

## Mineta, Cheney and “the orders still stand” controversy:

Further evidence that Vice President Cheney’s order on 9/11 regarding Flight 77 was not a shoot-down order, but a stand down order - an order NOT to shoot the plane down.

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This paper examines the controversy regarding American Airlines Flight 77 and the actions of Vice President Richard Cheney on the morning of September 11, 2001, specifically with regard to the testimony of former Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta before the 9/11 Commission on May 23, 2003. This controversy has emerged and has been heavily debated since the 9/11 truth movement began to critically examine the events of that day. Mineta’s now famous description of events in the Presidential Emergency Operations Center in the White House regarding Cheney have caused much discussion and debate, and have forced the following question:

### **QUESTION PRESENTED**

***Whether, on 9/11/01 while in the Presidential Emergency Operations Center of the White House, (1) certain Executive Orders which Vice President Richard Cheney acknowledged the existence of, referred to orders to the U.S. military to shoot down Flight 77 as it approached the Pentagon, or an order for the stand down of the U.S. military during an attack on the United States; and (2) whether Vice President Cheney issued said Executive Orders.***

The author concludes that the orders referred to in Norman Mineta’s testimony, the now famous “orders still stand” orders, *were not orders to shoot down aircraft, but in fact were stand down orders.*

Before examining Norman Mineta's testimony before the 9/11 Commission, we must ask this important question:

## **1. Who is Norman Mineta?**

Norman Y. Mineta is an accomplished, successful, and respected former Congressman from California. He was interned during World War II as a young boy in a government internment camp. He is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, and served in the U.S. Army as an intelligence officer in Japan and Korea. He was elected Mayor of San Jose, Ca., and then the U.S. Congress, serving 20 years. Mineta served as a vice president at Lockheed Martin, as Secretary of Commerce under President Bill Clinton, and as the longest serving Secretary of Transportation in U.S. history under both Clinton and George Bush. He was the first Asian-American Cabinet officer in U.S. history. (*Source - Wikipedia*).

And although this point may seem trite in this day and age, in his youth, Norman Mineta was a Boy Scout. In his public life, he exemplified the Boy Scout Law: trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent. *His public integrity has never been challenged in almost 40 years of public service until these Commission hearings.*

***Norman Mineta is an honest man.*** And when he appeared before the 9/11 Commission in May of 2003, ***Norman Mineta told the truth.***

## **2. Norman Mineta's testimony before the 9/11 Commission.**

(a) A peek into the crime; Hamilton questions Mineta.

It is necessary to remind the reader of these facts about Norman Mineta's background and character, due to the controversy over Secretary Mineta's testimony before the Commission. One of these controversies relates to the time of Mineta's arrival at the PEOC on the morning of 9/11, and his statement that Vice President Dick Cheney was present; the other regarding Cheney's conversation with an aide in the PEOC, and the now famous statement that "the orders still stand." Mineta's testimony under question by Vice Chairman Lee Hamilton follows: (emphasis added by the author)

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Pages 8-9 of the official 9/11 Commission PDF file transcript (emphasis added).

MR. HAMILTON: We thank you for that. I wanted to focus just a moment on the Presidential Emergency Operating Center. You were there for a good part of the day. I think you were there with the vice president. And when you had that order given, I think it was by the president, that authorized the shooting down of commercial aircraft that were suspected to be controlled by terrorists, **were you there when that order was given?**

MR. MINETA: **No, I was not. I was made aware of it during the time that the airplane coming into the Pentagon. There was a young man who had come in and said to the vice president, "The plane is 50 miles out. The plane is 30 miles out." And when it got down to, "The plane is 10 miles out," the young man also said to the vice president, "Do the orders still stand?" And the vice president turned and whipped his neck around and said, "Of course the orders still stand. Have you heard anything to the contrary?"** Well, at the time I didn't know what all that meant. And --

MR. HAMILTON: **The flight you're referring to is the --**

MR. MINETA: **The flight that came into the Pentagon.**

MR. HAMILTON: The Pentagon, yeah.

MR. MINETA: **And so I was not aware that that discussion had already taken place.** But in listening to the conversation between the young man and the vice president, then at the time I didn't really recognize the significance of that. And then later I heard of the fact that the airplanes had been scrambled from Langley to come up to DC, but those planes were still about 10 minutes away. And so then, at the time we heard about the airplane that went into Pennsylvania, then I thought, "Oh, my God, did we shoot it down?" And then we had to, with the vice president, go through the Pentagon to check that out.

MR. HAMILTON: Let me see if I understand. **The plane that was headed toward the Pentagon and was some miles away, there was an order to shoot that plane down [?]**

MR. MINETA: **Well, I don't know that specifically,** but I do know that the airplanes were scrambled from Langley or from Norfolk, the Norfolk area. **But I did not know about the orders specifically other than listening to that other conversation.**

MR. HAMILTON: **But there very clearly was an order to shoot commercial aircraft down.**

MR. MINETA: **Subsequently I found that out.**

*[Later, Mineta is questioned about the shoot down order referred to by Hamilton, in reference to Flight 93]*

MR. HAMILTON: With respect to Flight 93, what type of information were you and the Vice President receiving about that flight?

MR. MINETA: The only information we had at that point was when it crashed.

MR. HAMILTON: I see. You didn't know beforehand about that airplane.

MR. MINETA: I did not.

MR. HAMILTON: ***And so there was no specific order there to shoot that plane down?***

MR. MINETA: ***No, sir.***

MR. HAMILTON: But there were military planes in the air in position to shoot down commercial aircraft.

MR. MINETA: That's right. The planes had been scrambled, I believe, from Otis at that point.

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## **(b) Mineta stands his ground; Roemer questions Mineta.**

The next questioner was 9/11 Commission member Timothy J. Roemer, a former Democratic Congressman from Indiana. His questions were carefully worded and slanted to attempt to change the interpretation of Mr. Mineta's previous statements. Roemer's initial questioning appears to be an attempt to get Mineta to confirm that the exchange that Mineta observed between the aide and VP Cheney referred to a shoot down order:

*[Roemer starts off his questioning by asking an extremely tricky question - making the statement that the "orders still stand" orders were a shoot down order by asking the question whether Mineta was in the room when the decision to shoot down was made. Mineta skillfully dissects Roemer's question into two parts: (1) that he did not know if that exchange referred to a shoot down order; and (2) verifying the time that Mineta arrived at the PEOC as 9:20 a.m. **Mineta then makes an important, previously overlooked important revelation.** He states knowledge that the President was on his way to Louisiana when the 'conversation' (the shoot down authorization conversation between Bush and Cheney) occurred].*

COMMISSIONER ROEMER:...But you had not been in the room when the decision was made -- to what you inferred was a decision made to attempt to shoot down Flight 77 before it crashed into the Pentagon. Is that correct?

MR. MINETA: ***I didn't know about the order to shoot down. I arrived at the PEOC at about 9:20 a.m.*** And the president was in Florida, ***and I believe he was on his way to Louisiana at that point when the conversation that went on between the vice president and the president and the staff that the president had with him.***

MR. ROEMER: So when you arrived at 9:20, how much longer was it before you overheard the conversation between the young man and the vice president saying, "Does the order still stand?"

MR. MINETA: Probably about five or six minutes.

*[This statement further confirms previous statements by the 9/11 Commission and news accounts that Bush was airborne in Air Force One when shoot down order discussions were held between Bush and Cheney, which was well after the Pentagon strike. Mineta makes it clear that he has knowledge that the Bush-Cheney shoot down conference occurred when Bush was on his way to Louisiana, after Bush took off from Florida, and after the Pentagon strike. (Bush himself states that no major decisions about the crisis were made until he boarded Air Force One.)*

*This statement also eliminates the probability of the "orders still stand" orders having their genesis in a Bush-Cheney discussion. Mineta would have been in the PEOC when those discussions were held. This statement has importance regarding Flight 93 as we shall see]*

MR. ROEMER: So when you arrived at 9:20, how much longer was it before you **overheard** the conversation between the young man and the vice president saying, "Does the order still stand?"

MR. MINETA: Probably about five or six minutes.

MR. ROEMER: So about 9:25 or 9:26. And your **inference** was that the vice president snapped his head around and said, "Yes, the order still stands." Why did you infer that that was a shoot-down?

*[In the above paragraphs, Commissioner Roemer attempted to characterize Mineta's clear observation of Cheney as, first that Mineta "**overheard**" the conversation; and second, that Mineta had an "**inference**" that Cheney made the statement. Mineta didn't "infer" or "overhear" that Cheney snapped his head around and made the statement, he **clearly observed** the exchange.]*

MR. MINETA: Just by the nature of all the events going on that day, the scrambling of the aircraft and, I don't know; I guess, just being in the military, you do start thinking about it, an intuitive reaction to certain statements being made.

*[Mineta's "inference" that the order might have been a shoot down order was natural and instinctive given the circumstances of the day, but it was just that, an inference.*

*Roemer next tries to further characterize the "orders still stand" exchange as somehow having to do with "decisions" being made in the White House Situation Room and not by Cheney (or Bush). Roemer tries to make it appear that Richard Clarke was giving shoot down orders that Cheney was acknowledging. But Mineta holds to his account]:*

MR. ROEMER: And was there another line of communication between the vice president -- and you said you saw Mr. Richard Clark on the way in. Was Clark running an operations center as well on that day?

MR. MINETA: Dick was in the Situation Room.

MR. ROEMER: So there was the Situation Room making decisions about what was going to happen on shutdowns --

MR. MINETA: ***I don't believe they were [making] --***

MR. ROEMER: -- as well as the PEOC?

MR. MINETA: ***I don't believe they were making any decisions. I think they were more information-gathering from various agencies.***

*[Mineta has just told Roemer that no shoot down orders came from the Situation Room. But Roemer is persistent, and Mineta stands his ground]:*

MR. ROEMER: Could it have been in the Situation Room where somebody in the Situation Room recommended the shoot-down and the vice president agreed to that?

MR. MINETA: ***Commissioner Roemer, I would assume that a decision of that nature would have had to be made at a much higher level than the people who were in the Situation Room.***

*[That tack having failed, in the next few exchanges, Roemer will directly try to describe the exchange between the aide and Cheney as a shoot down order which had been given by the President. It is a skillful attempt by Roemer. Knowing that **Mineta's sworn testimony revealed the existence of an Executive Order of some kind that was acknowledged by Cheney**, Roemer describes a scenario where Cheney asks Bush for authorization to execute an order, instead of an order having previously been issued by Cheney on his own]:*

MR. ROEMER: So take me through that. The Situation Room is monitoring the daily minute-by-minute events and they find out that Flight 77 is headed to the Pentagon. Somebody's got to be getting that information. The Situation Room is then communicating with the PEOC and saying, "We've got another flight that's on its way toward the Pentagon. Here are the options." Then the vice president talks to the president and says, "Here are the options; we have a shoot-down recommendation. Do you agree, Mr. President?" Is that what happens?

MR. MINETA: ***Again, that would be speculation on my part as to what was happening on that day, so I just wouldn't be able to really answer that -- on that inquiry.***

*[Roemer persists in trying to frame the “order still stands” orders as coming from the President, by making the implication that Mineta could not comment on this hypothetical scenario just described by Roemer because he was not there to see it, i.e. it occurred before Mineta got to the PEOC when Mineta was conducting official business. As seen in the video, Mineta, clearly annoyed, attempts to interrupt him.]*

MR. ROEMER: I know, because you had been conducting official business, and I'm sure you were hurriedly on your way over there.

MR. MINETA: ***As I was listening --***

*[Now Roemer attempts to change Mineta's timeline. Roemer makes a confusing jumble of the actual facts and timeline, to get Mineta to state that the “order still stands” order was a shoot down order; Roemer's implication being that the “orders still stand” order was a shoot down order, that it was given prior to the Pentagon strike, that it was the President's order, and that he made it from Air Force One. This removes Cheney from any unilateral issuance of an order. Roemer tries to get Mineta to agree that his ‘inference’ followed this scenario:*

- (1.) The Situation Room conferred with the PEOC (Cheney, et.al);*
- (2.) The PEOC conferred with the President;*
- (3.) The decision is made to shoot down a commercial airliner;*
- (4.) Fighter jets are scrambled pursuant to that order;*
- (5.) The jets were not able to reach the airliner in time;*
- (6.) The airliner crashed into the Pentagon.*

MR. ROEMER: I'm just trying to figure out how the Situation Room, which was gathering the minute-by-minute evidence and information and talking probably to a host of different people, and how they're interacting with the PEOC and then how the PEOC is interacting with the president, who is at that point on Air Force One, how a decision is made to shoot down a commercial airliner. **And then would you say -- let's say we're trying to put that part of the puzzle together. Then would your inference be that they scrambled the jets to shoot down the commercial airliner, it failed, and the commercial airliner therefore crashed into the Pentagon, the jets were not able to get there in time to succeed in a mission that they'd been tasked to do?**

*[Roemer further tries to tie the flight of fighter jets toward Washington D.C. as a scramble of the jets for the purpose of execution of a shoot down order from the PEOC. But Mineta refuses to state that the fighter jets, which were airborne prior to the Pentagon strike, had been ordered to shoot down Flight 77.]*

**MR. MINETA: *I'm not sure that the aircraft that were scrambled to come up to the DC area from Norfolk were under orders to shoot the airplane down.***

### ANALYSIS

Upon reading Norman Mineta's testimony, observing his demeanor, and knowing of his character, the reader can make several observations:

**- *There is no reason for Mineta to lie about the events in the PEOC.*** On September 11, 2001, Mineta was in a meeting with FAA chief Jane Garvey when he was summoned to the White House after the World Trade Center attacks. In the midst of a national emergency, Mineta, as a Cabinet officer, took his job very seriously. He set in place the Department of Transportation emergency procedures before leaving his office. When he described the situation where he and Cheney called the Pentagon to inquire about the Flight 93 crash, he appears on the Commission hearing videotape twice describing the event, with a seeming sense of accomplishment that he and the Vice President were working together as a team.

**- *Norman Mineta knew what time he arrived at the PEOC.*** He arrived at 9:20 a.m. He testified that Cheney was there when he got there. He was acutely aware of his role in this crisis; as Secretary of Transportation, he was responsible for the safety of every airplane in the U.S; and on a personal level, he had two sons who were airline pilots on that day. He was, as anyone in his position but especially Mineta (a former intelligence officer) at that moment would be: focused, alert, and precise.

For anyone, be it the press, the White House, or the 9/11 Commission to allege that Mineta misstated the facts as to Cheney's presence in the PEOC upon his arrival is slanderous.

**- *Mineta witnessed no shoot down orders issued by Cheney prior to the Flight 77 and Flight 93 crashes while in the PEOC.*** Mineta's testimony clearly contradicts other accounts of a shoot down order. Mineta would have been present for such an order, and did not hear an order issued, even though he was sitting in the room by the Vice President.

**Conclusion: Norman Mineta's statements (1) that Cheney was in the PEOC when he arrived at 9:20 a.m., (2) and that Mineta witnessed the exchange between Cheney and the aide which mentioned certain orders (issued before Mineta's arrival), are true.**

### **3. Chain of command: General Arnold - NORAD No shoot down orders received until after 10:00 a.m.**

#### **Excerpts from 9/11 Commission Testimony, May 23, 2003**

NORAD Major General Larry Arnold's testimony and verbal exchanges with Vice Chairman Lee Hamilton of the 9/11 Commission.

Page 47-48 of the official 9/11 Commission PDF file transcript (emphasis added)

MR. HAMILTON:

And then, finally, as I understand your testimony, it was not possible to shoot down any of these aircraft before they struck. Is that basically correct?

GEN. ARNOLD: ***That is correct. In fact, the American Airlines 77, if we were to have arrived overhead at that particular point, I don't think that we would have shot that aircraft down.***

MR. HAMILTON: Because?

GEN. ARNOLD: ***Well, we had not been given authority --***

MR. HAMILTON: You didn't have authority at that point.

GEN. ARNOLD: And, you know, it is through hindsight that we are certain that this was a coordinated attack on the United States.

This exchange between General Arnold of NORAD and Vice Chairman Hamilton raises several crucial points, and helps clarify the now famous Norman Mineta account regarding Vice President Dick Cheney's "orders" executed on September 11, 2001:

This testimony was given to the Commission on May 23, 2003, immediately after Norman Mineta's testimony about the activities in the Presidential Emergency Command Center, or PEOC, on 9/11.

As we saw, Mineta stated that Vice President Dick Cheney told a young aide, in response to whether, according to the Vice President, certain orders "still stand" - at the time that Flight 77 was 10 miles from the Pentagon: "Of course the orders still stand! Have you heard anything to the contrary?" (Mineta testimony before the 9/11 Commission, May 23, 2003, pages 8-9 of official transcript).

Later, General Arnold testified under oath that **NORAD had no authority to shoot Flight 77 down** at 9:37 a.m., the time of the Pentagon strike, even if the fighter plane interceptors had arrived in time.

There are two possibilities: either the order (to shoot down the plane if that was the order Cheney had given) did not reach the military despite the fact that it was given, according to Mineta, prior to his arrival at the Presidential Emergency Command Center (PEOC) at 9:20 a.m., or the order was a standdown order - ***an order not to shoot the plane down.***

The idea that an order to shoot down aircraft was delayed (from when it would have been given prior to Mineta's arrival in the PEOC around 9:20 a.m.) in its transmission from the Vice-President of the United States to the General in charge of NORAD on September 11, 2001, seems all the more unbelievable and absurd when one reads the following exchange between General Arnold and Lee Hamilton on page 47 of the official 9/11 Commission transcript:

MR. HAMILTON:

Now, one of the things that's curious to me, General Arnold, ***you said that you did not learn of the presidential order until after United 93 had already crashed. That was about a little after 10 o'clock in the morning.*** The first notice of difficulty here was at 8:20 in the morning when a transponder goes off on the American Flight 11. I don't know how significant that is, but 20 minutes later you had notification of the possible hijack. So there's a long lapse of time here between the time you are initially alerted and you receive the order that you can shoot that aircraft down. Am I right about that?

GEN. ARNOLD: **That's correct.**

MR. HAMILTON: In your timeline, why don't you put in there when you were notified?

GEN. ARNOLD: Of which flight, sir?

MR. HAMILTON:

Getting the notification from the President of the United States that you had the authority to shoot a commercial aircraft down is a pretty significant event. Why would that not be in your timeline?

GEN. ARNOLD: ***I don't know when that happened.***

MR. HAMILTON: Had you ever received that kind of a notice before?

GEN. ARNOLD: Not to my knowledge.

MR. HAMILTON: So this is the first time in the history of the country that such an order had ever been given, so far as you know?

GEN. ARNOLD: Yes, sir. I'm sure there's a log that would tell us that, and I appreciate the question.

MR. HAMILTON: Maybe you could let us know that.

### **ANALYSIS**

So according to the facts before us, if the Executive Order (either Presidential or Vice-Presidential) that “still stands” was a shoot down order, and that order was given prior to Secretary Mineta’s arrival at the PEOC at 9:20 a.m. (because the young man and the Vice President were discussing a previously issued order), then, according to General Arnold, this order had not reached NORAD or the United States Air Force until after Flight 93 went down in Pennsylvania after 10:00 a.m., a full 45 minutes or more after it was given.

**It defies credulity** that an order of such magnitude would be delayed in its transmission for that length of time, especially since, logically and presumably, the military was asking the question “do the orders still stand?” through the aide in the PEOC. It makes little sense that the FAA or some other civilian agency was asking about the status of the orders, as that would imply that a shoot down order would not be transmitted directly to the Pentagon upon its issuance.

In addition, Norman Mineta’s testimony before the Commission confirms General Arnold’s statement regarding the shoot down order, as evidenced in the exchange on page 9 of the official transcript recounted in Section 2 above, as Mineta states clearly that there was no shoot down order given ***for either aircraft*** in his presence at the PEOC, and certainly not prior to the Flight 93 crash.

The 9/11 Commission concludes that Cheney did not enter the PEOC until 9:58 a.m., which has been widely criticized as a manufactured and false timeline entry, with possible complicity by the U.S. Secret Service, as well as Cheney making a false statement as to the timeline of his entry.

In a CNN article which allegedly accounts for the Vice President's actions in the PEOC that morning, Josh Bolton, deputy White House Chief of Staff describes Cheney as answering "yes" upon being asked by a military aide "Just confirming, sir, authority to engage [Flight 93 over Pennsylvania]." (CNN.com - "Cheney recalls taking charge from bunker", September 12, 2002). *This conversation, according to Bolton, allegedly occurred after the Pentagon had been hit by Flight 77.* The only important point of his account is that it would place Cheney in the PEOC prior to 9:58 a.m., but only that.

This story is obviously false for several reasons. First, Mineta would have been present for such an order, and did not hear what Bolton described, even though he was sitting in the room by the Vice President. Bolton's account conflicts with General Arnold allegedly not receiving the Flight 93 shoot down order until after 10:00 a.m., as this order would have been communicated within one or two minutes.

And since Bush himself states that no shoot down orders were given until Air Force One takes off (See Paul Thompson's Complete 9/11 Timeline, Bush's Actions on 9/11 "after 9:56 a.m.) , **Bolton's account cannot be taken seriously**, as it would have occurred without Bush's authorization, begging the question as to why Cheney would later seek shoot down authorization if he had it himself already.

However, it is entirely consistent with reports of a U.S. Government shoot down of Flight 93 over Shanksville, Pennsylvania, the U.S. Government and U.S. military's subsequent coverup of the actual facts regarding the crash, and strict adherence to the Flight 93 "Let's Roll" myth since. It would further suggest that the Shanksville, Pa. shoot down order, if issued as stated by Bolton prior to 10:00 a.m., was quickly communicated to the military, as only approximately 25 minutes or less would have elapsed between the Pentagon strike and the crash of Flight 93, unlike a gap of more than 45 minutes in Vice President Cheney's "still stands" order timeline (consisting of General Arnold's testimony being applied to the Mineta observations.) But no such order was issued officially.

*No official shoot down order was issued for Flight 93 under all accounts.* And since Pennsylvania was not declared a no fly zone by the White House as was NYC and D.C., (see next section) the apparent shoot down of Flight 93 appears to have been, without delving into the "Let's Roll" controversy, an individual act by U.S. fighter pilots operating under local or regional command and control.

#### **4. Declaration of a No-Fly Zone over Washington, D.C. - shoot down authority after 9:45 a.m. over the Capitol.**

The 9/11 Commission hearings revealed that *just prior* to the issuance of a shoot down order by the President, an order which was issued after the crash of Flight 93, a no-fly zone was established over Washington, D.C. airspace. The following testimony establishes that fact. Could this be the genesis of the "orders still stand" orders? *The testimony establishes that this order was issued after the Pentagon strike:*

(Page 41-43 of the official transcript, May 23, 2003)

MR. BEN-VENISTE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Following up on this shutdown authority, General Arnold, from what source did you receive the shutdown authority?

GEN. ARNOLD: ***I did not receive shutdown authority.***

MR. BEN-VENISTE: ***You say it was received subsequent to the crash of 93?***

GEN. ARNOLD: ***Yes, that's correct.***

MR. BEN-VENISTE: From what source was that received?

GEN. ARNOLD: It was passed down to us from the NORAD, from Cheyenne Mountain, that they had received shutdown authority. And then, you know, the timeframe escapes me at the moment, ***but you know for example over the Washington, D.C. area it was declared a no-fly zone by clear -- just by the fact that any aircraft was present, if we could not determine if that aircraft was friendly, then we were cleared to shoot that aircraft down.***

MR. BEN-VENISTE: When was the declaration of no-fly zone authorized?

GEN. ARNOLD: I don't know. It was shortly during that timeframe.

MR. BEN-VENISTE: So are you saying that that declaration gave you shutdown authority?

GEN. ARNOLD: It gave us -- that particular declaration that I am referring to is a class bravo airspace within the Washington, D.C. area that was shut down to aviation, except for military or for law enforcement emergency response aircraft at that particular time.

MR. BEN-VENISTE: ***To help me understand, does it mean once that condition exists, that unless you were able to determine that this was a friendly aircraft, which under the circumstances I suppose means under the control of the terrorists at that time making it an unfriendly aircraft, that you had authority --***

GEN. ARNOLD: That's correct.

MR. BEN-VENISTE: ***-- by whatever means to bring that down?***

GEN. ARNOLD: ***Yes.*** The --

MR. BEN-VENISTE: ***At what time during this process was that order issued, and who issued it?***

GEN. ARNOLD: I do not know who issued it. ***It is my understanding it was issued by the president, or the vice president in his stead, that that order was issued. And it was issued around the time that we decided to put all the aircraft on the ground, as Secretary Mineta had referred to, at that particular time.....***

MR. BEN-VENISTE: ..And if I understand the context of what you said about closing the perimeter around Washington, ***the president's directive or the vice president's directive would have been moot, because of the prior order, which would have enabled you to shoot down an unfriendly plane in that sector?***

GEN. ARNOLD: We developed a certain -- ***I guess the short answer again, that is correct. But it's very specifically in the Washington, D.C. area by presence that aircraft was hostile unless we could determine it was friendly.***

*[The above testimony is critical to the examination of the "order still stands" orders. Earlier, Secretary Mineta, in his own testimony before the Commission, with regard to grounding all commercial aircraft, stated]:*

MR. MINETA: ***At approximately 9:45 a.m.***, less than one hour after I had first been notified of an airplane crash in New York, ***I gave the FAA the final order for all civil aircraft to land*** at the nearest airport as soon as possible. It was the first shutdown of civil aviation in the history of the United States. (Page 47-48 of the official 9/11 Commission PDF file transcript on May 22, 2003, emphasis added)

And in another report, highlighted in Paul Thompson's [www.cooperativeresearch.org](http://www.cooperativeresearch.org). 9/11 Timeline, the Andrews Air Force Base fighters were given scramble orders from the U.S. Secret Service. (See Complete 9/11 Timeline, All Day of 9/11 Events, page 2) .

"Whilst the crew at Andrews are unloading missiles onto a flatbed trailer, Dan Caine answers another phone call from someone in the White House, requesting armed fighters over Washington. Caine says: "***I could hear plain as day the vice president talking in the background.*** That's basically where we got the execute order. It was 'VFR (Visual Flight Rules) direct.'"

This account refers to the Combat Air Patrol (CAP) being ordered over Washington, D.C. after the Pentagon strike, as confirmed by Richard Clarke and others. (See Clarke, Against All Enemies, p. 5; Clarke asking General Myers at 9:28 a.m. how long to get CAP over NYC and D.C., Myers replies: "Fifteen minutes.")

General Arnold's testimony places the no-fly zone order being given at about the same time as Mineta's order grounding commercial aircraft, which was at approximately 9:45 a.m.

### ANALYSIS

It seems highly unlikely and implausible that this 9:45 a.m. no-fly zone order refers to the "orders still stand" order for several reasons:

1. Even under the dubious and probably false assertions of the 9/11 Commission and VP Cheney that Cheney did not enter the PEOC until 9:58 a.m., this order would have been entered 10-15 minutes prior to his entry. Both Richard Clarke and Norman Mineta describe Cheney communicating with the Situation Room from the PEOC long before that time. According to General Arnold, this no-fly order was a Presidential or Vice Presidential decision, given around the time that Mineta grounded the planes. That rules out a pre-9:20 a.m. no-fly zone order.
2. The Pentagon strike had occurred at 9:37 a.m.
3. Prior to 9:20 a.m. at the time of the "orders still stand" orders' probable issuance, Washington, D.C. had not been assessed to be in a situation of imminent danger.

***According to the facts before us, the no-fly zone order was not "the orders still stand" order.***

## Conclusion

We have seen from the evidence presented that prior to 9:20 a.m. on the morning of September 11, 2001, certain orders were executed by Vice President Richard Cheney to the U.S. military. Norman Mineta's testimony before the 9/11 Commission establishes clearly that these orders "which still stood" just prior to the Pentagon strike were issued by executive authority prior to Mineta's entry into the Presidential Emergency Operations Center of the White House (PEOC) at 9:20 a.m.

It is undisputed, relying on the vast majority of the public record of events of that time period on 9/11, that President George Bush was "out of the loop" with regard to any such order. Bush was in the midst of his appearance at Booker School in Florida and did not issue these orders. So these orders were issued by Vice Presidential authority. Mineta's testimony evidences Cheney's awareness of the existence of these orders, and indicates command authority over the execution or non-execution of these orders.

Were the orders stand down orders or shoot down orders?

Norman Mineta and General Arnold and the 9/11 Commission all agree that no shoot down orders were issued prior to the crash of Flight 93. For the "orders still stand" commands to have been shoot down orders, if the Executive Order (either Presidential or Vice-Presidential) that "still stands" given prior to 9:20 a.m. was a shoot down order, then, according to General Arnold, this order did not reach NORAD or the United States Air Force until after Flight 93 went down in Pennsylvania after 10:00 a.m., a full 45 minutes or more after it was given. This possibility defies credulity and cannot be believed. In addition, the no-fly zone order given at 9:45 a.m. is eliminated as out of the timeline for issuance of the pre-9:20 a.m. order.

The facts prove: that a shoot down order for Flight 77 ***was not issued prior to the Pentagon strike at 9:37 a.m.***, the non-existence of a shoot down order for any aircraft until after 10:00 a.m, and confirm the following:

That the Vice-President of the United States, Richard Cheney, with full knowledge of the fact that a hijacked passenger jet airliner was hurtling toward Washington D.C., with full knowledge of its distance at regular intervals of a minimum of 50 miles out from the Capitol, *in fact not only did not act to intercept or shoot down* the airliner despite the two earlier hijacked planes hitting the World Trade Center, but issued a direct order to the U.S. Air Force, either by himself or from the President of the United States, NOT to shoot down Flight 77 prior to it hitting the Pentagon.

## EPILOGUE

How were these orders issued? The answer to this question is anyone's guess. The stand down/ shoot down orders are the ultimate climax decisions which emanate from a hijacking event chain-of-command. On 9/11, virtually the entire U.S. Air Force was locked into a multiple war game chain-of-command rigidness whose ability to unlock itself was not within the short time parameters of the conspirators, and the murderers knew it, especially since no principal at the top was unlocking the chain, or giving orders from the top of the chain. But the young aide's panicking in the PEOC could not have been foreseen, and Norman Mineta's candidness about the incident was not anticipated, which gave us a glimpse into the crime. Cheney's stand down order was crucial to the success of the crime. The conspirators know, and knew, that military chain-of-command is cumbersome and slow when the top moves slowly. The war games did most of the slowing down naturally, the principals hesitated just a bit, slowing it further, but the "orders which still stand" were the insurance policy, and Dick Cheney was the underwriter.

JCE