



# 20 Months and 585 Pages Wasted – Your Government at Work for You!

by **Karen Kwiatkowski**

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Reading through the [official 9/11 report](#), I quickly lost my focus – apparently emulating the 9/11 commission over the past 20 months.

The prequel of 9-11 gets the novella treatment, the intended chills and thrills landing somewhat flat. The aftermath of the attack features heroism and dedication, performance under fire and stress. Good stuff, but we've seen it before in far more detail, long before the overdue commission report. The report also provides abbreviated and sweetly presented 9-11 event timelines – apparently still being debated in spite of being sold for \$10 each by the Government Printing Office.

The report might have been original in its recommendations, yet even these mirror last month's "[How We Went to War in Iraq on False Pretenses, Part I](#)." More bureaucracy, more centralization, more superficial accountability and no real accountability. Failing government agencies and departments should have been eliminated. Industries, like those relating to public air transportation, should have been brutally weaned from the federal teat. Numerous senior bureaucrats should have lost their jobs. Instead, we augmented and poured funds into the poor performers, increased the federal coddling of the transportation industry, and added new bureaucratic layers typified by the Department of Homeland Security, so everyone gets their piece of the tax- and debt-funded action.

The 9/11 Commission "discovered" the main problem is not technology or information or even leadership – it was the government rule-set. The rules they used didn't allow our Jabba the Hutt commanders in Washington to properly predict and then respond to the millions of possibilities that constitute daily reality. If only the government could have more rules and regulations, more mandates and controls, if only we could centralize control, things would be much better, so says the 9/11 Commission. One wonders if the entire commission wasn't secretly replaced by pod people from the old Soviet Central Committee.

I naïvely expected more constructive and useful information in the report. A detailed discussion of FBI whistleblower Coleen Rowley and how her observations and actions led to change would be nice. She merited a brief mention in footnote 94. That is all.

I expected to hear how WTC 7 collapsed. The leaseholder of the building told the media [it was "pulled."](#) I expected to see more discussion of the mechanics of that presumably unplanned demolition in the evening of 9-11 as well as the collapse of the both 110-story towers, both impacted differently, both falling almost identically. Do we have an engineering design flaw no one knew about? It didn't come up in the report.

The Commission concluded that the FAA was not really capable of giving the military what it needed to know. [Things have certainly gone downhill since 1999, when Payne Stewart's twin engine Learjet quietly drifted off its flight plan](#), and was escorted by military jets from Eglin AFB and Tyndall AFB in Florida, ANG out of Tulsa, and out of Fargo, for several hours across several states before it ran out of gas and crashed in South Dakota. The difference was that Stewart was just a guy in a single private plane off course with no explanation, while on 9-11, it was one, no two, wait – three, I mean four jumbo passenger jets. Unlike Stewart's plane which simply left its flight plan and was unresponsive, the FAA actually had hijack warning on AA 11 at 8:19 a.m., UA 175 at 8:52 a.m. After two hijack warnings, AA 77 made an unauthorized turn at 8:54 a.m. The Herndon Control Center knew UA 93 was hijacked at 9:34 a.m.

The commission reports the first fighter jets from Otis ANG Base were scrambled for AA 11 thirty-four minutes after the first hijack alert and again, from Langley AFB, a half hour or so later. At 10:38, fighter jets from Andrews AFB were airborne. None had a visual on any of the four planes plane until it was too late. In 1999, more military jets were on the job watching a lone Learjet over the Midwest than in the 2001 response to multiple hijacks on the densely populated East Coast. Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz should have both been fired at the time, saving us the trouble and expense of criminal trials for their roles in fomenting the unjustified and gratuitous Iraq war.

The report refers to the many cell phone calls that were made from the speeding airplanes, yet most [people who have tried to do this find that reception, cell switching software, and other factors often prevent even a connection, much less a conversation](#). The 9/11 commission should have taken the opportunity to clear up that technological debate. It did not.

Why were the only gas stations mentioned those where terrorists were spotted before 9-11 – and not the Citgo directly in line with the Flight path of AA 77 as it aimed for the Pentagon? The security video from Citgo was confiscated by law enforcement – no hints as to what it recorded

were provided in the Commission report. In fact, as the CITGO gas station employee noted, "[The FBI was here within minutes and took the film.](#)" Sounds like the FBI had its eye on the ball, at least after the attacks!

Having walked from the Pentagon into the vivid sunlight the morning of 9-11, to stare in disbelief with thousands of my coworkers at the burning gash in the structure, I'd like to understand more about the events of the day itself. Why the Towers and the Pentagon or other governmental buildings would be targeted by al Qaeda or any other adversary is self-evident; why American policies and practices create enemies around the world is also no mystery. The slow and highly debatable rate of improvement in our ability to defend the country – while the cost of doing business for Americans everywhere has skyrocketed – is also predictable. George W. Bush himself admits the truth as he almost happily notes this week "[We are a nation in danger.](#)"

You better believe it, Mr. Bush. We have an incompetent, bankrupt, obese federal government bureaucracy led by ignoramuses who dream of empire, with continued zero accountability to either the facts on the ground or to the people who pay for it all.

As William Lind noted in his own analysis, "[government bureaucracies don't get more money and more power when they succeed, but when they fail.](#)"

Clearly, it was only me who lost focus. Political Darwinism requires that governmental failure must not only occur, but that the failure be massaged into a form unrecognizable by the most dangerous adversary (the people, of course), and thus perpetuated. Seems like the 9/11 Commission did their duty after all.

*August 3, 2004*


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