

Countdown to 9/11

Could it have been prevented?

2000 Terrorist ringleader **Mohammed Atta**, **Marwan al-Shehhi** and **Mounir el-Motassadeq** travel to Kandahar allegedly with a plan to attack the U.S. Following the bombing of the USS Cole, **President Clinton's** counter-terror chief **Richard Clarke** presents an aggressive plan to tackle al-Qaeda



The Clarke plan
Diplomatic pressure
Financial crackdown
Arrest of terror cells



Air attacks on terror camps
Special forces in Afghanistan

► **Clinton-to-Bush transition:** **Clarke** presents plan to **President Bush's** National Security Adviser **Condoleezza Rice**. Bush team has other interests – missile defence, Iraq, Russia and China, Central Asian oil



Clarke presents plan to Vice-President **Dick Cheney**. Plan put back for review

► Afghan Northern Alliance leader **Ahmed Shah Masood** pleads for U.S. and EU support against Taliban and al-Qaeda, warning that they "will damage U.S. very soon"

► **Deputies' Committee** – seconds to National Security chiefs – decide on three parallel policy reviews for revised Clarke plan

► Four **al-Qaeda** terrorists convicted for 1998 embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania

► **FBI** warns of al-Qaeda strikes – U.S. forces on high alert. **Fifth Fleet** leaves Bahrain

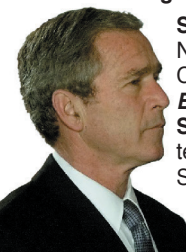
► **CIA** issues international call for arrest of al-Qaeda suspects, warns Bush of imminent strikes. **FBI in Phoenix** investigates students with terrorist links at Arizona flight school – **FBI HQ** defers action. G8 Summit in Genoa protected by anti-aircraft missiles after attack warnings

► **CIA Director George Tenet** warns Bush of Bin Laden's desire to attack U.S. – possibly with hijacked planes. *Al Quds al-Arabi* newspaper carries Bin Laden boast of imminent attacks in U.S.

► **U.S.** receives Jordanian intelligence intercepts referring to **Operation Big Wedding (Al Ourush al-Kabir)** – Muslim martyrs being "married to God" – involving suicide plane attack on U.S.

Sep 4: **Cheney, Rice** and National Security chiefs send Clarke's plan to **President Bush** for final approval.

Sep 6: Worldwide warning of terrorist attacks from State Dept. Senate plan to divert \$600m from missile defence to counter-terrorism vetoed



2001
Jan



► Unmanned **Predator** spy plane spots al-Qaeda leader **Osama bin Laden** in Afghanistan. **Mohammed Atta** enters U.S. after Czech intelligence sees him meeting Iraqi official in Prague

► Suspect **Hani Hanjour** – attending flight school in Arizona – investigated by FAA but found to be legitimate student



► **Zaccarias Moussaoui** arrives in Chicago from London to join Oklahoma flight school

Feb

Mar

Apr

May

Jun

Jul

Aug



► Despite international condemnation and diplomatic efforts Afghanistan's ruling Taliban destroys **Bamiyan Buddhas**

► **Ahmed Ressa** convicted for millennium plot to bomb L.A. airport

► Hijackers test cross-country flight routes. Around 16,000 Taliban and al-Qaeda troops begin massing for offensive against Northern Alliance

► **Bin Laden** warns of attack against U.S. in TV interview. \$100,000 wired to **Atta** from Pakistan

► **Atta, al-Shehhi, Khalid Almidhar, Ziad Jarrah** and **Nawaf Alhazmi**

travel to Spain, meet with possible 20th hijacker **Ramzi Bin al-Shibh**. Almidhar and Alhazmi re-enter U.S. despite being on CIA wanted list. Remaining hijackers assemble in Florida



► **Moussaoui** arrested taking 747 simulator training in Minneapolis. French intelligence sends data linking Moussaoui to al-Qaeda – deemed insufficient evidence by FBI HQ

September

► **Hanjour** makes test flights over Washington. Hijackers wire \$15,000 in unused funds to al-Qaeda financier in UAE. **Sep 9:** Two al-Qaeda assassins posing as journalists detonate bomb, killing Northern Alliance leader **Ahmed Shah Masood**.

Sep 10: U.S. intelligence intercepts Arabic messages stating "**Tomorrow is zero hour**"

