

9/11: Was There Foreknowledge by Officials that the Pentagon would be Attacked?

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Terrorism](#)

The Official Account

Critical to the success of the 9/11 attacks was the element of surprise, which was emphasized by key White House and Pentagon officials:

- President George Bush [said](#), “They [al-Qaeda] struck in a way that was unimaginable.” [1]
- Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld [said](#), “Never would have crossed anyone’s mind.” [2]
- General Richard Myers, Deputy Commander of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, [said](#), “You hate to admit it, but we hadn’t thought about this.” [3]
- White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer [said](#), “Never did we imagine what would take place on September 11th, where people used those airplanes as missiles and weapons.” [4]
- National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice [said](#), “I don’t think anybody could have predicted that these people would take an airplane and slam it into the World Trade Center, take another one and slam it into the Pentagon; that they would try to use an airplane as a missile, a hijacked airplane as a missile.” [5]
- Air Force Lt. Col. Vic Warzinski, a Pentagon spokesman, [said](#): “The Pentagon was simply not aware that this aircraft was coming our way, and I doubt prior to Tuesday’s event, anyone would have expected anything like that here. There was no foreshadowing, no particular warning that would have led anyone with any reasonable view of the world to think this was a threat we faced.” [6]

The Best Evidence

The following evidence suggests that an attack on the Pentagon was not at all unexpected: [7]

I. Pre-911 Military Exercises Involving Planes Flown into the Pentagon

- In 1999 NORAD conducted hijacking exercises where planes were flown into the Pentagon and the World Trade Center. [8]
- The US military [held an exercise](#) rehearsing a response to an airliner crash at the Pentagon on October 24-26, 2000. Emergency responders from the Pentagon

and Arlington County assembled in a conference room in the Office of the Secretary of Defense for a mass casualty exercise that involved a commercial airliner crashing into the Pentagon and killing 341 people. [9]

- Department of Defense medical personnel [trained for the scenario](#) of a “guided missile in the form of a hijacked 757 airliner” being flown into the Pentagon in May, 2001. [10]

II. Government Officials Warned Not to Fly

Several warnings from security sources to Pentagon and other officials about flying on September 11 were reported in the news:

- In a story about warnings, *Newsweek* [reported](#): “On Sept. 10, *Newsweek* has learned, a group of top Pentagon officials suddenly canceled travel plans for the next morning, apparently because of security concerns.” [11]
- San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown [received a warning](#) from what he described as his airport security people late Monday evening. [12]
- Salman Rushdie [was prevented](#), by an emergency resolution from the FAA, from flying the week of September 11th, 2001. [13]

III. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld Twice Predicts Imminent Pentagon Attacks

- On the morning of September 11, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, seeking approval for enhanced missile defense, held a well-attended 8:00 – 8:50 AM Pentagon breakfast meeting with House supporters. The meeting was winding down just about the time the first Tower was hit at 8:46 AM. During the course of the meeting, Rumsfeld reportedly said that “sometime in the next two, four, six, eight, ten, twelve months there would be an event that would occur in the world that would be sufficiently shocking that it would remind people again how important it is to have a strong healthy defense department.” [14]
- Later, in a meeting in Rumsfeld’s office, Christopher Cox, the defense policy committee chairman of the House of Representatives, reported [Rumsfeld to have been](#) more specific. Cox said:

“Just moments before the Department of Defense was hit by a suicide hijacker, Secretary Rumsfeld was describing to me why America needs to ... focus on the real threat facing us in the 21st century: terrorism, and the unexpected. ...

‘If we remain vulnerable to missile attack, a terrorist group or rogue state that demonstrates the capacity to strike the U.S. or its allies from long range could have the power to hold our entire country hostage to nuclear or other blackmail,’ he said ‘And let me tell you ... there will be another event ... There will be another event.’ ” [15]

According to *The Telegraph*, Donald Rumsfeld, the Secretary of Defense, was in his office on the eastern side of the building, in a meeting with Christopher Cox. Mr Rumsfeld, recalls Mr Cox, watched the TV coverage from New York and said:

“Believe me, this isn’t over yet. There’s going to be another attack, and it could be us.” [16]

Moments later, the plane hit [the Pentagon]. (When the attack did occur, it did not threaten Rumsfeld, as the attack was on the opposite side of the building.)

IV. NBC’s Pentagon correspondent Jim Miklaszewski Warned of Pentagon Attack by Intelligence Officer

Sometime between 9:03 and 9:37 AM, NBC’s Pentagon correspondent Jim Miklaszewski [said on camera](#):

“The first time I heard the word ‘terrorism’ out of any US official came shortly after the second plane hit, and I bumped into a US military intelligence official, and I said, ‘Look ... what have you got?’ And he said ‘Obviously this is clearly an act of terrorism. And then he got very close to me, and ... almost silent for a few seconds, and he leaned in and he said, ‘This attack was so well coordinated that if I were you, I would stay off the E Ring’ – where our NBC office was – ‘the outer ring of the Pentagon for the rest of the day, because we’re next.’ ” [17]

The intelligence official’s apparent foreknowledge was unaccountably specific:

1. How did he know the Pentagon would be hit next?
2. Even if he had just guessed that the Pentagon would be hit next, how could he have guessed that the outermost E Ring would be the specific target?
3. Of course, if an airplane attack had been aimed at one of the walls, the E Ring would have been struck. But why would he have guessed that the attack would have targeted one of the walls, which are only 80 feet high, when it would have been easier for a plane to dive into the Pentagon’s roof, where it might have killed the secretary of defense and some top brass?

V. FBI Confiscates Security Camera Videotapes within Minutes of Pentagon Attack

On the morning of 9/11, the Pentagon was surrounded by rush-hour [traffic jams](#). [18]

A Department of Justice [after-action report](#) describes the difficulty the FBI had in getting to the scene following the official attack time of 9:37 AM:

“The FBI Evidence Recovery Team began arriving before 10:00 a.m. and set up in a grassy area a short distance from the heliport. Because of the extremely congested traffic conditions, it took several hours for the entire FBI contingent to negotiate the route from the District of Columbia to the Pentagon.” [19]

The first priority of the Evidence Recovery Team was “to find and collect all the airplane parts and other bits of evidence from the lawn on the west side of the building, before firefighters and other rescue workers completely trampled it.” [20]

In spite of these conditions and priorities, FBI agents identified at least two private businesses whose security cameras may have captured the attack. The FBI agents then confiscated their videotapes *within minutes after the Pentagon was hit*:

1. José Velásquez, the Citgo gas station supervisor [was interviewed](#) by the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*: "Velasquez says the gas station's security cameras are close enough to the Pentagon to have recorded the moment of impact. 'I've never seen what the pictures looked like,' he said. 'The FBI was here within minutes and took the film.' " [21]
2. "A security camera atop a hotel close to the Pentagon may have captured dramatic footage of the hijacked Boeing 757 airliner as it slammed into the western wall of the Pentagon. Hotel employees sat watching the film in shock and horror several times before [the FBI confiscated the video](#)." [22]

The FBI agents who arrived so promptly to seize the business videotapes appeared to be operating separately from the traffic-delayed FBI Evidence Recovery Team.

Conclusion

The idea of 9/11 foreknowledge is also covered in a Consensus Point about [World Trade Center 7](#), another about [insider trading](#), a third about [VP Cheney's role regarding the Pentagon](#), a fourth about [NYC Mayor Rudy Giuliani](#), and a fifth Point about the [Able Danger data-mining discoveries](#).

This compelling array of evidence suggests that there was foreknowledge of the Pentagon attack by various officials. The strike on the Pentagon (whatever its nature) requires a full, impartial investigation with subpoena power.

References for Point Pent-4

- [1] White House News Release. "[President Meets with Muslim Leaders](#)," September 26, 2001.
- [2] "[Text: Rumsfeld on NBC's 'Meet the Press'](#)," September 30, 2001.
- [3] [American Free Press Service](#), US Department of Defense, Oct. 23rd, 2001.
- [4] [Ari Fleischer Press Briefing](#), May 16, 2002.
- [5] "[National Security Advisor Holds Press Briefing](#)," May 16, 2002.
- [6] "[Air Attack on Pentagon Indicates Weaknesses](#)," by Sylvia Adcock, Brian Donovan and Craig Gordon, *Newsday*, September 23, 2001.
When a statement is made about the Pentagon being "attacked," it is often assumed that this means that the Pentagon was struck by an airplane. But evidence has not been adequate to establish the nature of the attack. What is known for certain is that there was an attack of some type, resulting in dozens of deaths.
- [7] Steven Komarow and Tom Squitieri, "[NORAD had drills of jets as weapons](#)," *USA Today*, April 18, 2004; also: Barbara Starr, "[NORAD exercise had jet crashing into building](#)," *CNN Washington Bureau*, April 19, 2004.
- [8] US Army. Military District of Washington, "[Contingency planning Pentagon MASCAL exercise simulates scenarios in preparing for emergencies](#)," November 3, 2000.
- [9] Matt Mienka, "[Pentagon Medics Trained for Strike](#)," *US Medicine*, October 1, 2001.
- [10] Mark Hosenball, "[Bush: 'We're at War'](#)," *Newsweek*, September 23, 2001. *The 9/11 Commission Report* omitted this report.
- [11]

- [12] Phillip Matier and Andrew Ross, "[Willie Brown got low-key early warning about air travel](#)," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 12, 2001.
- [13] James Doran, "[Rushdie's air ban](#)," *London Times* (Times Online), September 27, 2001.
- [14] "Secretary Rumsfeld Interview with Larry King," *Larry King Live*, CNN, December 5, 2001. [Transcript here](#).
- [15] "Chairman Cox's Statement on the Terrorist Attack on America," Tuesday, September 11, 2001. The quote from his press release was picked up by *Associated Press* the same day: Robert Burns, "[Pentagon attack came minutes after Rumsfeld predicted](#): 'There will be another event,'" *The Topeka-Capitol Journal* (Associated Press), September 11, 2001.
- [16] William Langley, "[Revealed: what really went on during Bush's 'missing hours'](#)," *The Telegraph*, December 16, 2001.
For sound only see "[9/11 News Oddities - Reporter Pre-Warned of Pentagon Attacks](#)," *NBC News*, September 11, 2001. For face-to-face footage of Mr. Miklaszewski, see video documentary by Massimo Mazzucco, "[9/11— The New Pearl Harbor](#)," 1:15:22 to 1:16:18.
- [17] "[Pentagon Eyewitnesses' Traffic Descriptions: Witnesses described heavy traffic conditions around the Pentagon](#)," n.d. [© 2003-2004].
"[Arlington County After-Action Report on the Response to the September 11 Terrorist Attack on the Pentagon](#)," Titan Systems Corporation under contract to Dept. of Justice, n.d. [2002], Annex A, p. A-22. "The Crime Scene Team [was] onsite 30 minutes after the attack. Special Agent John Adams began organizing the FBI Evidence Recovery Team on a grassy site." p. C-45.
- [18] Patrick Creed and Rick Newman, "Firefight: Inside the Battle to Save the Pentagon on 9/11," Presidio Press, 2008, p. 80.
- [19] Bill McKelway, "[Three Months On, Tension Lingers Near the Pentagon](#)," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, December 11, 2001.
- [20] Bill Gertz and Rowan Scarborough, "[Inside the Ring](#)," *Washington Times*, September 21, 2001.

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