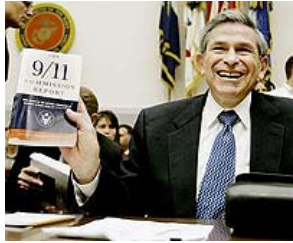


The Mineta Testimony: 9/11 Commission Exposed

By Gregor Holland

One year after the release of “The 9/11 Commission Report”, serious questions that were raised before and during the Commission proceedings remain unanswered. For many, the Commission Report raised more questions than it answered. Not the least of these has been posed by Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney. McKinney recently questioned Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Myers “about the four war games that were taking place on September 11



and how they may have impaired our ability to respond to those attacks.”¹ McKinney got a partial answer a week later². In the first on-the-record acknowledgement that **there were four war games underway on 9/11/01**, Myers told her that all battle positions were manned because of the drills... “...so it was an easy transition from an exercise into a real world situation. It actually enhanced the response.” This answer echoed one provided by General Ralph Eberhart during the final 9/11 Commission hearing. The question to Eberhart, posed by Commissioner Roemer, was coerced by hearing attendees who interrupted the hearing, forcing the issue by yelling “What about the war games?”

The failure of air defenses to respond on that morning does not support the given answer by Myers and Eberhart. In addition, **the drill being conducted at the National Reconnaissance Office³ on 9/11 simulating a plane crashing into that building, and the existence of bioterror drill Operation Tripod⁴ on the ground in lower Manhattan have had no illumination.** As with the recent London Bombings, co-incident training drills⁵ have not been treated as pertinent to the investigation.

Then there is the collapse of 7 World Trade Center, the 47 floor structure that collapsed neatly into its own footprint at 5:20 p.m. on 9/11. NIST has released 10,000 pages worth of draft report describing how WTC 1 & 2 collapsed. But an investigation of 7 WTC, barely mentioned in the Commission hearings and its final report, has been “decoupled” from that report. Why? Likely it is because from the beginning the collapse of 7 WTC has been impossible to explain without resort to explosives. It was not hit by either plane, and the fires in the building were localized. And of course the statement of leaseholder Larry Silverstein, who, interviewed about the 7 WTC collapse said⁶:

“I remember getting a call from the Fire Department Commander telling me that they were not sure they were going to be able to contain the fire. I said, you know we’ve had such terrible loss of life. Maybe the smartest thing to do is ‘pull it’. **And they made that decision to pull. And then we watched the building collapse.**”

Americans who rely solely on mainstream media might easily be under the assumption that “The 9/11 Commission Report” put the questions about what happened on 9/11 to rest. Despite relentless harping on the issues above and by some counts over one hundred others by a legion of writers, researchers and activists, the mainstream media has avoided thoughtful analysis of the Commission Report like the plague. The best explanation for this might be that the 9/11 Commission Report is essentially a house of cards. As soon as you touch it, it falls apart completely. As David Ray Griffin aptly pointed out in his book “The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortions”, the most obvious example of the infidelity of the Report can be found when comparing the testimony of Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta to the findings of the Commission.

The hearings of May 22-23, 2003 were the second public hearings of the Commission and the first to focus on the actual events the day of 9/11. Secretary Mineta recounted to the Commission his experience on the morning of 9/11 from the time he was notified of the first plane hitting the WTC, to his experience at the Presidential Emergency Operations Center (PEOC) along with Vice President Cheney and staff. Unlike Rumsfeld who claimed to be “out of the loop”, and Myers who was not disturbed from breakfast with Max Cleland, Mineta

was able to provide a full account of his experience that morning. Mineta testified that he arrived at the PEOC at 9:20 a.m. and that Vice President



White House photo by David Bohrer

Cheney was already present with his staff. **“The 9/11 Commission Final Report” states that Cheney himself arrived at the PEOC at 9:58, a stunning 38 minute contradiction to Mineta’s testimony.**

Mineta’s PEOC testimony was also edited out of the 9/11 Commission video archive⁷.

When questioned about this, representatives at the National Archive stated that the video may have been lost because of a ‘snafu’. Following is a brief summary of the scrubbed video along with links to recently obtained C-SPAN video for online readers.

Clip #1: Lee Hamilton questions Mineta

(video clips available at 911truthmovement.org)

Mineta responds to an opening question by Commissioner Hamilton about the PEOC and an alleged shoot down order. He describes a conversation between Cheney and a young man:

Mineta: “During the time that the airplane was coming into the Pentagon, there was a young man who would come in and say to

the Vice President...the plane is 50 miles out...the plane is 30 miles out...and when it got down to the plane is 10 miles out, the young man also said to the vice president “do the orders still stand?” And the Vice President turned and whipped his neck around and said “Of course the orders still stand, have you heard anything to the contrary!?”

Mineta explains that while he had not known it at the time, he had surmised that the standing order the young man asked about must have been a shoot down order. Hamilton seeks clarification about which flight the conversation was regarding, and Mineta once again clarifies that it is the flight that hit the Pentagon at 9:37 a.m. on September 11.

There was good reason for the quizzical expression on Hamilton’s face. Secretary Mineta had thoroughly trashed previous accounts of the PEOC activities that had been published in the press.

In a CNN piece dated 9/11/02, the timing of events had been represented differently⁸. According to CNN:

“After the planes struck the twin towers, a third took a chunk out of the Pentagon. Cheney then heard a report that a plane over Pennsylvania was heading for Washington. A military assistant asked Cheney twice for authority to shoot it down.”

In the CNN piece Cheney aid Josh Bolton describes the same exchange between Cheney and the young man that Mineta did, but Bolton ties the exchange to “a report that a plane over Pennsylvania was heading for Washington”. This is the official White House legend, the one adopted in the White House produced⁹ “9/11 Commission Final Report”, the one exposed by Mineta.

Hamilton follows with a question about Flight 93:

Hamilton: “With respect to flight 93, what type of information were you and the Vice President receiving about that flight.”
Mineta: “The only information we had at that point, was when it crashed.”

Chairman Kean then stresses that the Secretary’s time is limited. He moves to Commissioner Roemer, who, immediately prior to his questioning appears to be receiving counsel.

Clip #2: Tim Roemer seeks to discredit Mineta

(video clips available at 911truthmovement.org)

Mineta responds to a condescending greeting by Commissioner Roemer by giving a timeline for when he arrived in the PEOC (9:20), and an estimate of when the conversation between the young man and the vice president occurred (9:25-26). Roemer paints a picture of chaos and conflicting decision making between the functioning of the Situation Room and the PEOC and proposes a confused scenario of how a shoot down order might have transpired, to which Mineta replies:

Mineta: “That would be speculation on my part as to what was happening on that day.”

At this point Roemer appears to attempt to discredit Mineta and imply that he, like Rumsfeld, was “out of the loop”:

Roemer: “I know. Because you had been conducting official business and I’m sure you were hurriedly on your way over there...”

Mineta: “As I was listening!”

Thwarted, Roemer then tries to clarify how the order played out.

Roemer: “Would your inference be that they scrambled the jets to shoot down the commercial airliner, it failed, and the commercial airliner then crashed into the Pentagon?”

Mineta: “I’m not sure that the aircraft that were scrambled to come up to the D.C. area...were under orders to shoot the airplane down...”

Mineta ultimately expressed the obvious, that **the standing order was an open question only Cheney could answer**. The fact that “The 9/11 Commission Final Report” discarded his testimony has never been explained. Secretary Mineta did not respond to an open letter¹⁰ addressed to him. His spokesman Robert Johnson did not respond to multiple messages. It might be worth noting that Johnson was formerly the spokesman of Arizona Congressman Jon Kyl, who was meeting the morning of 9/11 with Porter Goss, Bob Graham and at the time Pakistan ISI Intelligence Chief Mahmood Ahmed.¹¹ Ahmed was linked to the wiring of \$100,000 to Mohammed Atta.¹²

If Mineta’s testimony is to be taken into account, and there is no apparent reason why it should not be, questions about the timing of events the morning of 9/11 come into focus. Most obvious is the



one, **if the standing order given by the Vice President prior to the aircraft hitting the Pentagon was not a shoot down order, then what was it?** Perhaps it was the danger of this question, and the danger that Cheney would have had to commit

perjury to uphold the timeline reported in the mainstream press, that caused the Vice President to testify to the Commission along with the President in closed session, with no transcript, no witnesses, and no public accountability.

Today, multiple serious investigations are underway as to the evidence used by the Bush administration to justify the war in Iraq (Plame/Wilson incident), and when the administration actually decided to invade Iraq (Downing Street Memos¹³). In fact, it is widely known that Bush declared his desire to invade Iraq to an official biographer in 1999¹⁴, even before he was appointed President by the Supreme Court. Given what is known today about the deceiving of the American public in order to justify the invasion of Iraq, and given what is known about “The 9/11 Commission Final Report” and the unanswered questions surrounding the attacks of 9/11. Is there not sufficient reason to include 9/11 in the overall inquiry into possible criminal actions of the Bush-Cheney administration?

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