

AIR DEFENSE RESPONSE

September 11, 2001

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Now that over five years have passed since September 11, 2001, a growing number of US citizens question the published, official story of that day¹ finding the official evidence to be inconsistent and lacking credibility.

Armed with evidence gathered by hundreds of grass roots citizen organizations and individuals, a growing number have come to the conclusion that members of the Bush Administration colluded with 9/11 planners and attackers, and that the resulting catastrophe was used to frighten us into a war we would otherwise have refused.

The world has yet to untangle the complexities of that day. Many questions remain involving the unprecedented failures of the World Trade Buildings, failures of the intelligence community to head off the attacks in the first place, and finally the spectacular failure of the military to defend U.S. airspace, despite the investment of billions in detection equipment, aircraft, highly trained pilots, and the like.

This paper focuses on this last question; specifically: What enabled four hijacked jumbo-aircraft to continue unimpeded flights without interception long after being identified as flights in major trouble, until three crashed into selected targets and one, into the ground? Was all of this the result of a terrible set of coincidences and incompetencies, or was 9/11 the result of purposeful actions taken by a few well placed jackals within this government?

The official story of 9/11 is an inconsistent fiction. The document that reports the story -- the official, government sponsored *9/11 Commission Report* -- concludes that incompetence and errors were to blame. A careful review of the evidence now at hand leads to other conclusions: the 9/11 attacks were carried out with precision, and required support -- whether known, or unknown to the actual attackers -- from agents within the Bush government. The official report concludes that the catastrophic failure of airspace defense on 9/11 was, in so many words, the result of a series of personnel failures within the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Department of Defense (DoD); all these people are officially exposed as a gaggle of incompetent dufusses. Is the official document an elaborate lie? Please read on and decide for yourself.

AIRSPACE [SCRAMBLE] PROTOCOLS OF 9/11

The Department of Defense (DoD) protocol defining appropriate actions to be taken in the event of airspace emergencies and hijacked airplanes was rewritten after many years of successful application just three months before 9/11/01 - on June 1, under the direction of former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

Painstaking reviews of that protocol document (CJCSI 3610.10A)² and of its predecessor (CJCSI 3610.10)³ have revealed no meaningful changes other than its relocation under the Joint Chiefs of Staff organizational flow chart. There are sentence rewrites, altered paragraph contents, etc., but careful flow charting of each protocol leads to identical sets of expected behaviors.

As will be explained below, despite the fact that the relocated protocol is functionally identical to the earlier version, the rewrite nonetheless played a significant role in the events of 9/11. As you digest this information, keep in mind that the FAA officially cataloged 67 North American Air Defense Command (NORAD) airspace scramble/intercepts between September 2000 and June 2001,⁴ yet between June 1, 2001, and September 10, 2001, there were none.^{5a} Following 9/11, the number of scramble/intercept events again became quite common.⁴

Each protocol -- old (CJCSI 3610.10)³ and new (CJCSI 3610.10A)² -- defined two action tracks: 1) EMERGENT -- immediate action required, or 2) NON-EMERGENT -- a slower process appropriate to a typical hijacking, where demands are issued and negotiations are expected to proceed.^{2,3}

The emergent track empowers air traffic controllers to communicate immediately and directly with the military to request assistance as needed, with no further authorization required.

The slower (hijack) track was designed to allow sufficient time to notify and synchronize the highest reaches of government as processes would unfold. In those cases, a contact chain of command was clearly defined, beginning with the FAA, then continuing across to the DoD chain of command -- headed by the Secretary of Defense -- whose authorization was finally required for any military assistance given.

If the relocated protocols are functionally identical, why were they rewritten three months before 9/11? And, how is it that the number of fighter-interceptor scramble orders dropped to zero for those three months^{5a}, after having been so common during the months and years preceding the rewrite? Robin Hordon^{5b, 5c}, an experienced past FAA Air Traffic Controller, who in former years helped write airspace protocols for the government, offers a cogent explanation: when newly (re)written protocols are released, a series of briefings are given to those who will be responsible to act on them. Briefings are personal, given on a one-to-one or small “need-to-know” group basis and can contain subtle biases regarding how those in upper levels expect the protocols to be implemented.

There is no log or paper trail of the biased briefings. All that remains is the numerical evidence: scramble orders between June 1, 2001 and September 10, 2001 dropped to zero.

Summarizing: the newly rewritten -- but functionally unchanged -- protocol offered an opportunity to re-brief people thereby creating a functional stand-down mechanism with no paper trail remaining.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFFING: CHAIN OF COMMAND ON 9/11

There were several key FAA and military personnel changes in place on 9/11 which, in concert with the slow-mode Airspace Defense Protocol, resulted in a finely tuned response timeline set to trail events as they occurred. It is that fine tuning that enabled the devastation of 9/11.

The following discussion will focus on the slow (hijack) mode chain of command and personnel who filled each of the positions on 9/11. The command chain is summarized here:

FAA: Boston Center → Regional Operations Center → Command Center → Headquarters → DoD: National Military Control Center → Secretary of Defense → NEADS/NORAD

FAA: Boston Center - Air Traffic Control (ATC) FAA Regional Operations Center

US airspace is divided into a series of regionalized facilities and sectors. Aircraft flying within specific sectors are displayed on radar screens monitored by FAA Air Traffic Controllers within various facilities, depending on the region over-flown.

Flight 11 departed Logan Airport in Boston at 7:59am.⁶ Shortly thereafter, it came under the “control” (monitoring on radar and issued flight commands) of FAA’s Boston Center. At 8:14am the aircraft failed to respond to an order to climb. Moments later it became clear that a serious in-flight emergency was unfolding, and within 5-10 minutes controllers understood that an atypical and violent hijack was underway.⁷

The responsible FAA controller, and the FAA team at the Boston Center appeared to have implemented BOTH protocols, the NORDO (No Radio) / in-flight emergency protocol, and the hijack protocol, as events spun out of control. While the Boston Center Watch Desk personnel took the protocol’s slow (hijack) track – alerting FAA’s New England Regional Operations Center⁸, the Military Liaison Officer at the Boston Center monitoring the flight contacted the defense department directly, seeking immediate assistance.^{9, 9a} The DoD responded to that call for immediate action by essentially setting in motion the Protocol’s hijack (slow) track, with pilots being alerted, but aircraft NOT being emergently scrambled.¹⁰ Thus, despite the protocol defining two track options, a bias existed that functionally melded the two into one -- slow-mode track.

**FAA Regional Operations Center
FAA Command Center**

The Regional Operations Center having been contacted by Boston Center, continued to operate under the Protocol's slow (hijack) mode, next contacting the FAA Command Center in Herndon, Virginia. There, Ben Sliney, FAA National Operations Manager, was working his first morning on the job.¹¹ Given his inexperience, he took what appeared to him to be a straightforward path, contacting the next link in the chain of command -- the Hijack Coordinator at FAA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. It is not unreasonable to conclude that had he collected more than a few hours of experience on the job, he might have visualized the unfolding events as requiring emergent action. He would have then been fully authorized to call the military directly and request an immediate scramble/intercept.

**FAA Command Center
FAA Headquarters**

The protocol required Mr. Sliney to speak directly with the Hijack Coordinator, the only person authorized to contact the military at the National Military Command Center (NMCC). Lt. General Mike Canavan, a military intelligence specialist who had been installed as Associate Administrator for Civil Aviation Security only nine months earlier, was the designated Hijack Coordinator on 9/11. But, he could not be found at FAA Headquarters on that date. He was in Puerto Rico at the time. And, he left no designated replacement in his absence!¹²

Mr. Sliney's comments below are consistent with his prior years of experience within the FAA: that the emergency underway would not require full Pentagon approval before the military would scramble aircraft. In other words, he applied his long held, day-to-day work experience of the pre - June 1, 2001, protocol.

Ben Sliney: *"I said something like that's incredible. There's only one person. There must be someone designated or someone who will assume the responsibility of issuing an order, you know. We were becoming frustrated in our attempts to get some information. What was the military response?"*¹⁴

After an unspecified delay, someone at FAA's Headquarters finally took over the duty reserved for the missing Hijack Coordinator and made the required NMCC contact.¹⁵ (Note: Lt. General Canavan removed himself from the FAA the following month.)¹³

**FAA Headquarters
National Military Command Center (NMCC)
Northeast Air Defense Sector (NEADS)**

That morning NMCC, located within the Pentagon, was headed by its new deputy for Command Center Operations, Captain Charles Leidig. The Center's longtime commander, Brigadier General Montague Winfield, had – the night before – instructed Captain Leidig to take charge the next morning, on 9/11. Leidig remained in that position until approximately 10:30am – after all aircraft had crashed.¹⁶

(Note: Captain Leidig's official testimony was not at all clear on these matters and further details are not available.) Leidig is said to have received information from the (unnamed) stand-in at FAA Headquarters, and at sometime thereafter, is said to have contacted Northeast Air Defense Sector (NEADS), commanded by Colonel Robert Marr - - who had earlier already been contacted by Boston Center Controllers via the emergent track of the Protocol (see above).

**Northeast Air Defense Sector (NEADS)
North American Air Defense Command (NORAD)**

Colonel Marr, continuing to run the exceptionally slow-track protocol, next ordered fighter pilots at Otis Air Base to "battle stations," but they were not given the order to scramble.¹⁰ Marr then spent 8 minutes phoning his superior, Major General Larry Arnold of NORAD's US Continental Region, seeking authorization to scramble the alerted fighter-interceptors. Despite the fact that the June, 2001, hijack protocol required scrambles to be authorized by the Secretary of Defense, Arnold issued the command at 8:46am, stating he would obtain authorization later.¹⁷

Thus the command to scramble was finally issued -- far too late -- at 8:46am, literally seconds before Flight 11 impacted WTC-N.¹⁷

The remainder of the morning went about the same.

And, where was the Secretary of Defense, whose authorization to scramble fighter aircraft was technically required under the new (old) slow-hijack protocol? Mr. Rumsfeld was not to be found that morning until 10:30am. He testified that he had been meeting with Congressional representatives in a room a few hundred feet from the NMCC during the entirety of the 9/11 events remaining uninvolved with the ongoing attack.¹⁸

SUMMARY: 9/11 SLOW-MODE HIJACK PROTOCOL ADMINISTRATORS

COMMAND FACILITY	ADMINISTRATOR IN CHARGE	STATUS OF THE ADMINISTRATOR IN CHARGE
FAA Command Ctr.	Ben Sliney	On the job for less than one day
FAA Headquarters	Lt. Gen. Mike Canavan	Military Intel.; in Puerto Rico – No designated replacement
NMCC	Capt. Charles Leidig	Newly certified, standing in that morning for the first time
NEADS/NORAD	Colonel Marr / Maj. Gen. Arnold	8” for Marr to reach Arnold before too-late scramble order.
Sec. of Defense	Donald Rumsfeld	Incommunicado (within the Pentagon)

CONCLUSIONS

The new protocols (i.e. the old, but rewritten/relocated protocols) allowed for briefings – sans a paper trail – that evidence suggests biased how future airspace events would be interpreted, melding the two possible response tracks into one slow-mode protocol.

In addition, the slow-mode was cranked through a command chain that was preloaded with people who were new on the job, or absent from their posts – all leading to the finely tuned failed airspace response on 9/11.

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