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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

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Team Number: Three (Counterterrorism Policy)

Location: Situation Room, The White House

Participants – Commission: Chairman Thomas Kean, Vice Chairman Lee Hamilton, Commissioner Richard Ben-Veniste, Commissioner John Lehman, Commissioner Tim Roemer, Philip Zelikow, Chris Kojm, Dan Marcus, Michael Hurley, Warren Bass

EOP Staff Present: Condoleezza Rice, John Bellinger, Bryan Cunningham, Dylan Cors

Witness's Background

Condoleezza Rice is President George W. Bush's national security adviser. (U)

She holds a B.A. from the University of Denver, an M.A. from the University of Notre Dame, and a Ph.D. from the University of Denver. In 1981, she joined the Stanford faculty as a professor of political science. She is the author of *Uncertain Allegiance: The Soviet Union and the Czechoslovak Army* (1984), *The Gorbachev Era* (1986, with Alexander Dallin), and *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed* (1995, with Philip Zelikow). In 1986, as a Council on Foreign Relations international affairs fellow, she served as special assistant to the director of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. (U)

From 1989 to March 1991, Rice was an NSC director and then senior director for Soviet and East European Affairs. From 1993-99, she was provost of Stanford. Rice headed up the Bush 2000 campaign's "Vulcans," the core group of national security advisers, before being asked to join the White House staff after the 2000 election. (U)

The Transition

Rice was told that she would become APNSA in a phone call after George W. Bush became president-elect, after the Florida election recount. During the transition, she focused on moving into that role. Andrew Card, the new White House chief of staff, was holding daily senior staff meetings that she attended. (U)

Rice's focus was first, getting the NSC's staff in place, especially because it was going to take time for the agencies to staff up. Second, she was concerned with the NSC's organizational structure. Only thirdly was she focused on briefings on individual issue areas. Her overwhelming concern was staffing up. (U)

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Richard Clarke, the previous administration's national coordinator for counterterrorism, offered her a briefing on CT, especially al Qaeda. Rice knew Clarke from before—they both served on George H. W. Bush's NSC—and said she thought well of him. In a presentation of some 10-12 PowerPoint slides, Clarke provided a look at his TNT directorate's organization and described al Qaeda as a major threat to U.S. interests. As a foreign policy specialist, al Qaeda was "not unknown to me" from beforehand, Rice said. The briefing took more than an hour; Rice said that she asked a lot of questions and that Clarke described what the USG had been trying to do in Afghanistan. (U)

Rice had a strong sense that TNT's span was too large and asked Clarke for a plan to reorganize it. The directorate had "a very big span of control," Rice said, including drugs, CT, the CSG, consequence management for WMD attack, and an innovative cybersecurity program. They kept CT, drugs, and international crime together and spun off the cyber issues into a board with its own chairman. Clarke expressed an interest in this early on, Rice said. (U)

Rice does not remember her predecessor, Sandy Berger, coming to the Clarke CT briefing for her. She does recall Berger introducing her to Clarke and then leaving. Back in her office, Rice said, Berger told her, You'll spend more time on terrorism than you would have the last time you served; you'll be surprised by how much time you'll spend on this. The bulk of their conversation was about the faltering Middle East peace process and North Korea; a major briefing on North Korea was held at Colin Powell's house. (U)

Al Qaeda was not presented to her in the transition as her number-one concern, Rice said, although it was clearly a priority. (U)

Rice doesn't recall discussing a response to the attack on the USS *Cole* in Clarke's briefing. Clarke listed the *Cole* among the issues he addressed in a January 25, 2001 memo for Rice. That same day, they got a preliminary CIA assessment that al Qaeda-linked people and al Qaeda itself may be responsible for the *Cole*. Clarke told them it was important for the USG to decide what to do about the *Cole* "at a time and place of our choosing," Rice said. She did not want to launch "tit-for-tat" responses that might be counterproductive. *[Commission note: this echoes language from her deputy, Steve Hadley.]*

The president-elect was briefed by the CIA at Blair House during the transition. DCI Tenet called al Qaeda dangerous and also mentioned Hezbollah as a threat. Rice does not recall Tenet mentioning the *Cole* at Blair House. The question of CA authorities came up several times. Tenet never said that he needed more authorities, Rice said; he felt he had what he needed. They talked about a housekeeping exercise of consolidating the five Clinton MONs into a single MON, which may have been the lawyers' idea. *[Commission note: this briefing is described by Bob Woodward in Bush at War.]* (U)

During the transition, the president-elect asked Vice President-elect Cheney to chair a commission about WMD consequence management. (U)

Clarke's Role

They decided against having a hiatus and therefore kept Clarke and his whole team in place, Rice said, which was "not uncontroversial." Clarke was somebody who tended to break the china, but she and Hadley felt the need for an experienced crisis manager in the first part of the administration. One reason to keep Clarke on was so that he could oversee current CT programs and authorities. She went to Clarke and said he should keep working CT issues the way that he was, which "seems to be working." They were not looking for a replacement for Clarke; he was doing a good job, Rice said. The only question was what happened with cybersecurity when TNT was reorganized. (U)

Rice had several conversations with Clarke about cybersecurity. He didn't say that it was time for him to move on, Rice said, but Clarke was passionate about both CT and cyber. On September 15, 2001, or so, Rice said, Clarke wrote a memo about his accomplishments and suggested that he move over to the cybersecurity board. (U)

Clarke attended all DC meetings on CT, which Rice called very interactive sessions. He would also be at PCs on terrorism; people also speak in those meetings, Rice said. Clarke was at the September 4, 2001 PC on al Qaeda. If there were any questions, Clarke would probably have answered them. (U)

President Bush reinstated a daily oral briefing from Tenet, which the DCI rarely misses. So the president was getting his CT information directly from Tenet, not Clarke. (U)

Clarke still reported to me, Rice said, as did her senior directors. She runs a flat organization in which senior directors can report directly to her and need not go through Hadley if they don't want to. Rice held a daily morning meeting for senior directors in the Sit Room; Clarke did not attend that regularly until Rice called him and told him to come. (U)

If Clarke was frustrated, he never expressed it to me, Rice said. She keeps an open door to her office, but she said Clarke never came to me and said he was frustrated in his job or the way the new team was handling things. He was certainly frustrated with the bureaucracy. We were doing all the things that were done in the Clinton administration, Rice said. (U)

In addition, the Bush administration was taking up the issues Clarke couldn't get resolved in the Clinton administration: armed Predator, aid to the Northern Alliance, aid to Uzbekistan. They had an honest policy disagreement about Masood, but that was a "call I'm paid to make," Rice said. ~~TS~~ 25X1

She told Clarke that the national coordinator role will continue, Rice said. "I have the flattest organization in Washington," Rice said. If he needed anything from the principals or a decision, Clarke only had to ask. (U)

Rice said she does not remember Clarke asking to brief President Bush on terrorism. Clarke did brief the president on cybersecurity. They had a procedure for senior directors to follow if they wanted to brief the president; Rice implied that Clarke did not avail himself of it. (U)

The March 2001 Draft MON and Finding

Tenet never told Rice or President Bush that he needed more CA authorities. "And George is not shy," Rice added. (TS25X1)

Early in the Bush administration, Clarke and Mary McCarthy (of the NSC's Intel Directorate) said that had had some trouble getting focus on issues related to UBL and Masood. Clarke and McCarthy, with Rice's support, asked for a draft MON and finding on covert action in Afghanistan. The two NSC aides saw the covert action piece with the Northern Alliance as part of an ongoing conversation with the CIA. So Rice tasked the CIA to produce the draft MON and finding. The CIA gave them to Hadley at one of the regular APNSA-DCI weekly meetings, which Rice could not attend because she was with the president elsewhere. Tenet was uncomfortable about moving ahead on the MON before the policy had been done, so the draft documents were used as a tool to develop policy. (TS25X1)

Rice stressed that we—i.e., the NSC—asked for the draft MON and finding. Rice described the draft authorities as "consolidation plus." Tenet was not ready to go ahead with them, and they had to rely on the DCI. (TS25X1)

The draft findings were folded into the DC-level policy review on al Qaeda, Rice said. Both the draft documents were supposed to stimulate discussion—not to be signed. Rice said she doesn't think she read either document. One time, Rice suggested circulating the draft documents to principals. Rice said that was more important for them was the context for the authorities. *[Commission note: Rice did not always distinguish precisely between the draft MON and the draft finding, often referring to "the findings." We have no evidence either draft document was ever shown to other principals.]* (TS25X1)

The Policy Review

After the transition, Rice said, she felt that U.S. policy on al Qaeda was at a cul de sac and required review. "I didn't like the idea of rollback of al Qaeda" or the previous administration's concept of turning it into something like the Abu Nidal Organization, Rice said. Rather, she wanted to eliminate al Qaeda. That meant they needed a major reorientation, more military options, more covert action, and more covert action resources. Rice said she was struck that that 1998-style strikes on empty camps were the only military options they had. (TS25X1)

So she asked Clarke for a more robust, properly resourced strategy, even while they kept the current authorities and CT programs. Some of the ideas that came out of this were good; others were not. Among the good ideas were Predator (possibly armed), moves on terrorist financing (where Rice said the Treasury Department adds 24 people in spring 2001), and covert aid to Uzbekistan (where two out of the three ideas were approved).

We looked at the individual bits that Clarke suggests while doing the broad strategy review, Rice said. ~~(TS)~~ 25X1

Rice did not think that arming Masood was a good idea. Arming the Northern Alliance had implications for Afghanistan, Pakistan, and so on. ~~(TS)~~ 25X1

The *Cole* and Military Planning

They were trying very hard to get the FBI access to one person in custody in Yemen, Rice said. They also had intel about al Qaeda links to the attack. The administration wanted to bring people to justice for the *Cole*, but they had very limited options. ~~(LES)~~

No formal decision was ever made to put off a response to the *Cole*, Rice said. She had at least conversation with President Bush about the *Cole*. (U)

During the 2000 campaign, then-Gov. Bush had spoken out against doing anything weak by way of response. The Bush team considered the 1998 airstrikes weak, Rice said. Intel reports said UBL was waiting for U.S. retaliation so that he crow that he had yet again survived America's attacks. A weak response was more damaging than no response, Rice said. (U)

They were in no position to do something stronger than had been done in 1998. The draft NSPD called for contingency military planning for striking al Qaeda and the Taliban and destroying the Taliban. To get more military options, they needed a push from OSD, Rice said. When the draft NSPD first circulated on June 6, 2001, the military planning requirement was set. ~~(TS)~~

They did not task DOD to plan retaliation options if al Qaeda struck again before June 6, Rice said, although such options would probably have been included in those plans. ~~(TS)~~

Clarke asked for more limited military options than those tasked on June 6, Rice said. That tasking called for using force in the context of a policy on al Qaeda that needed reorientation. June 6 was the point when they could do military planning in a way that wasn't a blue-sky exercise, she said. "The military didn't particularly want this mission," Rice said. Nor did they like it; DOD officials asked how they were going to take down the 13th century Taliban regime. The June 6 draft challenged the Pentagon to look at boots-on-the-ground options. The Bush administration was not going to invade Afghanistan in spring 2001 for the *Cole*, Rice said. ~~(TS)~~

Even after 9/11, the military said the best response is cruise missiles, Rice said. President Bush's impulse after 9/11 was to wait until they had a robust military option including boots on the ground so as to use force decisively. "I don't think this policy took a long time," Rice said. ~~(TS)~~

Policy toward Pakistan and Afghanistan

In mid-June 2001, Rice had the Pakistani foreign minister in. She says she was just leveling him about al Qaeda and "really let him have it." Rice said she told him that

Russia will start targeting Pakistan for backing Chechen terrorism via Pakistani support for the Taliban. As she was upbraiding Sattar, Rice said she thought, He's heard it all before. The Pakistani diplomat just sat there, and the criticisms didn't register. The USG Pakistan/Taliban policy was not working. ~~(C)~~

The administration was looking for a combination of carrots and sticks. The USG had an "understandable allergy" to being too close to Pakistan. Jawboning Pakistani leaders about the Taliban was not working. But if we can tell the Pakistanis we'll bring the Taliban down, Islamabad might respond differently. But you also had to consider the impact this would have on India, which brought it into the policy review, too. ~~(C)~~

Rice told Pakistan's foreign minister that "we won't tolerate the Taliban," although it was unclear what that meant. (U)

The administration considered trying to topple the Taliban by trying to foment a coup or by reaching out to all Taliban opponents—not just the Northern Alliance. We needed a "Pashtun strategy," Rice said. The USG had few ties in southern and southeastern Afghanistan, which proved to be a problem after 9/11 when Washington wanted to send fighters against the Taliban from both the south and the north. A Pashtun strategy would help Pakistan, which feared that the Northern Alliance would push out the Pashtuns. *[Commission note: the alliance is dominated by ethnic Tajiks.]* ~~(TS)~~

The CIA was giving nonlethal aid to the NA, Rice said. Their idea was to have Masood tie down some al Qaeda fighters and get enough aid to help Masood survive, even though he was already getting aid from Russia and Iran. Clarke and CIA proposed giving ~~25X1~~ to Masood to see what he can do. *[Commission note: this seems to have been proposed as a first installment.]* Rice said that giving that ~~25X1~~ in isolation didn't make sense. Masood was just sitting up in the northern corner of Afghanistan, and she doesn't know what difference the aid would have made. ~~(TS//25X1)~~

Masood came with a lot of baggage. The Clinton administration's State Department had been concerned with NA human rights violations; the Bush administration was more concerned with whether Masood's capabilities outweighed his downsides, Rice said. They hoped to use Masood within a broader strategy. ~~(C)~~

Powell and Armitage were not resisting aid to the NA, unlike past leaders at State. Everyone was impressed with the seriousness of the al Qaeda problem, Rice said. ~~(C)~~

In response to a question from Commissioner Ben-Veniste, Rice said she had never heard of the idea of using Masood to try to kill UBL and did not recall this being an issue under discussion. She added that she didn't know whether Masood had the capabilities to penetrate al Qaeda for such an operation; indeed, he was penetrated the other way in September 2001. ~~(TS//25X1)~~

Armed Predator

Early in the Bush administration, ~~25X1~~

25X1

Rice did not object. No armed Predator version was available in spring 2001. Issues about the armed drone were mostly discussed in the DC; Rice also talked with Tenet and Rumsfeld about armed Predator.

~~(TS)~~25X1

We were told that the most likely window to fly armed Predator would be fall 2001, but there were problems with the missile in the summer. Hadley wanted to get the armed version ready by September 1. They planned to get the recon version ready in late spring 2001; it seems to have been ready July 1, Rice said. ~~(TS)~~25X1

The administration had an important discussion about whether recon flights would hurt future armed missions. Since the difference between July 1 (when the recon version would be ready) and September 1 (when Hadley had directed that the armed version be ready) was relatively small, they decided to wait to fly the armed version, Rice said. Clarke said that the armed version would be ready in fall 2001, and TNT concurred. By consensus, we decided not to fly the recon version, Rice said. ~~(TS)~~25X1

The September 4, 2001 PC raised a new issue: who would fire armed Predator? Tenet very strongly argued that it not be him. They had a "really impassioned discussion" about having the USG, in peacetime, have the DCI—who was not in the chain of command to the president—assassinate someone, Rice said. They discussed a new chain of command—and even the possibility of Rice herself firing it, which she wasn't enthusiastic about. We would have resolved this if 9/11 hadn't happened, Rice said. ~~(TS)~~25X1

Weaponizing Predator was not an easy matter. If it went badly, everyone would come crashing down on the IC, and you could go back to the same errors of the 1970s, when, in Rice's view, the CIA was made to be too timid. ~~(TS)~~25X1

Clarke thinks that Predator saw UBL three times in 2000; others disagree, Rice said. She never looked at Predator video. *[Commission note: Barton Gellman of the Washington Post has reported that Rice was shown Predator video in the Sit Room on January 10, 2001.]* ~~(TS)~~25X1

The time on target [seemingly, the amount of time a recon Predator would have to stay on UBL before a cruise missile launch] was pretty long with TLAMs. That's the real value of armed Predator, Rice said: you can spot and fire in real-time. Armed Predator was a real breakthrough; to the extent that flying recon missions would burn the armed version, it wasn't worth it for a few extra months of recon. ~~(TS)~~25X1

Actionable Intelligence

Tenet never had actionable intelligence on UBL, Rice said. In our time, the DCI never came to us with an option to use lethal force against UBL. ~~(TS)~~25X1

Rice returned to this theme later in the interview. The second time, she said they never got actionable intel saying UBL was somewhere where we could act against him. If they

had gotten actionable intel, CIA had people in Afghanistan. In parallel, Tenet was continuing to try to get actionable intel and act under the existing authorities even as they were developing a more robust strategy. (TS25X1)

The Role of President Bush

In May 2001, at the start of the spike in warnings about terrorist threats, President Bush remarked that he wanted to go on the offensive, Rice said. *[Commission note: this has also been reported, in slightly different form, in the Washington Post, with Rice and seemingly Hadley as sources. Bush is said to have remarked to Rice, during an Oval Office briefing from her with Vice President Cheney and Chief of Staff Card present, "I'm tired of swatting flies. I'm tired of playing defense. I want to play offense. I want to take the fight to the terrorists."]* In one meeting with Tenet in May 2001, during a discussion of disruptions of cells here and there, Rice said that President Bush said, "I'm tired of swatting at flies." (U)

Rice said she later told Hadley that she'd just had a quite uncomfortable conversation with the president about the pace. The president constantly pushed us, Rice said. She added that she told President Bush that it would take three years or so for their al Qaeda strategy to work. (U)

The president asked whether killing UBL would mean ending al Qaeda. Tenet replied no; UBL had lieutenants and an entire network. Rumsfeld made a similar point, Rice said; the defense secretary would always cross out "UBL" on documents and write "al Qaeda" instead. (U)

The president was briefed more than 50 times on the al Qaeda threat, Rice said. (U)

When the policy review was done, President Bush would have done the speech to roll it out, Rice said. She said she would not have recommended a presidential speech on terrorism during the threat spike; even now, during alerts, such things are tough. (U)

The Role of the Principals and the PC

We used PCs for policy development on issues coming up from the DC. The deputies weren't freelancing, and principals were engaged before the issues came to a full PC. (U)

All principals were constantly briefed on al Qaeda in SEIBs, which contained more than 50 items on the subject, Rice said. Rice, Rumsfeld, and Powell handled operational matters in their daily 7:15 a.m. phone call, as well as their weekly lunch and other conversations. (C)

The administration held PCs to decide on matters that were ripe for decision, Rice said. She would sometimes ask for paper exercises and obviate the need for a formal PC meeting by having principals vote on the paper that was circulated. (U)

Rice didn't feel that Predator was a PC issue yet, she said. They resolved the issue of who'd pay for Predator in days. After Hadley's plan to bridge the CIA-DOD divide fell

apart, she called Rumsfeld [CK that in Kojm/Zelikow notes] and the issue got resolved.
(TS 25X1)

During the June/July threat spike, the principals talked during their 7:15 a.m. call about what's being done about the threat, including operational details about alerting diplomatic posts and military facilities. They didn't need a PC for this to be done, Rice said. The Bush team managed crisis *outside* of PC meetings, not in them. During the 11 days of the EP-3 plane crisis with China, they never held a PC, Rice said. (C)

The PC was supposed to meet twice a week, Rice said. Major subjects for pre-9/11 PCs included the Middle East peace process (where things were really falling apart, and the PC met to deal with the Mitchell report, the Zinni mission, and the Tenet plan), the Persian Gulf (with US planes over Iraq), and Russia (with some missile-defense issues probably subsumed in the Russia meetings). We had a lot of policy issues to contend with, Rice said. We could rely on Clarke to let us know when we needed to do things. (U)

The CSG was a pretty high-level body, Rice noted, with representatives at the assistant secretary or undersecretary level. (U)

9/11 happened at a point in time when we had built good relationships with Russia, China, and other major powers, Rice said. (U)

The first few NSPDs of the administration were organizational. The first substantive NSPD the Bush administration did was on Georgia, Rice said, and the very next one after that was on al Qaeda. (C)

Rice said she never discussed the Clinton administration's Small Group—a smaller version of the PC that handled close-hold decisions on al Qaeda—with Clarke. The vice president, Rumsfeld, Powell, and Rice have lunch once a week, Rice said; that's a small group. The principals held a lot of informal talks, and they had a lot of faith in this DC. (U)

The Summer of Threat

During the summer 2001 threat spike, we responded to the intel that was there, which pointed to the Gulf, Israel, or other foreign locations, Rice said. Clarke asked her to ask the DCI about Abu Zubaydah, and she asked Tenet what he was doing. It sounded pretty aggressive, Rice said. President Bush also sent a letter to Musharraf about the Taliban; Powell talked to the Pakistanis; Rice chewed out the Pakistani foreign minister and got the sense that he'd heard it all before. The principals were involved without meeting every day. (S)

Rice said they may have disrupted a terrorist plot in summer 2001—not that we let our guard down, she added. But there was no threat-reporting stream about attacks inside the United States. Moreover, the FBI's mentality was centered around law enforcement, not prevention—something that Mueller has addressed since 9/11. (S)

Despite the absence of threat reporting about attacks inside America in summer 2001, the president was concerned, Rice said. According to Rice, he asked where else attacks could occur. Acting on gut instinct rather than intel, Card and Rice asked Clarke about involving domestic agencies in the alert. So general warnings went out: the FAA sent out a circular citing a particular concern about hijackings, and the FBI issued MLATs to local law enforcement. ~~(C)~~

The CSG was the crisis management tool. Rice did ask that Attorney General Ashcroft be briefed during the threat spike. Clarke was saying that things were getting done. All Clarke had to do was come to me and say I need a quick decision, Rice said, and she'd do it. Dick did a terrific job for me, Rice said; at his recommendation, we concentrated on going on the offensive against al Qaeda, not on defending the homeland. It was her intervention with Clarke that got the domestic agencies into the CSG in July 2001, Rice said. (U)

Nobody ever told her about the Clinton administration's After Action Review after the Millennium crisis, Rice said. (U)

Rice said they pushed Treasury on terrorist financing. (U)

Their tendency was to look what the light was—outside the United States, Rice said. This is an intel-driven business. She didn't know what they could have said to the American people in summer 2001: that al Qaeda may hit the United States on an unknown date, in an unknown place, using unknown means? All of the reporting pointed abroad. Without anything other than a pretty vague sense that al Qaeda might strike at home, what else could they do? (U)

The August 6, 2001 PDB

The president was very engaged and interactive in his PDB sessions, Rice said. One time, during the 2001 alert, after getting so much threat reporting about al Qaeda in the Gulf, President Bush asked about what al Qaeda could do in America, according to Rice. (U)

That led to the August 6, 2001 PDB, which noted that UBL had admired the 1993 attack on the Twin Towers but was not current information in any way. Rice said the PDB mentioned a contact to Embassy UAE reporting that someone wanted to use explosives in the United States. But that seemed to be a crank call, she said; they had nothing to act on in the United States. ~~(TS)~~

According to Rice, the PDB included a section about hijackings, which mentioned that jihadists might take hostages to trade for the blind shaykh, Umar Abd al-Rahman. The PDB also made a general mention of hijackings, she added. ~~(TS)~~

The FBI and DOJ

FBI's CT resources were going up, Rice said; the problem was structure, not resources. We were only here for seven months before 9/11, she noted. "Trying to restructure the

FBI was not on my agenda," Rice said. They only got a new FBI director on September 9 or 10, she said, and he was on it within days. ~~(LES)~~

The attorney general, who also got a late start, was briefed on the summer 2001 threat. We didn't have to address structural issues, Rice said. [CK Kojm/Zelikow notes] What was put before us is eliminating al Qaeda abroad. ~~(C)~~

We had a "trough" between domestic and foreign issues, Rice said. This was partly because of discomfort with having CIA have access to domestic information; moreover, FBI feared that sharing information would taint prosecutions. ~~(LES)~~

FBI had no ability to do an analytic piece before 9/11, Rice said. (U)

Al Qaeda in America

Clarke thought that al Qaeda had sleeper cells inside the United States; Rice said she did not know what basis he had for that. The FBI was actively trying to find al Qaeda personnel. Rice didn't talk with Clarke before 9/11 about the potential of al Qaeda sleeper cells inside America. ~~(LES)~~

After 9/11, she learned of the belief that there were Iranian sleeper cells in the United States. ~~(S)~~

Homeland Security

Rice said that 9/11 pulled together foreign and domestic efforts. Before the creation of DHS, homeland security meetings practically had to be held in an auditorium in order to find a room big enough to pull all the relevant people together. (U)

DHS and TTIC are good innovations, Rice said. Integration is the next frontier. They've finally got all the right people at the table. ~~(C)~~

Domestic intelligence is a "dirty word," Rice said. But we can't have a divide; Tenet must be able to tell Mueller if a terrorist from Yemen shows up in Buffalo. ~~(C)~~

Rice expressed her concern that, as 9/11 fades, institutional changes won't get the full benefit. It's important to keep intel and law enforcement capabilities together. Before 9/11, structurally, we couldn't monitor threats inside the United States. But as the attacks recede, Rice said she fears the balance will tilt the wrong way again. (U)

Rice and Homeland Security Adviser John Gordon now share a common deputy, Fran Townsend. (U)

Planes as Missiles

Rice said she misspoke at her May 2002 press conference, in which she said nobody could have imagined the use of planes as missiles. I should have said that I couldn't have imagined using planes as missiles, Rice said. She later learned of earlier reports about this tactic. (U)

Dan Marcus noted that Italian authorities, concerned about terrorists' possible use of planes as missiles, had closed the airspace over Genoa during the summer 2001 G-8 summit there and set up air defense batteries. Rice replied that she didn't know why "no one made the leap of imagination." Now, they do more "Red Team" exercises. Everyone closes airspace, she noted, even for events like the Super Bowl. Rice said she did not know why all the elements were not pulled together. (U)

Iraq and the War on Terrorism

Mike Hurley noted that Bob Woodward's *Bush at War* reports that Rumsfeld and Deputy Defense Secretary Wolfowitz raised the possibility of moving against Iraq in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. Rice said the administration defined its campaign early on as a global war on terrorism, not just on al Qaeda. She added that you can't ask for support from your friends if you ignore their own problems with terrorism. By September 13, the DC had prepared a document saying that U.S. objectives were global. ~~(C)~~

The issue of moving against Iraq was really raised at Camp David, Rice said. There were fears that Iraq would take advantage of the 9/11 attacks. Rumsfeld asked, What should we do about Iraq? Wolfowitz made the case for doing Iraq during "this round" of the war on terrorism. On Sunday [September 16], Rice said, President Bush called her and said, It's Afghanistan, but I want plans about Iraq if they do something or if we find out about Iraqi involvement in 9/11. (U)

On Iraq, Rice said they felt they were doing a daily tit-for-tat exercise in the no-fly zones. ~~(C)~~

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is an important U.S. ally in the Gulf, Rice said. There's a different U.S.-Saudi strategic dynamic after the fall of Saddam Hussein, which ended the need for U.S. bases inside the kingdom. (U)

The Saudi government didn't understand its own al Qaeda problem very well, Rice said. She said that she was unclear if Saudi government money was going into NGOs that were backing terrorism but, when questioned by Warren Bass, left that possibility open; she said she was sure that private Saudi citizens' money was going into terror-supporting NGOs. ~~(C)~~

After the May 12 Riyadh attack, Saudi Arabia has been far more aggressive on al Qaeda. Rice noted that the United States had also had a problem too [with coming to terms with the scope of the threat]; in 1998, she pooh-pooched Russian reports that Middle Eastern funds were being sent to Islamist rebels in Chechnya, which turned out to be true. ~~(C)~~

A Global War on Terrorism

We have a strong, articulated strategy for a global war on terrorism, Rice said. We created a broad coalition to see jihadi terrorism as an attack on the international state

system similar to pan-Germanism or communism. So you had India and Pakistan on the same side of the terror divide, Rice noted.

The administration was able to get similar cooperation on terrorist financing. They were trying to "cut the arms and legs off" the UBL network, "not just its head." (U)

U.S. foreign policy after 9/11 had to be based on the principle of with us or against us, Rice said. You can't "hate al Qaeda and hug Hezbollah," she added. (U)

Their concern about another 9/11—this time involving WMD—also made them think differently about counterproliferation policy, Rice said. (U)

But the president says this all of this is short term, Rice said. "The root of the problem is the Middle East," she argued. Iraq and Afghanistan are part of a long-term solution. Unless there's a change in the political conditions in the Middle East, we will have terrorists "til all of us are too old to care." (U)

People are looking for a silver bullet, Rice said. She urged the Commission to tell the United States that this will be a long struggle—and that killing UBL won't end it. Rice recalled her time as an inhabitant of northern California and said that, at some level, she'd like terrorism to be handled by people somewhat like they deal with the risk of earthquakes. You take precautions, but you just live your daily life, albeit with the awareness of the risk. (U)

Miscellaneous

Rice does not favor the creation of a DNI. (U)

Rice said she would be glad to make herself available to the Commission for follow-ups. (U)

Bob Woodward got no access to PDBs or classified documents from us, Rice said. We cooperated with Woodward so that the story was accurate in *Bush at War*. (U)

Day of 9/11 [TK, from Dana Hyde off WB and PZ notes]

On the morning of 9/11 Rice was in the conference room of the Situation Room chairing a 0900 meeting of NSC senior directors.

Rice learned of the first hit on the World Trade Center from her executive assistant, and believed it to be accidental (not a jet liner). Once in the Situation Room she received a note informing her of the second hit on World Trade Center II. She immediately thought the strikes were a terrorist attack, and asked for Dick Clarke.

Rice reached out to the relevant principals: she spoke to Tenet, tried but could not reach Rumsfeld, and feared that Powell was in Colombia (when in fact he was in Peru).

Rice learned of the attack on the Pentagon by viewing the wreckage on television from the Situation Room. The Secret Service informed her of a threat to the White House and moved her to the PEOC. Rice phoned the President en route to the PEOC, and informed him that he should not return because Washington was under attack. *[Commission Note: In an interview with Evan Thomas on November 11, 2001 Rice stated that she called the President from the Situation Room, before leaving for the bunker ("Now, back in the Situation Room, I talked to the President one last time before I went to the bunker."); the Situation Room log and the President's Daily Diary reflect a call between the President and Rice at 0940.]*

Rice estimated that she entered the PEOC between 0950 and 0955. She heard the Vice President on an "open line" with the President saying that CAPS were up, and that they may need ROE. She also heard the Vice President saying "yes sir," and assumed the Vice President and President were talking about specific authorizations.

Rice was asked about a phone call from Prince Bandar at 1225. Rice stated that she believes the call was not substantive, but rather to convey condolences. She took several similar calls that morning; at the time she did not know the hijackers were from Saudi Arabia. Rice believes the first mention of UBL culpability was during the afternoon NSC meeting that took place via teleconference from Offutt Air Force Base.

Rice did not recall the issue of the evacuation of Saudi citizens coming up in the call with Bandar. Rice was aware that Saudis left the country, but did not recall who authorized their departure. Dick Clarke did not raise the issue with her (WB CHECK NOTES); she first she learned of the issue from the press.

Regarding the threat to Air Force One, Rice stated that in the days after 9/11 she learned the threat "might have been a garble," although she never heard definitively. On 9/11 it made perfect sense to consider it a real threat. Rice was absolutely convinced the President should not return to Washington, given the hit at the Pentagon and (false) report of a car bomb at the State Department.

Regarding the possibility of a fifth aircraft, Rice stated that later intelligence from detainees and others has pretty much established that only four planes were involved in the attacks.