airport.
- 9:56 a.m. President Bush departs Saratoga airport on Air Force One. He speaks to Vice President Cheney and approves shooting down hijacked commercial flights.
- 10:28 a.m. North Tower collapses.

**United Airlines Flight 175:**

- 8:14 a.m. Departs Boston.
- 8:42 a.m. Hijacked and veers from its course over New Jersey, makes U-turn.
- 8:43 a.m. NORAD notified.
- 9:03 a.m. Plane piloted into the World Trade Center South Tower.
- 9:59 a.m. South Tower collapses.

**American Airlines Flight 77:**

- 8:20 a.m. Departs Dulles International Airport outside of Washington, D.C.
- 8:46 a.m. Hijacked and changes course.
- 9:05 a.m. West Virginia flight control notes eastbound plane without transponder.
- 9:24 a.m. NORAD notified.
- 9:33 a.m. Plane passes over Pentagon at 7,000 feet, executes complete circle, spiraling down, passes near White House.
- 9:38 a.m. Piloted into the Pentagon.

### **United Airlines Flight 93:**

- 8:41 a.m. Departs Newark en route to San Francisco.
- 9:00 a.m. United warns all aircraft of cockpit intrusions and to barricade cockpit doors; Flight 93 pilots acknowledge; however, hijacker in uniform pretending to be a pilot may have already been in cockpit with permission.
- 9:27 a.m. (Or before) Three hijackers put red bandanas around head, force way into cockpit.
- 9:30 a.m. Transponder turned off.
- 9:34 a.m. Hijacker pretending to be Captain tells passengers there's a bomb on board; passenger on cell phone learns about other highjackings, determines plane is on suicide mission.
- 9:36 a.m. Plane turns around near Cleveland, Ohio; heads toward Washington, D.C.
- 9:47 a.m. Passengers vote to overcome hijackers;
- 9:50 a.m. Filling pitchers with hot water to use against hijackers;
- 9:57 a.m. Use galley cart in attempt to force cockpit door.
- 10:06 a.m. Plane crashes near Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

### **The Cover-up**

At 8:30 p.m., President Bush made a speech to the nation in which he stated that, "We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them." He also stated, "Immediately following the first attack, I implemented our government's emergency response plans." This was the first of many lies about 9/11.

What actually happened was that Bush did nothing for over an hour between 8:46 a.m. (the time of the first crash and three minutes after NORAD was notified of the second hijacking) and 9:56 a.m., when he approved shooting down hijacked airplanes. He continued to read to the children and to posture for the cameras. One can only wonder what he was thinking. Was he in denial because he had blown off so many warnings of just such an occurrence? Or is he just not that bright and failed to comprehend what was taking place?

When Bush was later asked about the attack, he stated, "I was sitting outside the classroom waiting to go in, and I saw an airplane hit the tower—the TV was obviously on. And I used to fly myself, and I said, well there's one terrible pilot. I said, it must have been a horrible accident. But I was whisked off there. I didn't have much time to think about it."

later said, "first of all, when we walked into the classroom, I had seen this plane fly into the first building."<sup>296</sup> None of this could be true. He wasn't whisked off and he could not have seen the first crash, because it wasn't shown on television until videotape later turned up. He said that his Chief of Staff, Andrew Card, had informed him of the crash, saying, "here's what you're going to be doing: You're going to meet so-and-so, such-and-such." Then Andy Card said, 'by the way, an aircraft flew into the World Trade Center.'"

What we do know is that during a substantial period of time, while time stood still for the rest of us and when the nation was entitled to aggressive leadership, Bush continued to dither and did nothing. He did not order the nation's commercial air fleet grounded. It fell to a third-tier FAA manager, Ben Sliney, to take that initiative.<sup>297</sup>

Fighter jets were dispatched in an attempt to intercept the remaining hijacked airliners; however, the only person who could have authorized the use of weapons was reading to the children. President Bush finally left for the airport and took off in Air Force One. He wandered around the country for much of the day, perhaps thinking about what to say to the American people. We don't know. All we do know is that he lied about taking immediate action, and he began to lie about his prior knowledge concerning the likelihood of just such an attack.

In an attempt to cover for Bush's all-day absence from duty, Karl Rove leaked that U.S. intelligence had received information that Air Force One was under threat of attack. The information was a complete lie.<sup>298</sup> The presidential communication codes were not compromised; there was never any intelligence that there was a risk to the airplane; Bush and Rove just needed time to create a cover story.

There were immediate calls for an independent investigation of the attack. Initially Congress was unwilling to go against White House suggestions that congressional hearings would detract from the efforts to prevent further attacks and interfere with the war in Afghanistan against the Taliban.

In the meantime, Bush began to take action that would ensure that the truth would not come out. First, while air traffic was still grounded, he allowed 11 members of Osama bin Laden's family to leave the United States for Saudi Arabia without questioning.<sup>299</sup>

Next, although the FBI was miraculously able to identify all of the hijackers, complete with backgrounds and photographs, within a couple of weeks (which is strong evidence that it knew exactly who and where they were before the attack), on October 10, 2001, less than a month after the attack, FBI agents were ordered to close their investigation. The case was considered closed: "The investigative staff has to be made to understand that we're not trying to solve a crime now."<sup>300</sup>

The United States pressured Pakistani General Ahmad to quietly announce his early retirement. He was never questioned about his transfer of money to Mohamed Atta, the lead hijacker.<sup>301</sup>

On November 1, 2001, President Bush signed Executive Order 13233, which ended 27 years of congressional and judicial efforts to make presidential papers and records available.\* Executive Order 13233 shifts the burden of proof from the former president to the person requesting presidential materials, to show why he should be given them; it makes the sitting president, rather than the Archivist of the United States, the judge of whether invocation of executive privilege by a former president should be honored; it allows a former president to indefinitely block access to presidential papers; it commits the Department of Justice to defend the former president's assertion

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\* Eleven months earlier Bush had transferred all of his Texas gubernatorial papers to his father's presidential library in College Station, Texas, in an attempt to remove them from the jurisdiction of the Texas freedom of information statutes.

of privilege against legal attack; and it allows the sitting president to withhold the records of a former president, even if the former president wants the records released.<sup>302</sup> What this means is that we may never have access to any of the documents that can tell us what Bush may have known or what he did or did not do in regard to 9/11.

In December 2001, resolutions were introduced in the Senate to establish an independent bipartisan commission to investigate 9/11. The Bush administration opposed such a commission and decided that an investigation by the House and Senate intelligence committees would be more narrowly focused and more easily controlled than either an independent outside commission (as in the Warren Commission) or a special congressional committee (as in the Watergate Committee).

In January 2002, Cheney attempted to quash even a limited congressional inquiry. He telephoned Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle to warn that the investigation would divert resources from the "war on terrorism." Later, on January 28, Bush made the same request in person.<sup>303</sup> Nonetheless, the congressional "Joint Inquiry Into Intelligence Community Activities Before and After the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001" was convened on February 14, 2002.

The first bombshell exploded under Bush's cover-up on May 16, 2002, when Condoleezza Rice revealed that beginning in May 2001, Bush's daily briefings had included reports of increasing numbers of general terrorist threats against the United States. She said, "The most important and most likely thing was that they would take over an airliner, holding passengers (hostage), and demand the release of one of their operatives." Rice added, "I don't think that anybody could have predicted that these people would take an airplane and slam it into the World Trade Center, take another and slam it into the Pentagon."<sup>304</sup> Apparently, serving on the board of directors of Chevron and having a tanker named after you really do not qualify someone to be the President's National Security Advisor.

Presidential spokesman Ari Fleischer said "The president did not receive information about the use of airplanes as missiles by suicide bombers. This was a new type of attack that had not

been foreseen.” In case you’re wondering about this newly-found candor after eight months of secrecy on the subject, be reassured it didn’t occur because of an attack of conscience. Congressional staffers had learned of the presidential briefing documents, and members of the joint committee were seeking to review them. The cat was out of the bag.

Suddenly, there was a shift of emphasis. Only a few months before, Bush had personally stated, “Never did we realize that the enemy was so well organized.”<sup>305</sup> Now it became known that specific evidence of a high level of organization had been available, and that Bush was so informed. Senator Daschle said he was “gravely concerned,” and asked President Bush to hand over to Congress all the information he had received. Daschle asked, “Why did it take eight months for us to receive this information?” And secondly, “what specific actions were taken by the White House in response?”

Rather than produce the information, the White House unleashed an attack. Cheney warned Democrats “to be very cautious” in blaming 9/11 on the Bush administration, saying that it is “thoroughly irresponsible and totally unworthy of national leaders in a time of war” to criticize Bush.<sup>306</sup> He cautioned that the inquiry should be carefully handled because “a very real threat of another perhaps more devastating attack still exists.”<sup>307</sup> Bush piled it on, saying, “Second guessing has become second nature to Washington Democrats.” He said, “Had I known that the enemy was going to use airplanes to kill on that fateful morning, I would have done everything in my power to protect the American people.”<sup>308</sup> Remember those words.

On May 21, 2002, a second bombshell exploded under the cover-up when a letter written by FBI Special Agent Coleen M. Rowley, a 21-year veteran and Minneapolis Chief Division Counsel, to FBI Director Robert Mueller was made public. Rowley wrote about her “deep concerns that a delicate and subtle shading/skewing of facts by you and others ... has occurred and is occurring.” She continued, “I feel that certain facts ... have, up to now, been omitted, downplayed, glossed over and/or mis-characterized in an effort to avoid or minimize

personal and/or institutional embarrassment on the part of the FBI and/or perhaps even for improper political reasons.”

Rowley’s 13-page letter detailed the abundant probable cause that had existed to justify a search warrant for Moussaoui’s computer disc and the improbable opposition of the FBI headquarters’ staff to even approve an application for a warrant. Specifically, she complained about news accounts attributed to headquarters saying she had concurred that there was inadequate probable cause, saying these accounts were “in error (or possibly the leak was deliberately skewed in this fashion?).” Rowley directly contradicted the public statement made by Mueller that “if the FBI had only had any advance warning of the attacks, we [the FBI] may have been able to take some action to prevent the tragedy.”<sup>309</sup>

The joint congressional intelligence inquiry employed a special staff under the direction of Eleanor Hill, a former federal prosecutor and Pentagon inspector general. The staff reviewed hundreds of thousands of pages of classified documents and conducted scores of interviews; however, investigators were not allowed to interview Condoleezza Rice, Donald Rumsfeld or Colin Powell.

During a public hearing in September 2002, Hill exploded another bombshell under Bush’s cover-up. An even earlier CIA briefing in July 2001 had specifically predicted that bin Laden was about to launch a terrorist attack “in the coming weeks” and that “The attack will be spectacular and designed to inflict mass casualties against U.S. facilities or interests. Attack preparations have been made. Attack will occur with little or no warning.” As Hill was about to disclose who, exactly, had received the briefing, CIA Director Tenet quickly stepped in and said that the *names* of the recipients were classified.<sup>310</sup> Huh?!!!! Perhaps the briefing can be classified, but the briefee? Hill was only allowed to say it was given to “senior government officials.”

Now, remember Bush’s words, “Had I known that the enemy was going to use airplanes to kill on that fateful morning, I would have done everything in my power to protect the American people.” Do you believe it?

The joint congressional committee completed its 800-page report in December 2002; however, it largely remained a secret from the American people, and only a brief list of “findings” was made public. The Bush administration reviewed the report and blocked its publication by refusing to declassify many of its major conclusions.

Moreover, Bush attempted to reclassify some material that had been discussed openly in public hearings, such as the Arizona FBI memo. Democratic Senator Bob Graham accused the administration of covering up information that could be a political embarrassment. Even Republican Representative Porter Goss said, “Senior intelligence officials said things in public hearings that they [administration officials] don’t want us to put in the report. ... That’s not something I can rationally accept.”<sup>311</sup>

The report was finally published in July 2003 with glaring omissions, including the most obvious conclusions. Either Bush was, in fact, aware that terrorists were likely to fly hijacked airplanes into major public buildings, or the CIA was criminally negligent in not providing him the information it had that the risk was real, specifically defined, and immediate. The report reveals its formal request to Bush for copies of the relevant President’s Daily Briefs and Bush’s denial on the grounds of executive privilege. (Remember Nixon?)

In answering the question as to whether it was Bush or the CIA who was criminally negligent, the report points out that on May 16, 2002, Condoleezza Rice conceded that Bush’s August 6, 2001, briefing included “information about bin Laden’s methods of operation from a historical perspective dating back to 1997.” Going on to define an “historical perspective,” the report lays out 36 instances of such information dating back to 1997, including: (1) September 1998—“Bin Laden’s next operation might involve flying an explosive-laden aircraft into a U.S. airport and detonating it”; (2) Fall 1998—“Bin Laden plot involving aircraft in New York and Washington, D.C. areas”; and (3) March 2000—“types of targets that operatives of bin Laden’s network might strike. The Statute of Liberty was specifically mentioned, as were skyscrapers, ports, airports, and nuclear power plants.”<sup>312</sup>

Needless to say, few outside the White House were satisfied with the joint Congressional Committee on Intelligence report, specifically the relatives of those murdered on September 11, 2001. They continued to lobby for an independent investigation, and over Bush's objections, Congress enacted legislation creating and funding the "National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States" to prepare a full and complete account of the circumstances surrounding the September 11, 2001 attacks. The commission was funded through May 2004.

When President Bush signed the legislation creating the commission on November 27, 2002, he said its investigation should "carefully examine all the evidence and follow all the facts, wherever they lead."<sup>313</sup> Remember these words.

Under the legislation, Congress selected the members and Bush appointed the Chair. So whom did the President select? Henry Kissinger, as being synonymous with "cover-up" in your thesaurus? You've got to be kidding. Kissinger, the guy wanted for questioning by judges in war-crime cases in Chile, France, and Spain, who can't even travel to Brazil because of protests by human rights groups.<sup>314</sup> Poor choice. At least, the relatives of 9/11 victims had a few questions about it. During a meeting with them, Kissinger reassured them that he would privately disclose to the commission's members any "potential conflicts of interests." That was not enough, as all members had to comply with Senate ethics guidelines, including financial disclosure requirements. Kissinger declined to release the secret list of clients served by his consulting firm, Kissinger Associates (more about this later), and resigned from the commission.<sup>315</sup>

President Bush then appointed former New Jersey governor Thomas Kean to take Kissinger's place. Kean agreed to work only one day a week on the commission and continued as president of Drew University. Kean's appointment posed a significant conflict of interest as Kean also continued to serve on the board of directors and executive committee at Amerada Hess, an oil company extensively involved in Central Asia.

In 1998, Amerada Hess established a joint venture with the Saudi oil company Delta Oil, which if you recall is involved with Unocal in the Afghanistan pipeline venture. Delta is controlled

by Khalid bin Mahfouz, who is Osama bin Laden's brother-in-law and the financial benefactor of both Bush and al Qaeda.<sup>316</sup>

In another conflict of interest, Kean appointed Philip Zelikow as the commission's staff director. Not only had Zelikow co-authored a book in the 1990's with Condoleezza Rice, he also worked on Bush's 2000 presidential transition team, specifically in the area of reducing and redefining the role of the National Security Council in the Bush administration. Following 9/11, Zelikow publicly praised Bush as having reached down and found "the best elements in his character. He is being authentic and plainspoken."<sup>317</sup>

Thus, is there any surprise that the commission operated in a "polite, friendly fashion"? Although Bush had promised cooperation, requests for documents from the Department of Defense, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the White House itself were met with delays and objections.

As time dragged on, and with the May 2004 cutoff date approaching for delivery of the final report, the commission had yet to use its subpoena power to obtain needed documents. Advocates for the families of victims complained about the lack of subpoenas, the lackluster hearings in which nobody testified under oath, and staff comments that negotiations with the White House over the production of documents were being carried on in a "very congenial atmosphere."\* The families didn't want congenial, they wanted answers.<sup>318</sup> Don't you?

The commission was not given the power to issue subpoenas unless the chairman approved. Thus, subpoenas were not issued to the Federal Aviation Administration until October

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\* Ellen Mariani, the widow of Louis Neil Mariani, who died in the crash of United Airlines Flight 175, has filed a lawsuit in the United States District Court, Eastern District of Pennsylvania, against Bush, Cheney, Ashcroft, Rumsfeld, Tenet, Rice and other members of the Bush administration. The complaint, which was brought under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO), alleges that the defendants failed "to act and prevent" the murder of her husband "for financial and political reasons" and that the defendants have since "obstructed justice" ([www.nancho.net/911/mariani.html](http://www.nancho.net/911/mariani.html)).

2003, when it was learned that the FAA had withheld dozens of boxes of requested documents concerning the 9/11 attack.<sup>319</sup> On November 8, 2003, the commission issued subpoenas to the Department of Defense because it had experienced “serious delays” in obtaining records involving the performance of NORAD on the morning of the attack. The commission stated, “In several cases, we were assured that all requested records had been produced, but we then discovered, through investigation, that these assurances were mistaken.”<sup>320</sup>

The White House continued to stonewall the commission, even under the threat of a subpoena, citing executive privilege. Commission member Max Cleland, the former senator from Georgia, stated, “It’s obvious that the White House wants to run out the clock here. ... It’s disgusting ... as each day goes by, we learn that this government knew a whole lot more about these terrorists before September 11<sup>th</sup> than it has ever admitted.”<sup>321</sup>

Fearing that a court battle over a rejected subpoena would likely extend past the May 27, 2004 cutoff date, the commission reached a wholly unsatisfactory agreement with the White House by which four members of the commission will review some of the documents, but only two of the four will get to review others.\* Moreover, the documents will be truncated before they are turned over, and the White House will vet any comments made by the members after reviewing the documents.<sup>322</sup> (Remember Nixon and the “expletives deleted” tape transcripts?)

Initially, the White House attempted to run out the clock by refusing to allow Condoleezza Rice to testify in public and under oath and by refusing to allow more than the chairman and vice chairman to privately question Bush and Cheney for only one

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\* The Commission has requested Congress to give it two additional months, until July 26<sup>th</sup>, to complete its report, and Bush has relaxed his previous opposition to an extension. Moreover, the Commission has reached an agreement to allow all commissioners to review the White House edited notes taken by three commissioners and Zelikow summarizing their review of pre-9/11 briefing documents. (“9/11 Panel Is Granted More Access to Data,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 11, 2004, p. A32.)

hour each. However, two things happened in March 2003 that changed the situation. First, Richard Clarke testified under oath in a public hearing of the 9/11 commission; second, his book, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror* was published and immediately became a best seller.

In the book and in his testimony, Clarke reported that Bush "failed to act prior to September 11 on the threat from al Qaeda despite repeated warnings and then harvested a political windfall for taking obvious yet insufficient steps after the attacks; and...launched an unnecessary and costly war in Iraq that strengthened the fundamentalist, radical Islamic terrorist movement worldwide.

Clarke said that "the administration had squandered the opportunity to eliminate al Qaeda and instead strengthened our enemies by going off on a completely unnecessary tangent, the invasion of Iraq. A new al Qaeda has emerged and is growing stronger, in part because of our own actions and inactions. It is in many ways a tougher opponent than the original threat we faced before September 11 and we are not doing what is necessary to make America safer from that threat."<sup>323</sup>

On March 30<sup>th</sup> after the commission demanded that Rice appear and testify under oath, Bush agreed on the condition that she cannot be recalled for further questions and that the Commission will not call any other White House aides as witnesses. She appeared on April 8, 2004 and continued to insist that the August 6, 2001 intelligence briefing was "historical information based on old reporting—there was no new threat information." Despite the reports explicit reference to attacks on America, she said, "all of the threat reporting that was actionable was about threats abroad, not about the United States."<sup>324</sup> Bush, who was on vacation in Texas, called Rice from his pickup truck and congratulated her on her performance before the Commission.

Although Bush agreed under pressure that he and Cheney can be questioned by the entire commission, he insisted that they appear together at the same time and that there be no transcript made of the proceedings.<sup>325</sup> One has to wonder if Bush can't be trusted to appear without his neocon handler, who, exactly, is in

control of our government, and why are we not entitled to know what Bush said to the Commission investigating his failures?

Although former President Clinton testified (alone) before the Commission that he had ranked Osama bin Laden as the number one problem the new administration would face, Bush told the Commission that Clinton "probably mentioned" terrorism as a national security threat but "did not make it a point of emphasis." Bush said that Clinton was more concerned about North Korea's nuclear program and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>326</sup> Since Bush was not under oath, he can't be charged with perjury; however, we don't have to believe him.

We're still waiting for answers. What do you think? Is there a cover-up going on? You're not stupid! Get the truth.

### **The Why**

Why the dilly-dallying? Why did Bush completely ignore all of the explicit warnings that a major terrorist attack using hijacked commercial airplanes as flying bombs against United States landmarks was imminent? Why the cover-up? The answer is spelled "O-I-L." It's crudely spilled all over, Bush's stepped in it, and he can't scrape it off his boots, no matter how hard he tries.

The incoming Bush administration wanted to change the aggressive tone of the Clinton administration into one more accommodating toward Saudi Arabia. There was "a major policy shift," and investigators were told to "back off" investigations into Saudi financing of terrorism if they involved the Saudi royal family or their associates, including the bin Laden family. Two of Osama's brothers, who were associated with the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, a suspected terrorist organization, were able to slip out of the United States before the 9/11 attacks after agents were ordered to stay away from them.<sup>327</sup>

If you recall, Bush Jr. earlier received bailouts in his failed business endeavors through his bin Laden and Saudi connections, one of whom was Khalid bin Mahfouz. One of Saudi Arabia's five wealthiest businessmen, Mahfouz diverted over \$3 million in pension funds to bank accounts linked to

terrorism.<sup>328</sup> Moreover, Bush Sr. continues to do business with the bin Ladens through the Carlyle group, the massive but largely unknown U.S. defense contractor.<sup>329</sup> The bin Laden family was a major investor in the Carlyle group until shortly after 9/11. Since leaving office, Bush Sr. has been employed to give speeches for Carlyle, which pays him \$80,000 to \$100,000 per speech. Bush Sr., along with former Secretary of State James Baker and former Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci (Carlyle's CEO), has visited the bin Laden family at their home in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and called on Crown Prince Abdullah to discuss Carlyle's business interests.<sup>330</sup>

The FBI's deputy director for counterterrorism, John O'Neill, who was closing in on Osama bin Laden, quit in protest over the Bush administration's obstruction of his investigation. He stated, "The main obstacles to investigating Islamic terrorism were U.S. oil corporate interests and the role played by Saudi Arabia." Tragically, O'Neill retired to become the World Trade Center's director of security and was killed in the 9/11 attack.<sup>331</sup>

More specifically, remember another clue—the gas pipeline that Unocal and the Saudis wanted to build across Afghanistan. It was terminated in 1998 because of the way the Taliban treated their women and for other "business reasons," back when Clinton was sending cruise missiles to bin Laden in care of the Taliban.<sup>332</sup> Well, beginning in January 2001, things had changed: an MBA was in charge of the White House, and he believed he could do business with the Taliban.

The Administration commenced a series of meetings with the Taliban. The objectives: to stabilize the country, establish a coalition government, complete the Unocal pipeline, and have the Taliban arrest and extradite bin Laden.<sup>333</sup> The point of the meetings was to convey to the Taliban that "if they did certain things, then, gradually, they could win the jackpot, get something in return from the international community." The meetings were intended to persuade the Taliban that once a broader-based government (a coalition with the Northern Alliance) was in place and the gas pipeline underway, there would be billions of dollars in commissions, and the Taliban

would have its own resources.<sup>334</sup> In other words, everything has a price and everyone can be bought with money.

In March 2001, several Taliban officials, including Mullah Omar's personal advisor, came to Washington, D.C., where they met with representatives of the CIA and the State Department. The agenda included both the arrest and extradition of bin Laden, as well as access to the Central Asian oil and gas reserves by American oil companies. Subsequently, there were other meetings outside the United States.<sup>335</sup>

In May 2001, Bush held out a carrot with his additional \$43 million gift to the Taliban; however, in July 2001, during a meeting in Berlin, the Bush administration arrogantly waved its big stick. The Taliban were bluntly told, "Either you accept our offer of a carpet of gold, or we will bury you under a carpet of bombs."

More diplomatically, the former U.S. ambassador to Pakistan, Tom Simons, said, "either the Taliban behave as they ought to, or Pakistan convinces them to do so, or we will use another option."<sup>336</sup> The other "option" was an open-ended military operation from bases in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. This was no idle threat. The Bush administration already had a war plan in place to attack from the North in concert with Russia, with Pakistan's agreement and with logistical support from India and Iran. General Franks had already visited Dushanbe, Tajikistan on May 16, 2001; Army Rangers were training Special Forces inside Kyrgyzstan; and 17,000 Russian troops were on standby. The plan was to launch the attack before snow started falling, no later than October 2001.<sup>337</sup> The invasion was set: the ultimatum had been given; all that was required was provocation.

Although the Taliban walked out of the Berlin meeting after the war threats, there was one further meeting in Islamabad, Pakistan. In August 2001, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Central Asian Affairs, Christina Rocca, met with the Taliban ambassador to Pakistan, Abdul Salam Zaeef.<sup>338</sup>

Note that the emphasis had shifted from Clinton's targeting of bin Laden, and telling the Taliban to not assist him, to Bush's

targeting of the Taliban, telling them not to resist the pipeline, and, by the way, to turn over bin Laden. This was essentially a threat of war, not over terrorism but over oil. Unbelievable? Perhaps a little more information will help you understand why Bush's Business Administration thought the payoff was worth the risk.

We have to start with Vice President Dick Cheney, the man who is just a beer and pretzel away from the presidency. After he left government service with the first Bush administration, Cheney was appointed as the CEO of the Halliburton Corporation, a service firm that has worked the oil patch since the dry hole was invented. With its subsidiaries, Halliburton does just about every job connected with the production and transportation of oil and gas, worldwide. Among its subsidiaries is Bredero-Shaw, a Texas-based company that provides anti-corrosion coatings for oil pipelines and which is a joint partner of the Saudi bin-Laden Group, a pipeline construction company owned by the bin Laden family.<sup>339</sup>

Other Halliburton foreign subsidiaries sold \$23.8 million (maybe as much as \$73 million<sup>340</sup>) in oil field equipment to Iraq in 1998 and 1999, even though U.S. oil companies were prohibited from investing in or buying Iraqi oil, which is probably why Cheney called for an end to the sanctions against Iraq while he was still Halliburton's CEO.<sup>341</sup> Cheney has denied any knowledge of these sales; however, Halliburton's current CEO stated that Cheney "unquestionably" knew.<sup>342</sup> Cheney received \$162,392 in deferred salary from Halliburton in 2002, and he continues to own 433,333 stock options in the company.

In a speech on June 23, 1998, Cheney proclaimed, "the good Lord didn't see fit to put oil and gas only where there are democratically elected regimes friendly to the United States. Occasionally we have to operate in places where, all things considered, one would not normally choose to go. But we go where the business is." And the "business" that is at issue here derives from the oil and gas reserves in the Caspian Basin. In 1998, Cheney stated, "I can't think of a time when we've had a region emerge as suddenly to become as strategically significant as the Caspian."<sup>343</sup>

In 1999, Congress passed the Silk Road Strategy Act to assist and support the “economic and political independence of the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia.” Congress noted that the region “could produce oil and gas in sufficient quantities to reduce the dependence of the United States on energy from the volatile Persian Gulf region” and that one of the principal objectives was “to support United States business interests and investments in the region.”<sup>344</sup>

The breakup of the USSR left a string of newly independent nations arranged around and near the Caspian Sea and along the southern border of Russia. These nations, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, have vast oil and gas deposits. The problem is that these countries are landlocked, and all of the existing pipelines run north into Russia, which, while no longer a cold war enemy, is a competitor in the worldwide energy business.

A 1997 study written by Zbigniew Brzezinski for the Council on Foreign Relations noted that any nation becoming predominant in Central Asia would pose a direct threat to U.S. control of oil resources and that “it is imperative that no Eurasian challenger emerges, capable of dominating Eurasia and thus of also challenging America. ... For America, the chief geopolitical prize is Eurasia.”<sup>345</sup>

Cheney’s energy task force projected a doubling of the United States’ consumption of fossil fuels over the next 25 years and found that “A significant disruption in world oil supplies could adversely affect our economy and our ability to promote key foreign and economic policy objectives, regardless of the level of U.S. dependence on oil imports.” With a projected yearly drop in domestic crude oil production, the report predicts the U.S. will become increasingly dependent upon imported oil, with a corresponding doubling of imports over the same 25 years.<sup>346</sup>

Among the areas targeted by the plan was the Caspian region with proven reserves of about 20 billion barrels of oil. With the potential of 270 billion barrels, or almost one-fifth of the world’s oil reserves, it also has natural gas potential of 665

trillion cubic feet, almost one-eighth of the world's gas reserves. In 1997, all of this was estimated to be worth some \$4 trillion.<sup>347</sup>

Development of the Caspian Basin became a priority of the Bush administration and a foundation of Cheney's energy plan.<sup>348</sup> In the early days of September 2001, the U.S. Energy Information Administration confirmed Afghanistan's strategic "geographical position as a potential transit route for oil and natural gas exports from Central Asia to the Arabian Sea."<sup>349</sup>

We have seen that Unocal was vitally interested in building at least one pipeline across Afghanistan; however, it was not alone in wanting to do business in the Caspian oil patch. In 1996, Enron signed a contract to explore gas fields in Uzbekistan, to sell gas to Russia, and to link up with Unocal's proposed Afghanistan gas pipeline. In addition, Enron wanted to build a gas pipeline north from its Dabhol generating plant in India to connect with Unocal's gas pipeline coming out of Afghanistan. It badly needed the supply of cheap natural gas to prop up its failing Dabhol operation.<sup>350</sup>

In 1998, Turkmenistan selected Enron to conduct a feasibility study funded by the U.S. Trade and Development Agency for a trans-Caspian gas pipeline, and in 1999, the country signed a contract with Bechtel and GE Capital Services to build the pipeline.<sup>351</sup>

While he was Halliburton's CEO, Cheney also sat on Kazakhstan's oil advisory board and helped broker a deal between that country and Chevron, at a time when Condoleezza Rice was on its board of directors, for half ownership of the Tengiz oil field. (We'll later talk about a criminal bribery investigation in this area.) Chevron and ExxonMobil are also heavily invested in Azerbaijan's oil and gas fields, and in 2001, Halliburton signed a 12-year contract with Azerbaijan.

Because Azerbaijan has blockaded Armenia over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh area, Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act adopted by Congress in 1992 prohibited the United States from providing most forms of assistance to Azerbaijan. However, after Bush met separately with the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan in April and July 2001,<sup>352</sup> and after Congress

granted Bush's request post 9/11, he waived Section 907 and extended \$4.4 million in military assistance to Azerbaijan.<sup>353</sup> Bush also met with Uzbekistan's ambassador to the United States.<sup>354</sup>

In November 2001, Bush proudly announced the opening of a new pipeline by the Caspian Pipeline Consortium: "The CPC project also advances my Administration's National Energy Policy by developing a network of multiple Caspian pipelines."<sup>355</sup>

Interestingly enough, John J. Maresca, a Unocal Vice President, testified before Congress on February 12, 1998, and asked for the repeal or removal of Section 907. In addition to the Afghanistan gas pipeline, he also discussed other proposed pipeline projects involving American oil companies. One would run west from the northern Caspian to the Black Sea and another (to be built by Unocal, Amoco, Exxon and Pennzoil) would either run to the Black Sea or to the Mediterranean port of Ceyhan, Turkey. To accommodate the growing Asian energy markets, Maresca proposed a pipeline through China and the Afghanistan gas pipeline. In addition, Maresca discussed another pipeline to gather oil from the existing pipeline infrastructure in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Russia, which would also run through Afghanistan to an export terminal on the Pakistan coast. The 42-inch pipeline would have a capacity of one million barrels of oil per day.

Maresca concluded, "We urge the Administration and the Congress to give strong support to the U.N.-led peace process in Afghanistan. ... U.S. assistance in developing these new economies will be crucial to business success. ... Unocal and other American companies like it are fully prepared to undertake the job and to make Central Asia once again into the crossroads it has been in the past."<sup>356</sup>

When Unocal speaks, Bush listens. To more fully answer the "Why" questions, we must continue to track Unocal's demands and Bush's jumps. Immediately following the U.S. blitzkrieg in Afghanistan, Bush appointed Zalmay Khalilzad as his special envoy to the country. Khalilzad was well informed about Afghanistan's oil issues because he and Henry Kissinger were

originally employed by Unocal to arrange the details of its Afghanistan pipeline. Yes, Henry “no conflict of interest” Kissinger and his Associates, including the present Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage. Back in 1995, Kissinger had helped put together the original pipeline deal between Unocal and Turkmenistan, and he was present at the signing ceremony in New York City.<sup>357</sup> However, at that time, Afghanistan was still in turmoil, and the Taliban needed a little help to capture Kabul. Enter the CIA, arrange a visit by Saudi intelligence chief Prince Turki to spread some Saudi petrodollars, and *voilà!*<sup>358</sup>

Khalilzad had served in Bush Sr.’s administration as a special assistant to the president and as a senior Defense Department official for policy planning. He was later employed as an advisor to Unocal to draw up the risk analysis for its proposed gas pipeline across Afghanistan, and to facilitate the talks between Unocal and the Taliban in 1997. Prior to Khalilzad’s appointment by Bush Jr. as his special envoy to Afghanistan, Khalilzad worked for Condoleezza Rice in the National Security Council and served as a counselor to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.<sup>359</sup> (It’s a small, small world after all.)

Back in 1996, just after the fall of Kabul to the Taliban, Unocal Vice President Chris Taggart described the takeover as a “very positive step” and called for the United States to recognize the Taliban. Shortly thereafter, Khalilzad wrote an article urging the United States to work with the Taliban to form a broad-based coalition government. He wrote “we should use as a positive incentive the benefits that will accrue to Afghanistan from the construction of oil and gas pipelines across its territory. ... These projects will only go forward if Afghanistan has a single authoritative government.”<sup>360</sup> As Yogi Berra once said, “It’s *déjà vu* all over again.”

At about the same time that Bush was appointing Khalilzad as his special envoy to Afghanistan, he also appointed another former Unocal employee, Hamid Karzai, as Afghanistan’s interim Prime Minister. Karzai had helped negotiate the pipeline deal with the Taliban in 1997 on behalf of Unocal and was closely associated with the CIA and its former director William Casey.<sup>361</sup>

Karzai immediately set out to finish the job on behalf of his former employers. On February 8, 2002, Karzai met with the president of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf, who agreed to reinstate the pipeline deal. He then met with President Saparmurat Niyazov of Turkmenistan the next month to seal up the northern end of the agreement. Niyazov stated the pipeline would allow the export of his country's vast natural gas resources, and he hoped that peace in Afghanistan would allow the work to go forward.<sup>362</sup>

With this agreement, Unocal may finally get to complete its pipeline, but at what cost? Billions and billions of dollars and thousands of lives? With this background information, we can now begin to understand why Bush dilly-dallied around trying to do business with the Taliban rather than stopping bin Laden. We can better understand why he lied and denied, and perhaps we are beginning to understand why Cheney refuses to turn over documents relating to his energy task force.

Do you believe Bush acted in the best interests of the American public, or did he act to defend oil company interests in the Caspian Basin and the Afghanistan pipeline? You're not stupid! Get the truth.

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