

Statement by the Former 9/11 Commissioners

Feb. 8, 2008 –The former 9/11 Commissioners issued a statement following publication of the book, “The Commission,” by Philip Shenon. All Commissioners (except for Mr. Fielding, who currently serves as White House Counsel) joined in the following statement:

“The 9/11 Commission had two responsibilities: To tell the story of 9/11, and to make recommendations. The report of the Commission was unanimous, and some 80 percent of its recommendations have been enacted into law.

“A recent book, ‘The Commission,’ challenges none of the central findings of the report. As author Philip Shenon notes: ‘The Report was released to almost universal acclaim.’ Regrettably, the author is mistaken in his criticism of the role of Executive Director Philip Zelikow. The proper standard for judgment is the quality of report, and there is no basis for the allegations of bias he asserts.

“The Report is the responsibility of the Commissioners. No staffer did control, or could control, the judgments that Commissioners reached. Each Commissioner made a distinct contribution. Each Commissioner went over draft text not once or twice but many, many times. Every sentence was reviewed for fact and interpretation. Commissioners spent hundreds of hours discussing, editing and re-writing. The judgments within the Report are solely our own.

“Executive Director Philip Zelikow made an enormous contribution to our collective effort. The challenges were unusually difficult: the story stretched back over 20 years; the evidence was highly classified, the atmosphere in the country highly partisan, and the timeframe of the investigation highly compressed. Philip led an investigation of 85 highly talented, independent-minded staff who helped us produce an excellent report. He was a strong and experienced Executive Director. He is a person of integrity who served the Commission honorably and well.

“We were aware of differences of interpretation among staff. Those differences were not about politics, but about the factual record and what it meant. Such differences, energetically debated, helped to clarify the issues for us. All staff expressed pride and great satisfaction in the final report. In turn, we take pride in the staff’s superb work.”

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