

HEARING OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON TERRORIST ATTACKS UPON THE UNITED STATES

WITNESS: DR. CONDOLEEZZA RICE, ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS CHAIR: THOMAS H. KEAN; VICE CHAIR: LEE H. HAMILTON

ROOM 216 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D.C.
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MR. KEAN: (Sounds gavel.) Good morning. As chair of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, I hereby convene this hearing. This is a continuation of the Commission's previous hearings on the formulation and conduct of U.S. counterterrorism policy. The record of that hearing, by the way, including staff statements, is available on our website, www.9-11commission.gov.

We will hear from only one witness this morning, the distinguished Dr. Rice, Condoleezza Rice, assistant to the President for national security affairs.

Dr. Rice, we bid you a most cordial welcome to the Commission.

But before I call on Dr. Rice, I would like to turn to our vice chair for brief opening remarks.

MR. HAMILTON: Good morning.

Good morning, Dr. Rice. We're very pleased to have you with us this morning.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to make a statement. I will be very brief. The purpose of our hearing this morning is very straightforward. We want to get information and we wanted to get it out into the public record.

If we are going to fulfill our mandate, a comprehensive and sweeping mandate, then we will have to provide a full and complete accounting of the events of 9/11, and that means that we are going to ask some searching and difficult questions.

Our purpose is not to embarrass, it is not to put any witness on the spot. Our purpose is to understand and to inform. Questions do not represent opinions. Our views will follow later after reflection on answers. We want to be thorough this

morning, and as you will see in a few minutes, the Commissioners will show that they have mastered their briefs. But we also want to be fair.

Most of us on this commission have been in the policymaking world at some time in our careers. Policymakers face terrible dilemmas. Information is incomplete, the inbox is huge, resources are limited. There are only so many hours in the day. The choices are tough and none is tougher than deciding what is a priority and what is not.

We will want to explore with Dr. Rice, as we have with other witnesses, the choices that were made.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. KEAN: Thank you.

Dr. Rice, would you please rise and raise your right hand? Do you swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

MS. RICE: I do.

MR. KEAN: Thank you. I understand, Dr. Rice, that you have an opening statement. Your prepared statement, of course, will be entered into the record in full, and we look forward to -- if it's a summary of your statement, that's fine. Dr. Rice.

MS. RICE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I thank the Commission for arranging this special session. I thank you for helping us to find a way to meet the nation's need to learn all that we can about the September 11th attacks, while preserving important constitutional principles.

The Commission and those who appear before it have a vital charge. We owe it to those that we lost -- and to their loved ones and to our country -- to learn all we can about that tragic day and the events that led to it. Many of the families of the victims are here today, and I want to thank them for their contributions to this commission's work.

The terrorist threat to our nation did not emerge on September 11th, 2001. Long before that day, radical, freedom-hating terrorists declared war on America and on the civilized world. The attack on the Marine barracks in Lebanon in 1983, the

hijacking of the Achille Lauro in 1985, the rise of al Qaeda and the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993, the attacks on American installations in Saudi Arabia in 1995 and 1996, the East Africa embassy bombings of 1998, the attack on the *U.S.S. Cole* in 2000 -- these and other atrocities were part of a sustained, systematic campaign to spread devastation and chaos, and to murder innocent Americans.

The terrorists were at war with us, but we were not yet at war with them. For more than 20 years the terrorist threat gathered, and America's response across several administrations of both parties was insufficient. Historically, democratic societies have been slow to react to gathering threats, tending instead to wait to confront threats until they are too dangerous to ignore or until it is too late.

Despite the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1915 and continued German harassment of American shipping, the United States did not enter the First World War until two years later. Despite Nazi Germany's repeated violations of the Versailles Treaty and provocations throughout the mid-1930s, the Western democracies did not take action until 1939. The U.S. government did not act against the growing threat from Imperial Japan until the threat became all too evident at Pearl Harbor. And, tragically, for all the language of war spoken before September 11th, this country simply was not on a war footing.

Since then, America has been at war, and under President Bush's leadership we will remain at war until the terrorist threat to our nation is ended. The world has changed so much that it is hard to remember what our lives were like before that day. But I do want to describe some of the actions that were taken by the Administration prior to September 11th.

After President Bush was elected we were briefed by the Clinton administration on many national security issues during the transition. The President-elect and I were briefed by George Tenet on terrorism and on the al Qaeda network. Members of Sandy Berger's NSC staff briefed me, along with other members of the national security team, on counterterrorism and al Qaeda.

This briefing lasted for about an hour, and it reviewed the Clinton administration's counterterrorism approach and the various counterterrorism activities then under way. Sandy and I personally discussed a variety of other topics, including North Korea, Iraq, the Middle East and the Balkans.

Because of these briefings and because we had watched the rise of al Qaeda over many years, we understood that the network posed a serious threat to the United States. We wanted to ensure that there was no respite in the fight against al Qaeda. On an operational level, therefore, we decided immediately to continue to pursue the Clinton administration's covert action authorities and other efforts to fight the network. President Bush retained George Tenet as director of Central Intelligence, and Louis Freeh remained the director of the FBI. I took the unusual step of retaining Dick Clarke and the entire Clinton administration's counterterrorism team on the NSC staff. I knew Dick Clarke to be an expert in his field, as well as an experienced crisis manager. Our goal was to ensure continuity of operations while we developed new policies.

At the beginning of the Administration, President Bush revived the practice of meeting with the director of Central Intelligence almost every day in the Oval Office, meetings which I attended along with the Vice President and the chief of staff. At these meetings, the President received up-to-date intelligence and asked questions of his most senior intelligence officials.

From January 20th through September 10th, the President received at these daily meetings more than 40 briefing items on al Qaeda, and 13 of those were in response to questions he or his top advisers posed. In addition to seeing DCI Tenet almost every morning, I generally spoke by telephone to coordinate policy at 7:15 with Secretary -- Secretaries Powell and Rumsfeld on a variety of topics. And I also met and spoke regularly with the DCI about al Qaeda and terrorism.

Of course, we did have other responsibilities. President Bush had set a broad foreign policy agenda. We were determined to confront the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We were improving America's relations with the world's great powers. We had to change an Iraq policy that was making no progress against a hostile regime which regularly shot at U.S. planes enforcing U.N. Security Council resolutions. And we had to deal with the occasional crisis; for instance, when the crew of a Navy plane was detained in China for 11 days.

We also moved to develop a new and comprehensive strategy to try and eliminate the al Qaeda network. President Bush understood the threat, and he understood its importance. He made clear to us that he did not want to respond to al Qaeda one attack at a time. He told me he was "tired of swatting flies."

This new strategy was developed over the spring and summer of 2001, and was approved by the President's senior national security officials on September 4th.

It was the very first major national security policy directive of the Bush administration -- not Russia, not missile defense, not Iraq, but the elimination of al Qaeda.

Although this National Security Presidential Directive was originally a highly classified document, we arranged for portions to be declassified to help the Commission in its work, and I will describe some of it today.

The strategy set as a goal the elimination of the al Qaeda network and threat and ordered the leadership of relevant U.S. departments and agencies to make the elimination of al Qaeda a high priority and to use all aspects of our national power -- intelligence, financial, diplomatic and military -- to meet that goal. And it gave Cabinet secretaries and department heads specific responsibilities. For instance, it directed the secretary of State to work with other countries to end all sanctuaries given to al Qaeda.

It directed the secretaries of the Treasury and State to work with foreign governments to seize or freeze assets and holdings of al Qaeda and its benefactors.

It directed the director of Central Intelligence to prepare an aggressive program of covert activities to disrupt al Qaeda and provide assistance to anti-Taliban groups operating in Afghanistan.

It tasked the director of OMB with ensuring that sufficient funds were available in the budgets over the next five years to meet the goals laid out in the strategy.

And it directed the Secretary of Defense to, and I quote, "ensure that contingency planning processes include plans against al Qaeda and associated terrorist facilities in Afghanistan, including leadership, command-control and communications, training and logistics facilities; and against Taliban targets in Afghanistan, including leadership, command-control, air and air defense, ground forces, and logistics; and to eliminate weapons of mass destruction which al Qaeda and associated terrorist groups may acquire or manufacture, including those stored in underground bunkers."

This was a change from the prior strategy -- Presidential Decision Directive 62, signed in 1998 -- which ordered the secretary of Defense to provide transportation to bring individual terrorists to the U.S. for trial, to protect DOD forces overseas, and to be prepared to respond to terrorist and weapons of mass destruction incidents.

More importantly, we recognized that no counterterrorism strategy could succeed in isolation. As you know from the Pakistan and Afghanistan strategy documents that we have made available to the Commission, our counterterrorism strategy was a part of a broader package of strategies that addressed the complexities of the region. Integrating our counterterrorism and regional strategies was the most difficult and the most important aspect of the new strategy to get right. Al Qaeda was both a client of and a patron to the Taliban, which in turn was supported by Pakistan. Those relationships provided al Qaeda with a powerful umbrella of protection, and we had to sever that. This was not easy.

Not that we hadn't tried. Within a month of taking office, President Bush sent a strong, private message to President Musharraf urging him to use his influence with the Taliban to bring bin Laden to justice and to close down al Qaeda training camps. Secretary Powell actively urged the Pakistanis, including Musharraf himself, to abandon support for the Taliban. I remember well meeting with the Pakistani foreign minister -- and I think I referred to this meeting in my private meeting with you -- in my office in June of 2001. And I delivered what I considered to be a very tough message. He met that message with a rote answer and with an expressionless response.

America's al Qaeda policy wasn't working because our Afghanistan policy wasn't working. And our Afghanistan policy wasn't working because our Pakistan policy wasn't working. We recognized that America's counterterrorism policy had to be connected to our regional strategies and to our overall foreign policy.

To address these problems, I had to make sure that key regional experts were involved, not just counterterrorism experts. I brought in Zalmay Khalilzad, an expert on Afghanistan who, as a senior diplomat in the 1980s, had worked closely with the Afghan Mujaheddin, helping them to turn back the Soviet invasion. I also ensured the participation of the NSC experts on South Asia, as well as the secretary of State and his regional specialists. Together, we developed a new strategic approach to

Afghanistan. Instead of the intense focus on the Northern Alliance, we emphasized the importance of the south, the social and political heartland of the country. Our new approach to Pakistan combined the use of carrots and sticks to persuade Pakistan to drop its support for the Taliban. And we began to change our approach to India to preserve stability on the continent.

While we were developing this new strategy to deal with al Qaeda, we also made decisions on a number of specific anti-al Qaeda initiatives that had been proposed by Dick Clarke to me in an early memorandum after we had taken office. Many of these ideas had been deferred by the last administration, and some had been on the table since 1998. We increased counterterrorism assistance to Uzbekistan, we bolstered the Treasury Department's activities to track and seize terrorist assets, we increased funding for counterterrorism activities across several agencies, and we moved to arm Predator unmanned surveillance vehicles for action against al Qaeda.

When threat reporting increased during the Spring and Summer of 2001, we moved the U.S. Government at all levels to a high state of alert and activity. Let me clear up any confusion about the relationship between the development of our new strategy and the many actions we took to respond to threats of the summer. Policy development and crisis management require different approaches. Throughout this period, we did both simultaneously.

For the essential crisis management task, we depended on the Counterterrorism Security Group, chaired by Dick Clarke, to be the interagency nerve center. The CSG consisted of senior counterterrorism experts from CIA; the FBI; the Department of Justice; the Defense Department, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff; the State Department; and the Secret Service. The CSG had met regularly for many years, and its members had worked through numerous periods of heightened threat activity. As threat information increased, the CSG met more frequently, sometimes daily, to review and analyze the threat reporting and to coordinate actions in response. CSG members also had ready access to their Cabinet secretaries and could raise any concerns that they had at the highest levels.

The threat reporting that we received in the spring and summer of 2001 was not specific as to time, nor place nor manner of attack. Almost all of the reports focused on al Qaeda activities outside the United States, especially in the Middle East and in North Africa. In fact, the information that was

specific enough to be actionable referred to terrorist operations overseas. Most often, though, the threat reporting was frustratingly vague.

Let me read you some of the actual chatter that was picked up in that spring and summer:

"Unbelievable news coming in weeks," said one.

"Big event ... there will be a very, very, very, very big uproar." "There will be attacks in the near future."

Troubling, yes. But they don't tell us when; they don't tell us where; they don't tell us who; and they don't tell us how.

In this context, I want to address in some detail one of the briefing items that we receive, since its content has been frequently mischaracterized.

On August 6, 2001, the President's intelligence briefing included a response to questions that he had earlier raised about any al Qaeda intentions to strike our homeland. The briefing team reviewed past intelligence reporting, mostly dating from the 1990s, regarding possible al Qaeda plans to attack inside the United States. It referred to uncorroborated reporting that -- from 1998 -- that a terrorist might attempt to hijack a U.S. aircraft in an attempt to blackmail the government into releasing U.S.-held terrorists who had participated in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. This briefing item was not prompted by any specific threat information and it did not raise the possibility that terrorists might use airplanes as missiles.

Despite the fact that the vast majority of threat information we received was focused overseas, I was concerned about possible threats inside the United States. And on July 5th, Chief of Staff Andy Card and I met with Dick Clarke and I asked Dick to make sure that domestic agencies were aware of the heightened threat period and were taking appropriate steps to respond, even though we did not have specific threats to the homeland. Later that same day, Clarke convened a special meeting of his CSG, as well as representatives from the FAA, the INS, Customs and the Coast Guard. At that meeting these agencies were asked to take additional measures to increase security and surveillance.

Throughout the period of heightened threat information, we worked hard on multiple fronts to detect, protect against and disrupt any terrorist plans or operations that might lead to an

attack. For instance, the Department of Defense issued at least five urgent warnings to U.S. military forces that al Qaeda might be planning a near-term attack, and placed our military forces in certain regions on heightened alert. The State Department issued at least four urgent security advisories and public worldwide cautions on terrorist threats, enhanced security measures at certain embassies, and warned the Taliban that they would be held responsible for any al Qaeda attack on U.S. interests.

The FBI issued at least three nationwide warnings to federal, state and (sic) law enforcement agencies, and specifically stated that although the vast majority of the information indicated overseas targets, attacks against the homeland could not be ruled out. The FBI tasked all 56 of its U.S. field offices to increase surveillance of known suspected terrorists and to reach out to known informants who might have information on terrorist activities.

The FAA issued at least five civil aviation security information circulars to all U.S. airlines and airport security personnel, including specific warnings about the possibility of hijackings; the CIA worked round the clock to disrupt threats worldwide; agency officials launched a wide-ranging disruption effort against al Qaeda in more than 20 countries; and during this period, the Vice President, the director, Director Tenet, and members of my staff called senior foreign officials requesting that they increase their intelligence assistance and report to us any relevant threat information.

This is a brief sample of our intense activity in the high-threat period of the summer of 2001.

Yet, as your hearings have shown, there was no silver bullet that could have prevented the 9/11 attacks. In hindsight, if anything might have helped stop 9/11, it would have been better information about threats inside the United States, something made very difficult by structural and legal impediments that prevented the collection and sharing of information by our law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

So the attacks came. A band of vicious terrorists tried to decapitate our government, destroy our financial system, and break the spirit of America. And as an officer of government on duty that day, I will never forget the sorrow and the anger I felt. Nor will I forget the courage and resilience of the American people, nor the leadership of the President that day.

Now, we have an opportunity and an obligation to move forward together. Bold and comprehensive changes are somewhat -- sometimes only possible in the wake of catastrophic events, events which create a new consensus that allows us to transcend old ways of thinking and acting. And just as World War II led to a fundamental reorganization of our national defense structure and to the creation of the National Security Council, so has September 11th made possible sweeping changes in the ways we protect our homeland.

President Bush is leading the country during this time of crisis and change. He has unified and streamlined our efforts to secure the American homeland by creating the Department of Homeland Security, established a new center to integrate and analyze threat information -- terrorist threat information, directed the transformation of the FBI into an agency dedicated to fighting terror, broken down the bureaucratic walls and legal barriers that prevent the sharing of vital threat information between our domestic law enforcement and foreign intelligence agencies, and, working with the Congress, given officials new tools, such as the PATRIOT Act, to find and stop terrorists.

And he has done this in a way that is consistent with protecting America's cherished civil liberties and with preserving our character as a free and open society.

But the President recognizes that our work is far from complete. More structural reform will likely be necessary. Our intelligence gathering and analysis have improved dramatically in the last two years, but they must be stronger still. The President and all of us in his Administration welcome new ideas and fresh thinking. We are eager to do whatever it is that will help to protect the American people. And we look forward to receiving this commission's recommendations.

We are at war and our security as a nation depends on winning that war. We must, and we will, do everything we can to harden terrorist targets within the United States. Dedicated law enforcement and security professionals continue to risk their lives every day to make us all safer, and we owe them a debt of gratitude. And let's remember that those charged with protecting us from attack have to be right 100 percent of the time. To inflict devastation on a massive scale, the terrorists only have to succeed once, and we know that they are trying every day.

That is why we must address the source of the problem. We must stay on the offensive, to find and defeat the terrorists

wherever they live, hide, and plot around the world. If we learned anything from September 11th, it is that we cannot wait while dangers gather.

After the September 11th attacks, our nation faced hard choices.

We could fight a narrow war against al Qaeda and the Taliban, or we could fight a broad war against a global menace. We could seek a narrow victory, or we could work for a lasting peace and a better world.

President Bush has chosen the bolder course. He recognizes that the war on terror is a broad war. Under his leadership, the United States and our allies are disrupting terrorist operations, cutting off their funding, and hunting down terrorists, one by one. Their world is getting smaller. The terrorists have lost a home base and training camps in Afghanistan. The governments of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia now pursue them with energy and force.

We are confronting the nexus between terror and weapons of mass destruction. We are working to stop the spread of deadly weapons and to prevent them from getting into the hands of terrorists, seizing dangerous materials in transit, where necessary. Because we acted in Iraq, Saddam Hussein will never again use weapons of mass destruction against his people or his neighbors. And we have convinced Libya to give up all its weapons of mass destruction-related programs and materials.

And as we attack the threat at its source, we are also addressing its roots. Thanks to the bravery and skill of our men and women in uniform, we have removed from power two of the world's most brutal regimes, sources of violence and fear and instability in the world's most dangerous region. Today, along with many allies, we are helping the people of Iraq and Afghanistan to build free societies. And we are working with the people of the Middle East to spread the blessings of liberty and democracy as the alternatives to instability and hatred and terror.

This work is hard, and it is dangerous, yet it is worthy of our effort and sacrifice. The defeat of terror and the success of freedom in those nations will serve the interests of our nation and inspire hope and encourage reform throughout the greater Middle East.

In the aftermath of September the 11th, those were the right choices for America to make, the only choices that can ensure the safety of our nation for decades to come.

Thank you very much, and now I'm happy to take your questions.

MR. KEAN: Thank you very much, Dr. Rice. We appreciate your statement, your attendance and your service.

I have a couple of questions. As we understand it, when you first came into office, you'd just been through a very difficult campaign. In that campaign neither the President nor his opponent, to the best of my knowledge, ever mentioned al Qaeda. There had been almost no congressional action or hearings about al Qaeda; very little bit in the newspapers. And yet you walk in and Dick Clarke is talking about al Qaeda should be our number one priority, Sandy Berger tells you you'll be spending more time on that than anything else. What did you think, and what did you tell the President as you hit that kind of, I suppose, new information for you.

MS. RICE: Well, in fact, Mr. Chairman, it was not new information. I think we all knew about the 1998 bombings. We knew that there was speculation that the 2000 *Cole* attack was al Qaeda. There had been, I think, documentaries about Osama bin Laden. I myself had written for an introduction to a volume on bioterrorism done at Stanford that I thought that we wanted not to wake up one day and find that Osama bin Laden had succeeded on our soil. It was on the radar screen of any person who studied or worked in the international security field.

But there's no doubt that I think the briefing by Dick Clarke, the earlier briefing during the transition by Director Tenet and, of course, what we talked with about (sic) Sandy Berger gave you a heightened sense of the problem and a sense that this was something that the United States had to deal with.

I have to say that of course there were other priorities, and indeed, in the briefings with the Clinton administration they emphasized other priorities -- North Korea, the Middle East, the Balkans.

One doesn't have the luxury of dealing only with one issue if you are the United States of America. There are many urgent and important issues.

But we all had a strong sense that this was a very crucial issue. The question was, what do you then do about it? And the decision that we made was to, first of all, have no drop off in what the Clinton administration was doing because clearly they had done a lot of work to deal with this very important priority. And so we kept the counterterrorism team on board. We knew that George Tenet was there. We had the comfort of knowing that Louis Freeh was there. And then we set out -- I talked to Dick Clarke almost immediately after his -- or I should say shortly after his memo to me saying that al Qaeda was a major threat. We set out to try and craft a better strategy, but we were quite cognizant of this group, of the fact that something had to be done.

I do think early on in these discussions we asked a lot of questions about whether Osama bin Laden himself ought to be so much the target of interest or whether -- what was that going to do to the organization if, in fact, he was put out of commission. And I remember very well the director saying to President Bush, well, it would help but it would not stop attacks by al Qaeda nor destroy the network.

MR. KEAN: I've got a question now I'd like to ask you. It was given me by a number of members of the families. Did you ever see or hear from the FBI, from the CIA, from any other intelligence agency any memos or discussions or anything else between the time you got into office and 9/11 that talked about using planes as bombs?

MS. RICE: Let me address this question because it has been on the table. I think that concern about what I might have known or we might have known was provoked by some statements that I made in a press conference.

I was in a press conference to try and describe the August 6th memo, which I've talked about here in my opening remarks and which I talked about with you in the private session. And I said at one point that this was a historical memo, that it was not based on new threat information, and I said no one could have imagined them taking a plane, slamming it into the Pentagon -- I'm paraphrasing now -- into the World Trade Center, using planes as a missile.

As I said to you in the private session, I probably should have said "I" could not have imagined, because within two days, people started to come to me and say, "Oh, but there were these

reports in 1998 and 1999, the intelligence community did look at information about this."

To the best of my knowledge, Mr. Chairman, this kind of analysis about the use of airplanes as weapons actually was never briefed to us. I cannot tell you that there might not have been a report here or a report there that reached somebody in our midst.

Part of the problem is -- I think Sandy Berger made this point when he was asked the same question -- that you have thousands of pieces of information, car bombs and this method and that method, and you have to depend to a certain degree on the intelligence agencies to sort, to tell you what is actually -- is actually relevant, what is actually based on sound sources, what is speculative. And I can only assume or believe that perhaps the intelligence agencies thought that the sourcing was speculative.

All that I can tell you is that it was not in the August 6th memo, using planes as a weapon, and I do not remember any reports to us, a kind of strategic warning that planes might be used as a weapon. In fact, there were some reports done in '98 and '99. I think I was -- I was certainly not aware of them at the time that I spoke.

MR. KEAN: You didn't see any memos to you or any documents to you?

MS. RICE: No. No, I did not.

MR. KEAN: Some Americans have wondered whether you or the President worried too much about Iraq in the days after the 9/11 attack and perhaps not enough about the fight ahead against al Qaeda.

We know that at the Camp David meeting on the weekend of September 15th and 16th the President rejected the idea of immediate action against Iraq. Others have told that the President decided Afghanistan had to come first. We also know that even after those Camp David meetings, the Administration was still readying plans for possible action against Iraq.

So can you help us understand where, in those early days after 9/11, the Administration placed Iraq in the strategy for responding to the attack?

MS. RICE: Certainly. Let me start with the period in which you're trying to figure out who did this to you. And I think given our exceedingly hostile relationship with Iraq at the time -- this was, after all, a place that had tried to assassinate an American president, was still shooting at our planes in the no-fly zone -- it was a reasonable question to ask, whether indeed Iraq might have been behind this.

I remember later on, in a conversation with Prime Minister Blair, President Bush also said that he wondered could it have been Iran, because the attack was so sophisticated. Was this really just a network that had done this?

When we got to Camp David -- and let me just be very clear. In the days between September 11th and getting to Camp David, I was with the President a lot. I know what was on his mind. What was on his mind was follow-on attacks, trying to reassure the American people. He virtually badgered poor Larry Lindsey about when could we get Wall Street back up and running, because he didn't want them to have succeeded against our financial system. We were concerned about air security, and he worked very hard on trying to get particular Reagan reopened. So there was a lot on our minds.

But by the time that we got to Camp David and began to plan for what we would do in response, what was rolled out on the table was Afghanistan, a map of Afghanistan. And I will tell you that was a daunting enough task -- to figure how to avoid some of the pitfalls that great powers had had in Afghanistan, most recently the Soviet Union and of course the British before that.

There was a discussion of Iraq. I think it was raised by Don Rumsfeld. It was pressed a bit by Paul Wolfowitz. Given that this was a global war on terror, should we look not just at Afghanistan, but should we look at doing something against Iraq? There was a discussion of that.

The President listened to all of his advisers. I can tell you that when he went around the table and asked his advisers what the -- what he should do, not a single one of his principal advisers advised doing anything against Iraq; it was all to do Afghanistan.

When I got back to the White House with the President, he laid out for me what he wanted to do. And one of the points, after a long list of things about Afghanistan, a long list of things about protecting the homeland, the President said that he

wanted contingency plans against Iraq, should Iraq act against our interests. There was a kind of concern that they might try and take advantage of us in that period. They were still -- we were still flying no-fly zones. And there was also -- he said in case we find that they were behind 9/11, we should have contingency plans.

But this was not along the lines of what later was discussed about Iraq, which was how to deal with Iraq on a grand scale. This was really about -- and we went to planning Afghanistan. You can look at what we did; from that time on, this was about Afghanistan.

MR. KEAN: So when Mr. Clarke writes that the President pushed him to find a link between Iraq and the attack, is that right, or was the President trying to twist the facts for an Iraqi war, or was he just puzzled by what was behind this attack?

MS. RICE: I don't remember the discussion that Dick Clarke relates. Initially he said that the President was wandering the Situation Room -- this is in the book, I gather -- looking for something to do, and they had a conversation. Later on he said that he was pulled aside. So I don't know the context of the discussion. I don't personally remember it. But it's not surprising that the President would say "What about Iraq?" given our hostile relationship with Iraq. And I'm quite certain that the President never pushed anybody to twist the facts.

Thank you.

Congressman Hamilton.

MR. HAMILTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Rice, you've given us a very strong statement with regard to the actions taken by the Administration in this pre-9/11 period, and we appreciate that very much for the record.

I want to call to your attention some comments and some events on the other side of that question and give you an opportunity to respond. You know very well that the Commission is focusing on this whole question of what priority did the Clinton administration and the Bush administration give to terrorism.

The President told Bob Woodward that he did not feel that "sense of urgency." I think that's a quote from his book or

roughly a quote from Woodward's book. The deputy director for Central Intelligence, Mr. McLaughlin, told us that he was concerned about the pace of policymaking in the summer of 2001, given the urgency of the threat. The deputy secretary of State, Mr. Armitage, was here and expressed his concerns about the speed of the process. And if I recall his comment, it is "We weren't going fast enough." I think that's a direct quote.

There was no response to the *Cole* attack in the Clinton administration and none in the Bush administration. Your public statements focused largely on China and Russia and missile defense. You did make comments on terrorism, but they were connected -- the link between terrorism and the rogue regimes like North Korea and Iran and Iraq. And by our count here, there were some 100 meetings by the national security principals before the first meeting was held on terrorism, September 4. And General Shelton, who was chairman of the Joint Chiefs, said that terrorism had been pushed farther to the back burner.

Now, this is what we're trying to assess. We have your statements, we have these other statements. And I know, as I indicated in my opening comments, how difficult the role of the policymaker is and how many things press upon you. But I did want to give you an opportunity to comment on some of these other matters.

MS. RICE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Let me begin with the Woodward quote, because that has gotten a lot of press. And I actually think that the quote put in context gives a very different picture.

The question that the President was asked by Mr. Woodward was: Did you want to have bin Laden killed before September 11th? That was the question.

The President said: Well, I hadn't seen a plan to do that. I knew that we needed to, I think the appropriate word is, bring it to -- bring him to justice. And of course, this is something of a trick question, in that notion of self-defense, which is appropriate for -- I think you can see here a president struggling with whether he ought to be talking about pre-9/11 attempts to kill bin Laden. And so that is the context for this quote.

And quite frankly, I remember the director sitting here and saying he didn't want to talk about authorities on

assassination. I think you can understand the discomfort of the President.

The President goes on, when Bob Woodward says, "Well, I don't mean it as a trick question, I'm just trying to get your state of mind," the President says: Let me put it this way. I was not -- there was a significant difference in my attitude after September 11th -- I was not on point, but I knew he was a menace and I knew he was a problem. I knew he was responsible, we felt he was responsible for bombings that had killed Americans.

And I was prepared to look at a plan that would be a thoughtful plan that would bring him to justice and would have given the order to do just that. I have no hesitancy about going after him. But I didn't feel that sense of urgency, and my blood was not nearly as boiling.

Whose blood was nearly as boiling prior to September 11th? And I think the context helps here.

It is also the case that the President had been told by the director of Central Intelligence that it was not going to be a silver bullet to kill bin Laden, that you had to do much more. And in fact, I think that some of us felt that the focus -- so much focus on what you did with bin Laden, not what you did with the network, what -- not what you did with the regional circumstances, might in fact have been misplaced.

So I think the President is responding to a specific set of questions. All that I can tell you is that what the President wanted was a plan to eliminate al Qaeda, so he could stop swatting at flies. He knew that we had in place the same crisis management mechanism -- indeed, the same personnel -- that the Clinton administration, which clearly thought it a very high priority, had in place. And so I think that he saw the priority as continuing the current operations and then getting a plan in place.

Now as to the number of PCs, I'm sorry; there's some difference in our records here. We show 33 Principals Committee meetings during this period of time, not 100. We show that three of those dealt with issues -- at least partially with issues dealing with terrorism not related to al Qaeda. And so we can check the numbers, but we have looked at our files, and we show 33, not 100.

The quotes by others about how the process was moving -- again, it's important to realize that we had parallel tracks here. We were continuing to do what the Clinton administration had been doing, under all the same authorities that were operating. George Tenet was continuing to try to disrupt al Qaeda. The -- we were continuing the diplomatic efforts.

But we did want to take the time to get in place a policy that was more strategic towards al Qaeda, more robust. It takes some time to think about how to reorient your policy toward Pakistan. It takes some time to think about how to have a more effective policy toward Afghanistan.

It particularly takes some time when you don't get your people on board for several months. So I understand that there are those who have said they felt it wasn't moving along fast enough. I talked to George Tenet about this at least every couple of weeks, and sometimes more often. How can we move forward on the Predator? What do you want to do about the Northern Alliance? So I think we were putting the energy into it.

And I should just make one other point, Mr. Hamilton, if you don't mind, which is that we also moved forward on some of the specific ideas that Dick Clarke had put forward prior to completing the strategy review. We increased assistance to Uzbekistan, for instance, which had been one of the recommendations. We moved along the armed Predator, the development of the armed Predator. We increased counterterrorism funding.

But there were a couple of things that we did not want do. I'm now convinced that while nothing in this strategy would have done anything about 9/11, if we had in fact moved on the things that were in the original memos that we got from our counterterrorism people, we might have even gone off course -- because it was very Northern Alliance-focused. That was going to cause a huge problem with Pakistan. It was not going to put us in the center of action in Afghanistan, which is the south. And so we simply had to take some time to get this right. But I think we need not confuse that with either what we did during the threat period, where we were urgently working the operational issues every day, or with the continuation of the Clinton policy.

MR. HAMILTON: Well, I thank you for a careful answer.

Another question. At the end of the day, of course, we were unable to protect our people. And you suggest in your statement -- and I want you to elaborate on this, if you want to -- that in hindsight it would have been -- better information about the threats would have been the single-most important thing for us to have done, from your point of view, prior to 9/11 -- would have been better intelligence, better information about the threats. Is that right? Are there other things that you think stand out?

MS. RICE: Well, Mr. Chairman, I took an oath of office, on the day that I took this job, to protect and defend, and like most government officials, I take it very seriously.

And so as you might imagine, I've asked myself a thousand times what more we could have done. I know that had we thought that there was an attack coming in Washington or New York, we would have moved heaven and earth to try and stop it. And I know that there was no single thing that might have prevented that attack.

I -- in looking back, I believe that the absence of light, so to speak, on what was going on inside the country, the inability to connect the dots, was really structural. We couldn't be dependent on chance that something might come together. And the legal impediments and the bureaucratic impediments -- but I want to emphasize the legal impediments -- to keep the FBI and the CIA from functioning really as one, so that there was no seam between domestic and foreign intelligence, was probably the greatest one. The director of Central Intelligence and, I think, Director Freeh had an excellent relationship. They were trying hard to bridge that seam. I know that Louis Freeh had developed legal attaches abroad to try to help bridge that. But when it came right down to it, this country, for reasons of history, and culture, and therefore, law, had an allergy to the notion of domestic intelligence, and we were organized on that basis. And it just made it very hard to have all of the pieces come together.

We've made good changes since then. I think that having a Homeland Security Department that can bring together the FAA and the INS and Customs and all of the various agencies is a very important step.

I think that the creation of the Terrorism Threat Information Center (sic), which brings together all of the intelligence from various aspects, is a very important step forward. Clearly, the

PATRIOT Act, which has allowed the kind of sharing -- indeed, demands the kind of sharing between intelligence agencies, including the FBI and the CIA, is a very big step forward. I think one thing that we will learn from you is whether the structural work is done.

MR. HAMILTON: Final question would be, one of your sentences kind of jumped out at me in your statement, and that was on page nine where you said, "we must address the source of the problem." I'm very concerned about that. I was pleased to see it in your statement. And I'm very worried about the threat of terrorism, as I know you are, over a very long period of time, a generation or more.

There are a lot of very, very fine -- 2 billion Muslims. Most of them we know are very fine people. Some don't like us; they hate us. They don't like what modernization does to their culture. They don't like the fact that economic prosperity has passed them by. They don't like some of the policies of the United States government. They don't like the way their own governments treat them.

And I'd like you to elaborate a little bit, if you would, on how we get at the source of the problem. How do we get at this discontent; this dislocation, if you would, across a big swath of the Islamic world?

MS. RICE: I believe very strongly and the President believes very strongly that this is really the generational challenge.

The kinds of issues that you are addressing have to be addressed, but they're not -- we're not going to see success on our watch. We will see some small victories on our watch. One of the most difficult problems in the Middle East is that the United States has been associated for a long time, decades, with a policy that looks the other way on the freedom deficit in the Middle East; that looks the other way at the absence of individual liberties in the Middle East. And I think that that has tended to alienate us from the populations of the Middle East. And when the President, at Whitehall in London, said that that was no longer going to be the stance of the United States, we were expecting more from our friends, we were going to try and engage those in those countries who wanted to have a different kind of Middle East, I believe that he was resonating with trends that are there in the Middle East. There are reformist trends in places like Bahrain and Jordan. And recently

there was a marvelous conference in Alexandria, in Egypt, where reform was actually on the agenda.

So it's going to be a slow process. We know that the building of democracy is tough; it doesn't come easily. We have our own history. You know, when our Founding Fathers said, "We the people," they didn't mean me. It's taken us a while to get to a multi-ethnic democracy that works. But if America is avowedly values-centered in its foreign policy, we do better than when we do not stand up for those values.

So I think that it's going to be very hard; it's going to take time. One of the things that we've been very interested, for instance, in is issues of educational reform in some of these countries. As you know, the madrassas are a big difficulty. I've met myself personally two or three times with the Pakistani -- a wonderful woman who is the Pakistani education minister. We can't do it for them; they have to do it for themselves.

But we have to stand for those values, and over the long run we will change -- I believe we will change the nature of the Middle East, particularly if there are examples that this can work in the Middle East. And this is why Iraq is so important.

The Iraqi people are struggling to find a way to create a multiethnic democracy that works, and it's going to be hard. And if we stay with them, and when they succeed, I think we will have made a big change -- they will have made a big change in the middle of the Arab world, and we will be on our way to addressing the source.

MR. HAMILTON: Thank you, Dr. Rice.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. KEAN: Thank you.

Commissioner Ben-Veniste.

MR. BEN-VENISTE: Good morning, Dr. Rice.

MS. RICE: Good morning.

MR. BEN-VENISTE: Nice to see you again.

MS. RICE: Nice to see you.

MR. BEN-VENISTE: I want to ask you some questions about the August 6, 2001 PDB. We had been advised in writing by the CIA on March 19, 2004 that the August 6 PDB was prepared and self-generated by a CIA employee. Following Director Tenet's testimony on March 26 before us, the CIA clarified its version of events, saying that questions by the President prompted them to prepare the August 6 PDB. You have said to us in our meeting together earlier, in February, that the President directed the CIA to prepare the August 6 PDB.

The extraordinary high terrorist attack threat level in the summer of 2001 is well documented. And Richard Clarke's testimony about the possibility of an attack against the United States homeland was repeatedly discussed from May to August within the intelligence community, and that is well documented. You acknowledged to us in your interview of February 7, 2004 that Richard Clarke told you that al Qaeda cells were in the United States. Did you tell the President at any time prior to August 6 of the existence of al Qaeda cells in the United States?

MS. RICE: First, let me just make certain --

MR. BEN-VENISTE: If you could just answer that question --

MS. RICE: Well, first --

MR. BEN-VENISTE: -- because I only have a very limited --

MS. RICE: I understand, Commissioner, but it's important --

MR. BEN-VENISTE: Did you tell the President? (Applause.)

MS. RICE: It's important that I also address -- it's also important, Commissioner, that I address the other issues that you have raised. So I will do it quickly, but if you'll just give me a moment.

MR. BEN-VENISTE: Well, my only question to you is whether you told the President.

MS. RICE: I understand, Commissioner, but I will -- if you will just give me a moment, I will address fully the questions that you've asked.

First of all, yes, the August 6th PDB was in response to questions of the President.

In that sense he asked that this be done. It was not a particular threat report. And there was historical information in there about various aspects of al Qaeda's operations. Dick Clarke had told me, I think in a memorandum -- I remember it as being only a line or two -- that there were al Qaeda cells in the United States.

Now, the question is, what did we need to do about that? And I also understood that that was what the FBI was doing, that the FBI was pursuing these al Qaeda cells. I believe in the August 6th memorandum it says that there were 70 full-field investigations under way of these cells. And so there was no recommendation that we do something about this, but the FBI was pursuing it.

I really don't remember, Commissioner, whether I discussed this with the President.

MR. BEN-VENISTE: Thank you.

MS. RICE: I remember very well that the President was aware that there were issues inside the United States. He talked to people about this. But I don't remember the al Qaeda cells as being something that we were told we needed to do something about.

MR. BEN-VENISTE: Isn't it a fact, Dr. Rice, that the August 6th PDB warned against possible attacks in this country? And I ask you whether you recall the title of that PDB.

MS. RICE: I believe the title was "Bin Laden Determined to Attack Inside the United States." Now, the PDB --

MR. BEN-VENISTE: Thank you.

MS. RICE: No, Mr. Ben-Veniste, you --

MR. BEN-VENISTE: I will get into the --

MS. RICE: I would like to finish my point here.

MR. BEN-VENISTE: I didn't know that there was a point.

MS. RICE: Given that you asked me whether or not it warned of attacks --

MR. BEN-VENISTE: I asked you what the title was.

MS. RICE: You said, did it not warn of attacks? It did not warn of attacks inside the United States. It was historical information based on old reporting. There was no new threat information, and it did not, in fact, warn of any coming attacks inside the United States.

MR. BEN-VENISTE: Now, you knew by August, 2001 of al Qaeda involvement in the first World Trade Center bombing. Is that correct?

You knew that in 1999, late '99, in the Millennium threat period, that we had thwarted an al Qaeda attempt to blow up Los Angeles International Airport and thwarted cells operating in Brooklyn, New York, and Boston, Massachusetts.

As of the August 6th briefing, you learned that al Qaeda members have resided or traveled to the United States for years and maintained a support system in the United States. And you learned that FBI information since the 1998 blind sheik warning of hijackings to free the blind sheik indicated a pattern of suspicious activity in the country, up until August 6th, consistent with preparation for hijackings. Isn't that so?

MS. RICE: You have other questions that you want me to answer in -- as part of the sequence?

MR. BEN-VENISTE: Well, did you not -- you have indicated here that this was some historical document. And I am asking you whether it is not the case that you learned in the PDB memo of August 6th that the FBI was saying that it had information suggesting that preparations -- not historically, but ongoing, along with these numerous full-field investigations against al Qaeda cells -- that preparations were being made consistent with hijackings within the United States.

MS. RICE: What the August 6th PDB said -- and perhaps I should read it to you --

MR. BEN-VENISTE: We would be happy to have it declassified in full at this time -- (applause) -- including its title.

MS. RICE: I believe, Mr. Ben-Veniste, that you've had access to this PDB. But let me just --

MR. BEN-VENISTE: But we have not had it declassified so that it can be shown publicly, as you know.

MS. RICE: I believe you've had access to this PDB, exceptional access.

But let me address your question.

MR. BEN-VENISTE: Nor could we --

MS. RICE: Let me address your --

MR. BEN-VENISTE: -- prior to today reveal the title of that PDB.

MS. RICE: May I address the question, sir? The fact is that this August 6th PDB was in response to the President's questions about whether or not something might happen or something might be planned by al Qaeda inside the United States. He asked because all of the threat reporting, or the threat reporting that was actionable, was about the threats abroad, not about the United States.

This particular PDB had a long section on what bin Laden had wanted to do -- speculative, much of it -- in '97, '98, that he had in fact liked the results of the 1993 bombing. It had a number of discussions of -- it had a discussion of whether or not they might use hijacking to try and free a prisoner who was being held in the United States, Rassam. It reported that the FBI had full field investigations underway. And we checked on the issue of whether or not there was something going on with surveillance of buildings, and we were told, I believe, that the issue was the courthouse in which this might take place.

Commissioner, this was not a warning. This was a historic memo -- historical memo prepared by the agency because the President was asking questions about what we knew about the inside.

Now, we had already taken --

MR. BEN-VENISTE: Well, if you are willing -- if you were willing to declassify that document, then others can make up their minds about it.

Let me ask you a general matter. Beyond the fact that this memorandum provided information -- not speculative, but based on intelligence information -- that bin Laden had threatened to attack the United States and specifically Washington, D.C., there was nothing reassuring, was there, in that PDB?

MS. RICE: Certainly not. There was nothing reassuring. But I can also tell you that there was nothing in this memo that suggested that an attack was coming on New York or Washington, D.C. There was nothing in this memo as to time, place, how or where. This was not a threat report to the President or a threat report to me. It's a matter --

MR. BEN-VENISTE: We agree that there were no specifics. Let me move on, if I may.

MS. RICE: Well, there were no specifics.

And in fact, the country had already taken steps through the FAA to warn of potential hijackings. The country had already taken steps through the FBI to task their 56 field offices to increase their activity. The country had taken the steps that it could, given that there was no threat reporting about what might happen inside the United States.

MR. BEN-VENISTE: We have explored that, and we will continue to, with respect to the muscularity and the specifics of those efforts.

The President was in Crawford, Texas, at the time he received the PDB. You were not with him, correct?

MS. RICE: That's correct.

MR. BEN-VENISTE: Now, was the President, in words or substance, alarmed in any way or motivated to take any action, such as meeting with the director of the FBI, meeting with the attorney general, as a result of receiving the information contained in the PDB?

MS. RICE: I want to repeat that when this document was presented, it was presented as, yes, there were some frightening things -- and by the way, I was not at Crawford, but the President and I were in contact, and I might have even been, though I can't remember, with him by video link during that time.

The President was told this is historical information -- I'm told he was told this is historical information. And there was nothing actionable in this. The President knew that the FBI was pursuing this issue. The President knew that the director of Central Intelligence was pursuing this issue. And there was no new threat information in this document to pursue.

MR. BEN-VENISTE: Do you -- a final question, because my time has almost expired.

Do you believe that had the President taken action to issue a directive to the director of CIA to ensure that the FBI had pulsed the agency to make sure that any information, which we know had been collected, we know now had been collected, was transmitted to the director; that the President might have been able to receive information from CIA with respect to the fact that two al Qaeda operatives who took part in the 9/11 catastrophe were in the United States - al Hazmi and Mihdhar; and that Moussaoui, who was not even made -- who Dick Clarke was never even made aware of, who had been -- who had jihadist connections, who the FBI had arrested and who had been in a flight school in Minnesota trying to learn the avionics of a commercial jetliner despite the fact that he had no training previously, had no explanation for the funds in his bank account and no explanation for why he was in the United States, would that have possibly, in your view, in hindsight, made a difference in the ability to collect this information, shake the trees, as Richard Clarke had said, and possibly -- possibly -- interrupt the plotters?

MS. RICE: My view, Commissioner Ben-Veniste, as I said to Chairman Kean, is that, first of all, the director of Central Intelligence and the director of the FBI, given the level of threat, were doing what they thought they could do to deal with the threat that we faced. There was no threat reporting of any substance about an attack coming in the United States. And the director of the FBI and the director of the CIA, had they received information, I am quite certain, given that the director of the CIA met frequently face to face with the President of the United States, that he would have made that available to the President or to me.

I do not believe that it is a good analysis to go back and assume that somehow maybe we would have gotten lucky by, quote, "shaking the trees." Dick Clarke was shaking the trees, director of Central Intelligence was shaking the trees, director of the FBI was shaking the trees. We had a structural problem in the United States --

MR. BEN-VENISTE: Did the President meet with the director of the FBI?

MR. KEAN: (Inaudible) --

MS. RICE: We had a structural problem in the United States. And that structural problem was that we did not share domestic and foreign intelligence in a way to make a product for policymakers, for good reasons -- for legal reasons, for cultural reasons -- a product that people could depend upon.

MR. BEN-VENISTE: Did the President meet with the director of the FBI between August 6th and September 11th?

MR. KEAN: Commissioner, we've got to move on.

Commissioner Fielding.

MS. RICE: I will have to get back to you on that. I'm not certain.

MR. KEAN: Commissioner Fielding.

MR. BEN-VENISTE: Thank you.

MR. FIELDING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Rice, good morning.

MS. RICE: Good morning.

MR. FIELDING: Thank you for being here and thank you for all your service, presently and in the past, to your country.

MS. RICE: Thank you.

MR. FIELDING: As you know, our task is to assemble facts in order to inform ourselves, and then ultimately to inform the American public, of the causes of this horrible event and also to make recommendations to mitigate against the possibility that there will ever be another terrorist triumph on our homeland or against our people. And as we do this with the aid of testimony of people like yourself, of course there will be some discrepancies as there always will, and we will have to try as best we can to resolve those discrepancies, and obviously that's an important thing for us to do.

But as important as that ultimately might be, it also is our responsibility to really come up with ways and valid ways to prevent another intelligence failure like we suffered, and I don't think anybody will kid ourselves that we didn't suffer one. So we must try to look at the systems and the policies that

were in place and to evaluate them and to see -- getting a view of the landscape, and I know it's difficult to do it through a pre-9/11 lens, but we must try to do that so that we can do better the next time. And I'd like to follow up with a couple areas of that sort of specificity, and one is the one that you were just discussing with Commissioner Ben-Veniste.

We've all heard over the years the problem between the CIA, the FBI, coordination, et cetera. And you made reference to an introduction you'd done to a book, but you also in October of 2000, while you were part of the campaign team for candidate Bush, you told a radio station -- WJR, which is in Detroit -- you were talking about the threat and how to deal with al Qaeda. And if I may quote, you said -- you were discussing Osama bin Laden. "The first is you really have to get intelligence agencies better organized to deal with the terrorist threat to the United States itself. One of the problems that we have is kind of a split responsibility, of course, between the CIA and foreign intelligence and the FBI and domestic intelligence. There needs to be better cooperation because we don't want to wake up one day and find that Osama bin Laden has been successful on our territory." End of your quote.

Well, in fact, sadly, we did wake up, and that did happen. And obviously there is a systemic problem.

And what I'd really like you to address right now is what steps were taken by you and the Administration, to your knowledge, in the first several months of the Administration to assess and address this problem?

MS. RICE: Well, thank you.

We do have -- did have a structural problem and structural problems take some time to address. We did have a national security policy directive asking the CIA through the Foreign Intelligence Board, headed by Brent Scowcroft, to review its intelligence activities, the way that it gathered intelligence; and that was a study that was to be completed.

The Vice President was a little later, in -- I think in May, tasked by the President to put together a group to look at all the recommendations that had been made about domestic preparedness and all of the questions associated with that, to take the Gilmore report and the Hart-Rudman Report, and so forth, and to try to make recommendations about what might have been done.

We were in office 233 days. And the kinds of structural changes that have been needed by this country for some time did not get made in that period of time. I'm told that after the Millennium plot was discovered that there was an after-action report done and that some steps were taken. To my recollection, that was not briefed to us during the transition period or during the threat spike.

But clearly what needed to be done was that we needed systems in place that would bring all of this together. It is not enough to leave this to chance. If you look at this period, I think you see that everybody -- the director of the CIA, the -- Louis Freeh had left, but the key counterterrorism person was a part of Dick Clarke's group and was meeting with him and I'm sure shaking the trees and doing all of the things that you would want people to do. We were being given reports all the time that they were doing everything they could, but there was a systemic problem in getting that kind of shared intelligence.

One of the first things that Bob Mueller did post-9/11 was to recognize that the issue of prevention meant that you had to break down some of the walls between criminal and counterterrorism, between criminal and intelligence.

The way that we went about this was to have individual cases where you were trying to build a criminal case, individual offices with responsibility for those cases. Much was not coming to the FBI in a way that it could then engage the policymakers.

So these were big structural reforms. We did some things to try and get the CIA reforming. We did some things to try and get a better sense of how to put all of this together. But structural reform is hard, and in seven months we didn't have time to make the changes that were necessary. We made them almost immediately after September 11.

MR. FIELDING: Would you consider the problem as solved today?

MS. RICE: I would not consider the problem as solved. I believe that we have made some very important structural changes. The creation of a Department of Homeland Security is an absolutely critical issue because the Department of Homeland Security brings together INS and the Customs Department and the border people and all the people who were scattered, Customs and Treasury and INS and Justice and so forth, brings them together in a way that a single secretary is looking after the homeland every day. He's looking at what infrastructure needs to be

protected. He's looking at what state and local governments need to do their work. That is an extremely important innovation. I hope that he will have the freedom to manage that organization in a way that will make it fully effective, because there are a lot of issues for Congress in how that's managed.

We have created a Threat Terrorism Information Center, the TTIC, which does bring together all of the sources of information from all of the intelligence agencies -- the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security and the INS and the CIA and the DIA -- so that there's one place where all of this is coming together. And of course the PATRIOT Act, which permits the kind of sharing that we need between the CIA and the FBI, is also an important innovation.

But I would be the first to tell you, I'm a student of institutional change, I know that you get few chances to make really transformative institutional change, and I think that when we heard from this commission and from others who are working on other pieces of the problem -- like, for instance, the issues of intelligence and weapons of mass destruction -- that this president will be open to new ideas. I really don't believe that all of our work is done, despite the tremendous progress that we've made thus far.

MR. FIELDING: I promise you that we're going to respond to that, because that is really a problem that's bothering us, is that it doesn't appear to us, even with the changes up till now, that it's solved the institutional versus institutional issues, which -- and maybe it has. But, you know, it's of grave concern to us.

I would also ask -- I don't want to take the time today, but I would ask that you provide our commission, if you would, with your analysis on the MI-5 issue. As you know, it's something we're going to have to deal with, and we're taking all information aboard that we may. So we'd appreciate that if you could supply that to us.

MS. RICE: I appreciate that. I want to be very clear; I think that we've made very important changes. I think that they are helping us tremendously. Every day now in the Oval Office, in the morning, the FBI director and the CIA director sit with the President sharing information in ways that they would have been prohibited to share that information before. So very important changes have taken place. We need to see them mature. We need to

know how it's working. But we also have to be open to see what more needs to be done.

MR. FIELDING: Well, it may be solved at the top. We've got to make sure it's solved at the bottom.

MS. RICE: I agree completely.

MR. FIELDING: And kind of related to that, we've heard testimony, a great deal of it, about the coordination that took place during the Millennium threat in 1999, where there were a series of Principals Meetings and a lot of activity, as we're told, which stopped and prevented incidents. It was a success, it was an intelligence success. And there had to be domestic coordination with foreign intelligence and everything, but it seemed to work. The time ended, the threat ended, and apparently the guard was let down a little too, as the threat diminished.

Now, we've also heard testimony about what we would call the summer threat, the spike threat, whatever it is, of 2001. A lot of chatter. You shared some of it with us directly. A lot of traffic during -- and a lot of threats. And during that period -- actually you put it in context, I guess it was the first draft of the NSPD was circulated to deputies. But right then when that was happening, the threats were coming in. And it's been described as a crescendo, and hair on fire, and all these different things.

At that time, the CSG handled the alert, if you will. And we've heard testimony about Clarke warning you and the NSC that State and CIA and the Pentagon had concerns and were convinced there was going to be a major terrorist attack.

On July 5th, I believe it was, domestic agencies including the FBI and the FAA were briefed by the White House. Alerts were issued. The next day, the CIA told the CSG participants -- and I think they said they believed that the upcoming attack would be a spectacular -- something quantitatively different from anything that had been done to date. So everybody was worried about it. Everybody was concentrating on it. And then later the crescendo ended and again it abated. But of course, that time the end of the story wasn't pleasant.

Now during this period of time, what -- I'd like you to just respond to several points -- what involvement did you have in this alert, and how did it come about that the CSG was handling this thing as opposed to the principals? Because candidly it has

been suggested that the difference between the 1999 handling and this one was that you didn't have the principals dealing with it, therefore it wasn't given the priority, therefore people weren't forced to do what they would otherwise have done, et cetera. You've heard the same things I've heard. But -- and would it have made a real difference in enhancing the exchange of intelligence, for instance, if it had been the principals? I would like your comments both on your involvement and your comments on that question. Thank you.

MS. RICE: Of course, of course. Let me start by talking about what we were doing and the structure we used. I've mentioned this. The CSG was -- the Counterterrorism Group was the nerve center, if you will, and that's been true through all crises. I think it was, in fact, a nerve center as well during the Millennium; that they were the counterterrorism experts, they were able to get together, they got together frequently, they came up with taskings that needed to be done. I would say that if you look at the list of taskings that they came up with, it reflected the fact that the threat information was from abroad. It was agencies like the Department of State needed to make clear to Americans traveling abroad that there was a danger, that embassies needed to be on alert, that our force protection needed to be strong for our military forces, the Central Intelligence Agency was asked to do some things. It was very foreign policy or foreign threat-based as well, and of course the warning to the FBI to go out and task their field agents.

The CSG was made up of not junior people, but the top level of counterterrorism experts. Now, they were in contact with their principals. Dick Clarke was in contact with me quite frequently during this period of time. When the CSG would meet, he would come back usually through e-mails, sometimes personally, and say here's what we've done. I would talk every day several times a day with George Tenet about what the threats might look like. In fact, George Tenet was meeting with the President during this period of time, so the President was hearing directly about what was being done about the threats to -- the only really specific threats we had, to Genoa, to the Persian Gulf, there was one to Israel.

So the President was hearing what was being done. The CSG was the nerve center.

But I just don't believe that bringing the principals over to the White House every day and having their counterterrorism people have to come with them and be pulled away from what they

were doing to disrupt was a good way to go about this. It wasn't an efficient way to go about it.

I talked to Powell, I talked to Rumsfeld about what was happening with the threats and with the alerts. I talked to George. I asked that the attorney general be briefed, because even though there were no domestic threats, I didn't want him to be without that briefing.

It's also the case that I think if you actually look back at the Millennium period, it's questionable to me whether the argument that has been made, that somehow shaking the trees is what broke up the Millennium period (sic), is actually accurate.

And I was not there, clearly, but I will tell you this. The -
- I will say this: that the Millennium, of course, was a period of high threat by its very nature. We all knew that the Millennium was a period of high threat. And after September 11th, Dick Clarke sent us the after-action report that had been done after the Millennium plot. And their assessment was that Ressay had been caught by chance. Well -- Ressay being the person who was entering the United States over the Canadian border --

MR. FIELDING: Right.

MS. RICE: -- with bomb-making materials in store.

I think it actually wasn't by chance, which was Washington's view of it. It was because a very alert Customs agent named Diana Dean and her colleagues sniffed something about Ressay. They saw that something was wrong. They tried to apprehend him. He tried to run. They then apprehended him, found that there was bomb-making material and a map of Los Angeles.

Now at that point, you have pretty clear indication that you've got a problem inside the United States. I don't think it was shaking the trees that produced the breakthrough in the Millennium plot. It was that you got a -- Dick Clarke would say a lucky break. I would say you got an alert Customs agent who got it right.

And the interesting thing is that I've checked with Customs, and according to their records, they weren't actually on alert at that point. So I just don't buy the argument that we weren't shaking the trees enough and that something was going to fall out that gave us somehow that little piece of information that

would have led to connecting all of those dots. In any case, you cannot be dependent on the chance that something might come together. That's why the structural reforms are important.

And the President of the United States had us at battle stations during this period of time. He expected his secretary of State to be locking down embassies. He expected his secretary of Defense to be providing force protection. He expected his FBI director to be tasking his agents and getting people out there. He expected his director of Central Intelligence to be out and doing what needed to be done in terms of disruption. And he expected his national security advisor to be looking to see that -- or talking to people to see that that was done.

But I think we've created a kind of false impression, or a not quite correct impression of how one does this in a threat period. I might just add that during the China period, the 11 days of the China crisis, I also didn't have a Principals Meeting.

MR. FIELDING: Thank you, Dr. Rice.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. KEAN: Thank you, Commissioner Fielding.

Commissioner Gorelick.

MS. GORELICK: Dr. Rice, thank you for being here today. I'd like to pick up where Fred Fielding and you left off, which is this issue of the extent to which raising the level to the Cabinet level and bringing people together makes a difference. And let me just give you some facts as I see them and let you comment on them.

First of all, while it may be that Dick Clarke was informing you, many of the other people at the CSG level and the people who were brought to the table from the domestic agencies were not telling their principals. Secretary Mineta, the secretary of Transportation, had no idea of the threat. The administrator of the FAA responsible for security on our airlines had no idea. Yes, the attorney general was briefed, but there is no evidence of any activity by him about this.

You indicate in your statement that the FBI tasked its field offices to find out what was going on out there. We have no record of that. The Washington field office international

terrorism people say they never heard about the threat, they never heard about the warnings, they were not asked to come to the table and shake those trees. SACs, Special Agents in Charge around the country, Miami in particular, no knowledge of this.

And so I really come back to you -- and let me add one other thing. Have you actually looked at the inlets, the messages that the FBI put out?

MS. RICE: Yes.

MS. GORELICK: To me -- and you're free to comment on them -- they are feckless. They don't tell anybody anything. They don't bring anyone to battle stations. And I personally believe, having heard Coleen Rowley's testimony about her frustrations in the Moussaoui incident, that if someone had really gone out to the agents who were working these issues on the ground and said, "We are at battle stations. We need to know what's happening out there. Come to us." she would have broken through barriers to have that happen because she was knocking on doors and they weren't opening. (Applause.)

So I just -- I ask you this question as a student of government myself, because I don't believe it's functionally equivalent to have people three, four, five levels down in an agency working an issue, even if they're the specialists; and you get a greater degree of intensity when it comes from the top. And I would like to give you the opportunity to comment on this because it bothers me.

MS. RICE: Of course. First of all, it was coming from the top, because the President was meeting with his director of Central Intelligence. And one of the changes that this president made was to meet face-to-face with his director of Central Intelligence almost every day. I can assure you, knowing government, that that was well understood at the Central Intelligence Agency, that now their director and -- the DCI had direct access to the President.

Yes, the President met with the director of the FBI. I'll have to see when and how many times, but of course he did, and with the attorney general and with others. But in a threat period -- and I don't think it's a proper characterization of the CSG to say that it was four or five levels down.

MS. GORELICK: Many of them were.

MS. RICE: These were people who had been together in numerous crises before, and it was their responsibility to develop plans for how to respond to a threat.

Now I would be speculating -- but if you would like, I will go ahead and speculate -- to say that one of the problems here was there really was nothing that looked like it was going to happen inside the United States. The threat reporting was -- the specific threat reporting was about external threats: about the Persian Gulf, about Israel, about perhaps the Genoa events. It is just not the case that the August 6th memorandum did anything but put together what the CIA decided that they wanted to put together about historical knowledge about what was going on, and a few things about what the FBI might be doing. And so the light was shining abroad. And if you look at what was doing, we were -- I was in constant contact to make sure that those things were getting done with the relevant agencies, with State, with Defense and so forth.

Now I just -- we just have a different view of this.

MS. GORELICK: Yes, I understand that. But I think it's one thing to talk to George Tenet, but he can't tell domestic agencies what to do. Let me finish. And it is clear that you were worried about the domestic problem, because after all, your testimony is you asked Dick Clarke to summon the domestic agencies.

Now, you say that -- and I think quite rightly -- that the big problem was systemic; that the FBI could not function as it should, and it didn't have the right methods of communicating with the CIA and vice versa. At the outset of the Administration, a commission that was chartered by Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich -- two very different people covering pretty much the political spectrum -- put together a terrific panel to study the issue of terrorism and report to the new Administration as it began.

And you took that briefing, I know. That commission said we are going to get hit in the domestic United States and we are going to get hit big; that's number one. And number two, we have big systemic problems. The FBI doesn't work the way it should and it doesn't communicate with the intelligence communities.

Now, you have said to us that your policy review was meant to be comprehensive. You took your time because you wanted to get at the hard issues and have a hard-hitting comprehensive policy.

And yet there is nothing in it about the vast domestic landscape that we were all warned needed so much attention. Can you give me the answer to the question why?

MS. RICE: I would ask the following. We were there for 233 days. There had been recognition for a number of years before -- after the '93 bombing and certainly after the Millennium -- that there were challenges, if I could say it that way, inside the United States, and that there were challenges concerning our domestic agencies and the challenges concerning the FBI and the CIA.

We were in office 233 days. It's absolutely the case that we did not begin structural reform of the FBI. Now, the Vice President was asked by the President, and that was tasked in May, to pull all of this together and to see if he could put together, from all of the recommendations, a program for protection of the homeland against WMD, what else needed to be done. And in fact, he had hired Admiral Steve Abbott to do that work and it was on that basis that we were able to put together the Homeland Security Council, which Tom Ridge came to head very, very quickly.

But I think the question is why, over all of these years, did we not address the structural problems that were there, with the FBI, with the CIA, the homeland departments being scattered among many different departments? And why, given all of the opportunities that we'd had to do it, had we not done it? And I think that the unfortunate -- and I really do think it's extremely tragic -- fact is that sometimes, until there is a catastrophic event that forces people to think differently, that forces people to overcome old customs and old culture and old fears about domestic intelligence and the relationship, that you don't get that kind of change.

And I want to say just one more thing, if you don't mind, about the issue of high-level attention. The reason that I asked Andy Card to come with me to that meeting with Dick Clarke was that I wanted him to know -- wanted Dick Clarke to know -- that he had the weight not just of the national security advisor, but the weight of the chief of staff if he needed it. I didn't manage the domestic agencies; no national security advisor does. And not once during this period of time did my very experienced crisis manager say to me, you know, I don't think this is getting done in the agencies; I'd really like you to call them together or make a phone call.

In fact, after the fact, on September 15th, what Dick Clarke sent to me -- and he was my crisis manager -- what he sent me was a memorandum or an e-mail that said, after national unity begins to break down again -- I'm paraphrasing -- people will ask, did we do all that we needed to do to arm the domestic agencies, to warn the domestic agencies and to respond to the possibility of domestic threat? That, I think, was his view at the time. And I have to tell you, I think given the circumstances and given the context and given the structures that we had, we did.

MS. GORELICK: Well, I have lots of other questions on this issue, but I am trying to get out my -- what will probably be my third and last question to you. So if we could move through this reasonably quickly.

I was struck by your characterization of the NSPD, the policy that you arrived at at the end of the Administration, as having the goal of the elimination of al Qaeda because as I look at it -- and I thank you for declassifying this this morning, although I would have liked -- (chuckles) -- to have known it a little earlier, but I think people will find this interesting reading -- it doesn't call for the elimination of al Qaeda. And it may be a semantic difference, but I don't think so. It calls for the elimination of the al Qaeda threat. And that's a very big difference because, to me, the elimination of al Qaeda means you're going to go into Afghanistan and you're going to get them. And as I read it, and as I've heard your public statements recently, there was not, I take it, a decision taken in this document to put U.S. troops on the ground in Afghanistan to get al Qaeda. Is that correct?

MS. RICE: That is correct.

MS. GORELICK: Now, you have pointed out that, in this document, there is a tasking to the Defense Department for contingency planning as part of this exercise; contingency planning -- and you've listed the goals of the contingency plans.

And you have suggested that this takes the policy with regard to terrorism for our country to a new level, a more aggressive level.

Were you briefed on Operation Infinite Resolve that was put in place in '98 and updated in the year 2000? Because, as I read Infinite Resolve and as our staff reads Infinite Resolve, it was

a plan that had been tasked by the Clinton administration to the Defense Department to develop precisely analogous plans, and it was extant at the time.

And so I ask you -- and there are many, many places where you indicate there are differences between the Clinton program and yours; this one jumps out at me -- was there a material difference between your view of the military assignment and the Clinton administration's extant plan? And if so, what was it?

MS. RICE: Yes, I think that there were significant differences. First of all, secretary Rumsfeld, I think, has testified that he was briefed on Infinite Resolve. It would have been highly unusual for me to be briefed on military plans, were we not in fact planning to use them for employment. And so I'm not surprised --

MS. GORELICK: Well, except that you were tasking -- pardon me for interrupting --

MS. RICE: Sure.

MS. GORELICK: -- you were tasking the military to do something as part of this seven-and-a-half-month process. So I'm -- it would strike me as likely that you would have wanted to know what the predicate was.

MS. RICE: We were tasking the secretary of Defense, who in fact had been briefed on Infinite Resolve, to develop within the context of a broader strategy military plans that were now linked to certain political purposes.

I worked in the Pentagon. I worked for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. There are plans and plans and plans. And the problem is that unless those plans are engaged by the civilian leadership on behalf of the President, unless those plans have an adequate political basis and political purpose in mind, those plans simply sit, and they in fact rarely get used.

Now the whole tortured history of trying to use military power in support of counterterrorism objectives has been, I think, very admirably and adequately discussed by your staff in the military paper. And what is quite clear from that paper is that from the time of Presidential Directive 62, which keeps the Defense Department focused on force protection and rendition of terrorists and so forth, all the way up through the period when we take office, this issue of military plans and how to use

military power with counterterrorism objectives just doesn't get -- doesn't get addressed.

What we were doing was to put together a policy that brought all of the elements together. It tasked the secretary of Defense within the context of a plan that really focused not just on al Qaeda and bin Laden, but also on what we might be able to do against the Taliban, and that gave the kind of regional context that might make it possible to use military force more robustly to work plans in that context. I think without that context, you're just going to have military plans that never get used.

I read Sandy Berger's -- or saw Sandy Berger's testimony. He talked about the fact that whenever they started to look at the use of military plans, the issue of whether you would get regional cooperation always arose. That was precisely what I was saying when I said that we had to get the regional context right.

I am not going to tell you that we were looking to invade Afghanistan during that seven months. We were not. But we were looking, in the context of a plan that gave you a better regional context, that looked to eliminate the al Qaeda threat or al Qaeda, that looked to eliminate Taliban support for them, how to use military power within that context.

MR. KEAN: This is the last follow-up.

MS. GORELICK: In order to keep us to our schedule, I'll just make this comment and we'll, I think, profitably follow up with you in a private session.

PDD 62, which was the Presidential Directive in the Clinton administration, was not the only way in which the Defense Department was tasked. I mean, Infinite Resolve went well beyond what you describe PDD 62 as doing. That's number one. And number two, however good it might have been to change the context in which the military planning was ongoing, neither I nor I think our staff can find any functional difference between the two sets of plans.

And I'll leave it to my colleagues.

MS. RICE: Thank you very much. But I continue to believe that unless you can tell the military in the context what it is they're going after and for what purpose, you're going to have

military plans that every time you ask for the briefing, turn out to be unusable.

MS. GORELICK: I'm sure that this debate will continue.

MS. RICE: Yes.

MR. KEAN: Senator Gorton.

MR. GORTON: Before 9/11, did any adviser to you, or to your knowledge to this Administration or to its predecessor, counsel the kind of all-out war against the Taliban and al Qaeda in Afghanistan that the United States actually conducted after 9/11?

MS. RICE: No, sir. No one counseled an all-out war against Afghanistan of the kind that we did after 9/11. There was a good deal of talk about the inadequacy of military options to go after al Qaeda. Dick Clarke was quite clear in his view that the various things that had been tasked were inadequate to the task. And so we were -- people were looking for other kinds of military options.

But no, an all-out invasion of Afghanistan, it was not recommended.

MR. GORTON: Was it possible to conduct that kind of war in Afghanistan without the cooperation of Pakistan?

MS. RICE: It was absolutely not possible, and this goes also to the point that I was making to Commissioner Gorelick. You can have lots of plans, but unless -- since the United States sits protected by oceans -- or no longer protected, the United States sits across oceans -- unless you find a way to get regional cooperation from Pakistan, from the Central Asian countries, you're going to be left with potentially standoff options, meaning bombers and cruise missiles, because you're not going to have the full range of military options.

MR. GORTON: Now, your written and oral statement spoke of a frustrating and unproductive meeting with the President of Pakistan in June. Let me go beyond that. How much progress had the United States made toward the kind of necessary cooperation from Pakistan by, say, the 10th of September, 2001?

MS. RICE: The United States had a comprehensive plan that the deputies had approved that would have been coming to the

principals shortly, and I think approved easily, because the deputies are, of course, very senior people who have the confidence of their principals -- that was going to try to unravel this overlapping set of sanctions that were on Pakistan -- some because of the way Musharraf had come to power, some because of nuclear issues. We were looking to do that.

Rich Armitage tells me that when he approached the Pakistanis after September 11th, he did presage that we would try and do this also with a positive side. But the plans were not in place. Changing Pakistan's strategic direction was going to take some time.

MR. GORTON: Would the program recommended on September 4th -- would the program recommended on September 4th have prevented 9/11 had it been adopted in, say, February or March of 2001?

MS. RICE: Commissioner, it would not have prevented September 11th if it had been approved the day after we came to office.

MR. GORTON: Now, in retrospect, and given the knowledge that you had, you and the Administration simply believed that you had more time to meet this challenge of al Qaeda than was in fact the case. Is that not true?

MS. RICE: It is true that we understood that, to meet this challenge, you were -- it was going to take time. It was a multiyear program to try and meet the challenge of al Qaeda. That doesn't mean that when you get immediate threat reporting that you don't do everything that you can to disrupt at that particular point in time. But in terms of the strategy of trying to improve the prospects of Pakistan withdrawing support from Taliban, with presenting the Taliban with possible defeat because you were dealing not just with the Northern Alliance but with the southern tribes, that we believed was going to take time.

MR. GORTON: Which turned out, in retrospect, you didn't have the time to do it.

MS. RICE: We didn't, although I will say that the document that was then approved by the President after September 11th -- what happened was that the NSPD was then forwarded to the President in a post-September 11th context, and many of the same aspects of it were used to guide the policy that we actually did take against Afghanistan. And the truth of the matter is that, as the President said on September 20th, this is going to take

time. We're still trying to unravel al Qaeda. We're still trying to deal with worldwide terrorist threats. So it's obvious that, even with all of the force of the country after September 11th, this is a long-term project.

MR. GORTON: One subject that certainly any administration in your place would not like to bring up, but I want to bring up in any event, is the fact is that we've now gone two-and-a-half years and we have not had another incident in the United States even remotely comparable to 9/11. In your view -- but there have been many such horrific incidents in other parts of the world, you know, from al Qaeda or al Qaeda look-alikes. In your view, have the measures that have been taken here in the United States actually reduced the amount of terrorism, or simply displaced it and caused it to move elsewhere?

MS. RICE: I believe that we have really hurt the al Qaeda network. We have not destroyed it. And it is clear that it was much more entrenched and had relationships with many more organizations than I think people generally recognized. I don't think it's been displaced, but they realize that they are in an all-out war, and so you're starting to see them try to fight back, and I think that's one reason that you're getting the terrorist attacks that you are. But I don't think it's been displaced; I think it's just coming to the surface.

MR. GORTON: Well, maybe you don't understand what I mean by displacement. Do you not think that al Qaeda and these terrorist entities are now engaged in terrorism where they think it's easier than it would be in the United States? That's what I mean about displacement.

MS. RICE: Oh, I see. I'm sorry. I didn't understand the question.

I think that it is possible that they are -- that they recognize the heightened security profile that we have post-September 11th, and I believe that we have made it harder for them to attack here.

I will tell you that I get up every day concerned because I don't think we've made it impossible for them. We're safer, but we're not safe. And as I said, they have to be right once, we have to be right 100 percent of the time. But I do think that some of the security measures that we have taken, some of the systemic and systematic security measures that we have taken have made it a lot harder for them.

MR. GORTON: I think in one sense, there are three ways in which one can deal with a threat like this, and I would like your views on how well you think we've done in each of them, and maybe even their relative importance. So, one is hardening targets; you know, the kind of disruptions we have every time we try to travel on an airplane. The second is prevention, and a lot has been spoken here about that; you know, whether we're better able to find out what their plans are and frustrate those plans. And the third is one that you talked about in your opening statement, preemption; you know, going at the cause. How do you balance, in a free society, those three generic methods of going after terrorism?

MS. RICE: I sincerely hope that one of the outcomes of this commission is that we will talk about balance between those, because we want to prevent the next terrorist attack; we don't want to do it at the expense of who we are as an open society.

And I think that in terms of hardening, we've done a lot. If you look at the airport security now, it's considerably -- very much different than it was prior. And there's a Transportation Security Agency that's charged with that. Tom Ridge and his people have an actual unit that sits around and worries about critical infrastructure protection and works with local and state governments to make sure that critical infrastructure is protected. I think we're making a lot of progress in hardening. In terms of -- but we're never going to be able to harden enough to prevent every attack.

We have, in terms of prevention, increased the worldwide attention to this problem. When Louis Freeh put together the Legat system, the legal attaché system abroad, it was -- as I'm sure that you, Commissioner Gorelick, as a former deputy attorney general, will remember that -- it became a very important tool also post-9/11 to be able to work with the law enforcement agencies abroad, now married up with foreign intelligence in a way that helps us to be able to disrupt abroad in ways that I think we were not capable of disrupting before.

Many of our democratic partners are having some of the same debates that we are about how to have prevention without issues of civil liberties being exposed. We think that the PATRIOT Act gets just about -- gets the right balance, and that it's extremely important to prevention because it makes law enforcement -- usually in law enforcement you wait until a crime is committed and then you act. We cannot afford, in terrorism, to wait until a crime is committed.

And finally, in terms of preemption, I have to say that the one thing that I've been struck by in these hearings is when I was listening to the former secretaries and the current secretaries the other day, is the persistent argument, the persistent question of whether we should have acted against Afghanistan sooner. Given that the threats were gathering, given that we knew al Qaeda had launched attacks against us, why did we wait until you had a catastrophic attack to use strategic military power, not tit-for-tat, not a little tactical military strike, but strategic military power against this country. And the President has said many times that after September 11th we have learned not to let threats gather. And yet we continue to have a debate about whether or not you have to go against threats before they fully materialize on your soil.

MR. GORTON: Well, Ms. Rice, I -- you know, one final comment. I asked both the secretary of State and secretary of Defense that question about whether or not they didn't think we had more time than we were actually granted the luxury of having. They both ducked the question totally. You at least partly answered it, thank you very much. (Laughter.)

MS. RICE: (Chuckles.) Thank you.

MR. KEAN: Thank you, Senator.

Senator Kerrey.

MR. KERREY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, Dr. Rice. Let me say at the beginning I'm very impressed, indeed, I'd go so far as to say moved by your story, the story of your life and what's you've accomplished. It's quite extraordinary. And I want to say at the outset that notwithstanding perhaps the tone of some of my questions, I'm not sure had I been in your position or Sandy Berger's position or President Bush or President Clinton's position that I would have done things differently. I simply don't know. But the line of questioning will suggest that I'm trying to ascertain why things weren't done differently.

Let me ask a question that -- well, actually, let me say -- I can't pass this up. I know it will take into my 10-minute time. But as somebody who supported the war in Iraq, I'm not going to get the national security advisor 30 feet away from me very often over the next 90 days. (Laughter.)

And I've got to tell you, I believe a number of things. I believe, first of all, that we underestimate that this war on terrorism is really a war against radical Islam. Terrorism is a tactic; it's not a war itself.

Secondly, let me say that I don't think we understand what the -- how the Muslim world views this, and I'm terribly worried that the military tactics in Iraq are going to do a number of things, and they're all bad. One is the -- (applause) --

(To the audience.) No, please don't. Please do not do that. Do not applaud.

And I think we're going to end up with civil war if we continue down the military operation strategy that we have in place. I say that sincerely as someone that supported the war in the first place.

Let me say secondly that I don't know how it could be otherwise, given the way that we're able to see these military operations, even the restrictions that are imposed upon the press, that this doesn't provide an opportunity for al Qaeda to have increasing success at recruiting people to attack the United States. It worries me, and I wanted to make that declaration. You needn't comment on it. But as I said, I'm not going to have an opportunity to talk to you this closely, and I wanted to tell you that I think the military operations are dangerously off track. And it's largely a U.S. army -- 125 (thousand) out of 145,000 -- largely a Christian army in a Muslim nation. So I take that on board for what it's worth.

Let me ask you, first of all, a question that's been a concern for me from the first day I came onto the Commission, and that is the relationship of our executive director to you. Let me just ask you directly, and you can just give me -- keep it relatively short, but I wanted to get it on the record. Since he was an expert on terrorism, did you ask Philip Zelikow any questions about terrorism during transition, since he was the second person carded in the National Security Office and had considerable expertise?

MS. RICE: Philip and I had numerous conversations about the issues that we were facing. Philip was, in fact, as you know, had worked in the campaign and helped with the transition plans. So, yes.

MR. KERREY: Yes, you did talk to him about terrorism?

MS. RICE: We talked -- Philip and I, over a period of -- you know, we had worked closely together as academics, of course talked about --

MR. KERREY: During the transition, did you instruct him to do anything on terrorism?

MS. RICE: Oh, to do anything on terrorism?

MR. KERREY: Yes.

MS. RICE: To help us think about the structure of the terrorism -- Dick Clarke's operations, yes.

MR. KERREY: Did -- you've used the phrase a number of times, and I'm hoping with my question to disabuse you of using it in the future. You said the President was tired of swatting flies. Can you tell me one example where the President swatted a fly when it came to al Qaeda prior to 9/11?

MS. RICE: I think what the President was speaking to was --

MR. KERREY: No, no, what fly had he swatted?

MS. RICE: Well, the disruptions abroad was what he was really focusing on.

MR. KERREY: No, no --

MS. RICE: When the CIA would go after Abu Sayyaf, go after this guy, and -- that was what was meant.

MR. KERREY: Dr. Rice, we didn't -- we only swatted a fly once, on the 20th of August, 1998. We didn't swat any flies afterwards. How the hell could he be tired?

MS. RICE: We swatted at -- I think he felt that what the agency was doing was going after individual terrorists here and there, and that's what he meant by swatting flies. It was simply a figure of speech.

MR. KERREY: Well, I think it's an unfortunate figure of speech because I think -- especially after the attack on the Cole on the 12th of August -- October 2000. It would have been a swatting a fly. It would not have been -- we did not need to wait to get a strategic plan. Dick Clarke had in his memo on the 20th of January overt military operations as a -- he turned that

memo around in 24 hours, Dr. Clarke. There were a lot of plans in place in the Clinton administration, military plans in the Clinton administration. In fact, just since we're in the mood to declassify stuff, he included in his January 25th memo two appendixes: Appendix A, "Strategy for the Elimination of the Jihadist Threat of al Qaeda;" Appendix B, "Political- Military Plan for al Qaeda."

So I just -- why didn't we respond to the *Cole*? Why didn't we swat that fly?

MS. RICE: I believe that there is a question of whether or not you respond in a tactical sense or whether you respond in a strategic sense, whether or not you decide that you are going to respond to every attack with minimal use of military force and go after every -- on a kind of tit-for-tat basis. By the way, in that memo, Dick Clarke talks about not doing this tit for tat, doing this on a time of our choosing.

I'm aware, Mr. Kerrey, of a speech that you gave at that time that said that perhaps the best thing that we could do to respond to the *Cole* and to the memories was to do something about the threat of Saddam Hussein. That's a strategic view. (Applause.) And we took a strategic view. We didn't take a tactical view. I mean, it was really -- quite frankly I was blown away when I read the speech because it's a brilliant speech. (Laughter.) It talks about, really, an asymmetric approach.

MR. KERREY: I presume you read it in the last few days?

MS. RICE: Oh, no, I read it quite a bit before that. It's an asymmetric approach. Now, you can decide that every time al Qaeda --

MR. KERREY: So you're saying that you didn't have a military response against the *Cole* because of my speech? (Laughter.)

MS. RICE: I'm saying -- I'm saying -- no.

MR. KERREY: That had I not given that speech, you would have attacked them?

MS. RICE: No. I'm just saying that I think it was a brilliant way to think about it. It was a way of thinking about it strategically, not tactically.

But if I may answer the question that you've asked me. The issue of whether to respond or how to respond to the *Cole*. I think Don Rumsfeld has also talked about this.

Yes, the *Cole* had happened. We received, I think, on January 25th the same assessment or roughly the same assessment of who was responsible for the *Cole* that Sandy Berger talked to you about. It was preliminary. It was not clear. But that was not the reason that we felt that we did not want to, quote, "respond to the *Cole*."

We knew that the options that had been employed by the Clinton administration had been standoff options. The President had -- meaning missile strikes, or perhaps bombers would have been possible, long-range bombers, although getting in place the apparatus to use long-range bombers is even a matter of whether you have basing in the region.

We knew that Osama bin Laden had been, in something that was provided to me, bragging that he was going to withstand any response, and then he was going to emerge and come out stronger. We --

MR. KERREY: You're -- but you're figuring this out. You've got to give a very long answer. I've got --

MS. RICE: We simply believed that the best approach was to put in place a plan that was going to eliminate this threat, not respond to it, tit-for-tat.

MR. KERREY: I'd like to talk -- look, I may say -- I think you could have come in there if you said, "Look, we screwed up. We made a lot of mistakes." And you obviously don't want to use the M word in here. And I would say fine; it's game, set and match. I understand that. I mean, it -- but this strategic and tactical and -- I mean, I just -- it sounds like something from a seminar. Does it --

MS. RICE: I just don't believe -- I do not believe to this day that it was -- would have been a good thing to respond to the *Cole*, given the kinds of options that we were going to have.

MR. KERREY: Well --

MS. RICE: And with all due respect to Dick Clarke, if you're speaking about the Delenda plan --

MR. KERREY: Yeah.

MS. RICE: -- my understanding is, it was, A, never adopted, and that Dick Clarke himself has said that the military portion of this was not taken up by the Clinton administration. So --

MR. KERREY: Well, let me move into another area, Doctor.

MS. RICE: So we were not presented -- I just want to be very clear on this, because it's been a source of controversy. We were not presented with a plan.

MR. KERREY: Well, that's not true. It is not --

MS. RICE: We were not presented -- we were presented with the --

MR. KERREY: I've heard you say that Dr. Clarke -- if that 25 January 2001 memo was declassified, I don't believe --

MS. RICE: That January 25 memo --

MR. KERREY: I don't --

MS. RICE: -- that January 25 memo has a series of actionable items having to do with Uzbekistan, Northern Alliance --

MR. KERREY: Let me move to another area.

MS. RICE: May I finish answering your question, though? Because this is an important point.

MR. KERREY: No, I know it's important. Everything that's going on here is important, but we got -- I get 10 minutes. So -
-

MS. RICE: But since we have a point of disagreement, I'd like to have a chance to address it.

MR. KERREY: Well, no, actually, there's going -- we have many points of disagreement with Dr. Clarke that we'll have a chance to --

MS. RICE: I think --

MR. KERREY: -- we'll have a chance to do in closed session. You can't -- please don't filibuster me. It's not fair.

MS. RICE: Do you mean --

MR. KERREY: It is not fair. I have been polite, I have been courteous. It is not fair to me. (Applause.)

MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC: (Boos.)

MR. KERREY: I understand that we have a disagreement.

MS. RICE: Commissioner, Commissioner, I'm here to answer questions. And you've asked me a question, and I'd like to have an opportunity to answer it.

MR. KERREY: No, it --

MS. RICE: The fact is that what we were presented on January the 25th was a set of ideas --

MR. KERREY: Okay.

MS. RICE: -- and a paper, most of which was about what the Clinton administration had done, and something called the Delenda plan, which had been considered in 1998 and never adopted.

MR. KERREY: Okay.

MS. RICE: We decided to take a different track. We decided to put together a strategic approach to this that would get the regional powers -- the problem wasn't that you didn't have a good counterterrorism person. The problem was you didn't have an approach against al Qaeda because you didn't have an approach against Afghanistan, and you didn't have an approach against Afghanistan because you didn't have an approach against Pakistan. And until we could get that right, we didn't have a policy.

MR. KERREY: Thank you for answering my question.

MS. RICE: You're welcome.

MR. KERREY: Let me ask you another question. Here's the problem that I have as I -- again, it's hindsight; I appreciate that.

But here's the problem that a lot of people are having with this July 5th meeting. You and Andy Card meet with Dick Clarke

in the morning. You say you have a meeting. He meets in the afternoon. It's July 5th. As Kristen Breitweiser, who's part of the families group, testified to the joint committee -- she brings very painful testimony, I must say.

But here's what Agent Kenneth Williams said, five days later. He said that the FBI should investigate whether al Qaeda operatives were training at U.S. flight schools. He posited that Osama bin Laden's followers might be trying to infiltrate the civil aviation system as pilots and security guards, other personnel. He recommended a national program to track suspicious flight schools.

Now, look, one of the first things that I learned when I came into this town was the FBI and the CIA don't talk. I mean, I don't need a catastrophic event to know that the CIA, FBI don't do a very good job of communicating. And the problem we've got with this -- both and the Moussaoui facts, which were revealed on the 15th of August -- all it had to do was to be put on Intelink. All it had to do was is go out on Intelink and the game's over. It ends. This conspiracy would have been rolled up. And so I --

MS. RICE: I -- Commissioner, with all due respect, I don't agree that we know that we had somehow a silver bullet here that was going to work. What we do know is that we did have a systemic problem -- a structural problem between the FBI and the CIA. It was a long time in coming into being. It was there because there were legal impediments as well as bureaucratic impediments. Those needed to be overcome. Obviously the structure of the FBI that did not get information from the field offices up to FBI Central in a way that FBI Central could react to the whole range of information before it was a problem.

MR. KERREY: Everybody -- but Dr. Rice, everybody --

MS. RICE: The structuring of the FBI -- the restructuring of the FBI was not going to be done in the 233 days in which we were in office.

MR. KERREY: (Laughs.) But Dr. Rice, everybody who does national security in this town knows that the FBI and the CIA don't talk. So if you have a meeting on the 5th of July where you're trying to make certain that your domestic agencies are preparing a defense against a possible attack -- you knew al Qaeda cells were in the United States. You've got to follow up and the question is, what was your follow up? What's the paper

trail that shows that you and Andy Card followed up from this meeting and made certain that the FBI and the CIA were talking?

MS. RICE: I followed up with Dick Clarke, who had in his group and with him the chief counterterrorism person for the FBI. You have to remember that Louis Freeh was by this time gone, and so the chief counterterrorism person was the second -- Louis Freeh had left in late June.

And so the chief counterterrorism person for the FBI was working these issues, was working with Dick Clarke. I talked to Dick Clarke about this all the time.

But let's be very clear. The threat information that we were dealing with -- and when you have something that says something very big may happen, you have no time, you have no place, you have no how, the ability to somehow respond to that threat is just not there.

Now you --

MR. KERREY: Dr. Clarke (sic) -- Dr. Clarke (sic) -- Dr. Clarke (sic) --

MS. RICE: I think, sir, with all --

MR. KERREY: -- in the spirit of further declassification -- further -- the spirit of --

MS. RICE: -- with all -- I don't think I look like Dick Clarke. But -- (laughter). (Applause.)

MR KERREY: Dr. Rice. Excuse me.

MS. RICE: Thank you.

MR KERREY: In the spirit of --

MR. KEAN: This is the last question, Senator.

MR KERREY: Actually, it won't be a question. I just -- in the spirit of further declassification, this is what the August 6th memo said to the President, that "the FBI indicates patterns of suspicious activity in the United States consistent with preparations for hijacking."

That's what -- that's the language of the memo that was briefed to the President on the 6th of August.

MS. RICE: And that was checked out, and steps were taken through FAA circulars to warn of hijackings. But when you cannot tell people where a hijacking might occur, under what circumstances -- I can tell you that I think the best antidote to what happened in that regard would have been many years before to think about what you could do, for instance, to harden cockpits. That would have made a difference. We weren't going to harden cockpits in the three months that we had a threat spike.

The really difficult thing for all of us -- and I'm sure for those who came before us, as well as for those of us who are here, is that the structural and systematic changes that needed to be made, not on July 5th or not on June 25th or not on January 1st, those structures and those changes needed to be made a long time ago so that the country was in fact hardened against the kind of threat that we faced on September 11th. The problem was that for a country that had not been attacked on its territory in a major way in almost 200 years, there were a lot of structural impediments to those kinds of attacks. Those changes should have been made over a long period of time.

I fully agree with you that in hindsight, now looking back, there are many things structurally that were out of kilter. And one reason that we're here is to look at what was out of kilter structurally, to look at what needed to be done, to look at what we already have done, and to see what more we need to do.

But I think it is really quite unfair to suggest that something that was a threat spike in June or July gave you the kind of opportunity to make the changes in air security that could have been -- that needed to be made.

MR. KEAN: Secretary Lehman.

MR. LEHMAN: Thank you.

Dr. Rice, I'd like to ask you whether you agree with the testimony we had from Mr. Clarke that, when asked whether -- if all of his recommendations during the transition or during the period when his, quote, "hair was on fire," had been followed immediately, would it have prevented 9/11, he said no. Do you agree with that?

MS. RICE: I agree completely with that.

MR. LEHMAN: In a way, one of the criticisms that has been made or one of the perhaps excuses for an inefficient handoff of power at the change -- and the transition is indeed something we're going to be looking into in depth -- was that because of the circumstances of the election, it was the shortest handover in memory. But in many ways, really it was the longest handover certainly in my memory because while the Cabinet changed, virtually all of the national and domestic security agencies and executive action agencies remained the same, a combination of political appointees from the previous administration and career appointees: CIA; FBI; JCS; the CTC, the Counterterrorism Center; the DIA; the NSA; the Directorate of Operations in CIA; the Directorate of Intelligence. So you, really up -- almost until, with the exception of the INS head leaving and there be an acting, and Louis Freeh leaving in June, you essentially had the same government.

Now that raises two questions in my mind. One, a whole series of questions. What were you told by this short transition from Mr. Berger and associates, and the long transition leading up to 9/11 by those officials, about these key -- a number of key issues? And I'd like to ask them quickly in turn.

And the other is I'm struck by the continuity of the policies rather than the differences. And both of these sets of questions are really directed towards what I think is the real purpose of this commission. While it's certainly a lot more fun to be doing the who struck John and pointing fingers as which policy was more urgent, more important and so forth, the real business of this commission is to learn the lessons and to find the ways to fix those dysfunctions, and that's why we have unanimity and true nonpartisanship on this commission. So that's what's behind the rhetoric, that's behind the questioning that we have.

First, during the short or long transition, were you told before the summer that there were functioning al Qaeda cells in the United States?

MS. RICE: In the memorandum that Dick Clarke sent me on January 25th, he mentions sleeper cells. There is no mention or recommendation of anything that needs to be done about them. And the FBI was pursuing them. And usually when things come to me it's because I'm supposed to do something about it, and there was no indication that the FBI was not adequately pursuing the sleeper cells.

MR. LEHMAN: Were you told that there were numerous young Arab males in flight training, had taken flight training, were in flight training?

MS. RICE: I was not. And I'm not sure that that was known at the center.

MR. LEHMAN: Were you told that the U.S. marshal program had been changed to drop any U.S. marshals on domestic flights?

MS. RICE: I was not told that.

MR. LEHMAN: Were you told that the red team in FAA, the red teams, for 10 years had reported their hard data that the U.S. airport security system never got higher than 20 percent effective and was usually down around 10 percent for 10 straight years?

MS. RICE: To the best of my recollection, I was not told that.

MR. LEHMAN: Were you aware that INS had been lobbying for years to get the airlines to drop the Transit Without Visa loophole that enabled terrorists and illegals to simply buy a ticket through the Transit Without Visa waiver and pay the airlines extra money and come in?

MS. RICE: I learned about that after September 11th.

MR. LEHMAN: Were you aware that the INS had quietly, internally halved its internal security enforcement budget?

MS. RICE: I was not made aware of that -- I don't remember being made aware of that, no.

MR. LEHMAN: Were you aware that it was the U.S. government established policy not to question or oppose the sanctuary policies of New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Chicago, San Diego, for political reasons, which policy in those cities prohibited the local police from cooperating at all with federal immigration authorities?

MS. RICE: I do not believe I was aware of that.

MR. LEHMAN: Were you aware -- to shift a little bit to Saudi Arabia, were you aware of the program, that was well-

established, that allowed Saudi citizens to get visas without interviews?

MS. RICE: I learned of that after 9/11.

MR. LEHMAN: Were you aware of the activities of the Saudi Ministry of Religious Affairs here in the United States during that transition?

MS. RICE: I believe that only after September 11th did the -- the full extent of what was going on with the Ministry of Religious Affairs became evident.

MR. LEHMAN: Were you aware of the extensive activities of the Saudi government in supporting over 300 radical teaching schools and mosques around the country, including right here in the United States?

MS. RICE: I believe we've learned a great deal more about this and addressed it with the Saudi government since 9/11.

MR. LEHMAN: Were you aware at the time of the fact that Saudi Arabia had, and were you told, that they had in their custody the CFO and the closest confidant of al Qaeda -- of Osama bin Laden and refused direct access to the United States?

MS. RICE: I don't remember anything of that kind.

MR. LEHMAN: Were you aware that they would not cooperate and give us access to the perpetrators of the Khobar Towers attack?

MS. RICE: I was very involved in issues concerning Khobar Towers and our relations with several governments concerning Khobar Towers.

MR. LEHMAN: Thank you.

Were you aware -- it disturbs me a bit -- and again let me shift to the continuity issues here. Were you aware that it was the policy of the Justice Department -- and I'd like you to comment as to whether these continuities are still in place. For instance, before I go to Justice, were you aware that it was the policy and, I believe, remains the policy today to fine airlines if they have more than two young Arab males in secondary questioning, because that's discriminatory?

MS. RICE: No. I have to say that the kind of inside arrangements for the FAA are not really in my purview --

MR. LEHMAN: Well, these are not so inside. Were you aware that the FAA up till 9/11 thought it was perfectly permissible to allow four-inch knife blades aboard?

MS. RICE: I was not aware.

MR. LEHMAN: Okay, back to Justice. I was disturbed to hear you say on the continuity line that President Bush's first reaction to 9/11 and the question of al Qaeda's involvement was we must bring him to justice because we have had dozens and dozens of interviewees and witnesses say that a fundamental problem of the dysfunction between CIA and Justice was the criminal -- the attitude that law enforcement was what terrorism was all about, not prevention in foreign policy. I think that there was at the time a very strictly enforced wall in the Justice Department between law enforcement and intelligence, and that repeatedly -- there are many statements from presidents and attorneys general and so forth that say that the first priority is to bring these people to justice, protect the evidence, seal the evidence and so forth. Do you believe that this has changed?

MS. RICE: I certainly believe that that has changed, Commissioner Lehman. Let me just go back for one second, though, on the long list of questions that you asked.

I think another structural problem for the United States is that we really didn't have anybody trying to put together all of the kinds of issues that you raised about what we were doing with INS, what we were doing with borders, what we were doing with visas, what we were doing with airport security, and that's the reason that first the Homeland Security Council and then -- Tom Ridge's initial job -- and then the Homeland Security Department is so important, because you can then look at the whole spectrum of protecting our borders from all kinds of threats and say what kinds of policies make sense and what kinds of policies don't. And they now actually have somebody who looks at critical infrastructure protection, looks at airport security, understands in greater detail than I think the national security advisor could ever understand all of the practices of what is going on in transportation security. That's why it is important that we made the change that we did.

As to some of the questions concerning the Saudis, I think that we have had really very good cooperation with Saudi Arabia

since 9/11, and since the May 12th attacks on Riyadh even greater cooperation because Saudi Arabia is, I think, fully enlisted in the war on terrorism. And we need to understand that there were certain things that we didn't even understand were going on inside the United States.

It's not, perhaps, surprising that the Saudis didn't understand some of the things that were going on in their country.

As to your last question, though, I think that that's actually where we've had the biggest change. The President doesn't think of this as law enforcement. He thinks of this as war. And for all of the rhetoric of war prior to 9/11 -- people who said we're at war with a jihadist network, people who said we are -- that they've declared war on us and we're at war with them -- we weren't at war. We weren't on war footing. We weren't behaving in that way. We were still very focused on rendition of terrorists, on law enforcement. And yes, from time-to-time, we did military plans or used the cruise missile strike here or there, but we did not have a sustained, systematic effort to destroy al Qaeda, to deal with those who harbored al Qaeda.

One of the points that the President made in his very first speech on that September -- the night of September 11th, was that it's not just the terrorists, it's those who harbor them, too. And he put states on notice that they were going to be responsible if they sponsored terrorists or if they acquiesced in terrorists being there. And when he said I want to bring him to justice, again, I think there was a little bit of nervousness about talking about exactly what that means. But I don't think there's anyone in America who doesn't understand that this president believes that we are at war; it's a war we have to win, and that it is a war that cannot be fought on the defensive. It's a war that has to be fought on the offense.

MR. LEHMAN: Thank you. Are you sure that the --

MR. KEAN: Last question, Mr. Secretary.

MR. LEHMAN: Last question. (pause)

As a last question, tell us what you really recommend we should address our attentions to to fix this, as the highest priority -- not just moving boxes around. But what can you tell us in public here that we could do, since we are outside the

legislature and outside the executive branch and can bring the focus of attention for change? Tell us what you recommend we do.

MS. RICE: My greatest concern is that a September 11th recedes from memory, that we will begin to unlearn the lessons of what we've learned. And I think this commission can be very important in helping us to focus on those lessons and then to make sure that the structures of government reflect those lessons, because those structures of government now are going to have to last us for a very long time.

I think we've done -- under the President's leadership, we've done extremely important structural change. We've reorganized the government in a greater way than has been done since the 1947 National Security Act created the Department of Defense, the CIA and the National Security Council. I think that we need to -- we have a major reorganization of the FBI, where Bob Mueller is trying very hard, not just to move boxes but to change incentives, to change culture. Those are all very hard things to do.

I think there have been very important changes made between the CIA and the FBI. Yes, everybody knew that they had trouble sharing. But in fact, we had legal restrictions to their sharing.

And George Tenet and Louis Freeh and others have worked very hard at that. But until the PATRIOT Act, we couldn't do what we needed to do. And now I hear people who question the need for the PATRIOT Act, question whether or not the PATRIOT Act is infringing on our civil liberties.

I think that you can address this hard question of the balance that we as an open society need to achieve between the protection of our country and the need to remain the open society, the welcoming society that we are. And I think you're in a better position to address that than anyone. And I do want you to know that when you have addressed it, the President is not going to just be interested in the recommendations, I think he's going to be interested in knowing how we can press forward in ways that will make us safer.

The other thing that I hope you will do is to take a look back again at the question that keeps arising -- I think Senator Gorton was going after this question; I've heard Senator Kerrey talk about it -- which is the country, like democracies do, waited and waited and waited as this threat gathered, and we

didn't respond by saying we're at war with them; now we're going to use all means of our national assets to go against them.

There are other threats that gather against us, and what we should have learned from September 11th is that you have to be bold and you have to be decisive and you have to be on the offensive because we're never going to be able to completely defend.

MR. LEHMAN: Thank you very much.

MR. KEAN: Congressman Roemer.

MR. ROEMER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome, Dr. Rice. And I just want to say to you that you've made it through two-and-a-half hours so far, with only Governor Thompson to go, and if you'd like a break of five minutes, I'd be happy to yield you some of Governor Thompson's time!
(Laughter.)

MS. RICE: (Laughs.)

MR. ROEMER: Dr. Rice, you have said in your statement, which I find very interesting, "The terrorists were at war with us, but we were not at war with them. Across several administrations of both parties, the response was insufficient. And tragically, for all the language of war spoken before September 11th, this country simply was not on a war footing."

You're the national security advisor to the President of the United States. The buck may stop with the President; the buck certainly goes directly through you as the principal advisor to the President on these issues.

And it really seems to me that there were failures and mistakes, structural problems, all kinds of issues here leading up to September 11th that could have and should have been done better. Doesn't that beg that there should have been more accountability, that there should have been a resignation or two, that there should have been you or the President saying to the rest of the Administration somehow, somewhere, that this was not done well enough?

MS. RICE: Mr. Roemer, by definition we didn't have enough information. We didn't have enough protection. Because the attack happened. By definition. And I think we've all asked

ourselves what more could have been done. I will tell you, if we had known that an attack was coming against the United States, an attack was coming against New York and Washington, we would have moved heaven and earth to stop it. But you heard the character of the threat reporting we were getting. "Something very, very big is going to happen." How do you act on "something very, very big is going to happen" beyond trying to put people on alert? Most of the threat reporting was abroad.

I took an oath, as I said, to protect.

MR. ROEMER: Yes, I heard you say this.

MS. RICE: And I take it very seriously. I know that those who attacked us that day -- and attacked us, by the way, because of who we are, no other reason but for who we are -- that they are the responsible parties for the war that they launched against us, the attack that they made, and that our responsibility --

MR. ROEMER: But Dr. Rice, you have said several times --

MS. RICE: -- that our responsibility is to --

MR. ROEMER: You have said several times that your responsibility, being in office for 230 days, was to defend and protect the United States.

MS. RICE: Of course.

MR. ROEMER: You had an opportunity, I think, with Mr. Clarke, who had served a number of presidents going back to the Reagan administration, who you decided to keep on in office, who was a pile driver, a bulldozer, so to speak. This person, who you, in the Woodward interview -- he's the very first name out of your mouth when you suspect that terrorists have attacked us on September the 11th. You say, I think, immediately it was a terrorist attack, get Dick Clarke, the terrorist guy, even before you mentioned Tenet and Rumsfeld's names. Get Dick Clarke.

Why don't you get Dick Clarke to brief the President before 9/11? Here is one of the consummate experts, that never has the opportunity to brief the President of the United States on one of the most lethal, dynamic and agile threats to the United States of America. Why don't you use this asset?

Why doesn't the President ask to meet with Dick Clarke?

MS. RICE: Well, the President was meeting with his director of Central Intelligence. And Dick Clarke is a very, very fine counterterrorism expert, and that's why I kept him on. And what I wanted Dick Clarke to do was to manage the crises for us and help us develop a new strategy. And I can guarantee you, when we had that new strategy in place, the President, who was asking for it and wondering what was happening to it, was going to be in a position to engage it fully.

The fact is that what Dick Clarke recommended to us, as he has said, would not have prevented 9/11. I actually would say that not only would it have not prevented 9/11, but if we had done everything on that list, we would have actually been off in the wrong direction about the importance that we needed to attach to a new policy for Afghanistan and a new policy for Pakistan, because even though Dick is a very fine counterterrorism expert, he was not a specialist on Afghanistan. That's why I brought somebody in who really understood Afghanistan. He was not a specialist on Pakistan. That's why I brought somebody in to deal with Pakistan. He had some very good ideas. We acted on them.

Dick Clarke -- let me just step back for a second and say we had a very good relationship --

MR. ROEMER: Yeah, I'd appreciate it if you could be very concise here, so I can get to some more issues.

MS. RICE: -- but all that he needed to do was to say, "I need time to brief the President on something." But the --

MR. ROEMER: I think he did say that.

MS. RICE: To my --

MR. ROEMER: Dr. Rice, in a private interview to us, he said he asked to brief the President of the United --

MS. RICE: Well, I have to say, Mr. Roemer, to my recollection --

MR. ROEMER: You say he didn't --

MS. RICE: -- Dick Clarke never asked me to brief the President on counterterrorism. He did brief the President later on cybersecurity, in July. But he, to my recollection, never asked -- and my senior directors have an open door to come and

say, "I think the President needs to do this. I think the President needs to do that. He needs to make this phone call. He needs to hear this briefing." It's not hard to get done.

But I just think that --

MR. ROEMER: But let me ask you a question. You just said that the intelligence coming in indicated a big, big, big threat. Something was going to happen very soon and be potentially catastrophic.

I don't understand, given the big threat, why the big principals don't get together. The principals meet 33 times in seven months -- on Iraq, on the Middle East, on missile defense, China, on Russia. Not once do the principals ever sit down -- you, in your job description as the national security advisor, the secretary of State, the secretary of Defense, the President of the United States -- and meet solely on terrorism to discuss, in the spring and the summer, when these threats are coming in; when you've known since the transition that al Qaeda cells are in the United States; when, as the PDB said on August 6th, "bin Laden determined to attack the United States." Why don't the principals at that point say, "Let's all talk about this. Let's get the biggest people together in our government and discuss what this threat is and try to get our bureaucracies responding to it."

MS. RICE: Once again, on the August 6th memorandum to the President, this was not threat reporting about what was about to happen, this was an analytic piece that stood back and answered questions from the President.

But as to the Principals Meetings --

MR. ROEMER: It has six or seven things in it, Dr. Rice, including the Ressam case when he attacked the United States in the Millennium; has the FBI saying that they think that there are conditions --

MS. RICE: No, it does not have the FBI saying that they think that there are conditions. It has the FBI saying that they observed some suspicious activity. That was checked out with the FBI.

MR. ROEMER: That is equal to what might be --

MS. RICE: No. With -- with --

MR. ROEMER: -- conditions for an attack.

MS. RICE: Mr. Roemer -- Mr. Roemer, threat reporting --

MR. ROEMER: Would you say, Dr. Rice --

MS. RICE: Threat reporting --

MR. ROEMER: -- that we should make that PDB a public document

--

MS. RICE: Mr. Roemer? Mr. Roemer, threat reporting --

MR. ROEMER: -- so we can have this conversation?

MS. RICE: Threat reporting is "We believe that something is going to happen here, at this time, under these circumstances." This was not threat reporting. Now --

MR. ROEMER: Well, actionable intelligence, Dr. Rice, is when you have the place, time and date. The threat reporting saying the United States is going to be attacked should trigger the principals getting together --

MS. RICE: But with all -- with -- Mr. Roemer --

MR. ROEMER: -- to say we're doing to do something about this, I would think.

MS. RICE: Mr. Roemer, let's be very clear, the PDB does not say the United States is going to be attacked, it says bin Laden would like to attack the United States. I don't think you, frankly, had to have that report to know that bin Laden would like to attack the United States. The threat reporting -- the threat reporting --

MR. ROEMER: So why aren't you doing something about that earlier than August 6th, then? (Scattered applause.)

MS. RICE: The threat reporting to which we could respond was in June and July about threats abroad. What we tried to do for -- just because people said you cannot rule out an attack on the United States, was to have the domestic agencies and the FBI together to just pulse them and let them be on alert. But there was nothing --

MR. ROEMER: I agree with that.

MS. RICE: -- that suggested there was going to be a threat to the United States.

MR. ROEMER: I agree with that. So, Dr. Rice, let's say, then, the FBI is the key here. You say that the FBI was tasked with trying to find out what the domestic threat was. We have done thousands of interviews here at the 9/11 Commission, we have gone through literally millions of pieces of paper. To date, we have found nobody -- nobody at the FBI who knows anything about a tasking of field offices.

We have talked to the director at the time of the FBI during this threat period, Mr. Pickard. He says he did not tell the field offices to do this. And we have talked to the special agents in charge. They don't have any recollection of receiving a notice of threat. Nothing went down the chain to the FBI field offices on spiking of information, on knowledge of al Qaeda in the country, and still the FBI doesn't do anything. Isn't that some of the responsibility of the national security advisor?

MS. RICE: The responsibility for the FBI to do what it was asked was the FBI's responsibility. Now, I --

MR. ROEMER: You don't think there's any responsibility back to the advisor of the President?

MS. RICE: I believe that the responsibility -- again, the crisis management here was done by the CSG. They tasked these things. If there was any reason to believe that I needed to do something or that Andy Card needed to do something, I would have been expected to be asked to do it. We were not asked to do it. In fact, as I've mentioned to you --

MR. ROEMER: But don't you ask somebody to do it? You're not asking somebody to to do it. Why wouldn't you initiate that?

MS. RICE: Mr. Roemer, I was responding to the threat spike and to where the information was. The information was about what might happen in the Persian Gulf, what might happen in Israel, what might happen in North Africa. We responded to that and we responded vigorously.

Now, the structure --

MR. ROEMER: Dr. Rice, let me ask you --

MS. RICE: -- of the FBI you will get into next week.

MR. ROEMER: You have been helpful to us on that, on your --

MR. KEAN: This is the last question, Congressman.

MR. ROEMER: Last question. Dr. Rice, talking about responses, Mr. Clarke writes you a memo on September the 4th where he lays out his frustration that the military is not doing enough, that the CIA is not pushing this hard enough in their agency, and he says we should not wait till the day that hundreds of Americans lay dead in the streets due to a terrorist attack and we think there could have been something more we could do. Seven days prior to September the 11th, he writes this to you. What's your reaction to that at the time, and what's your response to that at the time?

MS. RICE: Just one final point I didn't quite complete. I, of course, did understand that the attorney general needed to know what was going on, and I asked that he take the briefing and then asked that he be briefed because, again, there was nothing demonstrating or showing that something was coming in the United States. If there had been something, we would have acted on it.

MR. ROEMER: I think we should make this document public, Dr. Rice.

MS. RICE: We would have acted on it.

MR. ROEMER: Would you support making the August 6th PDB public?

MS. RICE: The August 6th -- the August 6th PDB has been available to you.

MR. ROEMER: And --

MS. RICE: You are -- you're describing it.

MR. ROEMER: About this much of it.

MS. RICE: You're describing it. And the August 6th PDB was a response to questions asked by the President, not a warning document.

MR. ROEMER: Why wouldn't it be made public then?

MS. RICE: Now -- now as to -- I think you know the sensitivity of presidential decision memoranda. And I think you

know the great lengths to which we have gone to make it possible for this commission to view documents that are not generally -- not -- I don't know if they've ever been made available in quite this way.

Now, as to what Dick Clarke said on September 4th, that was not a premonition nor a warning. What that memorandum was was I was getting ready go into the September 4th principals meeting to review the new NSPD and to approve the new NSPD. What is was a warning to me that the bureaucracies would try to undermine it. Dick goes into great and emotional detail about the long history of how DoD has never been responsive; how the CIA has never been responsive; about how the Predator has gotten hung up because the CIA doesn't really want to fly it. And he says, "If you don't fight through this bureaucracy --" he says at one point, "They're going to all sign onto this NSPD because they won't want to be -- they won't want to say that they don't want to eliminate the threat of al Qaeda," he says. "But you really have --" in effect -- "you have to go in there and push them, because we'll all wonder about the day when thousands of Americans --" and so forth and so on.

So that's what this document is. It's not a warning document. It's not a -- all of us had this fear. I think that the chairman mentioned that I had said this in an interview, that we would hope not to get to that day. But it would not be appropriate or correct to characterize what Dick wrote to me on September 4th as a warning of an impending attack. What he was doing was, I think, trying to buck me up so that when I went into this principals meeting, I was sufficiently on guard against the kind of bureaucratic inertia that he had fought all of his life.

MR. ROEMER: What is a warning if August 6th isn't and September 4th isn't, to you?

MS. RICE: Well, August 6th is most certainly an historical document that says, "Here's how you might think about al Qaeda." A warning is when you have something that suggests that an attack is impending, and we did not have -- on the United States -- threat information that was in any way specific enough to suggest that something was coming in the United States.

The September 4th memo, as I've said to you, was a warning to me not to get dragged down by the bureaucracy, not a warning about September 11th.

MR. ROEMER: Thank you, Dr. Rice.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. KEAN: Thank you, Congressman, very, very much.

Our last questioner will be Governor Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Rice, first, thank you for your service to this nation and this president. I think it can fairly be described by all, whether they agree with you or not on various issues, as devoted to the interests of the President and the country. And all Americans, I believe, appreciate that.

Thank you also for finally making it here. I know there was a struggle over constitutional principles. I don't think your appearance today signals any retreat by the President from the notion that the Congress should not be allowed to hail presidential aides down to the Capitol and question them. We are not the Congress. We are not a congressional committee. That's why you gave us the PDBs. And so we appreciate your appearance and we appreciate the decision of the President to allow you to appear, to not just answer our questions, because you've done that for five hours in private, but to answer the questions of Americans who are watching you today.

I'm going to go through my questions -- some of which have been tossed out because my brothers and sisters asked them before me -- as quickly as I can, because we have to depart. And I would appreciate it if you would go through your answers as quickly as you could, but be fair to yourself.

I don't believe in beating dead horses, but there's a bunch of lame ones running around here today. Let's see if we can't finally push them out the door.

Please describe to us your relationship with Dick Clarke, because I think that bears on the context of this -- well, let's just take the first question. He said he gave you a plan. You said he didn't give you a plan. It's clear that what he did give you was a memo that had attached to it not only the Delenda Plan, or whatever you want to describe Delenda as, but a December 2000 strategy paper. Was this something that you were supposed to act on or was this a compilation of what had been pending at the time the Clinton administration had left office but had not been acted on? Or was this something he tried to get acted on by the Clinton administration and they didn't act on

it? What was it? How did he describe it to you? What did you understand it to be?

MS. RICE: What I understood it to be was a series of decisions, near-term decisions, that were pending from the Clinton administration; things like whether to arm the Uzbeks -- I'm sorry, whether to give further counterterrorism support to the Uzbeks, whether to arm the Northern Alliance, a whole set of specific issues that needed decision, and we made those decisions prior to the strategy being developed.

He also had attached the Delenda plan, which it's my understanding was developed in 1998, never adopted, and in fact had some ideas. I said, Dick, take the ideas that you've put in this think piece, take the ideas that were there in the Delenda plan, put it together into a strategy not to roll back al Qaeda -- which had been the goal of the Clinton -- of what Dick Clarke wrote to us -- but rather to eliminate this threat, and he was to put that strategy together. But by no means did he ask me to act on a plan. He gave us a series of ideas, we acted on those. And then he gave me some papers that had a number of ideas, more questions than answers, about how we might get better cooperation, for instance, from Pakistan. We took those ideas. We gave him the opportunity to write a comprehensive strategy.

MR. THOMPSON: I'd like to follow up on one of Commissioner Roemer's questions. The principals meetings -- with all due respect to the principals -- Cabinet officers of the President of the United States, Senate-confirmed -- the notion that when principals gather the heavens open and the truth pours forth is, to borrow the phrase of one of my fellow commissioners, a little bit of hooey, I think. Isn't it a fact that when principals gather in principals meeting, they bring their staffs with them? Don't they line the walls? Don't they talk to each other? Doesn't the staff speak up?

MS. RICE: Absolutely. Well, actually when you have principals meetings, they really sometimes are to tell -- for the principals to say what their staffs have said --

MR. THOMPSON: Right.

MS. RICE: -- have told them to say.

I just have to say, we may simply disagree on this--with some of the Commissioners. I do not believe that there was a lack of high-level attention. The President was paying attention to

this. How much higher level can you get? The secretary of State and the secretary of Defense and the attorney general and the line officers are responsible for responding to the information that they were given, and they were responding. The problem is that the United States was effectively blind to what was about to happen into it, and you cannot depend on the chance that some principal might find out something in order to prevent an attack. That's why the structural changes that are being talked about here are so important.

MR. THOMPSON: What you say in your statement before us today, on page 2, reminds me that terrorism had a different face in the 20th century than it does today. I just want to be sure I understand the attitude of the Bush administration, because you reference the Lusitania, the Nazis and all these state-sponsored terrorist activities, when we know today that the real threat is from either rogue states -- Iran, North Korea -- or from stateless terrorist organizations -- al Qaeda, Hezbollah, Hamas. Does the Bush administration get this difference?

MS. RICE: We certainly understand fully that there are groups, networks, that are operating out there. The only thing I would say is that they are much more effective when they can count on a state either to sponsor them or to protect them or to acquiesce in their activities. That's why the policy that we developed was so insistent on sanctuaries being taken away from them. You do have to take away their territory. When they can get states to cooperate with them or when they can get states to acquiesce in their being on their territory, they're much more effective.

MR. THOMPSON: The *Cole*. Why didn't the Bush administration respond to the *Cole*?

MS. RICE: I think Secretary Rumsfeld has perhaps said it best. We really thought that the *Cole* incident was past, that you didn't want to respond tit-for-tat. As I've said, there is strategic response and there's tactical response, and just responding to another attack in an insufficient way, we thought, would actually probably embolden the terrorists; they'd been emboldened by everything else that had been done to them; and that the best course was to look ahead to a more aggressive strategy against them.

I still believe to this day that the al Qaeda were prepared for a response to the *Cole* and that, as some of the intelligence suggested, bin Laden was intending to show that he'd yet

survived another one, and that it might have been counterproductive.

MR. THOMPSON: I've got to say that answer bothers me a little bit because of where it logically leads, and that is -- and I don't like what-if questions, but this is a what-if question. What if in March of 2001, under your Administration, al Qaeda had blown up another U.S. destroyer? What would you have done? And would that have been tit-for-tat?

MS. RICE: I don't know what we would have done. But I do think that we were moving to a different concept that said that you had to hold at risk what they cared about, not just try and punish them, not just try to go after bin Laden. I would like to think that we might have come to an effective response.

I think that in the context of war, when you're at war with somebody, it's not an issue of every battle or every skirmish, it's an issue of can you do strategic damage to this organization. And we were thinking much more along the lines of strategic damage.

MR. THOMPSON: Well, I'm going to sound like my brother Kerrey, which terrifies me somewhat. (Laughter.) But blowing up our destroyers is an act of war against us, is it not? I mean, how long would that have to go on before we would respond with an act of war?

MS. RICE: We'd had several acts of war committed against us. And I think we believed that responding kind of tit-for-tat, probably with inadequate military options, because for all the plans that might have been looked at by the Pentagon or on the shelf, they were not connected to a political policy that was going to change the circumstances of al Qaeda and the Taliban, and therefore, the relationship to Pakistan.

Look, it can be debated as to whether or not one should have responded to the *Cole*. I think that we really believed that an inadequate response was simply going to embolden them. And I think you've heard that from Secretary Rumsfeld as well. And I believe we felt very strongly that way.

MR. THOMPSON: I'll tell you what I find remarkable. One word that hasn't been mentioned once today, yet we've talked about structural changes to the FBI and the CIA, and cooperation. Congress. The Congress has to change the structure of the FBI.

The Congress has to appropriate funds to fight terrorism. Where was the Congress?

MS. RICE: Well, I think that the -- when I made the comment that the country was not on war footing, that didn't just mean the executive branch was not on war footing. The fact is that many of the big changes that, quite frankly, again, we were not going to be able to make in 233 days, some of those big changes do require congressional action.

The Congress cooperated after September 11th with the President to come up with the PATRIOT Act, which does give to the FBI and the CIA and other intelligence agencies the kind of ability, legal ability, to share between them that was simply not there before. You cannot depend on the chance that something might fall out of a tree; you cannot depend on the chance that a very good Customs agent, who's doing her job with her colleagues out in the state of Washington, is going to catch somebody coming across the border of the United States with bomb-making materials to be the incident that leads you to be able to respond adequately. This is hard because, again, we have to be right 100 percent of the time; they only have to be right once.

But the structural changes that we have made since 9/11, and the structural changes that we may have to continue to make, give us a better chance in that fight against the terrorists.

MR. THOMPSON: I read this week an interview in Newsweek with your predecessor Mr. Brzezinski. He seemed to be saying that there is a danger that we can obsess about al Qaeda and lose sight of equal dangers -- for example, the rise of a nuclear state, Iran, in the Middle East, and their apparent connection to Hezbollah and Hamas, which may forecast even more bitter fighting, as we're now learning in Iraq, or the ability of Hezbollah or Hamas to attack us on our soil, within the United States, in the same way al Qaeda did. Are we keeping an eye on that?

MS. RICE: We are keeping an eye -- and working actively with the international community on Iran and their nuclear ambitions.

I think that one thing that the global war on terrorism has allowed us to do is to not just focus on al Qaeda, because we have enlisted countries around the world, saying that terrorism is terrorism is terrorism -- in other words, you can't fight al Qaeda and hug Hezbollah, or hug Hamas -- that we've actually started to de-legitimize terrorism in a way that it was not

before. We don't make a distinction between different kinds of terrorism. And we're therefore united with the countries of the world to fight all kinds of terrorism. Terrorism is never an appropriate, a justified response just because of political difficulties.

So yes, we are keeping an eye on it. But it speaks to the point that we -- an administration -- the United States administration cannot focus just on one thing. What the war on terrorism has done is it has given us an organizing principle that allows us to think about terrorism, to think about weapons of mass destruction, to think about the links between them and to form a united front across the world, to try and win this war.

MR. THOMPSON: Last, simple question: If we come forward with sweeping recommendations for change in how our law enforcement and intelligence agencies operate to meet the new challenges of our time, not the 20th century or the 19th century challenges we faced in the past; and if the President of the United States agrees with them, can you assure us that he will fight with all the vigor he has to get them enacted?

MS. RICE: I can assure you that if the President agrees with the recommendations -- and I think we'll want to take a hard look at the recommendations -- we're going to fight, because the real lesson of September 11th is that the country was not properly structured to deal with the threat that had been gathering for a long period of time.

I think we're better structured today than we ever have been. We've made a lot of progress. But we want to hear what further progress we can make. And because this president considers his highest calling to protect and defend the people of the United States of America, he'll fight for any changes that he feels necessary.

MR. THOMPSON: Thank you, Dr. Rice.

MS. RICE: Thank you. (Applause.)

MR. KEAN: Thank you. Thank you.

I might announce, before we thank Dr. Rice, that there was a lot of discussion today about the PDB, the Presidential Daily Briefing, of August 6th. This is not to do with Dr. Rice, but we have requested from the White House that that be declassified,

because we feel it is important that the American people get a chance to see it. We are awaiting an answer on our request and hope by next week's hearing that we might have it.

Dr. Rice, thank you. You have advanced our understanding of key events. We thank you for all the time you've given us.

We have a few remaining classified matters at some point we'd like to discuss with you in closed session, if we could. And I thank you for that. We appreciate very much your service to the nation.

This concludes our hearing. The Commission will hold the next hearing on April 13th and 14th, on "Law Enforcement and the Intelligence Community." Thank you very much.

MS. RICE: Thank you.

END.