



**Statement by  
Thomas H. Kean, Chair, and Lee H. Hamilton, Vice Chair  
of the 9-11 Commission**

**May 19, 2004** — We would like to thank the New School University for its hospitality these past two days. The Commission also appreciates the cooperation of our witnesses, the City of New York and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

We want to begin by expressing our profound admiration for the first responders of 9/11: the civilians, firefighters, police officers, and emergency personnel, living and dead, who exhibited courage and determination under horrifying, overwhelming conditions. Their acts of heroism exceed our ability to praise.

We were reminded by the former Mayor of the importance of national unity during times of crisis.

We want to outline some of what we have learned and brought before the public these past two days.

Investments in security by the Port Authority after the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, including stairwell improvements, aided the evacuation on September 11. But poor communication and the lack of knowledge of evacuation procedures proved costly.

Few tenants in the World Trade Center complex had a plan, or exercised a plan, for emergency preparedness.

9-1-1 operators and Fire Department dispatchers were not adequately integrated into emergency response. They did not integrate what they learned from callers, nor did they pass on important information to civilians or first responders.

Effective decision-making in New York was hampered by limited command and control and internal communications. Poor communications across agencies harmed situational awareness. Fire Chiefs did not know what the NYPD knew, and knew less than what TV viewers knew.

The Fire Department had limited command and control of its own personnel. Commanders had difficulty communicating with their units, and could not account comprehensively for units once they arrived at the World Trade Center.

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**Statement by Chair and Vice Chair, *continued***

The response at the Pentagon, generally successful, was plagued with similar problems of self-dispatching and poor communications.

As we look ahead, there are key areas where we will focus:

- We will focus on private sector emergency preparedness, and the importance of nationwide standards;
- We will focus on the importance of an integrated command system. We are impressed that a unified command structure for any given emergency incident makes a difference; and
- We will focus on communications. Reliable communications, across agencies, is essential to situational awareness, effective coordination, and implementation of decisions.

The goal of our work is to make America safer and more secure. We acknowledge the efforts the Fire Department of New York has already made to learn lessons from 9/11 and implement improvements. We believe the nation needs to learn from New York's experience as well.

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