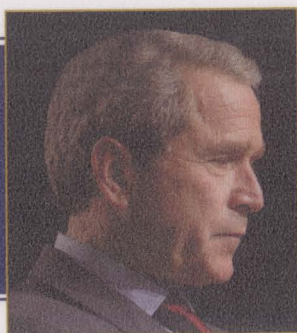


Against All Enemies

Inside
America's War
on Terror



Richard A. Clarke

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RICHARD A. CLARKE



FREE PRESS

NEW YORK • LONDON • TORONTO • SYDNEY

PUSTAKA PERDANA



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CONTENTS

Preface ix

1. Evacuate the White House 1
2. Stumbling into the Islamic World 35
3. Unfinished Mission, Unintended Consequences 55
4. Terror Returns (1993–1996) 73
5. The Almost War, 1996 101
6. Al Qaeda Revealed 133
7. Beginning Homeland Protection 155
8. Delenda Est 181
9. Millennium Alert 205
10. Before and After September 11 227
11. Right War, Wrong War 247

Epilogue 289

Index 293

PREFACE

FROM INSIDE THE WHITE HOUSE, the State Department, and the Pentagon for thirty years, I disdained those who departed government and quickly rushed out to write about it. It seemed somehow inappropriate to expose, as Bismarck put it, "the making of sausage." Yet I became aware after my departure from federal service that much that I thought was well known was actually obscure to many who wanted to know.

I was frequently asked "exactly how did things work on 9/11, what happened?" In looking at the available material, I found that there was no good source, no retelling of that day which history will long mark as a pivot point. Then, as I began to think about teaching graduate students at Georgetown and Harvard, I realized that there was no single inside account of the flow of recent history that had brought us to September 11, 2001, and the events that followed from it.

As the events of 2003 played out in Iraq and elsewhere, I grew increasingly concerned that too many of my fellow citizens were being misled. The vast majority of Americans believed, because the Bush administration had implied it, that Saddam Hussein had something to do with the al Qaeda attacks on America. Many thought that the Bush administration was doing a good job of fighting terrorism when, actually, the administration had squandered the opportunity to eliminate al Qaeda and instead strengthened our enemies by going off on a completely unnecessary tangent, the invasion of Iraq. A new al Qaeda has emerged and is growing stronger, in part because of our own actions and inactions. It is in many ways a tougher opponent than the original threat we faced before September 11 and we are not doing what is necessary to make America safer from that threat.

This is the story, from my perspective, of how al Qaeda developed and attacked the United States on September 11. It is a story of the

CIA and FBI, who came late to realize that there was a threat to the United States and who were unable to stop it even after they agreed that the threat was real and significant. It is also the story of four presidents:

- Ronald Reagan, who did not retaliate for the murder of 278 United States Marines in Beirut and who violated his own terrorism policy by trading arms for hostages in what came to be called the Iran-Contra scandal;
- George H. W. Bush, who did not retaliate for the Libyan murder of 259 passengers on Pan Am 103; who did not have an official counterterrorism policy; and who left Saddam Hussein in place, requiring the United States to leave a large military presence in Saudi Arabia;
- Bill Clinton, who identified terrorism as the major post-Cold War threat and acted to improve our counterterrorism capabilities; who (little known to the public) quelled anti-American terrorism by Iraq and Iran and defeated an al Qaeda attempt to dominate Bosnia; but who, weakened by continued political attack, could not get the CIA, the Pentagon, and FBI to act sufficiently to deal with the threat;
- George W. Bush, who failed to act prior to September 11 on the threat from al Qaeda despite repeated warnings and then harvested a political windfall for taking obvious yet insufficient steps after the attacks; and who launched an unnecessary and costly war in Iraq that strengthened the fundamentalist, radical Islamic terrorist movement worldwide.

This is, unfortunately, also the story of how America was unable to develop a consensus that the threat was significant and was unable to do all that was necessary to deal with a new threat until that threat actually killed thousands of Americans.

Even worse, it is the story of how even after the attacks, America did not eliminate the al Qaeda movement, which morphed into a distributed and elusive threat, how instead we launched the counter-productive Iraq fiasco; how the Bush administration politicized counter-

terrorism as a way of insuring electoral victories; how critical homeland security vulnerabilities remain; and how little is being done to address the ideological challenge from terrorists distorting Islam into a new ideology of hate.

Chance had placed me inside key parts of the U.S. government throughout a period when an era was ending and another was born. The Cold War that had begun before my birth was ending as I turned forty. As the new era began I started what turned into an unprecedented decade of continuous service at the White House, working for the last three presidents.

As the events of 2003 unfolded, I began to feel an obligation to write what I knew for my fellow citizens and for those who may want to examine this period in the future. This book is the fulfillment of that obligation. It is, however, flawed. It is a first-person account, not an academic history. The book, therefore, tells what one participant saw, thought, and believed from one perspective. Others who were involved in some of these events will, no doubt, recall them differently. I do not say they are wrong, only that this account is what my memory reveals to me. I want to apologize in advance to the reader for the frequent use of the first-person singular and the egocentric nature of the story, but it was difficult to avoid those features and still do a first-person, participant's account.

The account is also necessarily incomplete. Many events and key participants are not mentioned, others who deserve rich description are only briefly introduced. Great issues such as the need to reform the intelligence community, secure cyberspace, or balance liberty and security are not fully analyzed. There will be other places for a more analytical reflection on those and other related issues of technical detail and policy import. Much that is still classified as secret by the U.S. government is omitted in this book. I have tried, wherever possible, to respect the confidences and privacy of those about whom I write. Nonetheless, there are some conversations that must be recalled because the citizenry and history have a justifiable need to know.

I recognize there is a great risk in writing a book such as this that many friends and former associates who disagree with me will be offended. The Bush White House leadership in particular have a reputa-

tion for taking great offense at criticism by former associates, considering it a violation of loyalty. They are also reportedly adept at revenge, as my friend Joe Wilson discovered and as former Secretary of the Treasury Paul O'Neill now knows. Nonetheless, friends should be able to disagree and, for me, loyalty to the citizens of the United States must take precedence over loyalty to any political machine.

Some will say this account is a justification or apology, a defense of some and an attack on others. It is meant to be factual, not polemical. In a decade of managing national security, many made mistakes, definitely including me. Many important steps were also taken in that decade as the result of the selfless sacrifice of thousands of those who serve the superpower and try daily to keep it on the path of principle and progress. I have tried to be fair in recounting what I know of both the mistakes and the service. I leave bottom-line assessments of blame and credit to the reader, with a caution that accurate assignments of responsibility are not easily done.

The close reader will note that many names recur throughout the book over a period of not just a decade, but more than two decades. That fact reflects the often unnoticed phenomenon that during the last five presidencies, many of the behind-the-scenes national security midlevel managers have been constant, people such as Charlie Allen, Randy Beers, Wendy Chamberlin, Michael Sheehan, Robert Gelbard, Elizabeth Verville, Steven Simon, Lisa Gordon-Hagerty, and Roger Cressey. When things worked, it was because they were listened to and allowed to implement their sound advice. Working closely with them were an even less noticed cadre of administrative assistants, such as the stalwart Beverly Roundtree, who has kept me in line and on time for the last fifteen years of our twenty-five-year association and friendship.

No one has a thirty-year run in national security in Washington, including ten years in the White House, without a great deal of help and support. In my case that help has come from Republicans, Democrats, and independents, from Members of Congress, journalists, partners in foreign governments, extraordinary colleagues, mentors and mentees, and a long list of very tolerant and long-suffering bosses. Since some will not want to be named, I will spare them all specific

mention here. They know who they are, and so do I. Many thanks. Thanks too to Bruce Nichols of Free Press and to Len Sherman, without whom I would not have been able to produce a readable book.

In the 1700s a small group of extraordinary Americans created the Constitution that governs this country. In it, they dictated an oath that the President of the United States should swear. Forty-three Americans have done so since. Scores of millions of Americans have sworn a very similar oath upon becoming citizens, or joining the armed forces, becoming FBI agents, CIA officers, or federal bureaucrats.

All of the above-mentioned groups have sworn to protect that very Constitution "against all enemies." In this era of threat and change, we must all renew our pledge to protect that Constitution against the foreign enemies that would inflict terrorism against our nation and its people. That mission should be our first calling, not unnecessary wars to test personal theories or expiate personal guilt or revenge. We must also defend the Constitution against those who would use the terrorist threat to assault the liberties the Constitution enshrines. Those liberties are under assault and, if there is another major, successful terrorist attack in this country there will be further assaults on our rights and civil liberties. Thus, it is essential that we prevent further attacks and that we protect the Constitution . . . against all enemies.

