Against All Enemies Study Guide

Against All Enemies by Richard A. Clarke

BOOKRAGS

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Plot Summary

On September 11th, 2001, Richard Clarke, chair of the Counterterrorism Security Group (CSG), directed the United States' immediate response to the terrorist attacks from the Situation Room in the West Wing of the White House. Clarke published this narrative in 2004--to set the record straight on national security issues about which there was general confusion among his fellow citizens: In 2000, the new National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice, had requested he stay on to develop a plan for spinning CSG tasks to other agencies. Clarke was scheduled to assume a new position--as chair of the new committee on Critical Infrastructure Protection and Cyber-Security--in October 2001. This book describes his 30 years of public service, primarily in national security and counter terrorism.

In the 1980s, he begins, the Cold War dominated U.S. foreign policy: The Soviet Union had invaded Afghanistan, and the Iranian Revolution--led by Ayatollah Khomeini and other Muslim clerics--had overthrown the military dictatorship of Reza Shah Pahlevi, taking the U.S. embassy staff in Tehran as hostages. That same year, Iraq, under its new dictator, Saddam Hussein, invaded Iran. In 1982, the hostages were released, partly due to the Iran-Contra program, which exchanged arms for hostages. In 1983, Reagan sent U.S. troops into Lebanon and, after the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut, withdrew them and invaded Grenada. Reagan later sent weapons to Afghanistan: within weeks of receiving the infrared-seeking and wire-guided antiaircraft missiles, the mujahedeen and their Arab supporters began shooting down Soviet aircraft (the head of Saudi Arabia's Secret Service, Prince Turki al-Faisal, had requested that Usama bin Laden organize a Saudi response to the Soviet's invasion).

In 1989, the Red Army admitted defeat, and bin Laden returned, triumphantly, to Saudi Arabia: The prince asked him to head its Afghan Services Bureau and organize a faith-based resistance to the communist government in South Yemen: Doing so was consistent with the Wahhabi denomination of Islam. Bin Laden placed his Afghan veterans in different countries. In 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait: A multinational coalition, led by the U.S. and bankrolled by the Saudi royal family, soon liberated Kuwait and pushed Saddam back.

In 1991, bin Laden publicly criticized his king's decision to allow U.S. troops on Saudi soil. Bin Laden was stripped of his citizenship and accepted an invitation from the government of Sudan to reside in Khartoum. These events were overshadowed by the collapse of the Cold War at the end of 1991. The CIA first became aware of bin Laden after he denounced the king: His name began appearing in raw intelligence reports as a "terrorist financier."

It was not until 1996, after bin Laden parted amicably with his Sudanese hosts--and was enthusiastically welcomed by Afghanistan's Taliban government--that Clarke learned of a group calling itself "al Qaeda," which bin Laden, alarmed by the first Gulf War, had formed in 1990. In 1992, one of its members, Ramzi Yousef, entered the U.S. without any papers. In 1993, Clarke learned that the Kuwaitis had averted an assassination

attempt--orchestrated by Saddam Hussein--on President G.H.W. Bush: President Clinton bombed selected targets like the Iraqi Information Ministry, after which there were no more Iraqi terrorist attacks (except on Iraqis).

In 1993, the World Trade Center was truck bombed. Ramzi Yousef, a suspect, avoided capture by taking the first commercial flight to Baghdad. In 1995, Aum Shinrikyo released sarin gas in a Tokyo subway. In 1996, during the Atlanta Olympics, a private security guard discovered a bomb. In 1997, Egyptian Islamic Jihad attacked tourists in the resort town of Luxor. In 1998, al Qaeda declared war on countries like Egypt and the U.S.: Later that year, al Qaeda took credit for the nearly simultaneous bombings of the U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam (the capitals of Kenya and Tanzania). In 1999, Clarke's CSG was on high alert--and, contemporaneously, an alert border guard in Washington State aborted a plan to bomb the Los Angeles airport.

That same year, al Qaeda tried to bomb a U.S. ship in a Yemenese port. In 2000, al Qaeda succeeded in ramming a boat full of explosives into the Cole, which, docked in a Yemenese port, was heavily damaged. That same year, the U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia--who had been warning of terrorist attacks--was removed from his post by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's Deputy, Paul Wolfewitz: In 2002, a nightclub in Bali was bombed and, after that, a hotel in Jakarta. In 2003, Clarke resigned from federal service--as have, he notes, most of his peers. He left after the U.S. invaded Iraq: Since bin Laden had predicted, over a decade earlier, that the U.S. would invade an oil-rich Muslim state, Clarke argues that this invasion has undermined, not strengthened, the security of the U.S.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary and Analysis

It was September 11, 2001. Richard Clarke had been in a conference in the Ronald Reagan building when he heard that American Airlines Flight 11 had flown into the North Tower of the World Trade Center: I'll be there in 5 minutes, he responded, giving instructions to convene the Counterterrorism Security Group, which he had chaired since 1992, contact the Federal Aviation Administration, and to set up a high-level video conference. In his car on his way back to the Situation Room in the West Wing of the White House, he looked at the clock on his car's dashboard: 9:03 AM. He arrived first at Vice President Dick Cheney's office, where he found the Vice President and National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice: since he chaired the counter-terrorism committee, she asked his advice. Clarke's advice was, first, to not assume the attack was over--and, second, to evacuate the White House. The Vice President concurred.

The pre-established plan was for all Principals--cabinet level officials--to teleconference. By the time he arrived at the center of operations in the Situation Room, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was online from the Pentagon; a Deputy substituted for Secretary of State Colin Powell, who was on a mission in Peru; George Tenet was online from the CIA, as was Robert Mueller, only days into his job as new head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

Rice at his side, Clarke convened the meeting, first reminding everyone of the rules: be calm; keep your microphone off when you're not speaking; wave your arms if you want to speak; if you don't want to speak to the entire group, call on the Red phone. He told Rice, before she returned to the Vice President's office, that he needed a secure line to the Vice President. He turned to General Myers, representing the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and said he assumed NORAD--the North American Aerospace Defense Command--had already scrambled. The general prefaced his status report: "Not a pretty picture, Dick." The days of the U.S. military being in a constant state of alert and preparedness had ended with the Cold War: the U.S. military had been in the middle of a training exercise, and the AWACs wouldn't arrive for at least 15 minutes. The time was 9:28.

After hearing from Myers, Clarke stated that the President should not be allowed to return until the possibility of being under continued assault could be ruled out. Myers updated the group that fighters were en route to rendezvous over Florida to escort the President, who was in Sarasota, Florida, first to Barksdale--and that planes from Langley and Andrews Air Force Bases were on their way.

At 9:37, American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon: Rumsfeld, still on teleconference, said he was "too goddamn old" to evacuate. The West Wing group made additional evacuation decisions, including getting Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert to a safe place. Clarke walked from the Situation Room to the Presidential Emergency Operations Center (PEOC) in the East Wing, where the Vice President had

evacuated: present with him were his wife Lynne, White House Communications Director Karen Hughes, and Deputy White House Chief of Staff John Bolton. Clarke called the CSG from the PEOC location for a status report: the Vice President kept hanging up their open line, and his wife kept turning down the volume so she could watch CNN. Other than the group with Cheney in the PEOC and the group with Clarke in the Situation Room, the White House had been evacuated. Clarke received a message to call the FBI on the Red phone: Dale Watson told him that the FBI had obtained a copy of the passenger manifests: Clarke was stunned that "there were al Qaeda operatives on board the aircraft using names that FBI knew were al Qaeda." The FBI's Watson stressed the importance of apprehending the terrorists before they left the country.

At 10:03, United Airlines Flight 93 crashed in Pennsylvania near the Ohio border. The Coast Guard teleconferenced in, noting that the Canadian border was still wide open: Clarke suggested they close the ports. By this time all civilian and commercial aircraft had been downed: only the U.S. fighter planes and the AWACs remained in the air. The Department of Defense (DOD) went under DEFCON 3, a security alert status not implemented since 1973. Paul Wolfewitz, Deputy Secretary of Defense joined the teleconference: they needed, he said, to come up with a message for the public, which had to be told not to clog the roads--and be reassured that the airways were secure. Clarke observed that they didn't yet really understand what was happening, even whether the attack had concluded. The Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) Assistant Secretary Mike Brown told Clarke and the group that the New York Port Authority was closing all bridges and tunnels to and from Manhattan: he recommended that all landmark buildings--from the Sears Tower to Disney World--should be evacuated. Later, when he briefed the President, who had landed in Nebraska, Clarke stated that the ports and borders had been closed and all aircraft downed (and that FEMA had declared a disaster). It was after the President was safely in the air that World Trade Center Tower 7 collapsed. After the President returned to the White House and addressed the nation, Clarke returned to the Situation Room--and was surprised that, instead of discussing immediate issues, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Wolfewitz were talking about invading Iraq.

Evacuating the White House was what Clarke recommended. Clarke had previously been unable to get the Bush administration to take al Qaeda seriously. In the immediate aftermath of the attacks, he is shocked that the FBI recognized some of the names on the passenger manifests as being al Qaeda. He is also shocked that Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Wolfewitz were wasting time talking about theories long since thoroughly examined and discredited, in particular that Iraq had anything to do with the attacks.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary and Analysis

U.S. foreign policy during the 1980s took place in the context of the Cold War when there were two "super powers." At the end of the 1970s, the Soviets began focusing on the Persian Gulf, the Middle East, and South Asia: the Red Army invaded Afghanistan. In 1979, the U.S. lost an ally, Reza Shah Pahlevi, who had oil and wasn't a communist: Pahlevi was overthrown by Muslim clerics led by Ayatollah Khomeini. The staff at the American Embassy in Tehran were taken as hostages. "Public words to the contrary," Clarke writes, weapons were exchanged for the hostages. President Reagan sent military support to Afghanistan and troops into Lebanon. Reagan also strengthened U.S. support for Israel, the reasoning of his advisors being that doing so created a stronger ally.

In 1983, Hezbollah bombed the Marine barracks in Lebanon. Reagan pulled out of Lebanon and invaded Grenada. The U.S. reassumed full diplomatic relations with Iraq and backed it after it invaded Iran. Under Reagan, Clarke was, as he put it, a midlevel manager--Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intelligence at the State Department--involved in many historical summits and formal but unrecorded diplomatic missions: He flew to Tel Aviv to meet General Ivry in the Kiriat (Israel's equivalent of the U.S.'s Pentagon). Ivry told him that a small country like his had to export weapons to keep costs down. The Israeli general did though agree with Clarke that apartheid was the ethical equivalent of anti-Semitism, racism (Ivry does not though admit to exporting arms to South Africa). The professional relationship between the two continued during the first Gulf War. The CIA later planted false rumors that Israel had sold military hardware to China: Israel was exonerated. Clarke and his team also negotiated with different governments: American contractors flooded Saudi Arabia to build the new bases.

In 1980, Iraq launched a preemptive attack on Iran: although its relations with Iraq were not good, the U.S.'s relationship with Iran was much worse. After a brief prod of neutrality, the U.S. sided with Iraq. Clarke was surprised at the success of his team's efforts to prevent Iraq's defeat: he recalled firing off many missives to embassies threatening those who sold arms to Tehran with sanctions. In 1986, when Iraq began bombing Kuwaiti oil tankers, U.S. ships filled the Persian Gulf. Clarke also projected the costs to the Soviet treasury of fighting wars in Afghanistan, El Salvador, Angola, Mozambique, and Nicaragua. The U.S. covertly supplied the Afghans with military hardware: Within weeks of their arrival, the mujahedeen had figured out how to use the infrared antiaircraft missiles to shoot down Soviet aircraft.

Between 1982 and 1987, the budget of the covert action program on which Clarke worked rose from 35 to 600 million dollars annually. By 1988, the Soviets admitted defeat, and, by 1989, left Afghanistan. The "nineteenth century Afghan tribesman," and a thousand Arab volunteers had, with the covert help of the U.S. government, brought down the Red Army.

In Clarke's professional judgment, Reagan was right to strengthen ties with Israel and arm the Afghans. He did, however, make four mistakes: First, the CIA became too dependent on Pakistani intelligence. Then, Usama bin Laden was put in charge of recruiting Arab volunteers, many of whom, Clarke states, were "misfits within their own societies" or members of the Muslim Brotherhood. Also, after the Soviet defeat, the U.S. pulled out of Afghanistan so quickly that it left itself with no influence in the region. Finally, the U.S. did not help Pakistan deal with, to use Clarke's word, the "corrosive" effect of an influx of Afghan refugees and wealthy Arab fundamentalists within its own society.

For the Afghan and Arab fighters, the war against the Soviets was a training exercise: by 1989, it was obvious how little was needed to bring down a superpower: a young Usama bin Laden, who returned triumphantly to Saudi Arabia, noticed. He was the son of the wealthy industrialist; Prince Turki al-Faisal, head of Saudi Arabia's Secret Service, had asked him to organize Arab volunteers to fight in Afghanistan--not inconsistent for a wealthy country whose Wahhabi denomination of Islam believed in proselytizing. The first Gulf War alarmed bin Laden.

The U.S. did not walk or march into the Islamic world: it stumbled into it. The U.S. made its moves though the prism of the Cold War. Others interpreted these moves as an invasion. What bin Laden and the mujahedeen saw was that they had brought down the mighty Red Army.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary and Analysis

In 1990, Clarke became Assistant Secretary of State for Politico-Military Affairs. He arranged a Deputies meeting after learning that Iraqi troops were operating "emcon." They concluded there would be no war. When Iraq did invade Kuwait, both President Bush and British Prime Minister Thatcher were concerned that, unless stopped, Saddam Hussein would next take over the Saudi oil fields.

Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney was given the task of persuading Saudi King Fahd to allow U.S. troops to use the Saudi bases to protect their oil. Although other members of the royal family raised objections, Fahd told Cheney that he trusted President G.H.W. Bush and to send the troops. The Saudis wanted other Arab governments involved: Clarke and Wolfewitz flew to the Middle East. The CIA's "corporate" position was that Iraq was only intimidating Kuwait to influence oil prices. During that summer of 1990--temperatures in Kuwait averaged over 100 degrees Fahrenheit--Clarke and Wolfewitz obtained basing permissions from Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, as well as a temporary arrangement with the United Arab Emirates. The Saudis d purchased many weapons.

The bases and arrangements that had been created to stop the Soviets were now being used to stop Iraq. President G.H.W. Bush and his Secretary of State, James Baker, developed an international coalition, whose numbers swelled to the degree that, as Clarke recollected, Cheney had said they had no room for the F-111s Australia had wanted to donate.

In November 1990, Iraq responded to the U.S.'s aerial bombardment by targeting its Scud missiles at Israel. At Clarke's behest, the U.S. began attempting to intercept the Scuds. U.S. forces sent Iraqi forces fleeing Kuwait. Some media reported massacres of fleeing Iraqi forces. Although the remaining Republican Guard units could have been destroyed, the Bush White House was convinced that--having lost hundreds of thousands of troops--Saddam would most certainly fall: there was, the thinking went, no reason for invading Baghdad. However, the U.S. did encourage the Shi'a, the Kurds, and the Marsh Arabs to rise up: and then did nothing when Saddam slaughtered them.

Clarke disagrees with those who have argued that the U.S. should have extended the war a few more hours or weeks: he thinks invading Baghdad would have been a bad idea, because it would have destroyed the coalition. He does think that, at that time, Saddam was pursuing nuclear weapons: he points out that, after the first Gulf War, records of Iraq's nuclear program were obtained by an inspection team; the contents of the "smoking gun" document were dictated over satellite phone and paper copies printed for both the President and Secretary General by the next morning. Clarke cannot, however, understand how the Bush administration could stand by while the Shi'a, Kurds, and Marsh Arabs were slaughtered. After the first Gulf War, the U.S. kept

its troops in Saudi Arabia. Clarke thinks that, in the final analysis, the U.S.'s problem was a failure to manage the postwar challenges of the next twelve years.

Although the actual number of American military personnel had decreased, that they remained was obvious to all. After returning triumphantly to Saudi Arabia in 1989, Usama bin Laden had, at the request of the Saudi government, begun organizing a religious fundamentalist response to the Communist-like regime in South Yemen (the Afghan Services Bureau). He did not, initially, publicly disagree with the Saudi king about the presence of U.S. troops: He continued organizing returning veterans of the Afghan war to positions in Algeria, Chechnya, Bosnia, Egypt, and the Philippines. Bin Laden publicly denounced King Fahd for the continued U.S. presence: he was stripped of his citizenship and exiled; he accepted an invitation from the government of Sudan. By the end of 1991, bin Laden's forces had reunited in Khartoum; Saddam was still in power, and U.S. troops were still stationed in their new bases: By the end of 1991, the Soviet Union had collapsed, and the Cold War ended. As Clarke saw it, that left only one super power for the world to blame for its ills.

It is surprising that Clarke automatically categorizes those protesting U.S. foreign policy as being angry with the only remaining superpower for lack of a better scapegoat. Clarke decries the inhumanity of encouraging the Kurds, Shi'a, and Marsh Arabs to rise up. "Unfinished Mission, Unintended Consequences" is an apt title for this chapter: all base agreements were made during the Cold War. The effect of their being there spilled over into the post-Cold War decade. Al Qaeda, he notes retrospectively, had been saying for years that the U.S. wanted to invade and occupy an oil-rich Arab country.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary and Analysis

Terrorism had not been a concern of either Reagan or Bush. When Clinton came to office in 1993, Clarke observed, there was no difference. Clarke was one of the few Bush appointees asked to stay on: he was tasked with "Global Issues," one of which was terrorism. Clarke learned of the first World Trade Center bombing from Brent Scowcroft, Bush's National Security Advisor: who did it, Scowcroft had demanded over a secure line on a secure telephone on Clarke's desk. Clarke, who had not known about the truck bomb, feigned the universal response--we're working on it-- and then called a meeting: Up until that point--February 26th, 1993, when the World Trade Center was truck bombed--no one had even conceived of what they called terrorism occurring on national soil.

Neither the FBI nor the CIA recognized names on the list of suspects. The Egyptian government had been trying, unsuccessfully, to extract him for terrorism there. The FBI noted that two of the suspects had arrived at the JFK Airport in 1992 without any papers. Another, Abdul Yasim, was released for lack of evidence--after which he flew directly to Baghdad. Another, Ramzi Yousef also disappeared. Another thing neither he, nor the CIA, nor the FBI realized, Clarke notes, was that a group which called itself al Qaeda had formed three years earlier.

In June 1993, Kuwaiti officials foiled Saddam's attempted assassination of G.H.W. Bush. Clarke was alerted after the fact by a small newspaper heading. Clinton responded with cruise missiles: The missiles were launched at night at strategic targets: information about them was staggered out through secure channels to different embassies.

Clarke relates that Clinton had wanted confirmation that the missiles had hit their market: the CIA could not provide the information until the new morning; Clinton finessed information about the success of the strikes over the telephone--someone talking to the cousin of someone who was a cousin of someone who was a CNN employee who happened to be near the site. Clarke reports having heard that the Bush family was upset that by the air strikes being limited to strategic targets. This assassination plot, Saddam's last attempt at terrorism, was detected only because a Kuwaiti policeman happened to notice a bomb in the trunk of a car on the scene of a routine traffic accident: Richard Clarke learned about it from a newspaper clipping, after the fact.

In the months following his defeat at the polls, President G.H.W. Bush sent US. troops into Somalia to allow distribution of relief aid. On October 3rd, 1993, a Black Hawk helicopter went down in Mogadishu. Clinton took a middle ground between flattening Somalia and running, instructing Clarke to do whatever it took to ensure there were no more American deaths: American snipers killed any Somali they saw carrying a gun.

Subsequent evidence suggested that al Qaeda had shown the Somali warlord Farah Aideed how to shoot down helicopters. Six months later, without any subsequent American casualties, the United Nations took over. That same year was the fifth anniversary of Pan Am 103 being shot down over Lockerbee, Scotland by Libyan agents: Clarke mentions that, while Clinton was en route to a memorial service in Lockerbee, all U.S. media attention focused on presidential peccadilloes, none on the victims of Pan Am 103. A major shift in the FBI's interaction with the world outside itself came when Janet Reno and the FBI's Louis Freeh spoke of establishing a policy of information sharing.

In June 1995, Clinton signed Presidential Decision Directive 39 (PDD-39), which established a U.S. Policy on Counterterrorism: it called for no concessions. The policy also called for both defensive and offensive actions to be undertaken by intelligence agencies, the military, law enforcement, and the diplomatic services.

Under Clarke's advice, it became illegal to fund terrorist activities as well as raise funds for them. Ramzi Yousef, charged with masterminding Pan Am 103, was captured and extradited to New York. One of the many theories that attracted something of a cult following was promulgated by the American Enterprise Institute: it "theorized" that U.S. officials had extradited the wrong man, that the real Yousef remained in Baghdad. The idea was so entrenched, Clarke remarks, that Wolfewitz dispatched one of his staff to gather evidence regarding the link between Mohammad Atta and the Baghdad Yousef (he found none).

Between 1993 and 1995 the name "Usama bin Laden" began surfacing more frequently in the raw CIA intelligence reports that Clarke read: he requested more information. Nevertheless, executive funding for counterterrorism grew from just under 6 to just under 12 billion dollars between 1995 and 2000. Clarke lamented that, while his budget requests were usually administratively funded, none were funded by the congressional appropriation process, which he likened to pork production.

Clarke concludes this chapter with a withering critique of the U.S. Congress: despite Israeli busses being blown up in the streets of Tel Aviv, the World Trade Center and Oklahoma City bombings, and sarin gas being sprayed in a Tokyo subway, the Congress funded no antiterrorism projects in 1995. Al Qaeda, Clarke observes, might not have noticed that but did notice that the U.S. didn't flatten Mogadishu, interpreting it as a string of examples of Third World countries bringing down super powers.

Clarke shows himself being informed by a colleague: Clarke learned about the first World Trade Center bombing from Brent Scowcroft. Clarke shows himself being informed by reading the foreign press: he was the first U.S. government official to learn that Kuwaitis had foiled a plot to assassinate President G.H.W. Bush. Clarke also describes how Clinton finessed information about the success of his bombing of selected targets in Iraq from CNN: the CIA couldn't get the information he needed to him until at least the following morning. Clarke describes Ramzi Yousef as a man about whom much was said and little known. The American Enterprise Institute, for example, believed that the CIA had extradited the wrong Yousef from the Philippines: that the real

Ramzi Yousef resided in Baghdad. Clarke refers to such entrenched incorrect views as "received wisdom."

Clarke introduces the Black Hawk down incident noting that 18 innocent Americans and over 1000 innocent Somalis were killed and concludes that killing more innocent Somalis would not have deterred al Qaeda, whom he thinks taught Aideed how to shoot down helicopters, as they had so successfully done in Afghanistan. As in previous chapters, there is little mention of Palestine: not because it does not exist and its absence is unimportant but because this book relates Clarke's experiences as an eyewitness or participant observer in other U.S. foreign policy arenas during that period.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary and Analysis

Clinton imposed economic sanctions on Iran, which squelched a deal Conoco, then headed by Dick Cheney, had in its pipeline. Preparing for the Olympics to be held in Atlanta in 1996, Clarke convened several meetings to investigate security issues: In one, Clarke asks an FAA official, who observes that the core of their system of defense depended on individual planes to broadcast their locations. In the aftermath of the Atlanta bomb, the FBI thought Richard Jewell--a private security guard who in actuality had located the bomb and moved away many potential victims--had planted the bomb as a publicity ploy: the actual bomber, Eric Rudolph, committed several other crimes and was finally arrested by local police in 2003.

Those working on counterterrorism were cobbled from different offices: the FBI, CIA, Secret Service, NSA, Customs, Immigration, Diplomatic Security, Coast Guard, and the DOD. In the 1990s, there were more U.S. Navy ships in the port near Dubai than in any other place on the globe outside the U.S. Although not commented on by the U.S. media, Iran attempted a coup in Bahrain, an island Iran had claimed until overruled by the UN in 1970. Its rulers were Sunnis and most of the populace, Shi'a.

The media did notice, however, in June 1996, when another building which housed American military personnel--the Khobar Towers in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia--was blasted by a truck bomb, killing nineteen.

To avoid a repeat, Clarke relates pressing Clinton to persuade the Saudi King to appoint a joint commission to better investigate what actually happened, to identify the nature of the security deficiency. The DOD was outraged at having its laxness investigated. All the different intelligence reports Clarke examined, pointed to the Iranian Revolution Guard Corp's Quods Force (Iranian Special Forces).

Clarke describes FBI Director Louis Freeh as having been "charmed" by Saudi attention, failing to notice that the Saudis had no intention of cooperating with the FBI: the Khobar Towers attack revealed a matter of internal security that the Saudis did not want made public, i.e., a revolt of their Shi'a population in the south (the Saudis were in fact quite happy to blame Iran). Freeh, however, when one of the Khobar Towers bombers was about to be released for lack of evidence, thought of charging him with being in the U.S. illegally. In his two years of detention in the U.S., Sayegh said nothing. Saudi Prince Bandar explained to Freeh that Clinton did not want to fight Iran. Clarke also relates his understanding of the financial footing of the Saudi Royal family: poor after having bankrolled the U.S.-Iraq fight and having purchased numerous new weapons systems.

At Clinton's request, Clarke developed new airline security procedures for the country: all travelers must have photo IDs whose name matched that on their ticket. Clarke also

relates the John O'Neill begged him to secure funding for the mammoth task of reconstructing TWA 800: The final investigation suggested a spark in a half empty fuel tank had ignited it--and the silver streak many reported seeing was actually the fuel from the first explosion being jettisoned as the second explosion began. There were, of course, many conspiracy theories, both before and after the investigation.

Clarke describes the varied ways he obtained funding outside the routines of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) process: That ended on September 9, 1996, when Clinton requested 1.097 billion dollars to fund counterterrorism. At the time, most thought Clarke and others investigating air defense of Washington crazy: he was able to persuade the FAA to maintain its Air Marshals program but unable to convince the Treasury Department to fund a permanent aerial defense network for the capitol.

Clarke often refers to the vast network of colleagues he accumulated in his different positions in different roles on different committees. Some assignments were taken so seriously that the task forces charged with them continued long after they'd been officially dissolved. Apparently, the "unnamed official sources" so often cited by journalists are different members of the U.S. government's different agencies fighting turf wars with each other. After President G.W. Bush came to office, additional tensions rose--not between agencies--but between career civil servants and White House political appointees.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary and Analysis

This chapter focuses on what Clarke's Counterterrorism Security Group (CSG) knew and did not know in the early years of the Clinton administration. Clarke had read numerous raw CIA intelligence reports mentioning a "terrorist financier" named "bin Laden." Clinton increased spending. Senior military leaders, however, resisted. Clarke observes that both Clinton and Gore approved all the "snatches"--violating international law to nab presumed terrorists--Clarke presented them. The CIA thought, perhaps, that this bin Laden had been involved in a 1992 incident in Yemen, and, perhaps, that he was related to Yousef. Clarke and his CSG pressed the CIA for more information about bin Laden.

Bin Laden found that the struggle in Afghanistan was between Muslims and so not a favorable place for a jihad. Two other countries were more suitable: the Philippines, where Muslims and Catholics had fought for centuries, was one; Chechnya was another: bin Laden sent Ramzi Yousef and his uncle and mentor, Khalid Sheik Muhammad, to the Philippines; he sent money, arms, and troops to Chechnya. And then there was Bosnia: its 1991 declaration of independence was violently crushed by the Serbs.

In 1992, al Qaeda veterans began arriving in the country. No intelligence agencies recognized it at the time, but many of the names involved in subsequent al Qaeda attacks in other countries first surfaced here. Clarke judges al Qaeda's Bosnia operation as largely unsuccessful, a waste of its time, money, and men--women refused to wear the burkas the new religious police demanded. In contrast, the U.S.'s policy had successfully preserved the Bosnian Islamic government. From his operating base in Sudan, bin Laden was able to fund more successful attacks in Egypt, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Libya. By 1996, Sudan became less safe for bin Laden. Afghanistan looked, again, promising. The Pakistanis, in hopes of millions of Afghan refugees repatriating, had armed and trained the Taliban, who became the new Afghan government; Mullah Omar was pleased to have bin Laden return.

In contrast to persistent media rumors and misperceptions, Clarke states that the Sudanese government never offered to turn over bin Laden to the U.S.: bin Laden left Sudan on friendly terms with its government, which could have easily arrested him, as it had earlier turned in "Carlos the Jackal" for the reward. Clarke notes that, by the middle of the 1990s, snatches had become routine. Clarke remarks that the general policy of the White House was to act, and that of the Pentagon, to stall and spread rumors that the White House didn't want to act.

Al Qaeda, meanwhile, evolved into a new kind of organization: In 1996, when bin Laden went to Afghanistan, he closed several of the buildings, plants, and camps that were being monitored by U.S. intelligence. Of far greater importance was that, for the first

time, U.S. intelligence learned of a group calling itself "al Qaeda." This discovery was not the result of diligent research but pure serendipity: Jamal al-Fadl, al Qaeda's equivalent of an accountant, had been siphoning funds in Sudan--and feared he'd be discovered and killed. He sought U.S. protection and talked freely: U.S. intelligence learned about an al Qaeda network in over 50 countries. The network included Ramzi Yousef and Sheik Abdul Rahman, who had been sentenced, in 1996, to life imprisonment in the U.S.

Between 1996 and 1997, the CSG developed plans to snatch bin Laden from Afghanistan. Clarke explains that Reno had been unfairly criticized for having vetoed one such snatch: He, Clarke, and Tenet had vetoed it, because a frontal assault would have cost all of the few people they had in Afghanistan. The thought of terrorist acts occurring on U.S. soil had not occurred to them: such actions as they had seen were committed by what Clarke calls "deranged loners." By 1994, all but one of the 1994 World Trade Center bombers were in U.S. custody.

Clarke speculates that, had Khalid Sheik Muhammad been snatched, the September 11th attacks might have been prevented. On finding that Muhammad was in Qatar, Clarke's first thought was not to involve the national police, whom he remembered as bungling--escort cars crashing into each other on a road with no traffic--and duplicitous--having obtained Stinger missiles from Afghanistan at a time when Iran was involved in anti-U.S. activities throughout the region.

Clarke notes that the DOD's plan was more suitable for occupying a country than snatching a single individual. Before Muhammad could be apprehended, however, news of the snatch leaked, and he fled Qatar. Clarke bemoans this and the CSG's ignorance of Khalid Sheik Muhammad being al Qaeda's "chief operational leader." In 1997, over 60 tourists in Luxor, Egypt were killed and their bodies stuffed with leaflets to free Sheik Abdul Rahman. The Egyptian government, its tourism industry threatened, cracked down severely: In 1998, a weaker Islamic Jihad, led by Ayman Zawahiri, merged with al Qaeda. Together, along with several other groups, they made a public declaration of war against several countries, including Egypt and the U.S.

"Al Qaeda Revealed" is an appropriate title for this chapter: Although the name "bin Laden" had been appearing in raw CIA intelligence reports for several years, Al Qaeda was revealed to the CSG though pure serendipity. The CSG came to discover, for the first time, the name the organization gave itself, as well as indicators that it was active in over 50 different countries.

Clarke depicts bin Laden as motivated by the goal of a Muslim empire or Caliphate: he gained military experience in Afghanistan and had noticed how easy it was to bring down a major military power. Clarke depicts the FBI and CIA as, at best, bungling. Although he characterizes the armed forces in Qatar as "keystone cops," the FBI--56 bureaus that talked primarily amongst themselves and their attorneys--and the CIA--institutionally risk aversive--and the Pentagon--it stalled and spread rumors that the White House didn't want to act when the opposite was true--seem little better. In contrast, bin Laden built an organization characterized by open communication: anyone

could propose an idea. Al Qaeda, additionally, counted on Christian nations like the U.S. creating new recruits by invading oil-rich Muslim countries.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary and Analysis

Clarke had earlier noted that the congress refused to fund counterterrorism efforts. Here he describes how the heads of the departments themselves resisted such funding. Clarke confesses that, by 1995, he had enough experience dealing with the FBI and CIA to doubt whether they could be of any assistance.

Aum Shinrikyo's releasing sarin gas in a Tokyo subway in 1995 led to an emergency session of the CSG: John O'Neill, an FBI agent, found the Aum in the Manhattan telephone book. Clarke discovers that, again, the military is unable-- or unwilling--citing posse comitatus--to act. The Aum, however, had only an empty office is Manhattan: the need for emergency response was averted, again.

One of the CSG's first discoveries--learned from a defector--was that the Soviets had had chemical weapons programs. Secretary of State James Baker finally persuaded the former Soviet Union to destroy their stockpiles and allow some inspections. He also discovers, to his further dismay, that the only chemical weapons the U.S. has were leftovers from the 1960s and 1970s . The U.S., moreover, had no biological program of which he was aware.

After the sarin gas had been released, Clinton, who was a heavy reader, began reading different accounts of the incident and sent some to the CSG for comment. The DOD's concern with chemical and biological weapons, on the other hand, was entirely focused on defending U.S. troops. Clarke realizes early on, that the U.S. was in disarray when it comes to weapons of mass destruction (WMD). To illustrate the depth of the problem, Clarke convened the entire Cabinet and conducted mock chemical and biological attacks: it finally became clear to the Cabinet officials that they needed a plan.

The need for domestic preparedness was made a national, a presidential, a cabinet priority. Drafts of preparedness documents tentatively named X, Y, and Z were circulated: Z updated the Continuity of Government program; Y addressed infrastructure and cyber-security; X was the policy document, which both formalized committees and articulated chains of command.

Under the new policy, the CSG ceased being just an incident response committee: it would also oversee activities pertaining to 1) apprehension, extradition, and rendition of terrorists, 2) disruption of terrorist groups, 3) international cooperation, 4) preventing terrorist groups from acquiring WMD, 5) consequence management of terrorist attacks, 6) transportation--primarily aviation--security, 7) protection of other critical infrastructure and cyber-security, 8) continuation of government, 9) countering foreign terrorist threats in the U.S. (the FBI, which believed there were none, was given the lead), and 10) protecting Americans overseas. There were to be new committees reporting to a new national coordinator who would also serve on the cabinet-level Principals Committee.

When agreement was finally reached, Clarke, the new coordinator, had a staff of 12 and could recommend budgets to the cabinet. X, Y, and Z became PDD-67, which began with a warning about unconventional attacks on civilians. Clarke's goal turned toward fund raising and developing a coherent unified plan. He recollects a brief conversation--he had prepared "PowerPoint" slides--with Clinton, who, instead of looking at his slides, spoke about continually evolving defenses and offenses. With the new attention to counterterrorism came media attention on Richard Clarke, which included a report that Usama bin Laden had put out a fatwah on him.

In a rare personal moment Clarke quotes himself--this is a retrospective narrative--paraphrasing what Mr. Spock once said to Captain Kirk: if you die, we all move up one in rank. Clarke was declared a "protectee" and, when he asked the Secret Service if there were an alternative to usual procedures, was asked if he'd be willing to be a target: his answer was yes, which meant constant covert surveillance, new outdoor lights, and door locks. Clarke made media appearances to demystify and explain, for example, the U.S. stockpiles of atropine.

In one simulation, he assigned half the CSG the role of a terrorist group wanting bio-weapons at any cost; the other half was a U.S. government group wanting to prevent that at any cost. Clarke learned three things from this simulation: there never had been a coordinated U.S. government effort to find bio-weapons; it was easier to hide a bio-weapons development program than to find it, and, finally, that proving a negative was impossible, e.g. that al Qaeda did not have WMD.

Clarke's mention of cyber-security--based on the military's meticulously researched report which had concluded the nation was increasing dependent on networks of unprotected computers--is ironic given his reference to "powerpoint" slides: al Qaeda's loose, open decentralized organization is opposite Microsoft's rigid hierarchy; additionally, Microsoft software has the reputation of being the most insecure of all the competing computer operating systems. Retrospectively, Clarke faults himself for not having perceived the ease with which U.S. policy became a recruitment source for what was once a small decentralized but, while not insular, self contained group called al Qaeda: a year after Clarke first heard its name, it merged with Egyptian Islamic Jihad.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary and Analysis

Clarke recalls that Clinton was serious about counterterrorism although the media talked of nothing but the Lewinsky scandal, which was portrayed as a "high crime and misdemeanor" by the Congress. On August 7, 1998, two nearly simultaneous car bombs killed more than 200 people in the U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, the capitals of Kenya and Tanzania. Al Qaeda claimed credit: Clarke notes that this was the first act of aggression after its earlier joint declaration of war with Egyptian Islamic Jihad.

Clarke headed the CSG response to the embassy bombings, prioritizing tasks and assigning responsibility: only the Air Force was slow to respond. Israel sent the first military relief plane. Clarke was troubled that the CIA thought that, although there had been an al Qaeda cell in Kenya, it had eliminated it. Clarke comments on the less than lustrous history of the marital fidelity of U.S. presidents and states that he was, although personally angry with Clinton, more angry with the "boundless bitterness" of the Congress. On August 20, the same day Cruise missiles were fired at targets in Afghanistan and Sudan, Clinton signed Executive Order 13099, which formally placed sanctions on bin Laden and al Qaeda. This executive order was also extended to the Taliban.

When it came to tracing financial routes, Clarke found that neither the FBI nor the CIA had any useful information. Clarke next realized that al Qaeda was continually raising money, much through quasi-governmental Saudi charities. Although there was considerable resistance from the FBI and CIA, Clarke and others were able to, at least, convince the Saudis to stop allowing Ariana Airlines--used by the Taliban--to land.

Clarke developed a plan--nicknamed "Top Secret Delenda"--to kill bin Laden: He relates, several times in his narrative, that he had Clinton's explicit support for exactly this goal on several occasions. The main obstacle was that they could not predict where bin Laden would be, only, at best, where they thought he might be. An additional problem was that it took at least six hours between when information was collected and reported--the CSG and the Principals convened-- and the President making a decision.

One Army general, however, recommended they preposition the cruise missiles--on ships off the Pakistani coast--, which saved an hour. Clarke later learned that, of the three times it had seemed possible to assassinate bin Laden, he was actually where they thought he was once. Clarke urges that they stop mentioning bin Laden by name, reporting instead that they were targeting his facilities. There was general disinterest in his plan. He approached Madeline Albright--with whom he and several others had, in 1996, made a pact to oust Boutros-Ghali, the Secretary General of the U. N. Although all were in favor of eliminating al Qaeda, none were interested in bombing Afghanistan.

In Clarke's opinion, there were both legal and moral imperatives against U.S. agencies assassinating anyone. The Principals eventually concluded, however, that they needed to review their policies on targeted assassination--although they did not want to follow the path of the Israelis.

When G.W. Bush assumed office, his appointees were, at best, disinterested in al Qaeda financing. Again Clarke lamented the inertia of the Congress, which passed its first money laundering investigations only after the September 11th attacks. Clarke concludes sneering at the CIA's "pathetic incompetence."

Clarke took the first name for his plan - "Delenda Est"--from Cato the Elder, who in 201 B.C. had incited war by ending every speech with "Carthage must be destroyed." Certainly, it is to the public good that someone in the labyrinthian bureaucracy constituting the U.S. federal government was taking responsibility for looking after innocent civilians. It is also easy to understand the sinking force of a bureaucracy on new ideas. The legal and moral scruples about targeted assassination is interesting: Clarke occasionally writes about collateral damage--an Iraqi artist living next to its Information Ministry, over 1000 innocent Somalis--but targeted assassination of a single individual he thinks different. His views, however, evolved in the never-ending cycle of evolving methods of attack and defense.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary and Analysis

Clinton was accused of "wagging the dog"--having bombed Afghanistan to distract the media from his impeachment. Clinton froze U.S. Taliban assets. Several nations sent emissaries to "reason" with the Taliban. They were unsuccessful--in Clarke's opinion because of economic, military, and political ties between the Taliban and bin Laden. Additionally, the Taliban knew the U.S. would insist on human rights for women and an end to the opium trade.

Clarke urged the U.S. to actively support Massoud's Northern Alliance: the CIA resisted, having in the past been blamed for acting on executive causes du jour. Clarke notes that the CIA's official position at the time--there were no funds available--was different from Tenet's personal concerns: he often called Clarke, alarmed about what he read about al Qaeda in CIA intelligence reports. The CSG sent warnings to U.S. embassies, military bases, local police departments, federal law enforcement agencies, county sheriffs, state troopers, and the highway patrol.

A routine screening by a U.S. Customs officer in Washington State caught Ahmed Ressam with explosives and a map of the Los Angeles Airport. Another plot was foiled in Jordan; Sandy Berger had convened the Principals frequently, in crisis mode. George Tenet had tried cajoling his counterparts abroad to conduct preemptive raids on suspected al Qaeda cells. Clarke also mentions a plot foiled in Yemen: al Qaeda had planned to bomb the U.S. ship The Sullivans. When the would-be bombers pushed their boat off the dock, it sank, because the explosives it carried were too heavy. The world spent a relatively peaceful transition from 1999 to 2000. Clarke next chronicles traveling to FBI field offices across the country: he was alarmed that none of them reported al Qaeda cells in their area.

The FBI field offices were aware of an al Qaeda but focused on whatever group was active at the moment: the Irish Republican Army, domestic militias, Sikhs, whomever. The FBI field offices operated under the Attorney General's Guidelines--adopted in the 1970s after Watergate--which instructed them not to do anything unless a crime was suspected; some field offices lacked even Internet access.

Clarke notes that his email in box was filled daily with 100s of reports from the CIA, NSA, and State Department: However, the only way the FBI shared the information it had was in meetings or telephone calls. Clarke reports tracking leads "on an Excel spreadsheet." A book called American Jihad gave him far more information about terrorists in the U.S. than the FBI ever did. A cell having been identified in Montreal shook Canadian officials into cooperating with Clarke on a series of counterterrorism efforts.

Clarke was able to procure unmanned Predators to fly over and monitor an Afghan training camp. The terrorist camp being observed was, as fate had it, the same one that had earlier sunk its own boat with explosives. On October 12, 2000, it tried again and succeeded: although the Cole did not sink, it was badly damaged and 17 sailors died. The CSG had not known the Cole was docking in Yemen, a "viper's nest of terrorists," because the DOD hadn't mentioned it.

At subsequent meetings of the Principals, Clarke received no support for bombing the terrorist camp in Afghanistan. He knew now that there was an al Qaeda cell in Yemen. The Principals, in their first meeting after the Cole, decided to first determine who was responsible for the bombing. Many thought the Clinton administration overly concerned with al Qaeda. The incoming G.W. Bush administration was not alone in that regard.

Again Clarke refers, reflexively, to proprietary software with well-documented security flaws: "an Excel spreadsheet." No kind of software would be enough, however, to overcome the dysfunctional organizations like the FBI, CIA, and the Pentagon--and the resulting communication or information thermoclines.

Again serendipity favored the U.S.: Although, in 1999, Clinton's national security team met daily, it was a single guard in Washington State who discovered a nervous bomber--thereby disarming the Millennium Plot (to bomb the Los Angeles airport). Ressa's detention in early December was followed by arrests in Boston and New York City. The CIA's ineptitude is underscored by Clarke's observation that "there were stories about intermarriage:" CIA intelligence couldn't even confirm something as public as a marriage between the bin Laden and Omar families.

Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary and Analysis

Al Qaeda planned some attacks for years. The new Bush administration, if it heard Clarke--the CSG had been reclassified out of the Principals--did not pay attention to his message of imminent menace. However, during the transition, Colin Powell requested a meeting of the CSG, National Security Council (NSC), State, CIA, FBI, and the DOD to see how they interacted: they all agreed that al Qaeda posed an imminent threat. Condoleezza Rice was the fourth National Security Advisor that Clarke had reported to and the seventh he had worked with. He explained that al Qaeda wasn't just "bin Laden's group" but a network of cells in 50 countries, including the U.S.

Rice was skeptical and commented that the only difference between the NSC now and years earlier--when she had been a staffer during the Cold War--was Clarke's CSG. The NSC she saw was an office for coordinating foreign policy. Rice downgraded Clarke's position but requested he stay on and develop a plan for spinning CSG tasks to other agencies.

In April 2003, for the first time, Clarke was able to meet with the Deputies Committee to which he had been assigned. Clarke outlined the threat al Qaeda posed to the U.S.: Wolfewitz said he didn't understand the point in focusing on a terrorist group called al Qaeda instead of Iraq. Clarke pointed out--and the CIA Deputy Secretary agreed--that there had been no terrorist attacks emanating from Iraq since 1993. Wolfewitz retorted that bin Laden could not be responsible for all that Clarke ascribed to him: he had to have a state or governmental sponsor.

To his amazement, Clarke heard Wolfewitz iterate an American Enterprise Institute theory that had been thoroughly discussed and dismissed years earlier, i.e., that Iraq was responsible for the truck bombing of the World Trade Center. Although the meeting was heated, Clarke wanted to clarify the issues: He told Wolfewitz that history is sometimes published in advance, as with Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Wolfewitz said he resented comparing the Holocaust to a "little Afghan terrorist." Later, Wolfewitz arranged the removal of the U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia.

In October 2002, a Bali nightclub was bombed and ten months later, a Marriott Hotel in Jakarta. Subsequent investigations showed an extensive al Qaeda network in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. After Clarke completed his report for Rice, he surprised her by requesting the new position outside the NSC--the new committee on Critical Infrastructure Protection and Cyber-Security--stating that he, perhaps, having spent the last decade working on counterterrorism, was "too close" to the topic: she agreed with both his assessment and his request, effective at the beginning of the next fiscal year, October 1, 2001. However, by June of that year, both Clarke and Tenet were convinced that an attack on the U.S. was imminent.

In July 2001, Clarke put the CSG on full alert, canceling all vacation plans. He also contacted police departments and embassies. At that time, there was information: somewhere in the CIA was information that two known al Qaeda terrorists were currently residing in the U.S.; somewhere in the FBI was information about strange behaviors in different U.S. flight schools. On September 4, 2001, the Principals meeting about terrorism--that Clarke had pressed for since January--convened. Clarke and Tenet stressed their conviction that a major terrorist attack was imminent; Powell outlined an aggressive military plan to put pressure on Pakistan to put pressure on the Taliban. Rumsfeld said other sources of terrorism like Iraq needed more attention. Rice concluded the meeting without resolution, requesting that Clarke draft a broad policy statement on al Qaeda for the President's signature.

Clarke asks whether September 11th have been prevented: He thinks an affirmative answer is easy but overly facile. The U.S. government typically responded only to calamities, never to warnings. And there were, obviously, shortcomings in the sharing of information. Clarke and his staff put in regular 18-hour days in October 2001. Exhausted, he thought that at least al Qaeda had finally shown its hand and made its threat obvious to all. Clarke assumed his new position on cyber-security: Within months, his successor quit the position of coordinating the U.S. response to the September 11th attacks.

Several months later, Randy Beers, Clarke's replacement's replacement, confessed to him, over a nice pinot noir, that he thought he'd have to quit: the administration was maintaining only a nominal force in Afghanistan, where the Taliban were regrouping; all the administration wanted to do was invade Iraq, which, he knew, would only strengthen al Qaeda. Sensing Beers' pent up frustration, Clarke fetched a second bottle of pinot noir: Beers then described, in particular, Karl Rove's machinations. Beers later quit. Clarke's former position continued churning through other chairmen. Clarke notes that it was only on September 11th that he was first able to talk directly with the President.

Although Bush and his cabinet could be results oriented, they usually sought simple slogans as solutions and had no time for nuanced in-depth analyses. Additionally, Clarke realizes, to his amazement, that they had come to office with preconceived ideas of what the problems were and what solutions were needed. Clarke notes, perhaps most alarmingly, that Bush's advisors would not have told him that invading Iraq would, inevitably, strengthen al Qaeda.

The meeting schedule outlined in this chapter reads like a gregorian chant: In April 2001, for the first time, Clarke was able to meet with the Deputies Committee; in July 2001, Clarke convened the CSG and put it on high alert; on September 4, 2001, he met with the Principals and was asked to draft a broad policy document for the President's signature.

The first part of this chapter is about the summer of 2001. The second part asks whether the attacks could have been prevented. Although Iraq had chemical, biological and nuclear weapons programs at least in a developmental stage before the first Gulf War, it had not constituted a terrorist threat after the war except to its people, especially

the Shi'a and Kurds. The G.W. Bush administration's position that Iraq had been responsible for the World Trade Center truck bombing and subsequent acts was an idea that had been thoroughly examined and discredited: Saddam Hussein had at one time posed such a threat--but not since 1993, when Clinton had bombed strategic targets to retaliate for the assassination plot the Kuwaitis foiled. The reader is left to wonder what would have happened had U.S. foreign policy focused more on encouraging multiparty democracy by emphasizing the basic human rights outlined in its own Bill of Rights.

Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary and Analysis

Clarke says, "It didn't have to be this way:" there were rational alternatives to invading Iraq and so providing al Qaeda with an unparalleled recruitment opportunity. The alternatives Clarke saw were that the U.S. could have 1) seriously examined and rectified vulnerabilities throughout the country; 2) conducted a global campaign to offer alternatives to fundamentalist perceptions, to articulate common American and Islamic values; 3) gone after--instead of feigning wanting to--actual terrorists in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Clarke contrasts what was done with what he thought should have been done. Bush nominated Tom Ridge, then governor of Pennsylvania, to head a new office called "Homeland Security," which, Clarke notes, was the last thing Ridge himself thought the country needed.

Although Bush's insistence that certain federal employee rights be curtailed slowed passage, the new Homeland Security Department was created at a time when existing agencies needed to coordinate. The new department, which combined 22 departments was, as Clarke put it, a "mess." Many experienced civil servants quit in disgust; many of those who stayed on complained that less time than ever was spent on substantive issues. Cronyism was rampant; state and local governments wasted millions responding to changes in color codes not accompanied by threat assessments.

Clarke notes that Britain and Canada had approached the problem of national security and personal liberty and "not destroyed their democracies along the way." Clarke also advocates formation of an oversight committee to ensure that domestic surveillance does not lead to the excesses of J. Edgar Hoover. What Clarke sees is an Attorney General engaging in an unnecessary verbal war with librarians over reading records: the need to examine such records was, while possible, so remote that it unnecessarily eroded public confidence that they still lived in a democracy. Additionally, there was little actual funding and training for first responders. Funding from Homeland Security was given to states according to a formula that gave about 8 times more per capita to Wyoming than to California. Cities and states strapped for cash began laying-off firefighters and nurses.

With Senator Warren Rudman, Clarke prepared a report titled "Emergency Responders: Drastically Under funded, Dangerously Unprepared." The White House dismissed it as asking for "gold plated-telephones." Clarke's critique of the U.S. post September 11th response included the creation of a dysfunctional impossible bureaucracy, under funding first responders, and wasting resources in Iraq--not to mention creating a situation that has resulted, predictably, in more terrorists, more terrorist acts, and more innocent deaths.

Clarke also advocated providing an alternative to fundamentalism. He likens it to having fought Communism both with bullets and ideas: he saw little of this in the Bush administration's response.

The U.S. government should have proactively tried selling the ideals of democracy and capitalism to other countries instead of doing what it did, which was exactly what Usama bin Laden said it would do, invade an oil-rich Muslim country. Clarke laments that, although he had launched a number of projects over the years to stop Saddam Hussein, the cost of having invaded Iraq, beyond the resource drain, was the strengthening of "al Qaeda and its clones."

The Bush administration had arrived with Iraq on its agenda: the cabinet included many of the first Gulf War planners. While they had been out of office, they had spoken of concluding the first Gulf War by invading Iraq now. They gave five reasons for invading Iraq: 1) finish what they'd started; 2) improve Israel's strategic position; 3) create an Arab democracy; 4) withdraw U.S. forces from Saudi Arabia, and 5) create another friendly source of oil. Clarke believes that Iraq policy was influenced by all the preceding; he mentions a television interview in which Bush attributed the 2003 invasion of Iraq to its having used chemical weapons in the 1980s and having invaded Kuwait in 1990. Clarke thinks the Bush administration knew that Iraq posed no imminent threat. U.S. military deaths were virtually assured by sending in far fewer soldiers than was needed.

Another effect of invading Iraq was stretching the Army too thin, both at home and anywhere outside of Iraq. Another problem was, before the invasion, telling Iraqi soldiers not to fight--saying that the U.S.'s problem was only with Saddam and his sons--and then, immediately after the invasion, firing them and all Baath Party members: telling hundreds of thousands of people they no longer had a salary or pensions was, in Clarke's opinion, destabilizing.

Clarke also advocated supporting, strengthening democratic governments. Further, although the U.S. did begin bombing Afghanistan on October 7, 2001--targets were based on plans drawn up but unused during the Clinton administration--it was not until November 25, 2001 that troops landed and began hunting for bin Laden and Omar, who had, by that time, made leisurely escapes and subsequently issued videos condemning the bombing. And it was only in March 2002 that there were enough troops on the ground to conduct a thorough search for bin Laden.

The CIA was willing, after 2001, to do what Clarke and others had advocated since 1998, when the embassies in Africa were bombed. It had not previously been willing to do so, because its career management was risk aversive: the CIA's reputation had been tarnished after the bombing in Lebanon, its role in Iran-Contra, and supporting Latin American military dictatorships. Clarke relates that Madeline Albright had once characterized the CIA as having an institutional "battered child syndrome."

Although the al Qaeda and Taliban menace could have been eliminated, they were not because troops and funding were withheld for Iraq, leaving the new Afghan President,

Hamid Kharzai, with so little power that he was little more than mayor of Kabul. Instead of giving General Musharraf the economic assistance he needed to address the poverty of bin Laden's supporters, the U.S. provided more military assistance funds than he needed. Clarke's critique then turned to Saudi Arabia, the third country he thought needed support. After a truck bombing in Riyadh in 2003, the Saudis became discernibly more cooperative with the U.S.

What the invasion of Iraq had done was make Saudi Arabia less stable and strengthened Iran, which, Clarke notes, had funded Hezbollah from the beginning and been directly responsible for many American deaths. Clarke concludes by noting that, unless the U.S. begins addressing real problems, a Taliban-like government could control Pakistan and an Iran with nuclear ambitions could merge with the Saudis after the fall of the House of Saud: even with a "democratic" Iraq, the result would be a far less stable world for everyone.

Clarke had said that it would be easy but overly facile to assert that the September 11th attacks could have been prevented: he thinks the counterterrorism offensive was lost when Americans were told, after September 11th, to go shopping, that costs could be passed on to future generations, and that it wasn't unconstitutional to arrest Americans on U.S. soil without arrest warrants and detain them indefinitely without lawyers. Also unhelpful was combining agencies into an unmanageable bureaucracy, funding pork while cities and states were laying off first responders, and convincing people, unnecessarily in Clarke's opinion, that surveillance is the beginning of fascism: the U.S. needed reasoned response after September 11th but instead got unthinking reactions and the assertion of received wisdom. The price for that, Clarke concludes, will be paid in the coming years.

It is worth noting that Clarke writes that "In the months since the invasion, hundreds of U.S. military personnel have been killed:" the number killed since the invasion dates when Clarke wrote this chapter. Its title - "Right War, Wrong War" - reflects Clarke's thoughts: he had himself instigated a variety of programs to depose Saddam Hussein over the years; he thought the 2003 invasion of Iraq served to strengthen al Qaeda both by providing it with a recruitment tool and by diverting finite resources that could be better used supporting U.S. first responders and the disseminating democratic ideals; instead of providing Afghanistan the aid it needed, the U.S. invaded Iraq. Instead of giving Musharraf the economic aid he needed to provide an alternative to the poverty in which many of bin Laden's supporters were trapped, the U.S. gave him more military aid than he needed; instead of working with democratic forces within Iran and other countries, the U.S. created an unwieldy new behemoth of a bureaucracy.

What Clarke first saw emerge a decade earlier had evolved from a single organization calling itself al Qaeda to a global network. Meanwhile, on the home front, the nation's vulnerabilities were not addressed and its emergency response plans, inept: the only thing missing from Clarke's catalog of mistakes made is a "delinda est." Countering the prevailing disinformation on these subjects was, Clarke concludes, his motive for making his personal narrative public: He also wanted the reader to know that, although it wasn't enough, he and many others had tried.

Characters

Richard Clarke

President Ronald Reagan

President George Herbert Walker Bush

President William Jefferson Clinton

President George W. Bush

American Enterprise Institute

Saddam Hussein

Jamal al-Fadl

Usama bin Laden

Al Qaeda

Objects/Places

Situation Room, West Wing, White House, Washington, D.C.

It is from here that Richard Clarke teleconferenced with U.S. leaders in the immediate aftermath of the September 11th attacks. By 9:03 AM, Richard Clarke was in his car on his way to the White House. At 9:28 AM, General Myers reported that it was "not a pretty picture," that the closest fighter planes were 15 minutes away from Washington, D.C.

World Trade Center (WTC), Manhattan, New York

On February 26, 1993, less than 2 months after Clinton came to office, the WTC was truck bombed: the attack was later attributed to al Qaeda. On September 11, 2001, less than 8 months after G.W. Bush came to office, commercial airplanes were flown into it: At 8:02 AM local time, American Airlines Flight 11 took off from Boston's Logan Airport; at 8:16 AM, United Airlines Flight 175 took off from Logan; at 8:19 AM, American Airlines Flight 77 took off from Dulles; at 8:43 AM, United Flight 93 took off from Newark, New Jersey (all were 747s headed for California, their fuel tanks filled to capacity). At 8:46 AM, Flight 11 crashed into the WTC's North Tower (which collapsed over an hour and a half later at 10:28 AM); at 9:03 AM, Flight 175 crashed into the WTC's South Tower (which collapsed less than an hour later at 9:59 AM); at 9:37 AM, Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon (in Arlington, Virginia); at 10:03 AM, Flight 93 crashed in a Pennsylvania field (many believe its planned destination was the White House).

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia contains two of Islam's holiest cities, Mecca and Medina. The base agreements made by Clarke, Wolfewitz, and others during the Reagan administration--during the Cold War--were used during the G.H.W. Bush administration as a staging ground for the first Gulf War. After this brief war ended in 1991, U.S. troops remained on their Saudi bases; also in 1991, the Saudis expelled bin Laden for criticizing the king for allowing U.S. troops on Saudi soil. In 1995, the U.S. training headquarters building in Riyadh was bombed: within five days the Saudi authorities had arrested, tried, and beheaded those they accused of the crime.

In 1996, the Khobar Towers complex in Dhahran was truck bombed: Clarke pressed Clinton to persuade the king to appoint a joint commission--both to investigate what actually happened and to identify the nature of the security deficiency. Little came of the investigation: FBI Director Louis Freeh was "charmed" by Saudi Prince Bandar and did not realize the Saudis had no intention of cooperating.

Sudan

Bin Laden accepted the invitation of the Sudanese government after he had been stripped of his Saudi citizenship. While in Khartoum, he funded several training camps. Bin Laden left Sudan in 1996, still on friendly terms with its government.

Afghanistan

During the Cold War, the Red Army invaded Afghanistan. Usama bin Laden organized a contingent of Arab fighters to join battle with the mujahedeen against their aggressor. In 1989, bin Laden left Afghanistan, returning, triumphantly, to Saudi Arabia. In 1996, he returned, a welcomed guest of the new Taliban government.

Yemen

On October 12, 2000, al Qaeda rammed a boat full of explosives into a U.S. Navy ship, the Cole, which had docked at the Yemenese port in Aden: the Cole did not sink but was severely damaged. A year earlier, al Qaeda had attempted ramming another ship, The Sullivans, with a boat loaded with explosives--so loaded that it sank after being pushed away from the dock.

Somalia

In 1993, on October 3rd, Somali warlord Farah Aideed shot down a Black Hawk helicopter in Mogadishu, using the same methods the mujahedeen had used to bring down Soviet aircraft.

Iran

In 1979, the U.S. lost its Iranian ally, Reza Shah Pahlevi, who had oil and wasn't a communist: Pahlevi was overthrown by Muslim clerics led by Ayatollah Khomeini. The staff at the American Embassy in Tehran were taken as hostages. "Public words to the contrary," Clarke writes, weapons were exchanged for the hostages--NSA John Poindexter and his Deputy Oliver North were in charge--who were released in 1982. When Iraq invaded Iran, the U.S. backed Iraq.

The American Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam

In 1998, on August 7, after having openly declared war on countries like Egypt and the U.S., al Qaeda car bombed the embassies in the capitols of Kenya and Tanzania. The two bombs were coordinated to detonate at the same time.

Themes

Dysfunctional Organizations

Some assignments were taken so seriously that the task forces charged with them continued long after they'd been officially dissolved. The hallmark of an effective organization is meeting or exceeding its ascribed tasks and goals.

It is self evident that conflicts between old career civil servants and new political appointees decrease that effectiveness. That, however, is not the only source of organizational dysfunction. In 1991, the DOD was against intervention after Bosnia's declaration of independence was brutally suppressed.

In 1995, after Aum Shinrikyo released sarin gas in a Tokyo subway--and the FBI's John O'Neill found the Aum listed in a Manhattan telephone book--Clarke discovered that the military was unprepared--the nearest chemical unit was a four-hour drive away. That same year, when Clarke proposed snatching Khalid Sheik Muhammad from Qatar, the DOD submitted a plan more suitable for occupying a country than apprehending a single individual.

In 1996, after the Khobar Towers were bombed, Clarke reports that the DOD was outraged that its security procedures were being investigated. In 1998, after the African embassies were bombed, only the Air Force was slow to respond. In 2000, Clarke was surprised that Cole was bombed. On September 11th, General Myers' status report was "not a pretty picture:" the military was in the middle of a war "game," and the closest planes were 15 minutes away. The military was not alone in being unprepared: Clarke likens the congressional appropriations process to pork production.

The CIA and FBI appear equally, if not more, dysfunctional: Madeline Albright once characterized the CIA as having an institutional "battered child syndrome." The CIA was risk aversive, with risk defined in terms of what made the agency appear effective.

In the summer of 1990, the CIA's "corporate" position was that Iraq was only intimidating Kuwait to influence oil prices. In 1991, the name "bin Laden" began appearing in raw CIA intelligence reports; while the CIA knew about his Afghan Services Bureau, it thought it a simple war veteran fraternal organization.

In 1993, wanting to know whether his strategic air strikes against Iraq had succeeded, Clinton had to finesse the information from CNN. In 1998, the CIA was surprised when the American embassy in Nairobi was bombed. After the Taliban came to power, the CIA resisted supporting Massoud's Northern Alliance. In 2000, the CIA took months before agreeing with the CSG that al Qaeda was responsible for bombing the Cole. The CIA also thought Ramzi Yousef, not his uncle Khalid Sheik Muhammad, was al Qaeda's operational mastermind. Not even Director George Tenet's extreme alarm over the al Qaeda threat could change the CIA's bureaucratic inertia: In June 2001, somewhere in

the CIA, there was information that two known al Qaeda terrorists were currently residing in the U.S.

In addition to its Director, the FBI was comprised of 56 separate field. The only way the FBI shared information was in meetings or by telephone calls. In 1996, the FBI thought Richard Jewell--the private security guard who located a bomb during the Atlanta Olympics and moved many potential victims to safety--planted it as a publicity ploy to land himself a job with the FBI. That same year, after the Khobar Towers bombing, Saudi Prince Bandar convinced FBI Director Louis Freeh that Clinton did not want to fight Iran, evidence to the contrary.

Although a major shift in the FBI's interaction with the world outside itself came when Janet Reno and Freeh verbally established a policy of information sharing, approval of the formal written document drug out for years--and was never made official. Individual FBI agents who were proactively concerned with the growing terrorist threat either resigned or were fired.

Although the reader is repelled by al Qaeda's operational and religious objectives--kill civilians and oppress women--al Qaeda is a far more effective organization than the different branches of the U.S. government: indeed, invading Iraq in 2003 did far more to increase than decrease terrorism. Additionally, the invasion has made Saudi Arabia less stable and strengthened Iran, which, Clarke notes, had funded Hezbollah from the beginning and has been directly responsible for many American deaths. Clarke concludes by noting that, unless the U.S. begins addressing real problems, a Taliban-like government could control Pakistan and an Iran with nuclear ambitions could merge with the Saudis after the fall of the House of Saud: even with a "democratic" Iraq, the result would be a far less stable world for everyone.

The "Fourth Estate"

In his Preface, Clarke writes that his goal is to address the confusion and ignorance he has observed amongst his fellow citizens--which he attributes, in good measure, to poor journalism and media myths: one such myth was that the Sudanese government forced bin Laden out of the Sudan. Further, the "unnamed official sources" so often cited by journalists are too often just different members of different federal agencies fighting turf wars, spreading rumors about each other: Saudi Prince Bandar, for example, convinced FBI Director Louis Freeh that Iran was responsible for the Khobar Towers bombing--and that Clinton did not want to fight Iran--a story Freeh passed on to the media. Later, after the first Gulf War, the CIA planted false rumors that Israel had sold military hardware to China. Additionally, during the period in which Clinton increased funding for counterterrorism, senior military leaders spread rumors that they wanted to act but that the White House did not--and, rather than covering the growing terrorist threat that concerned the Clinton administration, media attention focused exclusively on presidential peccadilloes.

Terrorism

Clarke writes of his own work in the arena of counterterrorism between 1979 and 2003. As such, his book should not be assumed to provide a comprehensive view or history of terrorism. Thus, it is not surprising that Clarke doesn't mention, for example, that "Carlos the Jackal" was named "Ilich Ramirez." In 1953, the CIA orchestrated a coup which deposed the popularly elected leader of Iran's nascent democracy with Reza Shah Pahlevi's brutal dictatorship--or that, on September 11th 1973, the CIA sponsored a coup which led to Salvador Allende's democratic government--the oldest democracy in South America--being replaced by Augusto Pinochet's brutal dictatorship.

It is, however, surprising that there is so little mention of Palestine. Although the object of considerable presidential attention, it was evidently not a concern of Clarke's CSG. Although there are Palestinians, there is no Palestine: that it does not exist is certainly related to the first Intifada--which began in 1987 and ended with the Oslo Peace Accords in 1993--and the second, which began in 2000, approximately a year before the September 11th attacks.

Additionally, nothing on the CSG's 10-point foundational charter addressed "climates" said to facilitate terrorism: poverty, inequality, and injustice. Clarke does address the former in his final chapter, mentioning, for example, that Pakistan's Musharraf needed economic assistance to redress the poverty of bin Laden's supporters, particularly in the mountainous region bordering Afghanistan. As to inequality and injustice--both real and perceived--Clarke concludes that the U.S. needs to win the war of ideas in order to win the war against terrorism.

Style

Point of View

This narrative is told in the first person. The perspective is that of Richard Clarke, who, in this book, chronicles his 30 years as a civil servant: In 1979--the same year Israel's Begin and Egypt's Sadat signed a peace treaty in Jerusalem--Clarke began working for the U.S. government as a Pentagon analyst. He was later appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intelligence at the State Department, and, in 1990, Assistant Secretary of State for Politico-Military Affairs, followed by positions as Coordinator for Security Infrastructure and Counterterrorism, and chair of the Counterterrorism Security Group. In 2000, at the request of President G.W. Bush's National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice, he prepared a report spinning off most CSG responsibilities into other agencies. After completing his plan--as a career bureaucrat, he was a master of writing coherent, formal reports, action plans, and decision documents--he requested a new position, as the new chair of the new Committee on Critical Infrastructure Protection and Cyber-Security, which he was scheduled to assume on October 1, 2001 (he assumed the position in 2002).

Setting

Richard Clarke was in a meeting in Washington, D.C's Ronald Reagan Building when the September 11th attacks began: Within five minutes after a commercial jet was flown into the World Trade Center's North Tower, he was in the Situation Room in the West Wing of the White House. Although Clarke's work takes him to the Middle East--Israel, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Yemen--most of the book occurs in federal office buildings in the Washington, D.C. area. Part of the book occurs in "cyber-space:" Before reaching the Situation Room, Clarke had his staff set up a teleconference with the Principals. Additionally, Clarke's first view of Usama bin Laden came from a raw video feed obtained from an unarmed Predator, which he had secured to monitor a training camp in Afghanistan.

Language and Meaning

This book, Richard Clarke's retrospective description of his own experiences, was written in English: the exhortations at the end of his Preface and Epilogue suggest that Americans were his primary intended audience. He uses the present tense throughout: in the first chapter, the reader is there with Clarke in the Situation Room as he organizes the U.S.'s initial response. In the next 9 chapters, he describes his experiences from the 1980s through the summer of 2001. Except for his analytic critique of the U.S.'s invasion of Iraq in, the final chapter, he uses language descriptively, to relate his own experiences.

Structure

The book is divided into a Preface, 11 Chapters, an Epilogue. Each of the first 10 chapters range between 20 and 30 pages in length: Evacuate the White House; Stumbling into the Islamic World; Unfinished Mission, Unintended Consequences; Terror Returns (1993-1996); The Almost War, 1996; Al Qaeda Revealed; Beginning Homeland Protection; Delenda Est; Millennium Alert; and Before and After September 11. The final chapter--Right War, Wrong War--is about 40 pages in length. Both the Preface and Epilogue conclude exhorting Americans to renew their vows to "preserve, protect, and defend ... against all enemies."

Quotes

" 'We have to think of a message to the public. Tell them not to clog up the roads. Let them know we are in control of the airways'.... 'Paul, there is nobody in the White House but us and no press on the grounds. I think the President will have something to say when he lands in Barksdale, but we have to be careful ... we really don't know what is going on.'" Chapter 1, pg. 13

"Thousands of American civilian contractors moved into the Kingdom, causing resentment among some Muslims, who read the Koran as banning the presence of infidels in the country that hosted the two holiest mosques of Islam." Chapter 2, pg. 48

"Those feeling disadvantaged by the global system and wishing to blame their lot on foreign forces had only one world dominant nation to blame for their troubles, one major target to motivate their followers, America." Chapter 3, pg. 71

"Gore laughed and said, 'That's a no-brainer. Of course it's a violation of international law, that's why it's a covert action. The guy is a terrorist. Go grab his ass.'" Chapter 5, pg. 144

" 'Is there an al Qaeda presence in this city?' I would ask. 'What's al Qaeda? Is that that Been Layding guy? He hasn't been here.'" Chapter 9, pg. 216

"It was as if Usama bin Laden, hidden in some high mountain redoubt, were engaging in long-range mind control of George Bush, chanting 'invade Iraq, you must invade Iraq.'" Chapter 10, pp. 246-247

Topics for Discussion

The first speaker in the first quotation is Paul Wolfewitz and the second, Richard Clarke. What are they discussing?

The second quotation describes the influx of Americans into Saudi Arabia. What were the short- and long-term consequences of the U.S. presence?

The third quotation refers to the end of the Cold War, which left the world with only one "super power." Who is disadvantaged by the "global system?" Why would anyone want to blame their troubles on the U.S.?

Is there a difference between actual and perceived injustice?

The speaker in the fourth quotation is Vice President Gore. Who is he talking about? Does Clarke think that the U.S. response to terrorism has evolved since al Qaeda was formed?

How is al Qaeda related to other terrorist organizations?

The first speaker in the fifth quotation is Richard Clarke. He was alarmed that the FBI reported no terrorist activity within the U.S. (and so visited different FBI field offices). The second speaker is a hypothetical FBI agent. Is Clarke trying to make the FBI seem illiterate?

Why does Clarke think the FBI is a dysfunctional organization? How is it different from the CIA? The DOD? The Congress? The four different Presidents under which Clarke served?

In the sixth quotation, Clarke refers to the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Did bin Laden really want the U.S. to invade Iraq?

In his last chapter, Clarke says the U.S. war dead in Iraq number in the hundreds. When did he write this chapter? Why does he use the present tense throughout?

Why did the U.S. invade Iraq?

What does Clarke think the best outcome of that invasion? The worst?