Anniversary report from 9/11 Commission seeks to bolster "war on terror"

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On the tenth anniversary of its original 9/11 Commission Report, the bipartisan National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (NCTAUUS) has released a new study, "Reflections on the Tenth Anniversary of the 9/11 Commission Report".

Both the new "reflections" and the original report were overseen by former Republican Governor of New Jersey Thomas Kean, and former Democratic Party Congressman Lee Hamilton.

Though the commission was officially closed in August 2004, the panel has been revived in an effort to reinvigorate the "war on terror"—the central ideological framework used to justify unlimited war abroad and the unrelenting assault on democratic rights at home.

Following in the footsteps of the original 9/11 report, the commission makes the case for more aggressive overseas interventions by the US military. Summing up a central theme of the report, the authors insist, "The terrorist threat has evolved, but it is still very real and very dangerous. Complacency is setting in. There is a danger that this waning sense of urgency will divert attention and needed resources from counterterrorism efforts."

The report warns that Al Qaeda affiliates now operate in 16 different countries, that the takeover of large portions of Iraq and Syria by the Islamic State has created a "massive terrorist sanctuary" from which new operations can be launched. They do not note that the rise of Islamic fundamentalist forces in Syria is the product of US backing for these groups as part of the operation against Bashar Al Assad.

The commissioners defend NSA spying and advocate measures to further erode democratic rights. They argue that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) must continue to develop beyond the confines of traditional law enforcement functions, becoming "an intelligence-driven organization with a parallel national security mission."

The initial 9/11 report called for new measures enabling the state to better track and identify individuals. The anniversary report insists that the original report's recommendation for "a biometric exit-tracking system" must now be fully implemented in light of the renewed threat of terrorism. Other, similar measures are proposed.

The constant theme is a warning of the need to combat public "complacency" over the supposed terrorist threat. "I have not heard this much concern [about a possible terrorist attack on the US] since 9/11," commission leader Tom Kean told the *Wall Street Journal* .

Ominously, the authors of the "reflections" report write in response, "We hope it will not take another catastrophic attack to reinvigorate the sense of urgency about counterterrorism among the young Americans who represent the future of our national security agencies."

The report repeatedly stresses the need of the government to "communicate" to the public the imminence of the terrorist threat. The authors argue that in today's "era of heightened skepticism," the public does not sufficiently "understand" the need to massively beef up the security and intelligence powers of the state.

Popular "skepticism" has found expression in the form of support for NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden. In some highly interesting and revealing passages, the report notes a "troubling trend": the number of young people seeking jobs with the national security agencies has dropped significantly from its post-9/11 high, an effect the authors attribute to Edward

Snowden's leaks, which they say "may have dented young Americans' enthusiasm for national security work."

The report notes that the NSA has been disinvited from tech conferences that previously were fertile ground for recruiting.

The authors lament that a new generation, "for whom 9/11 was not a formative experience," lack the necessary sense of urgency in relation to the terrorism threat. "Young Americans need to know that terrorism is not going away," the authors write.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* wrote at the time of its main report ("What the 9/11 commission report ignores: the CIA-Al Qaeda connection"), the 9/11 Commission was a principal means through which the political establishment sought to affirm the official narrative of what happened on September 11, 2001. This was necessary to prevent any real investigations into the circumstances behind the attacks, and to affirm the "war on terror" political framework.

In particular, the report studiously avoided any analysis of the connections between sections of the state apparatus and Al Qaeda in general, and the 9/11 hijackers in particular. It ignored such issues as who was funding and providing logistical support for the terrorists, and how they were able to enter and operate freely inside the US.

Whatever the specific circumstances behind the attacks, they were immediately seized on by the Bush administration to implement a policy that had long been planned. Both war abroad and the assault on democratic rights at home have been intensified under Obama.

However, the "war on terror" has worn thin, creating a political crisis for the ruling class. Unending war and the increasingly brazen destruction of democratic rights has had an impact on popular consciousness, as has the experience of the Obama administration. The commissioners are seeking to reinvigorate this "war," with dangerous and ominous implications.

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