



MEDIA ADVISORY

9-11 Commission Releases Unanimous Final Report

Calls for Quick Action on Recommendations to Prevent Future Attacks

July 22, 2004 – The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (also known as the 9-11 Commission) released its bipartisan, unanimous final report to the American people today at a live, televised event in Washington, D.C. The report is now posted on the Commission’s Web site, www.9-11commission.gov, and is available for purchase in bookstores nationwide and from the Government Printing Office.

As mandated by the Commission’s founding legislation, the final report is the Commission’s full and complete accounting of the facts and circumstances surrounding the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, as well as recommendations for corrective measures that can be taken to prevent acts of terrorism.

“I am honored to present the report to the President of the United States, the United States Congress, and the American people for their consideration,” said Thomas H. Kean, Chair of the Commission. “Ten Commissioners—five Republicans and five Democrats chosen by elected leaders from our nation’s capital at a time of great partisan division—have come together to present this report without dissent.”

“This report is a product of a Commission that came together with a unity of purpose that our nation demanded,” said Kean. “September 11, 2001, was a day of unprecedented shock and suffering in the history of the United States. The nation was unprepared.”

In its final report, the Commission issued 37 recommendations to help prevent future terrorist attacks, divided into sections detailing a global strategy and a government reorganization necessary to implement such a strategy. The Commission summarized its recommended global strategy into three pillars: (1) attacking terrorists and their organizations; (2) preventing the continued growth of Islamist terrorism; and (3) protecting and preparing for terrorist attacks.

“The first phase of our post-9/11 efforts rightly included military action to topple the Taliban and pursue al Qaeda,” said Vice Chair Lee H. Hamilton. “But long-term success demands the use of all elements of national power: diplomacy, intelligence, covert action, law enforcement, economic policy, foreign aid, public diplomacy, and homeland defense. If we favor one tool while neglecting others, we leave ourselves vulnerable and weaken our national effort.”

To implement this strategy, the Commission proposed a five-part plan to build unity of effort across the U.S. government: (1) closing the foreign-domestic divide by linking intelligence and operational planning in a new National Counterterrorism Center; (2) bringing the intelligence community together under a National Intelligence Director and national intelligence centers; (3)

encouraging information sharing through government through decentralized networks; (4) centralizing and strengthening congressional oversight of intelligence and homeland security issues; and (5) strengthening the national security workforce within the FBI and clarifying the missions of the departments of Defense and Homeland Security.

“No president can promise that a catastrophic attack like that of 9-11 will not happen again,” said Hamilton. “But the American people are entitled to expect that officials will have realistic objectives, clear guidance, and effective organization. They are entitled to see standards for performance so they can judge, with the help of their elected representatives, whether the objectives are being met.”

In the report, the Commission provided the support for these recommendations with an exhaustive factual account of the events surrounding September 11, 2001, including particular findings. While specifics may be found in the final report, the Commission’s general findings focused on failures of imagination, policy, capabilities, and management throughout U.S. government. The Commission found little evidence that the progress of the al Qaeda plot was disturbed by any of the counterterrorism policies or activities of the U.S. government.

“The 9/11 attacks were a shock, but should not have come as a surprise,” said Kean. “By September 2001, the executive branch of the U.S. government, the Congress, the news media, and the American public had received clear warning that Islamist terrorists meant to kill Americans in high numbers.”

The Commission was created by Public Law 107-306, signed by the President on November 27, 2002, nearly 20 months ago. Working with a cumulative budget of \$15 million and more than 80 staff members, the Commission completed the most comprehensive independent government investigation in U.S. history. The Commission interviewed more than 1,200 people in ten different countries and reviewed more than 2.5 million documents. The Commission also held 19 days of public hearings, during which the Commission heard from more than 160 witnesses and released 17 staff statements.

On July 22 and 23, press inquiries about the Commission should be directed to Jonathan Stull of the 9-11 Commission at 202-326-1711 or by email at jstull@9-11commission.gov. Interview requests should be directed to Craig Brownstein at 202-326-1711 or by email at requests@9-11commission.gov.

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