



TRUTH & CONSEQUENCES

The Bush Administration and September 11

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pre-9/11: White House Received Warnings.....	2
Pre-9/11: Administration Reduces Counter-Terrorism.....	3
Pre-9/11: Strengthening Saudi Relations Despite Terror Ties.....	4
After 9/11: Maintaining Strong Saudi Ties, Despite 9/11 Connection.....	5
After 9/11: Refusing to Protect the Homeland.....	6

BEFORE 9/11: WHITE HOUSE RECEIVED WARNINGS

After September 11, both President Bush and his top national security adviser denied having any prior knowledge that Al Qaeda was planning an attack involving airplanes. National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice said on [5/16/02](#), "I don't think anybody could have predicted that they would try to use an airplane as a missile, a hijacked airplane as a missile." Similarly, President Bush denied having any idea about the threat, saying on [5/17/02](#), "Had I know 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." These denials belie the record.

1999 –EXPLICIT WARNING THAT AL QAEDA HAD PLANS TO FLY AIRPLANES INTO BUILDINGS:

A 1999 report prepared by the Library of Congress for the National Intelligence Council "warned that Osama bin Laden's terrorists could hijack an airliner and fly it into government buildings like the Pentagon." The report specifically said, "Suicide bomber(s) belonging to al-Qaida's Martyrdom Battalion could crash-land an aircraft packed with high explosives...into the Pentagon, the headquarters of the CIA, or the White House." In response to the ominous warnings, the New York Times reports "under Janet Reno, the Justice Department's counterterrorism budget increased 13.6% in the fiscal year 1999, 7.1% in 2000 and 22.7% in 2001." [Source: CBS, [5/17/02](#); NY Times, [2/28/02](#)]

EARLY 2001 – MAJOR SURGE IN AL QAEDA ACTIVITY: "In late spring 2001, a sudden surge in activity began among known Al Qaeda operatives...a reporter from Middle East Broadcasting visited bin Laden at a camp in Afghanistan and noted that his supporters were preparing for attacks against American 'interests.'" [Source: The Age of Sacred Terror, 2003]

EARLY 2001 – WHITE HOUSE DEPARTS FROM EFFORTS TO TRACK TERRORIST MONEY: The new Bush Treasury Department "disapproved of the Clinton Administration's approach to money laundering issues, which had been an important part of the drive to cut off the money flow to bin Laden." Specifically, the Bush Administration opposed Clinton Administration-backed efforts by the G-7 and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development that targeted countries with "loose banking regulations" being abused by terrorist financiers. Meanwhile, the Bush Administration provided "no funding for the new National Terrorist Asset Tracking Center." [Source: The Age of Sacred Terror, 2003]

JULY 2001 –ANOTHER WARNING THAT AL QAEDA PLANNED TO USE PLANES AS MISSILES: The LA Times reported that U.S. and Italian officials were warned in July 2001 that "Islamic terrorists might attempt to kill President Bush and other leaders by crashing an airliner into the Genoa summit of industrialized nations." [Source: LA Times, [9/27/01](#)]

JULY 2001 – ASHCROFT STOPS FLYING COMMERCIAL BECAUSE OF "THREAT ASSESSMENT": Attorney General John Ashcroft stopped flying commercial airlines and instead began "traveling exclusively by leased jet aircraft instead of commercial airlines" because of "what the Justice Department called a 'threat assessment.'" That "threat assessment" has never been made public. [Source: CBS, [7/26/01](#)]

AUGUST 2001 - PRESIDENT PERSONALLY WARNED OF AL QAEDA AIRPLANE PLOT: ABC News reported, Bush Administration "officials acknowledged that U.S. intelligence officials informed President Bush weeks before the Sept. 11 attacks that bin Laden's terrorist network might try to hijack American planes." Dateline NBC reported that on August 6, 2001, the President personally "received a one-and-a-half page briefing advising him that Osama bin Laden was capable of a major strike against the US, and that the plot could include the hijacking of an American airplane." [Source: ABC News, [5/16/02](#); NBC, 9/10/02]

SEPTEMBER 2001 - PENTAGON OFFICIALS CHANGE FLIGHTS ON 9/11 BECAUSE OF SECURITY: Newsweek reported that on 9/10/01 "a group of top Pentagon officials suddenly canceled travel plans for the next morning, apparently because of security concerns." Newsweek also reported "that as many as 10 to 12 warnings" were issued before 9/11, and "more than two of the warnings specifically mentioned the possibility of hijackings." [Source: Newsweek, 9/24/01]

BEFORE 9/11: REDUCING COUNTER-TERRORISM

The federal government was rapidly increasing its counter-terrorism efforts at the time President Bush took office. As the New York Times reported, Attorney General Janet Reno ended her tenure as "[perhaps the strongest advocate](#)" of counterterrorism spending. Similarly, [Newsweek](#) and the [Washington Post](#) reported National Security Adviser Sandy Berger was "totally preoccupied" with the prospect of a domestic terror attack, telling his replacement that they need to be "spending more time on this issue" than on any other. The focus changed dramatically when the Bush Administration took office.

ADMINISTRATION SHIFTED LAW ENFORCEMENT'S FOCUS OFF OF COUNTER-TERRORISM: The New York Times reported that in the lead-up to 9/11, Attorney General John Ashcroft "said fighting terrorism was a top priority of his agency," yet upon entering office, "he identified more than a dozen other objectives for greater emphasis within the Justice Department before the attacks." On Aug. 9, the Administration distributed a strategic plan to the Justice Department highlighting its new goals from a list of Clinton Administration goals. The item that referred to intelligence and investigation of terrorists was left un-highlighted. [Source: NY Times, [2/28/02](#)]

ASHCROFT OVERRULED EFFORTS FOCUSED ON COUNTER-TERROR: Newsweek reported that "in the spring of 2001, the attorney general had an extraordinary confrontation with the then FBI Director Louis Freeh at an annual meeting of special agents." The two talked before appearing, and Ashcroft laid out his priorities for Freeh: "basically violent crime and drugs," recalls one participant. Freeh replied bluntly that those were not his priorities, and began to talk about terror and counterterrorism. "Ashcroft didn't want to hear about it," says a former senior law-enforcement official." [Source: Newsweek, [5/27/02](#)]

SO LITTLE CONCERN FOR COUNTER-TERROR THAT A WHITE HOUSE TASK FORCE NEVER MET: The increased warnings about an al Qaeda attack led President Bush in May of 2001 to appoint Vice President Cheney to head a task force "to combat terrorist attacks on the United States." At the announcement, Bush said "I will periodically chair a meeting of the National Security Council to review these efforts." But according to the Washington Post, neither "Cheney's review nor Bush's took place." Meanwhile, Newsweek reported that when senators "sent a copy of draft legislation on counterterrorism and homeland defense to Cheney's office on July 20," they were told by Cheney's top aide "that it might be another six months before he would be able to review the material." [Source: White House release, [5/8/01](#); Washington Post, [1/20/02](#); Newsweek, [5/27/02](#)]

WHITE HOUSE BEGAN EFFORT TO CUT COUNTER-TERRORISM PROGRAMS: The New York Times reported that in its final 2003 budget request, the Administration "called for spending increases in 68 programs, none of which directly involved counterterrorism...In his Sept. 10 submission to the budget office, Ashcroft did not endorse FBI requests for \$58 million for 149 new counterterrorism field agents, 200 intelligence analysts and 54 additional translators. Ashcroft proposed a \$65 million cut for a program that gives states and localities counterterrorism grants for equipment, including radios and decontamination suits and training." By comparison, "Under Janet Reno, the department's counterterrorism budget increased 13.6% in the fiscal year 1999, 7.1% in 2000 and 22.7% in 2001." [Source: NY Times, [2/28/02](#)]

ADMINISTRATION LEFT "GAPS" IN MILITARY'S REQUEST FOR COUNTER-TERROR FUNDS: The Washington Post reported that in its first budget, the White House left "gaps" between "what military commanders said they needed to combat terrorists and what they got." Newsweek noted that, among other things, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld elected not to re-launch a Predator drone that had been tracking bin Laden. When the Senate Armed Services Committee tried to fill those gaps, "Rumsfeld said he would recommend a veto" on September 9. [Source: Washington Post, [1/20/02](#); Newsweek, [5/27/02](#); NY Times, [2/28/02](#)]

ADMINISTRATION STOPPED PREDATOR FLIGHTS TRACKING AL QAEDA IN AFGHANISTAN: AP reported "though Predator drones spotted Osama bin Laden as many as three times in late 2000, the Bush administration did not fly the unmanned planes over Afghanistan during its first eight months." Additionally, "the military successfully tested an armed Predator throughout the first half of 2001" but the White House "failed to resolve a debate over whether the CIA or Pentagon should operate the armed Predators" and the armed Predator never got off the ground before 9/11. [Source: AP, [6/25/03](#)]

WHILE CUTTING COUNTER-TERROR, THE WHITE HOUSE SENT FUNDING TO THE TALIBAN: At the same time the White House was trying to cut counter-terrorism funding, it gave "\$43 million in drought aid to Afghanistan after the Taliban began a campaign against poppy growers." As the 5/29/01 edition of Newsday noted, the Taliban rulers of Afghanistan "are a decidedly odd choice for an outright gift of \$43 million from the Bush Administration. This is the same government against which the United Nation imposes sanctions, at the behest of the United States, for refusing to turn over the terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden." [Washington Post, 9/23/01; Newsday, 5/29/01]

BEFORE 9/11: DESPITE TERROR TIES, BUSH-SAUDI BONDS STRENGTHEN

According to Time Magazine, President Bush is far “cozier than most [Presidents] to Riyadh.” But with the LA Times pointing out that the Saudi government “provided significant money and aid to the 9/11 suicide hijackers,” Vanity Fair notes that “the Bush-Saudi relationship raises serious questions” about why the Administration ignored the clear Saudi ties to terror before 9/11.

SAUDI TIES TO TERROR KNOWN LONG BEFORE 9/11: According to U.S. News and World Report, a 1996 CIA report found that a third of the 50 Saudi-backed charities it studied “were tied to terrorist groups.” Similarly, a 1998 report by the National Security Council had identified the Saudi government as “the epicenter” of terrorist financing, becoming “the single greatest force in spreading Islamic fundamentalism” and “funneling hundreds of millions of dollars to jihad groups and al Qaeda cells around the world.” Over the past decade, “al Qaeda and its fellow jihadists collected between \$300 million and \$500 million, most of it from Saudi charities and private donors” and the very “origins of al Qaeda are intimately bound up with the Saudi charities.” [Source: U.S. News and World Report, [12/15/03](#)]

SAUDI STONEWALLING OF U.S. COUNTER-TERROR INVESTIGATORS BEFORE 9/11: At the same time Al Qaeda-Saudi government ties were strengthening, U.S. “inquiries about bin Laden went unanswered by Riyadh. When Hezbollah terrorists killed 19 U.S. troops with a massive truck bomb at Khobar Towers in Dhahran in 1996, Saudi officials stonewalled, then shut the FBI out of the investigation.” [Source: U.S. News and World Report, [12/15/03](#)]

DESPITE CLEAR TIES TO TERROR, BUSH-SAUDI TIES STRENGTHENED BEFORE 9/11: The Bush Administration maintained and strengthened its ties to the Saudi government upon taking office. As the Boston Herald reported, a “revolving U.S.-Saudi money wheel” exists “within President Bush’s own coterie of foreign policy advisers.” First and foremost, the current President’s father “remains a senior adviser to the Carlyle Group” – an investment bank with deep connections to the Saudi royal family, and received \$1 million for his Presidential library from the royal family. George W. Bush himself is also linked to the Saudi-backed Carlyle Group: he was a director of a Carlyle subsidiary called Caterair. National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice “is a former longtime member of the board of Chevron which did business in the Saudi desert.” And Vice President Cheney’s tenure as CEO of oil giant Halliburton was among his dealings with “firms connected to the Saudis that paid big dividends.” [Source: Boston Herald, [12/11/01](#)]

INSTEAD OF TAKING PRE-9/11 TERROR TIES SERIOUSLY, WHITE HOUSE APPOINTS A CRONY: With the Saudis’ ties to terror clear, the Administration refused to appoint a qualified diplomat or counterterrorism expert as the U.S. government’s ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Instead, the President appointed his Texas crony Robert Jordan – a man with no diplomatic experience, who spoke no Arabic and who had never set foot in Saudi Arabia. Jordan’s chief qualification for the post was that he had been Bush’s lawyer during the SEC inquiry into the Harken energy scandal, was part of the legal team representing the president in Florida during the 2000 election. He also worked at the law firm Baker-Botts, which is headed by former Secretary of State James Baker, a man who has considerable ties to the Saudi government, and who told PBS even after 9/11 that Saudi Arabia is “an ally and friend of the United States.” Even after Jordan retired earlier this year, the Administration still refused to appoint a diplomatic/counter-terrorism expert, instead appointing Texas oil lobbyist James Oberwetter. [Source: Houston Chronicle, [10/3/01](#); Knight-Ridder, [11/17/03](#); PBS, [10/01](#); AP, [11/19/03](#)]

AFTER 9/11: WHITE HOUSE REFUSES ACTION ON SAUDI TIES TO TERROR

After 9/11, President Bush repeated the mantra that "if you aid a terrorist, if you hide terrorists, [you're just as guilty as the terrorists](#)" at the same time Time Magazine noted he was going "[out of his way to compliment the Saudis](#)." These compliments were given even though the Los Angeles Times reports the "Saudi government not only provided significant money and aid to the suicide hijackers but also allowed potentially hundreds of millions of dollars to flow to Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups."

IMMEDIATELY AFTER 9/11, WHITE HOUSE FLIES BIN LADENS OUT OF AMERICA: In the immediate wake of 9/11, all flights in the United States were grounded. But as the new book "House of Bush, House of Saud" notes, the flight ban had one exception: the Saudi relatives of Osama bin Laden. As Secretary of State Colin Powell acknowledged, members of bin Laden's family were put on flights that "were coordinated within the U.S. government" and allowed to go back to Saudi Arabia. According to Gerald Posner's "Why America Slept," the White House-authorized flights out of the United States also included Saudi Prince Ahmed, who a top Al Qaeda terrorist said "knew beforehand that an attack was scheduled for American soil" on 9/11. The White House's decision to allow the Saudis to leave came at the same time Vanity Fair notes "Arabs were being rounded up and interrogated" all over the country and Attorney General John Ashcroft was asserting that the government had "a responsibility to use every legal means at our disposal to prevent further terrorist activity by taking people into custody who have violated the law and who may pose a threat to America." As one law enforcement officer asked, "How could officials bypass such an elemental and routine part of an investigation during an unprecedented national-security catastrophe? At the very least, wouldn't relatives have been able to provide some information about Osama's finances, associates, or supporters?" [Source: Salon, [3/11/04](#); NBC, [9/7/03](#); Chicago Tribune, [9/19/01](#)]

APRIL 2002 - STILL PRAISING THE SAUDIS AFTER 9/11, EVEN WHILE THEY REFUSE TO COOPERATE:

Even as evidence was emerging that the Saudi government had connections to the 9/11 attack, President Bush invited Saudi Prince Abdullah to his Crawford mansion in April of 2002, saying the Saudi government is an "important friend" to the United States. His comments came two years after the New Yorker reported the royal family "refused to permit United States investigators to interrogate one of bin Laden's key financial aides - Sidi Tayyib" a man who "probably knows as much as anyone else about bin Laden's intricate financial empire." The praise continues, even though Newsweek reports officials at the Treasury and Justice departments have privately expressed deep frustration over the failure of the Saudi government to impose stricter controls over their Islamic charities and turn over crucial evidence about the murky flow of money to Al Qaeda. [Source: White House release, [4/25/02](#); New Yorker, 1/24/00; Newsweek, [4/16/03](#)]

MAY 2002 – BUSH ADMINISTRATION MOVES TO PREVENT INDEPENDENT INQUIRY OF 9/11:

Months after 9/11, Vice President Cheney went on Fox News to announce the Administration's full opposition to an independent 9/11 commission. As CBS News noted, the White House "opposed a commission" from the start, claiming "it would tie up officials waging the war on terror - and endanger U.S. secrets." [Source: Fox News, [5/19/02](#); CBS, [9/20/02](#)]

NOVEMBER 2002 - WHITE HOUSE ASSAILED FOR FAILURE TO AGGRESSIVELY PURSUE SAUDI-9/11 TIES:

In the year following the 9/11 attacks, Fox News reported lawmakers investigating the attacks believe the Administration "has not aggressively pursued the possibility that the Saudi government provided money to students who helped two of the hijackers." Congressional committees also "accused the Saudi government of not fully cooperating with American investigators" but faced a strong defense from the White House. Bush Communications Director Dan Bartlett "disputed congressional critics" saying, "As anyone who knows this issue will tell you, it's very difficult to track financing of terrorist networks because most of it is done in cash." [Source: Fox News, [11/23/02](#)]

2003 - WHITE HOUSE HIDES EVIDENCE OF 9/11-SAUDI TIE: As congressional committees prepared to release a bipartisan report on the 9/11 attacks, the Bush Administration swiftly moved to classify a section of the report which dealt with the Saudi ties to the attack. According to AP, that section "examined interactions between Saudi businessmen and the royal family that may have intentionally or unwittingly aided al Qaeda or the suicide hijackers." [Source: UK Guardian, [7/30/03](#); AP, [8/3/03](#)]

2003 - EVIDENCE EMERGES TYING SAUDI GOVERNMENT TO 9/11: The LA Times reported that "the 27 classified pages of a congressional report about Sept. 11 depict a Saudi government that not only provided significant money and aid to the suicide hijackers but also allowed potentially hundreds of millions of dollars to flow to Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups through suspect charities and other fronts." One U.S. official who read the classified section said it describes "very direct, very specific links" between Saudi officials, two of the San Diego-based hijackers and other potential co-conspirators "that cannot be passed off as rogue, isolated or coincidental." Said another official: "It's really damning. What it says is that not only Saudi entities or nationals are implicated in 9/11, but the [Saudi] government" as well. Meanwhile, Newsweek reported that thousands of dollars in charitable gifts from Princess Haifa, the wife of Prince Bandar, "ended up in the hands of two of the September 11 hijackers." [Source: LA Times, [8/2/03](#); CNN, [11/23/02](#)]

AFTER 9/11: WHITE HOUSE REFUSES TO PROTECT THE HOMELAND

For months after 9/11, the Bush Administration opposed the creation of a Department of Homeland Security to better coordinate efforts to protect America. Now, even after the White House was forced to support the proposal, it has continued to drastically underfund basic homeland security, with many experts saying the department's budget is at least [\\$14 billion short](#) of what it needs. The White House itself virtually acknowledged its negligence: the New York Times reported in 2003 the Administration admitted that it is "not providing enough money to protect against terrorist attacks on American soil" and that "domestic counterterrorism programs have been shortchanged." As a result, a recent GAO report concludes the White House is not adequately "addressing all of the elements of resources, investments and risk management" to protect America.

UNDERFUNDING BORDER SECURITY: Because of underfunding, the Justice Department reported in March of 2004 "the United States remains vulnerable to infiltration by known criminals and terrorists because of chronic delays in making millions of FBI fingerprints available to the Border Patrol." The nation is still about four years away from an integrated system between the FBI and Border Patrol that would "allow for a quick, automated check of fingerprints for the roughly 1 million illegal immigrants who are caught each year...That means thousands who could be prosecuted for crimes or detained as security risks will be simply returned to their home countries, free to try to re-enter the United States, the report found." [Source: AP, [3/4/04](#)]

UNDERFUNDING PORT SECURITY: The San Antonio Express-News noted critics point out that the White House "has skirted port security in budget requests, including a plea by the Coast Guard for \$1 billion this year to secure ports on American coasts." Currently, there are "fewer than 100 inspectors assigned to overseas ports" to inspect cargo containers headed to the U.S. That means that "of the 7 million cargo containers that arrive at US ports yearly, only a small percentage have been physically or mechanically inspected." Experts say these containers can be "shipped into a U.S. port with virtually no oversight, and remain a huge risk for importation of biological and radiological weapons." [Source: San Antonio Express-News, 4/1/03; Knight-Ridder, [2/29/04](#)]

UNDERFUNDING AVIATION SECURITY: According to the Century Foundation, "The Transportation Security Administration estimates there is a 35% to 65% chance that terrorists are planning to place a bomb in the cargo of a U.S. passenger plane. Yet, only about 5% of air cargo is screened, even if it is transported on passenger planes." Furthermore, the measures controlling general civil aviation continue to be voluntary and it remains unclear which ones have been instituted and by whom. [Source: The [Century Foundation](#)]

UNDERFUNDING FIRST RESPONDERS: In a landmark report, former Sen. Warren Rudman (R-NH) said "the United States is drastically underfunding local emergency responders and remains dangerously unprepared to handle a catastrophic attack on American soil, particularly one involving chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or high-impact conventional weapons. If the nation does not take immediate steps to better identify and address the urgent needs of emergency responders, the next terrorist incident could be even more devastating than 9/11." The White House has refused to address this problem: less than a year after 9/11 the President threatened to veto additional first responder funding. And just this year, top police and firefighters organizations noted that the Administration proposed "a reduction of \$1.57 billion, or 31.9%" in funding for first responders in 2005 alone. [Source: Rudman Report, [6/29/03](#); Washington Times, [3/4/04](#)]

CUTTING FUNDING TO SECURE LOOSE WMD: Despite President Bush's rhetorical support for non-proliferation efforts, the Center for Defense Information reports the Administration has requested a \$41.6 million (9.3%) decrease in funding for the Pentagon's Cooperative Threat Reduction program – the government's chief program to secure loose nuclear material that could be obtained by terrorists. The Administration also proposes in 2005 to cut \$21 million (8%) out of Energy Department programs aimed at securing nuclear material in Russia. [Source: CDI, [2/20/04](#); Arms Control Association, [3/04](#)]

IGNORING RAIL SECURITY: With concerns raised after the Madrid train attack, Asa Hutchinson, the Bush Administration's own Undersecretary for Homeland Security, said much can be done to improve security in the U.S. rail system. However, he also said that "we have to recognize that it has been historically an open system, very difficult to add layers of security." [Source: USA Today, [5/16/04](#)]

IGNORING POSTAL SECURITY: Despite anthrax and ricin attacks through the mail, Congressional Quarterly reported that "the president's \$37 million budget request in 2005 for the U.S. Postal Service does not include \$779 million for biodetection technology the agency had sought to safeguard against anthrax-like attacks." [Source: Congressional Quarterly, 2/2/04]