

9/11 Commission Members Demand Release of Suppressed 28 Pages

July 29—In response to questions from family members of 9/11 victims, the co-chairmen of the 9/11 Commission insisted, at a July 22 public event, that suppressed documents dealing with the role of the Saudi Kingdom in the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States should be declassified and released to the public.

It was an extraordinary moment, made even more remarkable by the utter lack of interest of most of the establishment news media in such a critical issue of our national security.

The occasion was a day-long conference hosted by the Bipartisan Policy Institute in Washington, commemorating the 10th anniversary of the release of the 9/11 Commission's Final Report. The Commission co-chairs, former Congressman Lee Hamilton and former New Jersey Governor Tom Kean, both strongly supported the release of the still-classified materials from the Commission's investigation, especially the 28 pages from the Joint Congressional Inquiry into the 9/11 attacks, which both the Bush-Cheney and the Obama Administrations have kept secret—although, or perhaps because, those pages go to the heart of the issue of British-Saudi state sponsorship of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The event featured, in addition to Hamilton and Kean, Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Tex.), Chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee; Director of National Intelligence James Clapper; former Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, and others involved in the original 9/11 Commission report.

In response to a question from a 9/11 family representative about the suppressed chapter from the Joint Congressional Inquiry, whose work preceded the formation of the independent 9/11 Commission, both Hamilton and Kean were emphatic in their condemnation of the secrecy surrounding the contents of the 28 pages, as well as many other documents from the Commission's work, many of which remain classified at the National Archives. Hamilton declared that he was "embarrassed" that the documents are still secret,

and said that he had expected that all of the Commission's work would be released to the public. Kean went one step further by discussing the Saudi role, and Ridge agreed that *nothing* about the investigation should remain classified and kept from the American people.

Uncovering the Saudi Role

The first independent investigation of the 9/11 attacks was conducted in 2002 by the Congressional Joint Inquiry, of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees. Under the direction of the chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Sen. Bob Graham (D-Fla.), investigators uncovered a Saudi money trail to the 9/11 hijackers centered in San Diego, Calif., which led directly to Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the Saudi Ambassador to the U.S.—who was often called "Bandar Bush" because of his close ties to the Bush family. These discoveries, made over strenuous objections and stonewalling by the FBI and other agencies, led Graham to believe that the 9/11 attacks would not have been possible without an extensive Saudi support network for the hijackers in San Diego and other locations around the nation.

When the official report of the Joint Inquiry was finally released in June 2003, it had been heavily censored by the Bush-Cheney White House, including a 28-page chapter which Graham later described as being "the section of the report related to the Saudi government and the assistance that government gave to some and possibly all of the September 11 terrorists."

Under heavy pressure from the 9/11 families, the Bush White House was forced to agree, in late 2002, to the creation of an independent, bipartisan commission to investigate the 9/11 attacks, which became known as the "9/11 Commission." But from the outset, the Commission was under the direct, surreptitious control of the White House, which blocked any serious investigation of the actual state sponsor of the 9/11 attacks: Saudi Arabia.

Although the 9/11 Commission was intended to

build its investigation upon the record established by the Congressional Joint Inquiry, its White House-controlled executive director, Philip Zelikow, suppressed any serious investigation of Saudi Arabia, and instead directed the Commission's focus toward Saddam Hussein, as part of the buildup for the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Zelikow's mis-direction was carried out over the strenuous objections of the 9/11 families and a number of the Commissioners.

Not only did Zelikow suppress the 28-page chapter of the Joint Inquiry report, he even barred the Commission's own investigators from accessing it—even though one of the Commission staff investigators, an FBI counterintelligence specialist, Mike Jacobson, had been the primary author of that chapter.

When Barack Obama took office in 2009, he promised the 9/11 families that he would get the 28 pages released, but he has yet to do so, while, at the same time, protecting the Saudi Kingdom through Justice Department intervention in various court cases. (Some light on Obama's continued coverup of the Saudi role was shed by the recent Glenn Greenwald/Edward Snowden revelation, that in 2011, the Obama Administration's National Security Agency entered into an even closer partnership with the Saudi Arabia's Ministry of the Interior, involving information- and technology-sharing on matters of terrorism and the Kingdom's internal security.)

Commission Calls for Declassification

The Tenth Anniversary Report issued by the Commission called for the broadest possible declassification of materials from its investigation. In its section titled "Transparency," the Commissioners noted that their original report was valuable because it had "included a tremendous amount of previously classified information," adding: "The job of fully informing the American people is incomplete, however. The Commission's records, including summaries of our interviews and important intelligence and policy documents, are held by the National Archives. Some of those documents and records remain classified and are thus unavailable to the



Tim Kean: "In this democracy, very little ought to be classified."

Bipartisan Policy Institute

public. Authority to declassify those documents rests with the agencies that created them. Distressingly, little progress has been made by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in encouraging the relevant executive branch agencies to declassify those records and documents. Ten years after the Commission closed its doors, scholars and the general public should be given broad access to these documents, absent a compelling national security justification for withholding a given record."

9/11 Families Speak

The first question from the audience during the panel with Kean and Hamilton, was from Matthew Sellitto, whose son Matthew C. Sellitto, Jr., died on the 105th floor of World Trade Center Tower One on 9/11. Sellitto said that he was one of the family members who were asked to advise the 9/11 Commission, and went on to cite the classified 28-page section. He pointed out that although the Commission itself didn't want the 28 pages to be classified, the Executive branch kept them secret. He asked the panelists whether they support declassification; his question, and the responses, follow:

Sellitto: "Going forward, former Senator Bob Graham, Representative Lynch, and Representative Jones have tried to get them declassified, and they even brought HRes 428 and tried to get a ruling to get them declassified. 'Til this day, they are still classified. I'd



Lee Hamilton: "When I learned that a number of the documents were classified—or even redacted—I was surprised and disappointed. I want those documents declassified!"

like to know from the gentlemen up on the dais, what are your feelings to this day, and do you still think they should be declassified?"

Hamilton: "Yes, they should be! I am embarrassed that they are not declassified. We emphasized throughout, transparency. And I assumed—incorrectly—that our records would be public. All of them. Everything! And then, when I learned that a number of the documents were classified—or even redacted—I was surprised and disappointed. *I want those documents declassified.* And I'm embarrassed to be associated with a work product that is secret."

Kean: "In this democracy, very little ought to be classified. Only the most seriously important national security issues, and there are very few of them. My experience was that almost every other commissioner had an access to classified information before under a security clearance; I never had. That was the upside, I was very excited when I got my first shiny right to look at secrets! And I was amazed, in reading the stuff, that it was stuff I knew already! I mean, the first time I read the whole report, with my classification, I turned to the FBI guy who was watching me, and said 'I knew all this already!' And he said, 'Yes, but you didn't know it was true.' [laughter] That is *not* a reason for classification. But I'd say, and I don't think I'm exaggerating, I'd say that 60-70% of the stuff that we saw

that was classified, in my opinion should *not* have been. It should have been available to the American people.

"This [the 28 pages] is an example of the sort of thing that should be. As I remember that particular section, it has been updated, because I think that we did research on that particular episode in San Diego and Saudi Arabia, and I believe, if you read the 9/11 Report, you'll find anything you want to find about that particular section. There is no reason to classify it anymore! Even if some of the facts are wrong, that could be pointed out, but I just don't believe in keeping things secret from the American people."

'I want to know...'

Abraham Scott, whose wife was killed at the Pentagon on 9/11, said the report could help him find out who was behind her death. "I think it focuses on key people in the Saudi Arabian government. I want to know, myself, who they were," Scott said in an interview with RIA Novosti, adding that the release of those pages would force the U.S. government and citizens to "have a different outlook on the Saudi Arabian government, which we considered, up until recently, to be a close ally."

In an interview with Fox News, Scott said that he has been pushing for a decade now to get the 28 pages declassified, "so those events on Sept. 11, 2001 don't happen again." In those pages, Scott said, he believes there is information about the funding of the 9/11 terrorists, and he cited the bill in Congress calling for their declassification.

Informed of the Commissioner's public remarks, Lyndon LaRouche said that if the 28 pages and other damning documentation can be forced into the public, it will blow up the British Empire's control over the United States.

"This is very serious," LaRouche declared. "Bush and Cheney can go to prison if the full truth comes out about their complicity with the British and the Saudis. The Bush-Cheney organization created a crime against the United States, and they need to be punished with the full weight of the law."