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## **Viewpoint: 9-11 commission probe rigged**

By Joe Baker, Senior Editor

If you've been expecting the 9-11 commission to ultimately produce some startling revelations, forget it. The commission is a sham and a farce.

That became very clear last week when the group announced it had cut a deal with the White House for access to highly classified intelligence reports prepared for the president daily.

Commissioners agreed to let the White House edit the documents before panel members get to see them. Lawmakers will get to see only selected parts of the briefing papers, and then only four of the 10-member panel get to do so.

A member of the commission, Rep. Timothy Roemer, D-Ind., said he believes the agreement will allow the White House to remove the contexts in which the intelligence was presented and allow it to hide any "smoking guns."

"...under this agreement the commission will be allowed to see only specific articles or paragraphs within the PDB's (president's daily brief). Our members may see only two or three paragraphs out of a nine-page report."

The executive director of the so-called independent commission, Philip Zelikow, said: "The notion that the commission should want to read PDB articles that have nothing to do with al-Qaeda would be a novel suggestion. The commission has not asked to see the country's most sensitive intelligence information on China or North Korea."

Zelikow is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, a secret organization promoting one-world government. (Who's Who of the Elite, by Robert Gaylon Ross)

Just in case you still doubt that the commission is not independent, get this—the panel members allowed to read the reports may take notes, but the White House will have the right to review and edit those notes! How's that for independence?

The Family Steering Committee, a group representing the families of victims of 9-11, stated the agreement would "prevent a full uncovering of the truth and is unacceptable."

The committee added: "The commission should issue a statement to the American public fully explaining why this agreement was chosen in lieu of issuing subpoenas to the CIA and executive branch." (Common Dreams.com)

A group called 9-11 CitizensWatch, a citizen-led government watchdog organization, commented: "The commission doesn't appear to be meeting a high standard of investigative rigor; by ignoring important areas of inquiry and witnesses, by not requiring testimony under oath, allowing administration or agency 'minders,' and not pursuing aggressive cross-examination in an open, public arena, questions naturally arise as to whether or not the commission is being serious and aggressive enough to get to the truth."

A closer look at the commission is revealing. As head of the investigative body, President Bush chose Thomas Kean, former governor of New Jersey and president of Drew University.

So far, the only national publication to report any downside on Kean is New York Newsday.

Kean, another CFR member, has business ties with Khalid bin Mafhouz and Mohammed Hussein al Amoudi.

The two own Delta Oil, which is participating in a pipeline deal with Delta-Hess. Kean is a stockholder of Amerada Hess Corp., which also is part of the pipeline project.

In 1998, former CIA director James Woolsey told a Senate committee that bin Mahfouz' younger sister is married to Osama bin Laden. Mahfouz is Osama's brother-in-law. (The New York Times, 11-12-2001)

That would seem to put Kean, as head of the 9-11 commission, in an awkward spot. The panel has a mandate to investigate Osama and his organization, al-Qaeda.

Bush first named Henry Kissinger to head the commission, but he resigned after the heat began to build over his obvious conflicts of interest.

The same thing happened with former Sen. George Mitchell of Maine, who had been vice-chairman of the commission. He quit for the same reasons.

It seems reasonable to think that if Kean has business dealings with a firm connected to Osama bin Laden, and his commission is supposed to investigate this guy, it could be concluded that a conflict exists.

Kean is not the only member of the Washington insiders snared in this net. Extensive documentation exists of business dealings between the bin Laden and Bush families and other prominent Republicans.

Delta officials apparently played a key role in talks with the Taliban regarding the trans-Afghan pipeline. Next at the trough, Enron—whose former CEO Ken Lay has close ties to the Bush family—was under contract to do feasibility studies for the Unocal-Delta consortium.

Wayne Madsen, an investigative reporter, has documented business dealings between Osama's brother-in-law and George W. Bush when Bush was in the oil business in Texas. Both men were implicated in the Bank of Commerce and Credit International (BCCI) scandal in the early 90s when BCCI robbed depositors of \$10 billion.

Madsen wrote: "Other links between Bush and Mahfouz can be found through investments in the Carlyle Group, an American investment firm managed by a board on which former President George Bush (Sr.) himself sat. The younger Bush personally held shares in one of the components of the Carlyle group, the Caterair Co., between 1990-94. And Carlyle today ranks as a leading contributor to Bush's electoral campaign." (Boston Herald, Dec. 11, 2001)

Mahfouz and al Amoudi have been under investigation since as far back as 1999 for alleged ties to al Qaeda. Yet, after the attacks of 9-11, just by "sheer coincidence," they both were exempted from U. S. Treasury Department investigations.

A report by Scripps Howard News Service in December 2002 claimed Kean was chosen to head the commission because he was "close to the families of 9-11 victims, an important credential to the White House, which was coming under increasing criticism from those families."

Those families have filed a \$1 trillion lawsuit against Kean's business buddies-Mahfouz and al Amoudi. How will he square that with his mandate to investigate Osama and company?

"What I find surprising," said Rep. Roemer, "is that there are two things which can most help the Bush administration, and they won't cooperate.

"This report could prove there was no warning; there was no smoking gun provided to the president. It could also prove that the intelligence community did not do a proper job of putting the position to him. And he won't provide access to these things."

Yes, because the report might also prove that Bush knew...in advance of the attacks. He wants the emasculated report to be delivered in May, well ahead of the 2004 election campaign homestretch.

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