

and contributed to the attack of September 11.

My point today is that the leaks, the disclosures of the last couple of weeks, both from the FBI and now the indication of the CIA briefing to the President, just reinforces within me the fact that we need such an independent commission. In fact, in some ways it may argue even in a different more forceful sense for such a commission. If we don't have a comprehensive, public, official investigation, I fear leaks related to September 11 and the tragedy that occurred will continue for months, for years. We ought to try as best we can through the intelligence committee investigations and through such an independent commission to answer all the questions that can possibly be answered.

That is what I intend, I believe, with my colleagues: To offer this as an amendment at an early time.

I respond to the points the Senator from Arizona makes about the most recent disclosures on briefing to the President. They are quite on point. It is very important not to overreact to them. For the record, I have not in this case received any of the classified briefings. I speak based on publicly available sources in the media. Those are the reports of the various FBI memos that went into Washington and now this report of the CIA briefing of the President.

What truly troubles me and gnaws at me is not the President's behavior because, of course, if he had any indication in the briefing that an attack was imminent, he would have acted as Commander in Chief. My concern is about the quality of the information working its way up to the President as Commander in Chief.

More particularly, was there any point of connection between what we now know are the FBI memo's concerns about Moussoui's conduct in Minnesota at the flight school, the agent in Phoenix who had broader concerns, very acute, and unfortunately turns out to be right to the point, did those intersect on anyone's desk with the information that the CIA had which was the basis of a longer briefing to the President last summer in a way that would have led anyone to reach a more specific conclusion that they could have taken to the President?

I agree, there ought not be an overreaction. My reaction is, as I stated, as to whether all the systems underneath the President, as Commander in Chief, worked together as we would want them to, to be able to alert him to what was about to happen. And in a more direct sense, was this in any measure preventable?

I even ask the question with a sense of humility because I know the difficulty in an investigation of this kind. It is that which motivates me, and I am sure would motivate a commission and Intelligence Committees more than any second-guessing on the President's behavior.

I know we have used our time. I thank my colleague. I look forward to talking to him off the floor, and I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Two o'clock having arrived, under the previous order, the Senate will stand in recess until the hour of 3 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 2 p.m., recessed until 3:01 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. REID).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York is recognized.

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, are we in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is not in morning business. We are on the trade bill.

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator will proceed.

INVESTIGATE 9-11

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I rise today out of respect for and to speak on behalf of the people I represent in New York. I am especially mindful today of the memory of those whom we lost on September 11, their family members and their loved ones who, until this very minute, grieve for those who were sacrificed in the terrible attacks we suffered on September 11.

We have learned something today that raises a number of serious questions. We have learned that President Bush had been informed last year, before September 11, of a possible plot by those associated with Osama bin Laden to hijack a U.S. airliner. The White House says the President took all appropriate steps in reaction to that warning. The White House further says that the warning did not include any specific information, such as which airline, which date, or the fact that a hijacked plane would be used as a missile. Those are all very important issues, worthy of exploration by the relevant committees of Congress. The goal of such an examination should not be to assign blame but to find out all of the facts.

I also support the effort by Senators LIEBERMAN and MCCAIN to establish an independent national commission on terrorist attacks upon the United States. That was reported out of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee in March. Such a panel can help assure the people of New York and America that every facet of this national tragedy will be fully examined in hopes that the lessons we learn can prevent disasters in the future.

I very much appreciated the remarks by Senator LIEBERMAN in the Chamber earlier today, indicating his desire to offer this proposal that he and Senator MCCAIN have put forth as an amendment at the earliest possible time.

Because we must do all we can to learn the hard lessons of experience from our past and apply them to safeguard our future, I also support the call by the distinguished majority leader, Mr. DASCHLE, for the release of the Phoenix FBI memorandum and the August intelligence briefing to congressional investigators, because, as Senator DASCHLE said this morning, the American people need to get the facts.

I do know some things about the unique challenges faced by the person who assumes the mantle of Commander in Chief. I do not for a minute doubt that any individual who holds that responsibility is the only person who can truly know the full scope of the burdens of that office. Just the other day there was a survey about the most difficult job in America, the most stressful position. It should not come as any surprise that President of the United States ranked at the top.

I have had the privilege of witnessing history up close, and I know there is never any shortage of second guessers and Monday morning quarterbacks, ready to dismantle any comment or critique any action taken or not taken. Having experienced that from the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, I for one will not play that game, especially in these circumstances. I am simply here today on the floor of this hallowed Chamber to seek answers to the questions being asked by my constituents, questions raised by one of our newspapers in New York with the headline "Bush Knew."

The President knew what? My constituents would like to know the answer to that and many other questions, not to blame the President or any other American but just to know, to learn from experience, to do all we can today to ensure that a 9-11 never happens again.

If we look back, we know that the Phoenix FBI memorandum in early July raised very specific issues about certain people of Arab heritage who were taking flying lessons. For what purpose? To do what?

We know that shortly after there was at least the news report of the Attorney General sending a directive that people of the Justice Department should no longer fly commercially. In fact, the Attorney General took a chartered plane for his own vacation.

We know that in August additional information came forward, including what we learned today about the intelligence briefing provided to the President.

The pain of 9-11 is revisited in thousands of homes in New York and around our country every time that terrible scene of those planes going into those towers and then their collapse appears on television. It is revisited in our minds every time we see a picture of the cleanup at Ground Zero. It is revisited every time the remains of a fallen hero are recovered, as they were yesterday for Deputy Chief Downey. And it is revisited today with the

questions about what might have been had the pieces of the puzzle been put together in a different way before that sad and tragic day in September.

I cannot answer the questions my constituents are asking. I cannot answer the concerns raised by the families of the victims. As agonizing as it is even to think that there was intelligence suggesting the possibility of the tragedy that occurred, particularly for the family members who lost their husband, their wife, their son, their daughter, their niece, their nephew, their mother, their father, it is a subject we are absolutely required to explore.

As for the President, he may not be in a position at this time to respond to all of those concerns, but he is in a position to answer some of them, including the question of why we know today, May 16, about the warning he received. Why did we not know this on April 16 or March 16 or February or January 16 or August 16 of last year?

I do hope and trust that the President will assume the duty that we know he is capable of fulfilling, exercise the leadership that we know he has, and come before the American people, at the earliest possible time, to answer the questions so many New Yorkers and Americans are asking. That will be a very great help to all of us.

I know my constituents want those answers, particularly the families who still today wonder why their loved one went to work that beautiful September morning and did not come home from the World Trade Center or the Pentagon or those airplane flights. After all, in the grieving process, it is often the not knowing that hurts the most.

I hope the President will address these issues, will do so as soon as possible, and will also authorize the release of any other information that New Yorkers and Americans have a right to know. I certainly look forward to learning of and being able to share that information with the people I represent.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BAYH). The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I have some remarks on another subject I would like to make. I commend our colleague and friend from New York for her comments. I associate myself with her remarks. I think all Americans would.

Obviously, it is critically important we know all that we possibly can of what occurred. If there was, in fact, information that should have been acted on, it is critically important we know about it, what happened, and why actions were not taken, so we minimize the possibility of the events of September 11 from occurring again.

We all realize, as our colleague and friend from New York has pointed out, it is a difficult job being the Chief Executive Officer of this country, the Commander in Chief. And there is a vo-

luminous amount of material that arrives every day from our national security agencies and services. But when you get information this specific, this detailed, arriving from a variety of different sources, then someone should have taken better action, in my view.

So I am hopeful we will get a response. It is critically important for the healing process and for understanding exactly what occurred. So I commend the Senator for her remarks and associate myself with them.

COMMENDING PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I commend our former Chief Executive of the country—former President Ronald Reagan. I just attended a ceremony in the Rotunda of the Capitol honoring former President Ronald Reagan and Nancy Reagan. We are from different parties, and we had disagreements during his administration. But one thing can be said about President Ronald Reagan: Whatever disagreements or agreements you may have had on specific policy issues, Ronald Reagan gave this country a strong sense of confidence and optimism.

We had come through a difficult time in the 1970s, with Watergate, the Iranian crisis, and the energy crisis that had been debilitating to our spirit. Ronald Reagan restored our Nation's confidence in itself. I commend the President. I know he is suffering from Alzheimer's, and Mrs. Reagan has taken on the heroic efforts of being his eyes and ears in the sense of speaking for him where appropriate. It was a very moving ceremony in the Rotunda, where both the President and First Lady were recognized with the Congressional Gold Medal.

So as one Democrat, to a former Republican President, but more importantly a great American President, I express my gratitude to him for his service, and Mrs. Reagan for her remarkable service both to her husband and family and this country.

COMMENDING PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER

Mr. DODD. Secondly, Mr. President, I commend President Carter for his work this week. I have been so impressed with the efforts that President Carter has made in Cuba during the past 4 or 5 days. I think he has spoken for many of us in this country during his visit to Cuba.

While in Cuba, President Carter addressed the Cuban people on national radio and television—a unique opportunity in a country that is a totalitarian regime where democracy has had no expression now for more than four decades.

In having been granted permission to address the Cuban people, President Carter was given a right that no Cuban other than the President of the country, and those who agree with him, has

been given—the opportunity to speak freely about democratic values, values that we embrace as a people and the 11 million people of Cuba embrace as well.

In his address, President Carter urged the government of Cuba to allow democracy to be restored, and asked that pro-democracy petitions be allowed to be collected, and respected.

He simultaneously called for the U.S. government to allow free travel to Cuba and stated his belief that our government should begin to lift our embargo. I commend him for those comments.

The only place I know of in the world that we prohibit our citizens from traveling to is the island of Cuba. You can go to Iraq. You can go to North Korea. You can go to Iran. You can go to any other country around the globe, some of which are our most devout enemies when it comes to terrorism. You may be stopped from entering by the governments of those countries, but our Government does not prohibit you from going. Cuba is the only country where Americans are prohibited from entering by our country.

And for the hundreds of thousands of Cuban Americans who have family and loved ones there, who are only allowed to go back once a year, who would like to go and see their family members more than once a year, perhaps to go see an ailing parent or grandparent, I find this to be a particularly onerous provision in American law. I hope it will be changed, just as I am hopeful that change will come to Cuba and democracy will arrive on that island so the people will have the opportunity to elect and choose their political leadership.

In summary, President Carter, by calling upon the Cuban Government to change its ways and our own Government to change some policies, I think gave the appropriate message; one that can be appreciated not only here, but on the island of Cuba by the Cuban people and freedom-loving people around the globe.

So today, I take this moment to express my gratitude to this former President who, in his retirement, has accomplished so many wonderful things and become such a wonderful symbol for human rights and dignity and democracy around the globe.

I am proud to stand here and honor two former Presidents who faced each other in an election 1980, but in their own way have made unique contributions to our Nation. President Carter continues to do so. I commend him for his work in Cuba and look forward to his return and hearing from him. I am hopeful that he will come before us in Congress in some setting in which he might be able to describe his feelings about events in Cuba while sharing his opinion of what the prospects hold for the future.

With that, Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.