August 6, 2001, 10th "Anniversary" of 9/11 Warning -

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BEN-VENISTE: Isn't it a fact, Dr. Rice, that the Aug. 6 P.D.B. warned against possible attacks in this country? [...]
RICE: You said did it not warn of attacks. It did not warn of attacks inside the United States. It was historical information based on old reporting. There was no new threat information. And it did not, in fact, warn of any coming attacks inside the United States.

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HCT=http://www.historycommons.org/timeline.jsp?warning_signs:_specific_cases=complete_911_timeline__strike_in_us__pdb&timeline=complete_911_timeline
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[HCT]"While National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice will claim the memo is only one and a half pages long, other accounts state it is 11 1/2 pages instead of the usual two or three"

[HCT} "In retrospect, the briefing is remarkable for the many warnings that apparently are not included (see for instance, from the summer of 2001 prior to August alone: May 2001, June 2001, June 12, 2001, June 19, 2001, Late Summer 2001, July 2001, July 16, 2001, Late July 2001, Late July 2001, Summer 2001, June 30-July 1, 2001, July 10, 2001, and Early August 2001). According to one account, after the PDB has been given to him, Bush tells the CIA briefer, “You’ve covered your ass now” (see August 6, 2001). Incredibly, the New York Times later reports that after being given the briefing, Bush “[breaks] off from work early and [spends] most of the day fishing.”"

"According to journalist and author Ron Suskind, just after a CIA briefer presents President Bush with the later infamous PDB (Presidential Daily Briefing) item entitled “Bin Laden Determined to Strike in US” (see August 6, 2001), Bush tells the briefer, “You’ve covered your ass, now.” This account is from Suskind’s 2006 book The One Percent Doctrine, which is based largely on anonymous accounts from political insiders. In the book, after describing the presentation of the PDB, Suskind will write: “And, at an eyeball-to-eyeball intelligence briefing during this urgent summer, George W. Bush seems to have made the wrong choice. He looked hard at the panicked CIA briefer. ‘All right,’ he said. ‘You’ve covered your ass, now.’”"

August 6, 2001: Bush Misled on Number and Extent of FBI’s Bin Laden Investigations

The CIA’s Presidential Daily Briefing (PDB) given to President Bush on this day (see August 6, 2001) contains the important line, “The FBI is conducting approximately 70 full field investigations throughout the US that it considers bin Laden-related.” Bush will state in 2004 that, based on this, “I was satisfied that some of the matters were being looked into.” National Security Adviser Rice will explain that since the FBI had 70 “full-field investigations under way

of cells” in the US, “there was no recommendation [coming from the White House] that we do something about” the large number of warnings coming in. However, the number and content of the FBI investigations appears grossly exaggerated. The FBI later will reveal that the investigations are not limited to al-Qaeda and do not focus on al-Qaeda cells. Many were criminal investigations, which typically are not likely to help prevent future terrorist acts. An FBI spokesman will say the FBI does not know how that number got into Bush’s PDB. The 9/11 Commission will later conclude, “The 70 full-field investigations number was a generous calculation that included fund-raising investigations. It also counted each individual connected to an investigation as a separate full-field investigation. Many of these investigations should not have been included, such as the one that related to a dead person, four that concerned people who had been in long-term custody, and eight that had been closed well before August 6, 2001.”

SEE THE ENTIRE HCT, IT'S EXCELLENT . . .
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http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/29/AR2009052901560.html

Richard Clarke:

The first response they discussed was invading Iraq. While the Pentagon was still burning, Secretary of Defense Don Rumsfeld was in the White House suggesting an attack against Baghdad. Somehow the administration's leaders could not believe that al-Qaeda could have mounted such a devastating operation, so Iraqi involvement became the convenient explanation. Despite being told repeatedly that Iraq was not involved in 9/11, some, like Cheney, could not abandon the idea. Charles Duelfer of the CIA's Iraq Survey Group recently revealed in his book, "Hide and Seek: The Search for Truth in Iraq," that high-level U.S. officials urged him to consider waterboarding specific Iraqi prisoners of war so that they could provide evidence of an Iraqi role in the terrorist attacks -- a request Duelfer refused. (A recent report indicates that the suggestion came from the vice president's office.) Nevertheless, the lack of evidence did not deter the administration from eventually invading Iraq -- a move many senior Bush officials had wanted to make before 9/11.

Yes, Dick Cheney and Condoleezza Rice may have been surprised by the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 -- but it was because they had not listened.

The White House thought that 9/11 changed everything. It may have changed many things, but it did not change the Constitution, which the vice president, the national security adviser and all of us who were in the White House that tragic day had pledged to protect and preserve.
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http://www.slate.com/id/2097750/

Richard Clarke KOs the Bushies
The ex-terrorism official dazzles at the 9/11 commission hearings.

By Fred Kaplan
Updated Wednesday, March 24, 2004

Among the many feckless or snarky statements that Vice President Dick Cheney, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, and White House spokesman Scott McClellan have issued about Clarke the past few days, the observation they've recited with particular gusto is that this disgruntled ex-official was in charge of counterterrorism policy during the first bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993, the attacks on the U.S.S. Cole, and the bombing of our East African embassies. Their implication was: How can this guy, who allowed so much bloodshed on his watch, be blaming us?

And so now here's Clarke, in an official, nationally broadcast forum, announcing: I failed, I'm sorry, please forgive me. Which, as one member of the panel noted, is more than any official in the Bush administration has said to any victims of the far more devastating 9/11 attacks.

I am not suggesting that Clarke's apology was cynical or purely tactical. I'm sure it was sincere. This is a guy who was obsessive about terrorism when he was the national coordinator for counterterrorism during the Bush 41, Clinton, and—briefly—Bush 43 administrations. His obsessiveness—and his frustration over the fact that his bosses didn't share his sense of urgency—made him genuinely passionate about the issue and genuinely distraught when inadequate policies led to tragedy.

But in his 30 years of service in the upper rungs of the national-security apparatus, Clarke was such a formidable player of bureaucratic politics precisely because he combined eloquent advocacy and shrewd tactics. So, there's little doubt that Clarke truly meant his plea for forgiveness—but also that he knew he was twisting his dagger into Bush a little deeper.

Three of the panel's Republicans tried to throw some punches Clarke's way, but they didn't land.

James Thompson entered the ring with a swagger, holding up a copy of Clarke's new book in one hand and a thick document in the other. "We have your book and we have your press briefing of August 2002," he bellowed. "Which is true?" He went on to observe that none of his book's attacks on Bush can be found anywhere in that briefing.

Clarke calmly noted that, in August 2002, he was special assistant to President Bush. White House officials asked him to give a "background briefing" to the press, to minimize the political damage of a Time cover story on Bush's failure to take certain measures before 9/11. "I was asked to highlight the positive aspects of what the administration had done and to play down the negative aspects," Clarke said, adding, "When one is a special assistant to the president, one is asked to do that sort of thing. I've done it for several presidents."

Nervous laughter came from the crowd—or was it from the panel? The implication was clear: This

is what I used to do and—though he didn't mention them explicitly—this is what Condi Rice and Stephen Hadley are doing now when they're defending the president.

John Lehman, Navy secretary under Ronald Reagan and a former colleague of Clarke's, came out not just swaggering but swinging. The 16 hours of classified testimony that Clarke gave to the commission—and the six hours he testified before the joint congressional inquiry on 9/11—were nothing like what's in the book. There is, Lehman said, "a tremendous difference, and not just in nuance," adding, "You've got a real credibility problem!" You look like "an active partisan selling a book."

Clarke began with a playful shuffle. "Thank you, John," he said, to laughter. First, he denied that he's campaigning for John Kerry and swore, under oath, that he would not take a job in a Kerry administration if there is one. Then he admitted there was a difference between his earlier testimony and his book. "There's a very good reason for that," he went on. "In the 15 hours of testimony, nobody asked me what I thought of the president's invasion of Iraq." The heart of his book's attacks surrounds the war. "By invading Iraq," he said, taking full advantage of Lehman's opening, "the president of the United States has greatly undermined the war on terror." End of response. Lehman said nothing.

In the second round of questioning, Thompson returned to the August 2002 press briefing. "You intended to mislead the press?" he asked, perhaps hoping to pound a wedge between the media and their new superstar.

"There's a very fine line that anyone who's been in the White House, in any administration, can tell you about," Clarke replied. Someone in his position had three choices. He could have resigned, but he had important work yet to do. He could have lied, but nobody told him to do that, and he wouldn't have in any case. "The third choice," he said, "is to put the best face you can for the administration on the facts. That's what I did."

Well, Thompson asked in a bruised tone, is there one set of moral rules for special assistants to the White House and another set for everybody else?

"It's not a question of morality at all," Clarke replied. "It's a question of politics." The crowd applauded fiercely. To invoke another sports metaphor: Game, set, and match.