

McKinney: Probe Sept. 11 Intelligence Failure

by Suzanne Rose

On March 25, Rep. Cynthia McKinney (D-Ga.) raised questions about the failure to prevent the Sept. 11 attacks on the Pentagon and New York World Trade Center towers, in an interview with Dennis Bernstein on the Berkeley, California radio station KPFA. She referenced coverage in the media of prior warnings to the United States, and said that what has to be explained is why people who had prior warnings did not act. She is demanding a full Congressional investigation of the events surrounding Sept. 11.

Given that no credible evidence has been presented that the deeds were carried out by Osama bin Laden, and, more important, given the utter ludicrousness of the contention that such an attack could have been planned and carried out by al-Qaeda networks operating from caves outside of the United States, members of Congress would be derelict if they did not demand a full investigation of a massive intelligence failure. They must also consider the possibility that rogue elements from the U.S. military and intelligence community acted to shut down the security and intelligence screens, as Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche was pointing out, as the attacks were ongoing.

McKinney rightly demands that an intelligence failure of this magnitude must be investigated. Why is it not being investigated? She implies that members of the Bush family and other members of the administration would have a political and/or mercenary motive for supporting a defense buildup and war in response to Sept. 11. She mentions the Bush family's ties to the "Carlyle Group," which is tied to the defense industry, which would profit from the \$48 billion in additional defense spending requested by the administration. She points to the phone call President George Bush made to Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.), asking him not to have Congress investigate the events of Sept. 11.

While the events of Sept. 11, and the President's initial response to the attacks, undermines the idea that the President himself had foreknowledge or a vested interest in covering it up, the fact remains that a full investigation is appropriate. While some of the issues McKinney is raising are not relevant and reflect input from ideologically anti-Bush elements, an open and frank investigation getting to the unanswered questions would only improve U.S. national security.

In a statement released on March 28, entitled "Thoughts on Our War Against Terrorism," McKinney demands that the hard questions be asked, and that the media be held accountable. "What did this administration know, and when did it

know it about the events of Sept. 11? Who else knew and why did they not warn the innocent people of New York who were needlessly murdered?" she asked. "There were numerous warnings of the events to come on Sept. 11. Vladimir Putin, President of Russia, delivered one such warning. Those engaged in unusual stock trades immediately before Sept. 11 knew enough to make millions of dollars from United and American Airlines, certain insurance and brokerage firms' stocks."

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In a follow-up statement on April 12, she said, "News reports from [the German weekly] *Der Spiegel* to the London *Observer*, from the *Los Angeles Times* to MSNBC to CNN indicate that many different warnings were received by the administration." She pointed to one of the administration's avowed military objectives—the occupation of foreign capital cities and the overthrow of regimes—as a matter of great concern. "We've been told that there are as many as 60 countries around the world that host terror cells that we need to go in and flush out—then basically what we're talking about is expanding U.S. military presence all over the planet."

The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* lost no time in ridiculing McKinney's statements. The *Post* on April 12 imputed that she was accusing President Bush of complicity in the attacks. "With her comments concerning Sept. 11, McKinney, 47, seems to have tapped into a web of conspiracy theories circulating during the past six months among people who believe that the government is partially—or entirely—to blame for last year's attacks which killed more than 3,000 people." As evidence of her supposed lack of credibility, they cite her opposition to the Iraq sanctions which have brutalized

innocent Iraqis.

Speaking on McKinney's behalf was investigative reporter Wayne Madsen, who was interviewed on Fox News' Hannity and Colmes show on April 12. Holmes demanded that Madsen say McKinney's suggestion of government foreknowledge was preposterous. Madsen replied, "I think that what the Congresswoman is asking is that, with the worst intelligence failure in the history of the United States, why cannot we have in this country a full independent Congressional investigation of who knew what, when?"

Rep. Mark Foley (R-Fla.), also on the show, said that the only legitimate inquiry would be whether the CIA had advanced warning, and accused McKinney of slander and libel against the President. Hannity demanded, "What evidence do you have that our President had any knowledge of these attacks: Do you have any evidence at all? Yes or no?" Madsen cited press accounts of warnings from French and Israeli intelligence to the U.S. FBI and CIA. "And I find it strange," he added, that "here we suffered the worst intelligence failure in the country's history and George Tenet is still the director of the CIA. Can you imagine if they were airliners that crashed into buildings in downtown Tokyo?"

Hannity denounced the call for an investigation as "an irresponsible, irrational political assault on the President while we're at war." Madden countered, "Why is the Bush Administration against an investigation? I've read the work of many journalists: The *Times* of London, the BBC, *Der Spiegel* in Germany. They have all been reporting the same thing about advance knowledge. Is everybody crazy? Are all these journalists not allowed to express their opinion?" He concluded, "I think Congress has the responsibility to investigate."

Rabbani: It Wasn't Bin Laden

Former Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani told the Russian daily *Izvestia* on April 15, "I don't believe bin Laden was behind Sept. 11." In a rare interview, the leader of the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance dismissed Osama bin Laden as a "small fish," who could not possibly have organized the attack, and called for a major investigation of the events of Sept. 11. Rabbani's statements are notable against the background of the latest media hype around bin Laden. Here are relevant excerpts:

Izvestia: Are Osama bin Laden and [Taliban leader] Mullah Omar still alive? If so, where are they now?

Rabbani: Their fate doesn't interest me. They are very small fish.

Izvestia: But they destroyed the peace of the whole world.

Rabbani: It interests me very much, to know, how such a complex, multi-layered, painstakingly planned, and technically, masterfully organized terrorist operation, as the attack on the U.S.A. on Sept. 11, could have been organized and carried out by a small group of bandits, sitting in uninhabited Afghan mountains. Personally this is incomprehensible to me.

Izvestia: You mean, you doubt that the guilty party in the American tragedy of the 21st Century was bin Laden?

Rabbani: And don't you doubt it, too? A big investigation is absolutely necessary. Of course, anything is possible. I never met bin Laden, but people have come to me, who sat at the same table with him, and observed him in various situations. Not a single one of these told me that bin Laden is a great personality. On the contrary, all who knew him spoke of him as a simple field commander. Bin Laden sat for a long time in the caves. One does not control the world from such a place.