

Attacks on the world trade center law international essay

Law



Abstract

The attack on the World Trade Center in 1993 and the subsequent attack that led to their destruction had a lasting effect on our country. The attacks not only led to new legislation being passed and old legislation being removed or modified, but also led to the formation of the Department of Homeland Security.

Attacks on the World Trade Center and Birth of Department of Homeland Security

There has been no more famous terror event in the United States than the one that occurred on September 11, 2001. The attacks carried out on this day made Americans sharply aware that we were vulnerable. These attacks were planned, coordinated and sophisticated in terms of destruction and lethality. In order to understand this attack and the effects it had on our country, we must consider the first attack on the World Trade Center. Next, the way our country combats and responds to terrorist activities will be examined. Third, the way we handle captured terrorist while also including a look into the detention facility located in Guantanamo Bay will be considered. Finally, we will look at the laws that were passed following 9/11 and the impacts of these laws. The first attack on the World Trade Center occurred on February 26, 1993. This attack occurred when a bomb was detonated from a truck that was parked in an underground garage. The bomb was rigged with a timed delayed fuse and the conspirators were able to escape the scene. The result of the attack however, was six people dead, more than 1, 000 injured, and millions of dollars in property damage. This attack and the subsequent FBI investigation revealed a pattern of clues. First <https://assignbuster.com/attacks-on-the-world-trade-center-law-international-essay/>

the investigation into the fragments of the truck that the explosive was carried in led them to Mohammed Salameh, " who rented the truck and reported it stolen". (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, 2004, p. 72) Shortly thereafter, the FBI had several other conspirators in custody including: Nidal Ayyad (engineer who acquired the material for the bomb), Mahmoud Abouhalima (who assisted in mixing the chemicals). In addition to these three suspects, Ahmad Ajaj was also linked to the attack and arrested. These four individuals would all be convicted and sentenced to life for their involvement in the attack. It is important to note that Ahmad Ajaj had been arrested in September 1992 prior to the attack for trying to enter the U. S. with fraudulent identification. When he was arrested in 1992, he had also been carrying how-to manuals on bombs. Ajaj would serve six months on a fraudulent passport charge and released after the attack on the World Trade Center was carried out. The investigation that led to Ajaj's involvement also identified another suspect, Ramzi Yousef, who was traveling with Ajaj. Later, it would be learned that Yousef was not only the driver of the truck but also the one who planted the bomb during the attack. Yousef would flee the U. S. for Pakistan and would remain a fugitive for a few of years before being captured in 1995. The arrest of Salameh, Ayyad, and Abouhalima and the interrogation that followed led the FBI to the Al Farooq Mosque in Brooklyn and Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman (aka " Blind Sheikh"). Rahman, an extremist Sunni Muslim cleric who moved to the United States from Egypt in 1990 was a prominent figure in the Mosque and preached " the message of Sayyid Qutb's Milestones, characterizing the United States as the oppressor of Muslims worldwide and asserting it was their religious duty to fight against

God's enemies." (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, 2004, p. 72)

Rahman would later be convicted and sentenced to life in prison for conspiracy related to the World Trade Center attack as well as plots to destroy other New York City landmarks. The Blind Sheik is currently serving his sentence in solitary confinement at a North Carolina Federal Penitentiary.

The first attack on the World Trade Center left many clues that if all put together could have possibly prevented the second attack. When Ramzi Yousef was captured in 1995 and later said " he hoped to have kill \$250, 000." (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, 2004, p. 72) Further, with the suspects in custody how were they handled and interrogated? Did investigators do their due diligence to extract intelligence? Khalid Sheikh Mohammad's (KSM) relationship as the Uncle of Ramzi Yousef and his involvement in the first attack was revealed through the investigation, but was there enough done to bring him to justice? As it would turn out, KSM would be deemed the " mastermind" of the 911 attacks. Quite possibly, investigators were crippled in their investigation due to the terrorist entering the American justice system. These terrorist were appointed attorneys who probably limited the scope of interrogations they were subjected to and the information that they revealed. Fast forward eight years and we experience another attack, but this time it would be of a magnitude at that we as modern day American's have never experienced since Pearl Harbor. On the morning of September 11, 2001, al Qaeda terrorist high jacked four aircraft, turned them into weapons of mass destruction and flew them into the World Trade Center and Pentagon. The first plane, a Boeing 767- American Airlines flight number 11, collided into the north tower. Minutes later, a second

Boeing 767- United Airlines flight number 175, struck the south tower.

Following the two planes that hit the towers of the World Trade Center, a third plane, American Airlines flight number 77, struck the Pentagon. Lastly, terrorist hijacked a fourth plane, United Flight 93. The last plane did not successfully strike a target probably because of the news that was received from the other three hijacking incidents. The passengers on United Flight 93 took action, overpowered the terrorist and crashed the plane in a secluded Pennsylvania field. Following the attacks that collapsed both towers of the World Trade Center and the attack on the Pentagon President Bush took immediate action. He declared the events larger than an attack, but consummated an act of war. This declaration would be important and have several impacts with the way we proceeded following the attacks. First, the declaration paved the way for the invasion of both Iraq and Afghanistan. Second, it impacted the policies we followed during the investigation and bringing those that were responsible to justice. This policy, while it brought controversy, declared those responsible as unlawful enemy combatants. This essentially stripped the protection of the Geneva Convention from those responsible. Additionally, it prevented these terrorists from the protection afforded by the U. S. Constitution. Third, the U. S. did not hold those captured in the U. S. but chose instead to store these individuals at a Naval Base located in Guantanamo Bay. This choice proved to be an ideal location due to the isolation and protection the base afforded. Finally, it established a judicial system, military commissions, that would be used to process those that were captured. Military commission started in the form of an Executive Order signed in 2001 by President Bush. The Executive Order was challenged

in the Supreme Court in *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*. This case would lead to the passing of the Military Commissions Act in 2006 that allowed the Central Intelligence Agency to continue its interrogation of foreign terrorist and provided a system to try these foreign terrorist accused of war crimes. (Fact Sheet, 2006) One nearly immediate law that was passed had enormous impact was the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT) Act. The USA PATRIOT Act was passed on October 26, 2001 with overwhelming support in the House (357-66) and Senate (98-1). This act is geared toward the prevention of future attacks and eased restrictions that were previously placed on investigators. Some key authorities that that act allowed or facilitated: " allowed law enforcement to use surveillance against more crimes of terror, allowed federal agents to follow sophisticated terrorists trained to evade detection (roving wiretaps), allowed federal agents to ask a court for an order to obtain business records in national security terrorism cases, and facilitated information sharing and cooperation among government agencies." (USA PATRIOT Act, 2001) The act received a four year renewal in 2011 with the House voting 250-153 and the Senate voting 72-23. (Bliss, 2011) The Department of Homeland Security received its foundation just days after the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001. On September 22nd, 2001 Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge was appointed as the Director of the Office of Homeland Security. The office was charged with managing and coordinating the national strategy to protect against and respond to future attacks. This office would eventually lead to the creation of the Department of Homeland Security through the passage of the Homeland

Security Act of 2002. The Homeland Security Act of 2002 paved the way for the Department of Homeland Security to stand up and form. The Act called for the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security with the following stated as the department's primary mission: " to prevent terrorist attacks within the United States, to reduce the vulnerability of the United States to terrorism, minimize the damage, and assist in the recovery, from terrorist attacks that do occur within the United States, to carry out all functions of entities transferred to the Department, including by acting as a focal point regarding natural and manmade crises and emergency planning, to ensure that the functions of the agencies and subdivisions within the Department that are not related directly to securing the homeland are not diminished or neglected except by a specific explicit Act of Congress, to ensure that the overall economic security of the United States is not diminished by efforts, activities, and programs aimed at securing the homeland, and to monitor connections between illegal drug trafficking and terrorism, coordinate efforts to sever such connections, and otherwise contribute to efforts to interdict illegal drug trafficking." (H. R. 5005, 2002)In order to meet the assigned mission, the Department of Homeland Security had to grow and reorganize. The department was formed through the consolidation and reorganization of 22 other departments and agencies. Today, following reorganization and capitalizing on efficiencies, the major operational components of the Department of Homeland Security consist of: U. S. Customs and Border Protection, U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Service, U. S. Coast Guard, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U. S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U. S. Secret Service, Transportation

Security Administration, and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center. In addition to the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security, there were also several pieces of legislation there were born and passed as a result of the World Trade Center attacks. One piece of legislation was the Robert T. Stafford Relief and Emergency Assistance Act and Related Authorities that amended the Disaster Relief Act of 1974 and governs response and assistance provided during disasters including acts of terror. Another piece of legislation is the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 that was passed to address port and waterway security. Lastly the Aviation and Transportation Security Act was signed into law by the President on November 19, 2001. This act ultimately established the Transportation Security Administration. The terror attacks that were carried out on the World Trade Center in 1993 and ultimately destroyed the buildings in 2001 did in fact have a lasting effect on our country. Both attacks proved that we could be attacked on our homeland. Both attacks also prompted an investigation however, the disposition of the terrorist were different. The terrorist responsible for the first bombing were processed in the American judicial system while those responsible for 9-11 were captured, interrogated, and transported to Guantanamo Bay to possibly face a military tribunal. Finally, our country passed unprecedented legislation that not only created the Department of Homeland Security but also supported federal agents and law enforcement personnel in the conduct of investigations.

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