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22 July 2005

SENT VIA FEDEX SHIPPER # 8508-7786-4263
(RECEIPT SIGNATURE REQUIRED)

Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Subject: Request for a Letter of Confirmation
Reference: September 11, 2001 and the Events at the Pentagon in Washington, D. C.

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:

I was pleased by your recent rejection of a suggestion by Senator Edward Kennedy that you tender your resignation as Secretary of the Department of Defense. We, the taxpayers, need you to remain in your current post for the duration of the current administration.

Regarding us taxpayers, we sometimes internalize the impression that U.S. government employees, especially those 'inside the beltway', feel that we, the taxpayers, work for them. I have never felt that you engender that impression, but I would like to emphasize that one context of the subject is the fact that you work for me, a taxpayer. Again, I do not believe you have forgotten that fundamental fact.

Background

I am from New York, New York. I am a 'New Yorker' and always will be a 'New Yorker.' Family members reside in the New York metropolitan area. Indeed, a close relative is a high ranking official in the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), and previously reported directly to then-Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. (On the morning of September 11, 2001 we temporarily lost cell phone contact with this relative, but all was/is "well."). For these and all other obvious reasons, the events of September 11, 2001 will remain, for me, a permanent issue of deep patriotic and personal grief.

Current Discussion

As you are aware, the taxpayers are constantly being bombarded with direct and indirect discussions regarding the events of September 11, 2001. A prominent recent discussion which reemphasized the ongoing relevance of September 11, 2001 came from President George Bush on June 28, 2005 during the address to his (and your) subordinates at Fort Bragg. By not-later-than the third paragraph of his talk, which mostly dealt with the war in Iraq, President Bush exclaimed:

"The war reached our shores on September the 11th, 2001. The terrorists who attacked us -- and the terrorists we face -- murder in the name of a totalitarian ideology that hates freedom, rejects tolerance, and despises all dissent."

The carnage in Madrid of March 11, 2004, and the recent catastrophe in London of July 7, 2005 again prompted a bombardment of the taxpayer which specified the ongoing relevance of September 11, 2001. As the Fort Bragg audience was told, September 11, 2001 is not “behind us.”

Paraphrasing President Bush, we are very fortunate to live in a country that loves freedom, encourages tolerance and has, as a pretext to its very existence, dissent. Indeed, President Bush’s nominee for 109th Supreme Court Justice, Judge John Roberts, refers to our nation as a “constitutional democracy.”

September 11, 2001 and the Events at the Pentagon in Washington, D. C.

On November 10, 2001 President George Bush made the following statement to the United Nations:

“Let us never tolerate outrageous conspiracy theories concerning the attacks of September the 11th, malicious lies that attempt to shift the blame away from the terrorists themselves, away from the guilty.”

It is by the grace of God that you were both present at the Pentagon and not killed by the event there on September 11, 2001. You demonstrated a patriotic integrity, for all to see, by walking to that area of the Pentagon that had been struck by an aircraft. In the effort to assist in any way possible, you personally were at the crash site within minutes of the event.

Certainly, from your first-hand witnessing, there are no “conspiracy theories” about what crashed into the Pentagon. The official rendition was that American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon, killing all crew and 58 passengers. The DOD Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP) issued a report on November 16, 2001 which states that, by use of bodily remains, all Flight 77 crash victims were positively identified. Given that separable, individual bodily remains survived the conflagration of Flight 77, to such an extent as to allow positive identification of the victims, certainly the 60 tons of Boeing 757 aircraft components also survived at the Pentagon; a scene that you personally observed on September 11, 2001. It is in this context that I make a simple but specific request.

Request for a Letter of Confirmation - Background

The aforementioned taxpayer bombardment includes the allegation that a Boeing 757 did **not** crash into the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. This allegation is the central issue of my request. Clearly this allegation is designed to *“shift the blame away from the terrorists themselves, away from the guilty.”* I have read innumerable documents and reports on the events of September 11, 2001. This readership includes the ‘National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States’ which was closed on August 21, 2004. I noted that all ten 9/11 Commission Members signed their names to the report. As public servants working for the taxpayer, the Commission Members believe what is stated in their report. Ironically, unlike yourself, the Commission Members were not present at the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. And yet despite that lack of direct personal witnessing of the Pentagon event, the Commission Members unabashedly signed the report, doing so in the patriotic spirit of the proverbial *John Hancock*. My request involves similar behavior on your part.

Request for a Letter of Confirmation - Specific Request

My request is very simple. I would like to receive from you a simple, straightforward letter, that you author and personally sign, that confirms and states that there is no doubt in your mind that American Airlines Flight 77, which utilized a Boeing 757 passenger aircraft, crashed into the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. I request that this letter of confirmation be received at my address listed above not more than 30 calendar days subsequent to receipt-signature of the instant letter at the Pentagon.

What I Will Not Accept

So that my request is not subject to misinterpretation, I will review the specific and general responses that are not acceptable. I will not accept a letter authored and signed by a member of your staff. I will not accept proposals, of any kind, that suggest that in-the-alternative I review various reports, computer simulations or engineering reviews; I am already thoroughly familiar with those sources of information. In general, I will not accept diatribe about "conspiracy theories." (Indeed, the underlying theme of this request is your assistance with obviation of these allegations, theories, etc.) In general, I will not accept a response that is not directly from my Secretary of Defense, Mr. Donald H. Rumsfeld.

Request for a Letter of Confirmation - Reiteration

Many have said, and I agree, that you are probably the most well-known Secretary of Defense in the history of the United States of America. Your actions prior to, on the very day in-question, and after September 11, 2001 are part of the justification for that place in history. Again, the American taxpayers and the world need you to remain at your current post. Certainly you would agree that the American taxpayer has earned and is deserving of a simple and personalized confirmation, from their Secretary of Defense, that the Pentagon event of September 11, 2001 is not questionable or worthy of "*malicious lies.*" In the context of national security, and the need for ongoing public confidence in the integrity/honesty of the Administration, your proverbial *John Hancock* is requested on a letter of confirmation.

I look forward to hearing from you. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Cordially,

Paul V. Sheridan

cc: President George W. Bush
Secretary Michael Chertoff
Secretary Norman Y. Mineta
Senator Edward M. Kennedy
Ms. Renata B. Greenspan
Mr. Gerald J. Arpey
Mr. Glenn F. Tilton
Mr. Martin C. Jischke