

**Insight MediaFile****Mondays,****10:30 p.m. ET, 7:30 p.m. PT****Repeats: Thursdays at 1:30 a.m. ET, 10:30 p.m. PT****Photo: Barrie Zwicker, Insight Media Analyst**

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**"The Great Deception"**

Part 2 of a multi-part series (Part 3 airs Feb 4)

Transcript of Mon., Jan. 28 2002 Broadcast

**What really happened on Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>? "9/11 -- Part 2."**

Next, more troubling questions. Part 2 in my series of commentaries about the events of September 11th.

As you've heard in the panel discussion, a common explanation as to why no U.S. military interceptors took to the skies on September 11th until it was too late, is that it was "simple incompetence."

Well, let me deal with the "incompetence theory." By first taking you back to October 26th, 1999. That is the day the chartered Learjet carrying golfer Payne Stewart crashes, killing all on board. This from the official National Transportation Safety Board crash report:

9:19 a.m.: the flight departs

9:24: The Learjet's pilot responds to an instruction from air traffic control

9:33: The controller radios another instruction. No response from the pilot. For 4 ½ minutes the controller tries to establish contact.

9:38: Having failed, the controller calls in the military. Note that he did not seek, nor did he require, the approval of the President of the United States, or indeed anyone. It's standard procedure, followed routinely, to call in the Air Force when radio contact with a commercial passenger jet is lost, or the plane departs from its flight path, or anything along those lines occurs.

9:54 – 16 minutes later -- the F-16 reaches the Learjet at 46,000 feet and conducts a visual inspection.

Total elapsed time: 21 minutes.

So what does this prove? Well, it proves that standing routines exist for dealing with all such emergencies, for instance loss of radio contact. All personnel in the air and on the ground are trained to follow the routines, which have been fine-tuned over decades, as the Learjet incident illustrates.

For large scheduled aircraft, tracked throughout on radar, to depart extravagantly from their flight paths, would trigger numerous calls to the military, especially after two have hit the World Trade Centre and now one is speeding toward Washington, D.C.

It flies over the White House, turns sharply and heads toward the Pentagon. Everyone – and I mean everyone – now knows these planes are very bad news. It's been reported on all TV networks for more than half an hour that this is a terrorist attack.

Now, Andrews Air Force Base is a huge installation. It's home to Air Force One, the President's plane. It's home base for two combat-ready squadrons of jet interceptors mandated to ensure the safety of the U.S. capital. Andrews is only 12 miles from the White House.

On September 11th the squadrons there were:

The 121st Fighter Squadron of the 113th Fighter Wing, equipped with F-16s

The 321st Marine Fighter Attack Squadron of the 49th Marine Air Group, Detachment A, equipped F/A-18s

This information was on the website of the base on September 11th. [POSSIBLE (cuts)] On September 12th, Andrews chose to update its website. I find it odd that after the update there's no mention of the F-16 and F-18 fighters. The base becomes, according to the website, home to a transport squadron only.

Yet at 6:30 the evening of September 11th NBC Nightly News, along with many outlets, reported: "It was after the attack on the Pentagon that the Air Force then decided to scramble F-16s out of the DC National Guard Andrews Air Force Base to fly ... a protective cover over Washington, D.C."

Throughout the northeastern United States are many air bases. But that morning no interceptors respond in a timely fashion to the highest alert situation. This includes the Andrews squadrons which have the longest lead time and are 12 miles from the White house.

Whatever the explanation for the huge failure, there have been no reports, to my knowledge, of reprimands. This further weakens the "Incompetence Theory." Incompetence usually earns reprimands.

This causes me to ask – and other media need to ask – if there were "stand down" orders.

Next week, bin Laden was a longtime close ally of the CIA, according to the CIA itself. Why did he suddenly turn against them? Or did he?

### Sources

Report by National Transportation Safety Board re crash of chartered Learjet 26 October 1999, carrying golfer Payne Stewart:

<http://www.nts.gov/aviation/aviation.htm>

click on "Aviation," then "Major investigations," then "Aberdeen, South Dakota."

For commercial aviation flight rules and procedures:

<http://www.faa.gov/>

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