

But two weeks of public hearings in April by the 9/11 Commission—officially the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States—have revealed that, up until the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, top Bush Administration policymakers, including Cheney and Attorney General John Ashcroft, stymied every effort by career law enforcement and intelligence personnel to respond to a growing pattern of evidence that a major terrorist attack against the United States was imminent.

While neo-conservatives love to heap criticism on the Clinton Administration, the record, as presented by the 9/11 Commission, shows that the Clintonians—who never adopted the Hitlerian conceit of preventive war—were far more serious about dealing with terrorism than the pre-9/11 Bush-Cheney Administration.

The first public evidence of the Bush Administration's ambivalence towards growing evidence of a terrorist threat in the Spring-Summer 2001, came from former White House counterterror czar Richard Clarke, whose book and testimony before the 9/11 Commission exposed that key policy players, led by Cheney, were so obsessed with the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, that they ignored the issue of terrorism altogether. Cheney responded by charging, publicly, that Clarke was "out of the loop"—a flagrant lie that even National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice was forced to rebut, under oath, during her April 8 agonizing three-hour appearance before the Commission.

After Rice's testimony, White House polls showed that the President's approval rating had plunged, overnight, by 4%. The next day, a damage control-driven White House declassified the Aug. 6, 2001 Presidential Daily Briefing (PDB), which had dealt with evidence of an al-Qaeda plot inside the U.S.A. Rice had mischaracterized the document as an "historical account," with no current intelligence value. The title of the document, alone, belied Rice's claims: "Bin Ladin Determined to Strike in U.S."

The PDB's damaging item cited a growing pattern of evidence of al-Qaeda penetration of the United States, including "patterns of suspicious activity in this country consistent with preparations for hijackings or other types of attacks, including recent surveillance of Federal buildings in New York."

During two intensive days of hearings April 14-15, Commission staffers and the former acting director of the FBI provided further proof of the Administration's indifference to the mounting evidence of a terrorist threat. Tom Pickard, who was acting director of the FBI from Spring 2001 through the 9/11 attacks, told the Commission that Attorney General John Ashcroft was so indifferent that at one point in July 2001, he ordered Pickard to stop pestering him with information about terror plots. Butressing Pickard, the Commission found that an FBI request for \$85 million in additional funding for counterterrorism was rejected by Ashcroft—on Sept. 10, 2001! Earlier, in a policy memo outlining the strategic priorit-

Principles of Westphalia

The Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, bringing an end to the Thirty Years' War, which had drowned Europe in blood in battles over religion, defined the principles of sovereignty and equality in numerous sub-contracts, and in this way became the constitution of the new system of states in Europe. We quote the two key principles:

Article I begins:

"A Christian general and permanent peace, and true and honest friendship, must rule between the Holy Imperial Majesty and the Holy All-Christian Majesty, as well as between all and every ally and follower of the mentioned Imperial Majesty, the House of Austria . . . and successors. . . . And this Peace must be so honest and seriously guarded and nourished that each part furthers the advantage, honor, and benefit of the other. . . . A faithful neighborliness should be renewed and flourish for peace and friendship, and flourish again."

Peace among sovereign nations requires, in other

words, according to this principle, that each nation develops itself fully, and regards it as its self-interest to develop the others fully, and vice versa—a real "family of nations."

Article II says:

"On both sides, all should be forever forgotten and forgiven—what has from the beginning of the unrest, no matter how or where, from one side or the other, happened in terms of hostility—so that neither because of that, nor for any other reason or pretext, should anyone commit, or allow to happen, any hostility, unfriendliness, difficulty, or obstacle in respect to persons, their status, goods, or security itself, or through others, secretly or openly, directly or indirectly, under the pretense of the authority of the law, or by way of violence within the Kingdom, or anywhere outside of it, and any earlier contradictory treaties should not stand against this.

"Instead, [the fact that] each and every one, from one side and the other, both before and during the war, committed insults, violent acts, hostilities, damages, and injuries, without regard of persons or outcomes, should be completely put aside, so that everything, whatever one could demand from another under his name, will be forgotten to eternity."