
A Tragedy for All Americans: the 9/11 Terrorist Attack

On September 11th, 2011, United States was attacked by Al Qaida terrorists where over 3000 people lost their lives with several others sustaining severe injuries. The attack involved four passenger planes. Led by Osama Bin Laden, the Al Qaida terrorists attacked the four planes and used them as directed missiles to bomb different areas. Among the four, 2 landed on the world trade centre causing immense destruction on the twin tower. The third aeroplane landed on the Pentagon and the fourth one landed on a field in Pennsylvania. All the passengers aboard the planes lost their lives including the 19 terrorists. This attack forced George Bush the president of United States at that time to launch a manhunt for the terrorists who by far threatened the security of America and its citizens. However, several arguments have been made related to whether the attack could have been prevented. A report that was written to the CIA regarding the attack and the involved terrorists was said to have been put on hold. This report is said not to have reached to the intelligence agencies like the FBI which could have launched investigations that probably could have led to the apprehension of the terrorists thus preventing the attack. This was facilitated by the involvement of the CIA into illegal operations in the country. President Trump also believes that the attack could have been prevented if there were strict immigration rules. However, the director of CIA stated that he did everything in his power to protect the nation and prevent such attacks but the 9/11 attack could not be prevented.

The United States on 11 September 2011 woke up to watch deaths of several US citizens in despair. It happened when four American planes were hijacked by 19 Al-Qaeda militants carrying out attacks on different parts of the United States. Two of the planes landed on the world trade Centre immensely destroying the Twin Towers., the third plane was flown to the Pentagon while the fourth one landed on a field in Pennsylvania. The terrorist attack left almost 3000 people dead (Huddy, Khatib&Capelos, 2002). The attack brought about several changes and initiatives that would help in combatting terrorist attacks. This incidence was also used to define the rule of George W. Bush the president of United States at that time (Carafano, 2007). Nonetheless, several people believe that this attack could have been prevented while others view it as impossible to prevent such an attack. This essay will explain the way the 9/11 attack could or could not have been prevented and the reasons behind it.

After the three planes slamming on their targets and the fourth one missing to reach the target, president George Bush who at that time was in Florida made his return to the white house. After his return, he addressed the people of the United States and the world, in general, making a declaration that despite the terrorists attack the biggest buildings, the attacks can never shake the foundations of America. "Terrorist attack can shake the foundation of our buildings, but they cannot touch the foundations of America." (Carafano, 2007). The president also made

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reference to a military plan where he said that there will be no distinction between the terrorists who were involved in the attack and those who harboured them declaring that all the terrorists will face the wrath of the able United States military. The operation power of the Taliban terrorists had been brought to its knees within a period of two months after the attack (Huddy, Khatib&Capelos, 2002). This fight against the terrorists led to the killing of the attack's architect, Bin Laden during president Barrack Obama's regime on the year 2011 (Carafano, 2007). However, a question keeps on arising, could the 9/11 terrorist attack be prevented?

A former FBI agent known as Mark Rossini believes that he could have prevented the attack if a memo briefing the FBI about the possibility of the attack could have keenly been considered. Special agent Rossini and his partner Doug Miller had been tasked with the responsibility of tracking Osama Bin Laden and his moves. After doing their assignment, they drafted a memo explaining to their superiors what they had gathered from their several month's spy work. The memo contained information regarding the possibility of such an attack. There was also information that Khalid Al- Midhar who was suspected to be an Al Qaida terrorist was travelling to the Middle East and back to the United States after acquiring a US visa. The suspected terrorist would also help in the flying to the Pentagon the Airline flight 77

Unfortunately, the drafted memo never reached the FBI since according to Miller, an operative of the CIA told them to hold off (Zegart, 2009). Rossini and Miller were also strictly instructed not to share the information they had with anyone which included their bosses. After obeying their orders, there was break down of communication between the two involved agencies which is termed as an intelligence failure. This breakdown resulted in the attack that led to the loss of lives of almost 3000 people on the day of the terrorist attack. If the memo could have reached the bosses, investigations could have commenced which hopefully could have led to the apprehension of the terrorists thus saving the lives of the people who died on the day of the attack (Zegart, 2009). The information that was on the memo was critical to the safety of the nation. Since the two involved agencies are charged with the responsibilities of gathering intelligence and protecting the nation, such information should not have been assumed. Even the orders that directed the two officers to hold off should not have been made since at that time the US was in dire need to stop the dangerous Al Qaida terrorists. Withholding such sensitive information was not necessary. If an action could have been taken regarding the information that had been gathered, then possibly the attack could have been prevented (Zegart, 2009).

Another reason as to why the memo was blocked by the CIA from reaching the FBI was because the agency was complicit with the intelligence agency of Saudi Arabia trying to recruit Khalid and Azmin who were both citizens of Saudi Arabia (Zegart, 2009). The two were residents of Lemon Grove and Claremont in the year 2000 and were also in the plane that crashed on the Pentagon. This simply means that the CIA was carrying out illegal operations on the soils of United States. At such a time, the agency was never competent and the seniors in

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the agency were never keen in carrying out the tasks that they were given. If the agency stuck to the operations it was meant to carry out then the terrorists could not have stayed in the United States which could have prevented the attack.

Additionally, President Donald Trump argues that if there existed tough immigration policies then the attack could have been prevented (Worland, 2015). Lately, the president has been tough on the people moving in and out of United States especially the non-Americans. In his statement, he says that "I am extremely tough on the people coming to this country." (Worland, 2015). Under the reign of Trump, the foreigners have been subjected to tough scrutiny and observation. Those who have migrated illegally into the United States are being deported to their countries because all these people are seen as a threat to the security and the economy of the state (Boswell, 2007). If such tough immigration policies could have been laid prior to the attack, the terrorists who entered United States smuggling ammunition into the country that were used to carry out the attack could not have found a chance to do so. This is in association with the information that a number of the terrorists had entered the country illegally and spent a lot of time in the country plotting and planning the attack. With strict immigration policies, the terrorists could have been at least identified as they were entering the country, their backgrounds could have easily been known and the attack could have been prevented (Worland, 2015).

As possibilities of what could have been done to prevent the attack swirl around the minds of many United States citizens, a senior intelligence boss in the United States denied that more could have been done to prevent the attack. After a criticism of the intelligence department topped by George Tenet the director of CIA, the CIA boss defended himself by saying that his department did not at any point fail to do what it was supposed to have done. He stated that "there was no silver bullet which would have stopped the attack happening..." (Zegart, 2009). He also said that he did everything he could in the course of warning, motivating action and preventing harm." (Zegart, 2009). This was in reference to a criticism report released by Mr Helgeson the CIA inspector general at that time which stated that the director was not willing to curb the terrorism by making use of all the available resources. This simply shows that the attack could have happened if it was meant to happen and nothing could have prevented it from happening.

The 9/11 terrorist attack on the soil of US was a tragedy that Americans will never forget. After the attack, the fight against terrorism intensified. However, the attack could have been prevented if the report produced after the investigation could not have been withheld but shared with the bosses and the FBI for further investigation. Also, if there were strict immigration rules, the terrorists could not have found refuge in the soil of United States. It could also have been prevented if the CIA was not involved in illegal operations with the government of Saudi Arabia in the US. Nonetheless, if the attack was meant to happen, it could have happened despite all

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the efforts employed by the involved agencies like it was stated by George Tenet.

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