

Kissinger Watch

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About This Issue

Dear readers,

“It was at that moment that satire died. There was nothing more to say after that.”

(The musical satirist Tom Lehrer, when Henry Kissinger won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973. Lehrer decided he could no longer perform.)

We never thought that awarding the Nobel peace prize to Kissinger could be topped. To put him in charge of the 911 investigations rivals with the decision of Nobel Peace Prize Committee 30 years ago. There is a certain logic behind this appointment. After all, Kissinger has first hand experience with 911ths. Reality has once again caught up with political satire.

Thanks for your readership.

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1. Kissinger To Head 9-11 Commission WASHINGTON, Nov. 27, 2002, CBSNews.com

President Bush Wednesday named former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to head a new independent investigation of intelligence failures before the Sept. 11, 2002 terrorist attacks.

The announcement came as the president signed the bill authorizing the commission, which the White House resisted it until just two months ago.

“Dr. Kissinger will bring broad experience, clear thinking and careful judgment to this important task,” Mr. Bush said at a signing ceremony in the Roosevelt Room of the White House. “Mr. secretary, thank you for returning to the service of your nation.”

Kissinger, 79, served as national security adviser under Presidents Nixon and Ford and secretary of state under Mr. Ford. He won the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize.

The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States has a broad mandate, building on the limited joint inquiry conducted by the House and Senate intelligence committees. The independent panel will have 18 months to examine issues such as aviation security, diplomacy, terrorist financing and border problems, along with intelligence.

Mr. Bush called on members to report back more quickly than 18 months, saying the nation needed to know quickly how it can avoid terror attacks in the future. “The sooner we have the commission’s conclusions, the sooner we can act on them,” he said.

However, Mr. Bush did not set as a primary goal for the commission to uncover mistakes or lapses of the government that could have prevented the attacks. Instead, he said it should try to help the administration learn the tactics and motives of the enemy.

“This commission will help me and future presidents to understand ... the nature of the threats we face,” he said in a ceremony with survivors, families of victims, and advocates of the bill, including lawmakers.

He pledged his administration will “continue to act on the lessons we’ve learned so far to better protect the people of this country. It’s our most solemn duty.”

The commission’s creation is part of a bill authorizing intelligence activities in the 2003 budget year. Though most

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details of the legislation remain secret, lawmakers say it provides the biggest-ever increase in intelligence spending in an attempt to fix some counterterrorism weaknesses — such as a lack of information-sharing, experts in certain key languages and attention to traditional, human spying.

The bill requires a database of known or suspected international terrorists. Two of the Sept. 11 hijackers were placed on a State Department watch list in the weeks before the attacks, but other agencies were not notified.

It also establishes a new center to help intelligence agencies quickly translate foreign languages; provides millions for the study of languages key to national security; and calls for a standard way for all agencies to spell names from other alphabets.

Unlike the signing ceremonies earlier in the week for bills creating the Department of Homeland Security and a new federal commitment to terrorism insurance, Wednesday's signing was a low-key affair.

Like the Homeland Security Department, the independent commission was an idea to which Mr. Bush's support came late.

The White House held that only Congress should investigate, arguing that an independent probe could distract administration officials from anti-terrorism efforts. The change of heart came in September, as family members of Sept. 11 victims applied pressure and congressional hearings began to uncover intelligence and law enforcement failures.

Mr. Bush insisted only a bipartisan group should be able to compel testimony and documents, fearing that one-party subpoenas would lead to ineffective finger-pointing and allow the panel to be used merely to score political points.

The 10-member commission will be evenly divided between Republican and Democratic appointees. It will take at least six members, in most cases, to approve subpoenas.

Kissinger was born in Germany in 1923 and his family emigrated to the United States in 1938. He served in counter-intelligence units in the United States army and then attended Harvard University, receiving his doctorate in 1954.

Prior to entering full-time government service, Kissinger taught at Harvard, did work for the Rockefeller foundation and Rand Corporation and served as an advisor

to numerous government task forces concerned with foreign policy, military matters and arms control.

In 1969, President Nixon named him national security advisor, a position he held until 1975. During that time, he was the architect of U.S. foreign policy. His notion of "triangular diplomacy" informed relations with Soviet Russia and Communist China, which culminated in arms control talks with Moscow and Mr. Nixon's visit to China in 1972. He also worked to secure peace after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war.

Kissinger helped coordinate American efforts in Vietnam, winning the Nobel peace prize in 1973 for negotiating the Paris peace treaty that ended American involvement in the war. However, critics of Kissinger blame him for proposing controversial moves such as the Christmas bombing of Hanoi, and the secret bombing and subsequent invasion of Cambodia.

From 1973 to 1977, Kissinger also served as the nation's secretary of state.

Since leaving government, Kissinger has written several books and remained a popular speaker around the world, often appearing in television interviews as a commentator on foreign policy issues of the day.

However, criticism of Kissinger's policies in Southeast Asia and Latin America has not ebbed. In a series of articles in 2001, writer Christopher Hitchens accused Kissinger of war crimes for the bombing of Cambodia, for his failure to head off Indonesia's conquest of East Timor in 1975 and for his alleged support for a coup against Chilean president Salvador Allende on Sept. 11, 1973.

In April, when Kissinger was visiting London, a Spanish judge asked British authorities to deliver a warrant to question Kissinger over the disappearances of Spanish citizens under Latin American dictatorships. The warrant was not served.

Kissinger currently heads Kissinger Associates, Inc., a lobbying and consultant group.

2. Bush Taps Kissinger to Head 9/11 Probe By Dana Milbank

Washington Post Staff Writer

Wednesday, November 27, 2002; 11:45 AM

President Bush today named former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to head the independent commission investigating the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Bush, who originally opposed such a commission and later sought to restrict it from investigating intelligence failures, today embraced the panel that has a broad charge to investigate the various lapses that allowed the attacks to succeed. And, by naming Kissinger, Bush assured the commission a high profile.

"I have been given every assurance by the president that we should go where the facts lead us and that we're not

Kissinger Watch

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a joint project of:

East-Timor Action Network
(www.etan.org)

International Campaign against Impunity
(www.icaonline.org)

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(<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/politicaconosur/>)

restricted by any foreign policy considerations,” Kissinger said in the White House driveway this morning after his appointment. “We are under no restrictions, and we would accept no restrictions.”

Asked whether the commission would question Bush himself, Kissinger replied: “I don’t know whom we will want to question, but we will get at all the facts. And the president has promised us that all the facts will be made available.”

Kissinger promised a “nonpartisan” inquiry. The 10-member commission will be evenly divided between Republican and Democratic appointees. It will generally require six members for the commission to issue a subpoena, but to allay Democratic concerns that Republicans would block subpoenas, one of the Republican members

will be approved by Sens. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) and John McCain (R-Ariz.), who favor an aggressive inquiry.

Kissinger was a key foreign policy adviser in the Nixon and Ford administrations and is one of the nation’s most prominent elder statesmen.

“Dr. Kissinger and I share the same commitments,” Bush said in announcing the appointment as he signed the Intelligence Authorization Act in the Roosevelt Room this morning. “His investigation should carefully examine all the evidence and follow all the fact, wherever they lead. We must uncover every detail and learn every lesson of September the 11th.”

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