

9/11: Ask no questions, you'll get no lies

IN 1996 Bill Clinton had an affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky. On September 11th, 2001, terrorists hijacked four jetliners and used them to attack the Pentagon and destroy the World Trade Center. The Lewinsky affair involved a White House intern performing oral sex on the President. Congress created an independent office to investigate the affair and appointed a special prosecutor to prosecute any individuals caught breaking the law. The affair dominated the world media for two years and ultimately led to the impeachment of President Clinton.

The 9/11 attacks, by contrast, resulted in 3,000 Americans being killed. The ensuing domino effect resulted in the death of over 10,000 Afghans and Iraqis, the collapse of the US economy, the decline of the American dollar. It also led to the onset of political amnesia regarding Enron and other corporate scandals, conflicts of interest running rampant in the Bush regime and the illegitimacy of the 2000 presidential election.

To date, however, there has not been an independent investigation of the events leading up to the 9/11 attacks. A bi-partisan committee appointed by congress and led by a former Pentagon inspector general compiled an 800 page report primarily about intelligence community warnings prior to 9/11. It was completed in December, but its release has been suppressed by the Bush regime. The media has been all but silent on this issue.

Normally, though I'm no fan of the Clinton administration, I don't write about the

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Lewinsky affair, which I've always found to be boring and trivial. But it seems like a good starting point to compare the media's treatment of a few blowjobs and the ensuing lies about blowjobs, with its treatment of what's become known as the "Attack on America" and the new reactionary political culture the attack has ushered in. One was clearly over-reported, while the other now receives scant mention from a quisling press corps.

It's nothing short of outrageous that as we approach the second anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, we have still not seen the results of any investigation regarding these charges – this despite a plethora of very disturbing international press reports raising horrifying questions about Bush regime complicity, duplicity or incompetence. And we are still only at the stage where a few lone congressional voices are calling in vain for hearings that in all likelihood will never take place.

One story that should now be dominating the American press is that of the aforementioned 800 page congressional report. The report, according to preliminary releases dating back to last year, demonstrates that US intelligence agencies were aware of al Qaeda's plans to use commercial airliners as terrorist weapons and made those concerns known to George W. Bush and his top advisors. Weeks before September 11th, the Central Intelligence Agency reported to the White House that Osama bin Laden's network was planning imminent attacks on US soil which would be "spectacular and designed to inflict mass casualties." They went on to warn the Bush regime that the "attack will occur with little or no warning."

How much did Bush know?

The report, according to Newsweek, "names names, gives dates and provides a body of new information about the handling of many other crucial intelligence briefings – including one in early August 2001 given to national-security advisor Rice that discussed al Qaeda operations within the United States and the possibility that the group's members might seek to hijack airplanes." These briefings followed warnings, issued to the Bush White House by Italian, Israeli, Jordanian, Egyptian, Tunisian, Moroccan, Russian, Malaysian, Filipino and British intelligence agencies, which reported that al Qaeda was planning a major terrorist operation in the US. Many of these agencies accurately speculated upon both the targets and the means by which they would be attacked. The Filipino report, according to The New York Times, detailed the cross-country odyssey of one would-be terrorist as he attended flight schools in New York, Texas, California and North Carolina in order to learn the skills needed to precisely fly a jumbo jet directly into a building.

The FBI in Oklahoma, as early as 1998, in a memo titled, "Weapons of Mass

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Destruction," warned that suspicious foreigners were receiving flight training for no apparent reason, and that they might be part of a plot to use airliners in the manner in which they were eventually used on 9/11. In the months leading up to 9/11, other FBI offices around the country followed suit, warning about the potential use of airplanes as terrorist weapons, with the most recent warning coming out of the Phoenix office in July of 2002, less than two months before 9/11. Officials in Minneapolis were more specific, and had already identified Zacarias Moussaoui as one of the would-be hijackers. The Bush regime's only visible responses to these warnings were Attorney General John Ashcroft's July 26th, 2001 decision to stop flying on commercial airliners and the Bush regime's now documented order for the FBI to back off on its investigation of al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden.

The congressional report, which promises to shed light on some of the questions concerning the Bush regime and the 9/11 attacks, was completed in December of 2002 despite a lack of cooperation from key players such as Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell and Donald Rumsfeld. On December 10th, both the Senate and House intelligence committees determined that the report contained no classified information and voted to release the report to the public. The Bush administration, however, argued that the report still needed to be "scrubbed" of classified information and blocked its release for the last five months. Hence, they blocked the release of the report, which is essentially a critique of their behavior and performance. They did this by declaring major sections, such as those detailing when George W. Bush was informed and what he was informed of, to be "classified" information whose release would compromise US security.

Choreographing the 2004 Campaign

Critics, however, point out that what the report would actually compromise would be Bush's 2004 presidential election campaign. Early indicators show that with unemployment and the deficit skyrocketing, public services declining, the economy in ruins, environmental degradation increasing, public education and healthcare going to hell, and chaos rampant in Central Asia and the Middle East, a re-election for a never elected president would be a hard sell.

Hence, the emerging Republican strategy is to wrap Bush in the flag and re-run lots of 9/11 "united we stand" footage, pushing the wartime president myth. To this end, the Republicans scheduled their convention, planned for New York City, to occur in early September 2004. This will be the latest date that the Republicans have ever held a convention, but it promises a priceless tie-in with 9/11 commemorative events.

The plan shamelessly dishonors the 9/11 dead by turning their commemoration into a

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sort of Bush rally, with George W. emerging Giuliani style as "America's President" while going into the final stretch of his election campaign – avoiding issues at all cost. Images of Bush sitting on 9/11 warnings, allowing the horror of 9/11 to unfold either through incompetence or malfeasance, would poison this strategy.

Your right to know nothing

The Bush team is going further than simply suppressing the report and thwarting any further investigation. They're attempting to "reclassify" information that's already in the public domain, such as the July 2001 "Phoenix memo" referred to in this article, in which FBI agents warn about suspicious foreigners enrolling in US flight schools to learn how to fly, but not necessarily land, jetliners. Such reclassification of information already in the public domain and internationally distributed is unprecedented. If the Bush White House succeeds in carrying through on their reclassification plans, it will make republishing this story, or possibly even possessing a copy of it, illegal. Most interesting is the clear fact that the Phoenix memo, like other documents the Bush regime wants to classify or reclassify, in no way compromises American national security. This is a clear abuse of power and a severe threat to our constitutionally guaranteed right of free speech – with a president attempting to criminalize any rhetoric critical of his performance. ●