

ident Bush and asked for the additional authority. See George Tenet testimony, Mar. 24, 2004. The Blair House CIA briefing is recounted in some detail in Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (Simon & Schuster, 2002), pp. 34–35.

159. President Clinton meeting (Apr. 8, 2004).

160. President Bush and Vice President Cheney meeting (Apr. 29, 2004).

161. NSC briefing materials, “CT Briefing for Bush-Cheney Transition Team, APNSA-Designate Rice, “Policy, Organization, Priorities,” undated. Powell was briefed by the full CSG, at his request.

162. Richard Clarke interview (Feb. 3, 2004); Samuel Berger interview (Jan. 14, 2004); Condoleezza Rice meeting (Feb. 7, 2004); Roger Cressey interview (Dec. 15, 2003); Paul Kurtz interviews (Dec. 16, 2003; Dec. 22, 2003).

163. Condoleezza Rice meeting (Feb. 7, 2004); Stephen Hadley meeting (Jan. 31, 2004). Hadley told us that he was able to do less policy development than in a normal two-month transition.

164. Public references by candidate and then President Bush about terrorism before 9/11 tended to reflect these priorities, focusing on state-sponsored terrorism and WMD as a reason to mount a missile defense. See, e.g., President Bush remarks, Warsaw University, June 15, 2001.

165. Rice and Zelikow had been colleagues on the NSC staff during the first Bush administration and were coauthors of a book concerning German unification. See Philip Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1995). As the Executive Director of the Commission, Zelikow has recused himself from our work on the Clinton-Bush transition at the National Security Council.

166. Philip Zelikow interview (Oct. 8, 2003).

167. Condoleezza Rice meeting (Feb. 7, 2004).

168. Ibid.

169. Richard Clarke interviews (Dec. 18, 2003; Feb. 3, 2004); Roger Cressey interview (Dec. 15, 2003). As Clarke put it, “There goes our ability to get quick decisions.” Richard Clarke interview (Feb. 3, 2004). However, Paul Kurtz told the Commission that even though Clarke complained about losing his seat on the Principals Committee on terrorism issues, Kurtz saw no functional change in Clarke’s status. Paul Kurtz interviews (Dec. 16, 2003; Dec. 22, 2003).

170. President Bush and Vice President Cheney meeting (Apr. 29, 2004); George Tenet interview (Jan. 28, 2004).

171. President Bush and Vice President Cheney meeting (Apr. 29, 2004).

172. NSC memo, Clarke to Rice, al Qaeda review, Jan. 25, 2001 (italics and underlining of the word *urgently* in original). Clarke’s staff called on other occasions for early Principals Committee decisions, including in a “100 Day Plan” that called for cabinet-level decisions on the Northern Alliance, Uzbekistan, Predator, and the *Cole*. See NSC memo, Fenzel to Rice, Feb. 16, 2001. Other requests for early PCs are found in NSC email, Fenzel to Hadley, “Early PC Meeting Priorities,” Feb. 2, 2001; NSC email, Cressey to NSC Front Office, “TNT Meeting Priorities,” Feb. 7, 2001; NSC email, Cressey to Moran, “Aid to NA,” Feb. 12, 2001; NSC memo, Cressey to Rice, Mar. 2, 2001.

173. NSC memo, Clarke to Rice, al Qaeda review, Jan. 25, 2001.

174. The Bush administration held 32 Principals Committee meetings on subjects other than al Qaeda before 9/11. Condoleezza Rice testimony, Apr. 8, 2004; White House information provided to the Commission. Rice told us the Administration did not need a principals meeting on al Qaeda because it knew that al Qaeda was a major threat. Condoleezza Rice meeting (Feb. 7, 2004) Condoleezza Rice testimony, Apr. 8, 2004.

175. CNN broadcast, “CNN Ahead of the Curve,” Oct. 13, 2000. Vice presidential candidate Dick Cheney also urged swift retaliation against those responsible for bombing the destroyer, saying: “Any would-be terrorist out there needs to know that if you’re going to attack, you’ll be hit very hard and very quick. It’s not time for diplomacy and debate. It’s time for action.” Associated Press, “Cheney: Swift Retaliation Needed,” Oct. 13, 2000.

176. George Tenet interview (Jan. 28, 2004).

177. NSC memo, Clarke to Rice, al Qaeda review, Jan. 25, 2001.

178. NSC memo, Clarke to Vice President Cheney, Feb. 15, 2001.

179. CIA briefing materials, “UBL Strategic Overview and USS COLE Attack Update,” Mar. 27, 2001. These briefing slides appear to have been recycled from slides prepared on Jan. 10, 2001.

180. In early March, Cressey wrote Rice and Hadley that at a belated wedding reception at Tarnak Farms for one of Bin Ladin’s sons, the al Qaeda leader had read a new poem gloating about the attack on the *Cole*. NSC email, Cressey to Rice and Hadley, “BIN LADIN on the USS COLE,” Mar. 2, 2001. A few weeks later, Cressey wrote Hadley that while the law enforcement investigation went on, “we know all we need to about who did the attack to make a policy decision.” NSC email, Cressey to Hadley, “Need for Terrorism DC Next Week,” Mar. 22, 2001. Around this time, Clarke wrote Rice and Hadley that the Yemeni prime minister had told State Department counterterrorism chief Hull that while Yemen was not saying so publicly, Yemen was 99 percent certain that Bin Ladin was responsible for the *Cole*. NSC email, Clarke to NSC Front Office, “Yemen’s View on the USS Cole,” Mar. 24, 2001. In June, Clarke wrote Rice and Hadley that a new al Qaeda video claimed responsibility for the *Cole*. NSC email, Clarke to Rice and Hadley, “Al Qida Video Claims Responsibility for Cole Attack,” June 21, 2001. Later that month, two Saudi jihadists arrested by Bahraini authorities during the threat spike told their captors that their al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan had held celebratory parties over the *Cole* attack. NSC email,