



The 9/11 Report Expanded

Barnes & Noble Edition Of 2006 and Missing National Islam Project

Reviewed by

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Following its 567-page original report, the 9/11 Commission¹ disbanded after nearly two years as an entity in mid of 2004.

The National Archives received its records, closed them for five years and started to reopen them at the beginning of 2009.² However, all ten Commissioners liked to do more to fulfill their mandate: narrating the circumstances of the 9/11 at-tacks, and providing recommendations to make America safer.

Thus the Commissioners founded the 9/11 Public Discourse Project, PDP.³ For one year until the beginning of 2006, this watchdog produced three progress reports on the implementing of 41 original recommendations to the White House. Soon the PDP ceased. Its latest text includes also the London subway bombings and Hurrican Katrina. All parts were updated for this edition in April 2006, the so called second report edition.

After the original report of July 2004, we have now four new additions on about 250 pages:

- *two released interim reports on state and plans of the Commission,
- *the new introduction,
- *the third monograph,
- *and three progress reports.



Photo: W.G. Schwanitz

Lady Liberty watched how Manhattan turned into a zone of devastation on 9/11.

¹ <http://www.9-11commission.gov/>

² [9/11 Commission Memoranda for the Record](http://www.9-11commission.gov/9-11-Commission-Memoranda-for-the-Record)

³ <http://www.9-11pdp.org/>

Watchdog Dissolved

While two interim reports reflect more technicalities for Commissioners and their staff (65 persons, two offices in DC, one in New York), and while the third monograph deals with the four flights and aviation security, I focus here on the introduction and progress reports.

I look for the assessment of U.S. foreign relations to the Middle East and other Islamic regions. Before I probe if the Commissioners reacted to critique on the original report as well, I opine that they did a great civic duty in updating the public. Whether or not it was a good step to dissolving the watchdog is very doubtful for the mandate above is not realized yet.

In the introduction former Commission's Chair Kean and Vice Chair Hamilton say that they achieved a measure of success. Some problems were addressed by the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act, signed into law by President Bush at the end of 2004. Thomas H. Kean and Lee H. Hamilton say also that the law's implementation is lagging, recommendations were sidestepped: "This is not acceptable. So what needs to be done?"

Terrorist Nukes

They outline nine points, two of which are most striking. First, government agencies at all levels need to create, regularly update, and practice plans for emergency response (p. XI): "Hurricane Katrina taught us a lesson that we should have learned from 9/11. We cannot wait for a disaster to hit and then look for the plan. All first responders need to know, from the moment they learn of disaster; who is in charge and what their jobs will be."

This is true, though with the time the sense of emergency vanishes unless either kept alive by regular exercises or by worst cases. This problem is unresolved. Isn't there a way where only proven emergency preparedness will be rewarded with allocations of federal money?

Second, the Commissioners underscore that overall progress in information sharing is lagging badly among federal, state, and local authorities. This is hard to believe after all. They also stress that preventing terrorists from getting access to nuclear weapons must be elevated above all other issues of national security (p. XII): "our level of effort still falls far short."

One only wishes that this point is to be enlarged to ABC weapons for there are other ways in these days than direct *nuclear* terrorism having similar potentials for catastrophic destruction. For nuclear devices might not hit directly U.S. regions. Rather they could be used for instance in Cumbre Vieja Volcano on the Canary Island of La Palma triggering from there the long feared volcano collapse and a super tsunami reaching in eight hours America's East Coast.⁴

Other People's Cultures

The new introduction misses responses to critique of the original 9/11 report. Besides of reviews with sound ideas, there are lots of books questioning parts of the report.⁵ And that so many Americans are still convinced that the attacks were an inside job by their government, isn't a good sign either.

The Commissioners did not address this properly. They claim that in the U.S. only a few colleges offered Middle Eastern studies and language courses. This is not true. America was before the millenium the land with the most quantity of such institutions. The big question remains still unanswered why the government was not able to convert the richness of expertise into a high quality foreign relations. Academics monitored fairly well the Middle East and grasped problems of the missing U.S. Islam policy early on.⁶

⁴ http://www.es.ucsc.edu/~ward/papers/La_Palma_grl.pdf

⁵ Two English examples out of many others also in Europe and in the Islamic regions: James Ridgeway: The 5 unanswered questions about 9/11. What the 9/11 report failed to tell us. Seven Stories Press, New York 2005; Paul Zarembka, ed.: The Hidden History Of 9-11-2001. Seven Stories Press 2008.

⁶ See executive summaries:

Another example, a footnote still maintains (p. 47): "there is no universally accepted way to transliterate Arabic words and names into English."

Wrong. A clear transliteration was internationally agreed upon in Roma 1935. I can only repeat⁷ advising to work with the Latin transcription of the Library of Congress based on Roman principles.

Reprinting this false footnote, which also says having omitted the article "al-" in names and using only the last part thereof (how would English speakers feel if Middle Easterners say omitting "Mc" in names or using only parts of them?), and continuing with misspelling of words, shows a questionable dealing with the peculiarities of the great languages of Islam. This should be stopped.

Secular Education In Islamic Countries?

I come to foreign relations in the progress reports, first in their summary. Every topic drawn from a recommendation got a grade "A" to "D" or incomplete. "Create an FBI national security force" was rated "C" for the slow progress.

Only one "A-" was given in "Vigorously track terrorist financing." The "C" for "Develop a comprehensive Coalition strategy against Islamic terrorism" appears rightly: for the White House didn't formulate any "U.S. policy on Islam." Similarly, the Commission rated the biometric entry system only "some progress."⁸

A "D" rated suggestion is new: "Support secular education in Muslim countries." Would not this be the same as if Saudi Arabia should elevate "Setting up *madrassa* like Qur'an schools in the U.S." to a principle of its foreign policy? Supporting the public secular education in Muslim countries is pointless.

It touches the core of differences between two civilisations, the separation of state and church on one hand and the unity of power and religion on the other hand. Support for secular education is explained: "secular education programs have been initiated across the Arab world, but are not integrated into a broader counterterrorism strategy. The U.S. has no overarching strategy for educational assistance, and the current level of education reform funding is inadequate."

There are no such native secular programs. Not to mention directing them against terrorism. With the exception of foreign operated schools - mostly in private clerical hands - or those with many foreign students belonging to embassies, secular teaching would be a revolt. This shows a misperception. Also, report headlines are misleading (p. 715): "develop a better terrorist travel strategy."

Fighting For Minds

The third progress report deals with foreign policy, diplomacy, and nonproliferation. Regarding Afghanistan, the original report emphasized a long-term commitment against the rise of terrorism. The Commissioners see some progress, and the insurgency is growing. They insist that Pakistan remains open for terrorists and that they are not sure "if there has been in Saudi Arabia much positive change." Also in the third progress report Iraq fell out of the picture.

Though the Commissioners had seen no evidence of collaboration between Saddam Husain's regime and al-Qa'ida in the original report, they noticed there at least an agreement between Iraq and al-Qa'ida, a series of contacts and concluded, that Iraq was a part of the terror scene and safe haven. This time they didn't offer any evaluation of Iraq's role.

http://www.kas.de/db_files/dokumente/auslandsinformationen/7_dokument_dok_pdf_9280_1.pdf

http://www.kas.de/db_files/dokumente/auslandsinformationen/7_dokument_dok_pdf_9515_1.pdf

⁷ http://www.mepc.org/journal_vol12/0503_wsbkr.asp

⁸ For basics see Joseph W. Eaton: Privacy Card. A Low Cost Strategy to Combat Terrorism. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanhan 2003.

This leads to a very mixed general picture. Some progress is indicated like "inroads by Arabic-language Radio Sawa⁹ since 2002 and al-Hurra TV¹⁰ since 2004."

And there is a remarkable insight in progress report three (p. 743): "If the United States does not act to define itself in the Islamic world, the extremists will gladly do the job for us."

To Do List: NIP

Finally, here are three points to be made - and in the very same style of those latest progress reports:

1. Regularly correct the text of the last edition of the 9/11 report: online. Eliminate all the mistakes. Offer web users an online editing chance at least for history and global contents according to Wikipedia's guidelines (Wikipedia's [entry on this](#) is insufficient). Put all the to release documents online. Thus, with an own website for the corrections and further development of the 9-11-report, it gets a very low cost, though global continuation and discussion.

What has happened: We know more now by terrorist videos and protocols signed by Khalid Sheik Muhammad. The unmentioned Abel Danger program needs to be dealt with profoundly.

What needs to be done: Revive the PDP watchdog with a low cost internet performance as well. Share your latest insights. Let others be part of revisions if records are released.

2. Investigate the [history](#) of U.S. foreign relations and the rise of Islamism for 150 years.

What has happened: Although the U.S. is not directly the main reason for Islamism, the American administrations bear some responsibility for its global wave, be it looking the other way in Saudi Arabia, cuddling with dictators, or promoting the Afghan "jihad made in America." For most administrations Islamic areas were also a big cognitive problem.

What needs to be done: Gather your academics and experts in a **National Islam Project, NIP**. Find ways to explore your parts in this global history and politics. This might avoid further grave mistakes in foreign relations and lead to the better mutual understanding beyond of military actions.

3. Regard several parts of America, Australia, Europe, China, India, and Latin America as flash points of Islamism.

Why is this still important: New regional kinds are emerging: American, Australian, Euro, Sino, Indian, and Latino Islam.

9/11 Commission Report. New Introduction by Thomas H. Kean and Lee H. Hamilton. Fully Updated With Controversial Third Monograph and never-before-published Progress Reports from the 9/11 Commissioners. New York: Barnes & Noble, 2006. 816 pages, including index. \$ 9.95, hardcover

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⁹ <http://www.radiosawa.com/>

¹⁰ <http://www.alhurra.com/>