

The Family Steering Committee Statement and Questions Regarding the 9/11 Commission Interview with President Bush

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The Family Steering Committee believes that President Bush should provide sworn public testimony to the full ten-member panel of the *National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*. Collectively, the Commissioners are responsible for fulfilling the Congressional mandate. Therefore, each Commissioner must have full access to the testimony of all individuals and the critical information that will enable informed decisions and recommendations.

Before an audience of the American people, the Commission must ask President Bush in sworn testimony, the following questions:

1. As Commander-in-Chief on the morning of 9/11, why didn't you return immediately to Washington, D.C. or the National Military Command Center once you became aware that America was under attack? At specifically what time did you become aware that America was under attack? Who informed you of this fact?
2. On the morning of 9/11, who was in charge of our country while you were away from the National Military Command Center? Were you informed or consulted about all decisions made in your absence?
3. What defensive action did you personally order to protect our nation during the crisis on September 11th? What time were these orders given, and to whom? What orders were carried out? What was the result of such orders? Were any such orders not carried out?
4. In your opinion, why was our nation so utterly unprepared for an attack on our own soil?
5. U.S. Navy Captain Deborah Loewer, the Director of the White House Situation Room, informed you of the first airliner hitting Tower One of the World Trade Center before you entered the Emma E. Booker Elementary School in Sarasota, Florida. Please explain the reason why you decided to continue with the scheduled classroom visit, fifteen minutes after learning the first hijacked airliner had hit the World Trade Center.
6. Is it normal procedure for the Director of the White House Situation Room to travel with you? If so, please cite any prior examples of when this occurred. If not normal procedure, please explain the circumstances that led to the Director of the White House Situation Room being asked to accompany you to Florida during the week of September 11th.

7. What plan of action caused you to remain seated after Andrew Card informed you that a second airliner had hit the second tower of the World Trade Center and America was clearly under attack? Approximately how long did you remain in the classroom after Card's message?
8. At what time were you made aware that other planes were hijacked in addition to Flight 11 and Flight 175? Who notified you? What was your course of action as Commander-in-Chief of the United States?
9. Beginning with the transition period between the Clinton administration and your own, and ending on 9/11/01, specifically what information (either verbal or written) about terrorists, possible attacks and targets, did you receive from any source?

This would include briefings or communications from

- Out-going Clinton officials
 - CIA, FBI, NSA, DoD and other intelligence agencies
 - Foreign intelligence, governments, dignitaries or envoys
 - National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice
 - Richard Clarke, former counterterrorism czar
10. Specifically, what did you learn from the August 6, 2001, PDB [President's Daily Brief] about the terrorist threat that was facing our nation? Did you request any follow-up action to take place? Did you request any further report be developed and/or prepared?
 11. As Commander-in-Chief, from May 1, 2001 until September 11, 2001, did you receive any information from any intelligence agency official or agent that UBL [Usama Bin Laden] was planning to attack this nation on its own soil using airplanes as weapons, targeting New York City landmarks during the week of September 11, 2001 or on the actual day of September 11, 2001?
 12. What defensive measures did you take in response to pre-9/11 warnings from eleven nations about a terrorist attack, many of which cited an attack in the continental United States? Did you prepare any directives in response to these actions? If so, with what results?
 13. As Commander-in-Chief from May 1, 2001 until September 11, 2001, did you or any agent of the United States government carry out any negotiations or talks with UBL, an agent of UBL, or al-Qaeda? During that same period, did you or any agent of the United States government carry out any negotiations or talks with any foreign government, its agents, or officials regarding UBL? If so, what resulted?
 14. Your schedule for September 11, 2001 was in the public domain since September 7, 2001. The Emma E. Booker School is only five miles from the Bradenton Airport, so you, and therefore the children in the classroom, might have been a target for the terrorists on 9/11. What was the intention of the Secret Service in allowing you to remain in the Emma E. Booker Elementary School, even though they were aware America was under attack?

15. Please explain why you remained at the Sarasota, Florida, Elementary School for a press conference after you had finished listening to the children read, when as a terrorist target, your presence potentially jeopardized the lives of the children?
16. What was the purpose of the several stops of Air Force One on September 11th? Was Air Force One at any time during the day of September 11th a target of the terrorists? Was Air Force One's code ever breached on September 11th?
17. Was there a reason for Air Force One lifting off without a military escort, even after ample time had elapsed to allow military jets to arrive?
18. What prompted your refusal to release the information regarding foreign sponsorship of the terrorists, as illustrated in the inaccessible 28 redacted pages in the Joint Intelligence Committee Inquiry Report? What actions have you personally taken since 9/11 to thwart foreign sponsorship of terrorism?
19. Who approved the flight of the bin Laden family out of the United States when all commercial flights were grounded, when there was time for only minimal questioning by the FBI, and especially, when two of those same individuals had links to WAMY, a charity suspected of funding terrorism? Why were bin Laden family members granted that special privilege -- a privilege not available to American families whose loved ones were killed on 9/11?
20. Please explain why no one in any level of our government has yet been held accountable for the countless failures leading up to and on 9/11?
21. Please comment on the fact that UBL's profile on the *FBI's Ten Most Wanted Fugitives* poster does not include the 9/11 attacks. To your knowledge, when was the last time any agent of our government had contact with UBL? If prior to 9/11, specifically what was the date of that contact and what was the context of said meeting.
22. Do you continue to maintain that Saddam Hussein was linked to al Qaeda? What *proof* do you have of any connection between al-Qaeda and the Hussein regime?
23. Which individuals, governments, agencies, institutions, or groups may have benefited from the attacks of 9/11? Please state specifically how you think they have benefited.

**FSC Statement Regarding the Failure
of the 9/11 Independent Commission to Subpoena the White House**

February 10, 2004

The Family Steering Committee (FSC) is outraged by the failure of the 9/11 Independent Commission to subpoena the White House for complete access to the Presidential Daily Briefings.

The public needs to be aware that the President's statements on *Meet the Press*, on February 8, 2004, were misleading.

He stated that he is "cooperating" with the 9/11 Independent Commission. Yet the Commission has been negotiating for access to these documents for **over 10 months** with no success. While the Commission negotiates with the Executive Branch, this nation remains at risk.

We therefore respectfully request that President Bush:

1. Release all material requested by the Commission. Such information must be provided to all Commissioners so that it can be made part of their Final Report;
2. Testify under oath before the Commission in a public hearing as to his Administration's actions leading up to and including 9/11 as well as the immediate response to the attacks;
3. Support an extension of time for this Commission so it is able to:
 - a. Conduct the full schedule of public hearings, inclusive of high-ranking officials as witnesses (under oath);
 - b. Access (for all 10 Commissioners) to all relevant documents, including all PDBs (Presidential Daily Briefings), PDDs (Presidential Decision Directives), and NSPDs (National Security Presidential Directives), and the working notes behind those documents;
 - c. Thoroughly investigate all relevant facts with regard to this nation's preparedness for, and immediate response to, the attacks on 9/11, including all available testimony from federal whistleblowers, former and present federal agents/officials, and certain members of foreign governments.

This Administration must legitimately cooperate. Professing cooperation while limiting the time and resources of the Commission, and restricting access to important documents and key witnesses, only serves to further erode the safety and trust of the American people.

**FSC Statement Regarding
The Importance of Gaining Access to the NSC**

February 8, 2004

In May 2002, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice made a statement that she did not know that planes could be used as missiles. She further stated that the United States government did not have specific information regarding the 9/11 attacks.

As National Security Advisor, it was Condoleezza Rice's job to know that the historical record was replete with instances of terrorists planning to use planes as missiles. Yet, as admitted in her own words, she did not. Furthermore, as National Security Advisor, it was Condoleezza Rice's job to coordinate information from the intelligence community and make policy decisions and recommendations to the President, in conjunction with other NSC members, about dealing with terrorist threats. By Ms. Rice's own admission, she and her fellow NSC members apparently failed in this capacity, too.

The Clinton national security team gave three extensive briefings on the present danger of al Qaeda to the incoming Bush administration. Donald Kerrick, three star general, was Deputy National Security Adviser under President Clinton and served for the first four months of the Bush Administration on the National Security Council. General Kerrick has said that he wrote a memo for the Bush NSC stating, "we will be struck again." General Kerrick states that he received no response to his memo and was not included in any meetings.

It has also been reported that Richard Clarke, head of counterterrorism on the NSC, was very frustrated during the first nine months of the Bush Administration. Clarke was reportedly frustrated because he tried to get the principals committee (the central body of top national security figures in the Administration) to take up terrorism as an issue. The principals in the Bush Administration, according to Clarke, finally discussed terrorism only once when they decided against funding the unmanned predator drone plane over Afghanistan prior to 9/11.

Also reported in the media are the statements and facts regarding the Iraqi war plan. Paul O'Neill writes that the Bush Administration had the Iraq war plan drawn up and finalized in the first few weeks of the Bush Administration. The Bush Administration has not denied this fact. Rather, the Administration has anecdotally stated that every incoming Administration has a desk full of work to sift through, prioritize, and explore. Apparently, the Bush Administration made its number one priority the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. In doing so, Bin Laden and his al Qaeda network were ranked lower in priority. Why? Especially since we now know that Iraq was not an "imminent threat" while Al Qaeda apparently in the midst of planning an attack on 9/11 clearly was an imminent threat.

Once again, this issue revolves around the vital flow of intelligence information. Why was information detailing the clear and present danger of Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda "downplayed" by this Administration while at the very same time, apparently, the intelligence information regarding Saddam Hussein and Iraq was peppered up. Both of these facts regarding the Bush Administration's clear failure to prioritize matters of national security have cost lives. Three thousand people were murdered on the morning of 9/11, and thousands have been killed in the war in Iraq.

President Bush aptly stated on *Meet the Press* (2/08/04) that it is the President's most solemn responsibility to keep this country secure. President Bush also stated that commissions, in general, must take their time and learn lessons from the past because we live in a dangerous world. Asked if he would submit to questioning by the 9/11 Independent Commission, President Bush replied, "Perhaps, perhaps." On *Meet the Press*, President Bush also said he was cooperating with the 9/11 Independent Commission, and specifically cited the agreement on Presidential Daily Briefs.

In light of President Bush's admission of the importance of cooperation, the 9/11 Independent Commission must request President Bush, Vice President Cheney, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, Secretary of State Powell, and National Security Advisor Rice to testify in an open hearing while under oath to answer the following questions.

Questions that need to be answered:

1. Why did the Bush Administration fixate, prioritize, and explore the necessity to go to war in Iraq, while ignoring the clear and present danger of Osama Bin Laden and al Qaeda who nine months later killed three thousand people on American soil? Was it the structure of the NSC that caused this failure?
2. Who determined the prioritization of terrorism issues in the early months of the Bush Administration? Who was consulted regarding such policy decisions? Who wrote the Presidential Decision Directives (PDDs) carrying out such policy decisions? More importantly, what was the nature and substance of those PDDs?
3. Has the 9/11 Independent Commission adequately addressed this issue -- namely the failure of the Bush Administration, its NSC, and its Cabinet to properly assess imminent threats posed to this nation's security?
 - Has the 9/11 Independent Commission gained full access to individuals and information to properly investigate this issue? If not, what areas of access must still be gained?
 - Who has the 9/11 Independent Commission questioned regarding this issue?
 - Has the 9/11 Independent Commission made any "deals" with Administrative officials with regard to the scope of access surrounding this issue? If so, what areas of access are blocked to the 9/11 Independent Commission, as a whole or in part?

FSC Statement Regarding the Need for an Extension

February 1, 2004

With little more than four months until May 27th, we feel that the Commission must request an extension from Congress regardless of whether the extension deadline is prior to or after the election. Our reasons are as follows:

1. **The scaling back of the number and scope of public hearings.** During the first year of the Commission's investigation, the Commission repeatedly promised that substantive, hard-hitting, investigative hearings with testimony from high-ranking officials would commence in January 2004. According to a recent *Washington Post* article and certain Commissioner's own admissions, these promised hearings are now being curtailed and/or cancelled due to time constraints.
2. **The discovery of new information of probative value in need of further investigation by the Commission.** Recently, new information with regard to 9/11 has

been revealed. (See Newsweek, Mike Isikoff; See N.Y.ObsERVER, Gail Sheehy) According to media accounts, staff operations at the Commission are "frenzied" in their rush to complete their work by the May 27th deadline. As a result, certain specific, relevant information with regard to 9/11 is being "turned away" because of the Commission's need to focus on only broad issues. (See N.Y.ObsERVER, comment by unnamed Commissioner)

3. **The need for a Classified Final Report.** The Commission is currently preparing a non-classified Final Report to be due out on May 27, 2004. The Commission, thereafter plans to release certain "supplemental classified monoliths." While this controlled release of information may please certain intelligence agency officials, the FSC is opposed to it. The FSC suggests the Commission issue a fully classified Final Report that would then be de-classified through the use of visible redactions. The FSC would recommend the Commission look towards the Joint Inquiry's Final Report as their model. The preparation of a classified Final Report requires more time and preparation by both Commissioners and Staff.

Please contact the Commission, the White House and your Congressional representatives to indicate your support for an extension, so the Commission will have sufficient time to complete a comprehensive in-depth investigation. Click on Action Alert for the addresses.