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Viewpoint: Lies of 9-11 trapping the Bushites

By Joe Baker, Senior Editor

We have witnessed the sad spectacle of the Bush administration trying to lie its way out of the web of lies it created about the events of Sept. 11, 2001. It is becoming more apparent as to why the president and his cabinet members did not want to testify publicly before the 9-11 Commission.

One of the most revealing and damning disclosures in these hearings came from an FBI translator, Sibel Edmonds. Edmonds told the panel she was offered a substantial pay raise and a full-time position if she would keep quiet about being asked by the Department of Justice to retranslate and adjust terrorist intercepts to fit the White House line.

Edmonds is a 10-year citizen of the U.S. and speaks fluent Farsi and Turkish. She had worked part time for the FBI beginning in December 2001. At a recent press conference, she told the assembled reporters that: "Attorney General John Ashcroft told me he was invoking State Secret Privilege and National Security when I told the FBI I wanted to go public with what I had translated from the pre-9-11 intercepts."

Edmonds told journalist Tom Flocco that she had appeared once on 60 Minutes but has been silenced by Ashcroft. She said the FBI follows her and that she was threatened with jail in 2002 if she went public

She said: "The Senate Judiciary Committee, and the 9-11 Commission have heard me testify for lengthy periods of time (three hours) about very specific plots, dates, airplanes used as weapons, and specific individuals and activities."

That information has been suppressed by the White House, the CIA, the FBI and the Justice Department since Edmonds' appearance on CBS.

Despite these briefings, President Bush declared that "had my administration had any information that terrorists were going to attack New York City on September the 11th, we would have acted."

National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice declared that no one in the administration had imagined that terrorists would use airliners as weapons to attack this country.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld tried to shift responsibility to the domestic side, stating that since these attacks occurred on U.S. soil, they were a matter for civilian law enforcement and not for the U.S. military.

Some of the hardest hitting accusations, however, have come from Richard Clarke, former national coordinator for counter-terrorism activities. Appearing before the 9-11 panel, Clarke told the nation: "Your government failed you ... and I failed you. We tried hard, but that doesn't matter because we failed. And for that failure, I would ask ... for your understanding and for your forgiveness."

When have you heard any other member of the Bush administration offer an apology to the WTC victims' families, to surviving colleagues of the first responders or to the American people? Instead,

we have the president and his upper echelon denying any culpability and trying to shift the nation's attention elsewhere.

Instead of admitting they dropped the ball and promising to do better, the Bushites have adopted the standard technique against whistleblowers. They have branded Clarke as a disgruntled former employee and a liar.

Clarke has not backed off, however. He told CBS: "Frankly, I find it outrageous that the president is running for re-election on the grounds that he's done such great things about terrorism. He ignored it. He ignored terrorism for months, when maybe we could have done something to stop 9-11. Maybe. We'll never know."

Clarke said he tried several times, in the months before the attacks, to get the president and the cabinet to meet to discuss and act on the reported threat from al Qaeda. Bush, himself, in an interview with reporter Bob Woodward, said he felt little sense of urgency in the period before 9-11. Terrorism was not a top priority, even though there were pointed warnings from the outgoing Clinton administration and many specific alerts from a number of foreign sources in 2001.

Clarke said he was astonished at the administration's reaction the day after the WTC and Pentagon attacks. He said Rumsfeld immediately began pushing for bombing raids on Iraq. When Clarke noted al-Qaeda was not in Iraq, but in Afghanistan, Rumsfeld responded that there were more targets in Iraq. He said that although he was the president's chief adviser on terrorism, he did not get to brief the president until Sept. 11.

"There's a lot of blame to go around, and I probably deserve some blame, too. But on Jan. 24th, 2001, I wrote a memo to Condoleezza Rice asking for urgently—urgently—a cabinet-level meeting to deal with the impending al-Qaeda attack. And that urgent memo wasn't acted on," Clarke said.

By June of 2001, there still had been no cabinet-level meeting, despite the fact that U.S. intelligence was picking up more and more ominous messages from certain parts of the world.

Clarke recalled: "George Tenet was saying to the White House, saying to the president—because he briefed him every morning—a major al-Qaeda attack is going to happen against the United States somewhere in the world in the weeks and months ahead. He said that in June, July, August."

Associated Press reported in 2002 that Bush's national security leadership had almost 100 meetings in the months before 9-11, but only two of those meetings concerned terrorism. At the same time, Bush was attempting to cut key counter-terrorism programs.

Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage testified before the 9-11 Commission and was questioned about the hijacking of jetliners for use as weapons on 9-11. He told the panel: "I just don't think we had the imagination required to consider a tragedy of this magnitude."

Joseph Ehrlich, in his analysis posted at Senderberl@aol.com, stated: "This should make the families of the victims bitter indeed. Al Qaeda historically has shown little imagination in implementing terrorism, but here the United States government declares it lacked the imagination to perceive planes being used against buildings, but al-Qaeda not only then had the imagination to plan the deed but also had the capability of carrying it off!

"Do you see the folly of Armitage's argument, to wit, that therefore al-Qaeda is more competent and imaginative than the U.S. government and therefore better suited to implement such actions? Further,

if this, in fact, is the case, the entire current government responsible for security should be sent to pasture because if they admit to not having the creative ability to anticipate the terrorism, how in the world can such people be suited to protect us against further attack? Will they claim the next act of terrorism is successful due to their inability to imagine it?

“The point, of course, is that they didn’t need imagination at all. When four planes went off transponders, our military defensive apparatus, costing taxpayers untold billions of dollars, should have intervened. But they were kept grounded. This is where the Commission shows itself to be a whitewash. The real message of the Commission is for Bush and friends to retire.”

Pres. William J. Clinton was impeached for lying about sex in the Oval Office. Accordingly, what should happen to Pres. George W. Bush for lies about failing to protect our nation, resulting in more than 2,000 deaths; and for lies about Weapons of Mass Destructions bringing us to war, resulting in up to 14,000 Iraqi casualties, almost 600 American service people dead with at least 4,000 wounded? Bush should be impeached, too.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. may have touched the core issue when he said: “We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence of the good people.”

Source: Senderberl@aol.com; Scoop.com; Daily Misleader.org; CBS News.com; Slate.com; truthout.org; kirwanstudios@earthlink.net.

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