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NATIONAL COMMISSION ON TERRORIST ATTACKS UPON THE UNITED STATES

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Second public hearing of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States

Statement of Jon Corzine to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States May 22, 2003

Thank you, Governor Kean, Congressman Hamilton, and other members of the Commission. I appreciate the invitation to testify at today's hearing of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States.

As I'm sure you know, I was among the original co-sponsors of the legislation – introduced by Senators Lieberman and McCain in December 2001 – to establish this commission to examine the circumstances related to the September 11, 2001 attack against our nation. And I've been working with my colleagues in the Senate to help ensure that the Commission is fully funded, fully resourced, and fully equipped to carry out

Current News

The Commission has released its final report. [\[more\]](#)

The Chair and Vice Chair have released a statement regarding the Commission's closing. [\[more\]](#)

The Commission closed August 21, 2004. [\[more\]](#)

Commission Members

Thomas H. Kean
Chair

Lee H. Hamilton
Vice Chair

its mission.

Yours is clearly a difficult task. But it is critically important that it be done, and done thoroughly, credibly, and expeditiously. It is imperative that you demand access to all relevant materials, and that you develop findings that lead to recommendations that will strengthen America's security. To do otherwise, would be disrespectful to the thousands of innocents who paid the ultimate price for mistakes in judgment or worse in the time preceding September 11.

But an analysis of history aside, at its root, this Commission must be about keeping Americans safe. The terrorist attacks of September 11 unmasked our past vulnerabilities. And we need to better understand what happened on that tragic day. History may not repeat itself, but, as Will Rodgers said, It often rhymes. This Commission must review not just why those vulnerabilities were not addressed, but its task is to take the lessons learned and apply them to reshaping our future.

The objective is not to find blame. We need to focus on genuine reform and accountability. Just today, we read media reports that the CIA is conducting a post-mortem analysis of the difference between its intelligence before the Iraqi conflict and our knowledge today, an analysis one month after the main hostilities in Iraq were concluded.

In my view, we are irrefutably tardy in carrying out this analysis with respect to 9-11. With no disrespect for the Commission's work, we are already building the Department of Homeland Security without a serious foundation being built on the lessons learned.

Commissioners, these criminal and barbarous attacks were not carried out against faceless victims or families. In New Jersey, the terror of September 11 is very real. Almost every day, a

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Jamie S. Gorelick
Slade Gorton
Bob Kerrey
John F. Lehman
Timothy J. Roemer
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Commission Staff

Philip D. Zelikow
Executive Director

Chris Kojm
*Deputy Executive
Director*

Daniel Marcus
General Counsel

loved one or a friend of a victim calls my office for advice or support. The victims' families continue to struggle emotionally and practically with the horrific and unfair burden of this tragedy.

We mourn the thousands who died. I, like most of you, think about them every day.

Seven hundred of my fellow New Jerseyans were murdered – innocent people, people who were working hard to provide for their families. These were fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, children and grandparents. Their memories and their families deserve the truth and a serious response to help shape our future.

We owe it to those who died and to those still in mourning to make an accounting that is as complete and public as possible.

As Kristin Breitweiser, whose husband Ronald was killed at the World Trade Center put it in a letter to the New York Times, "The 9/11 families and the country have waited long enough for answers. Each day of delay is another day that this country remains vulnerable and perilously at risk to another terrorist attack."

We all have waited long enough.

I know you understand the weight of your assignment and mission. I know there is much to do. And I know there are literally thousands of questions that must be asked.

Questions about intelligence and counter-terrorism policy. Immigration policy. Homeland security. Border security and port security. Airport security and rail security. The preparedness of our emergency first responders.

We must ensure that you have complete and unfettered access to all the information you need. Americans deserve to know what went

wrong and what we can do in the future so that thousands of other families do not live through another horror like 9-11. I hope you know that, if at any point during this process you are less than satisfied with the level of disclosure or access this Commission is receiving to relevant information, I am, like my colleagues, at your service to help – to prod and push if necessary

I urge the Commission to be as specific as possible in your recommendations so that we can shape practical responses as quickly as possible. And I hope that, after your report is filed, you will continue to work closely with the Congress and other officials to ensure that your recommendations are considered with the seriousness that they deserve.

I know the Commission appreciates the importance of your mission, and I thank you for your willingness to serve. And, again, if there is any way I can be of assistance to you, I hope you will let me know.

Thank you.

National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States
The Commission closed on August 21, 2004. This site is archived.